

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document:                    **WHITEWORK: UNCOVERING THE VISUAL  
CULTURE OF WHITENESS THROUGH  
QUILTMaking, HISTORY AND ART  
EDUCATION CURRICULA**

Diane Louise Kuthy, Ph.D., 2019

Directed By:                            Associate Professor  
Dr. Nicole King, Ph.D.  
Department of American Studies

Professor  
Dr. James Smalls, Ph.D  
Department of Visual Arts

*Whitework* argues that quilts are important sources for close readings of visual and material culture of whiteness when placed against the backdrop of political and social history. These art objects create for the quilt makers and audiences a new body of multimodal knowledge that promotes a deeper understanding of the workings of white supremacy and the cultural myths that have kept it in place. The quilts created for and analyzed in the dissertation and the related curricular resources provide important educational tools to promote racial justice. Using the methodology of *a/r/tography*, an embodied and emergent form of inquiry within practice-based educational research that includes the interconnected practices of artist, educator and researcher, this dissertation investigates the visual and material culture of whiteness and the historical context that produces its meaning. As part of this study, two quilts were created collaboratively with a community of artist/researchers. Each quilt is complemented by a curricular resource for high school or college art education

classrooms to critically engage learners with historical artifacts of whiteness and resistance to whiteness, as well as related contemporary exemplars. The thematic moments selected and animated in the historically informed curricula engage with current social justice issues and underscore the workings of white supremacy and resistance to it.

Key words: visual culture, whiteness, a/r/tography, curricula, history, quilts