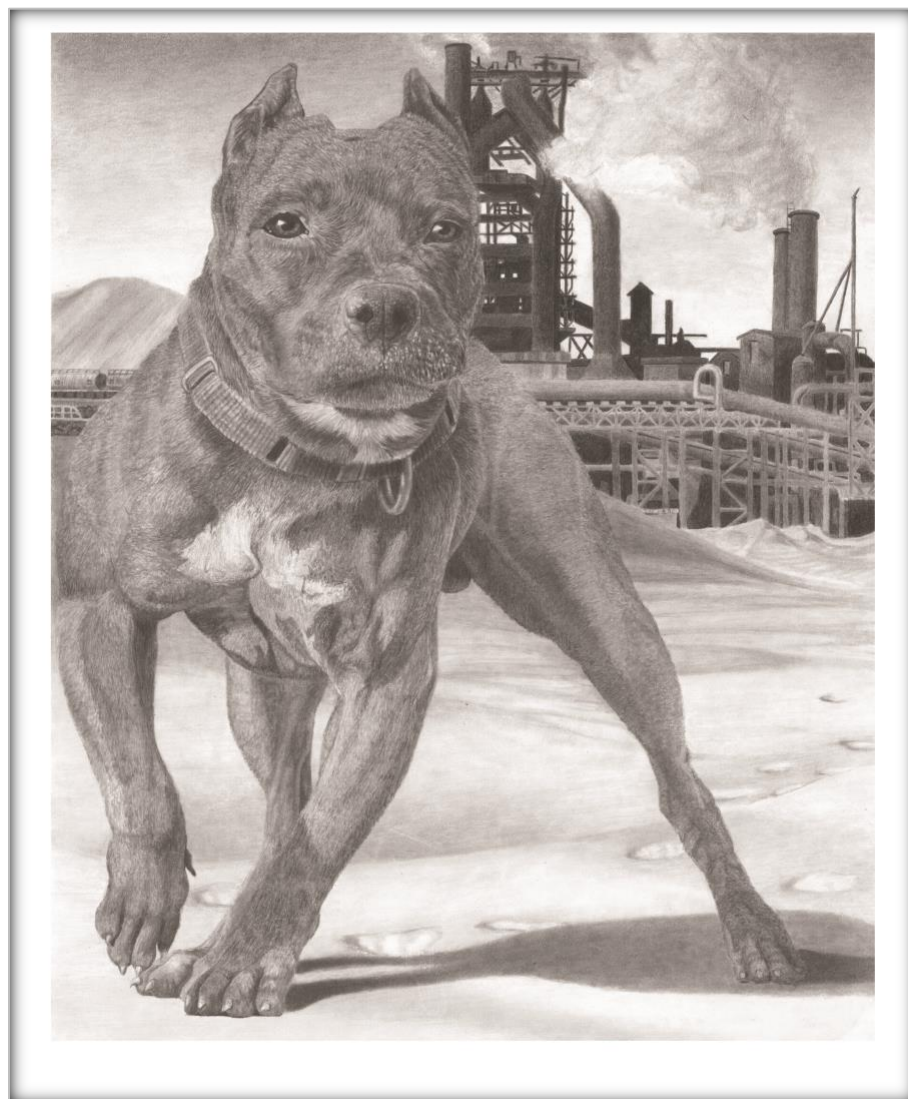




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## *Illustrating Inner-Landscapes*

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**A**s an artist, I believe that art, like life, needs space to breathe. By not dictating the meaning held in my work, others have an opportunity to hear, listen and describe what an image has to say to them.

Beyond the imagination and insight of the artist, I believe others engage in dialogue with an image to also breathe life into it. In my view, only by listening deeply to relationships expressed between poets, poems, visual art, and the people who find meaning in them, do communities have an opportunity to learn together by embracing inquiry. I'm delighted that JCACS editor Pauline and guest editor Amanda shared their readings of *Terrier & Blast Furnace*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> My artwork *Terrier and Blast Furnace* was originally published in 2021 by Routledge in the book titled *Influences and Inspirations in Curriculum Studies Research and Teaching: Reflections on the Origins and Legacy of Contemporary Scholarship*. I hold copyright and applicable licencing for its publication here.

I see the factory pointing to the capitalist dream. Colonization's outcomes include pollution and a barren earth. The dog looks old, wise, aware, strong and steady. The dog is a watchful barrier, powerful in stance. The dog protects the factory, both entries and exits. This guarding can refer to keeping the complex status quo, challenges to dismantlings, and the necessity of finding alternate paths. (P. Sameshima, personal communication, Oct 30, 2021).

The first association that came to mind was Frida Kahlo's (1932) [Self Portrait on the Borderline Between Mexico and the United States](#)—your work and Kahlo's works seem to be participating in related conversations. As Pauline talks about the "capitalist dream" in reference to your drawing, that could also describe Kahlo's painting as well, as Kahlo paints herself literally standing on the line between the industrialized world and the natural Indigenous world. Something about your drawing suggests that foot-in-two worlds idea. I see the dog as being more than a dog. Maybe a metaphorical portrait pointing to a human counterpart? The dog knows a lot, and he has an ambivalent relationship to the factory that is both integral to life and killing us all. (A. Gulla, personal communication, Oct 30, 2021).

For me, the pit bull is a form of love—guarding, having an instinctive relationship to a territory. I focused on illustrating my interpretation of love's complex nature, its relationship with existence, survival and privilege. As I grew up, a steel plant provided food and shelter to my family. As our town's steel plant went in and out of bankruptcy, a lot of pain was experienced (Podolski, 2021). The documentary *Steel Town Down* notes how despair, limited economic opportunity and the opioid epidemic are tied to job cuts and the modernization of the steel industry there (CTV W5, 2018).

It is with mixed emotions that I look at my life in relation to capitalism, colonialism and industry—to how I'm injured and yet benefit from each. I'm fond of the place where I grew up, and that bond makes it hard for me to recognize my privilege and other unattractive aspects of myself and my hometown (Podolski, 2021).

*A form of love too  
powerful  
Too personal  
A form of love too*

Poetry and inquiry allow me to enter my memories to explore an emotional landscape (Guiney Yallop, 2011), in which I travel and from which I express art. In observing and rendering my inner-landscapes, I recognize my privilege is part of me; thus, I understand why I protect it at times. By listening to how others view the landscapes I express, I see why I must work towards dismantling barriers guarding an internal status quo. In doing so, I unlock a greater understanding of myself, my art and my position in relation to others. And I learn to travel through my work and life more informed.

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