

Collage

A MAGAZINE FOR COLORADO'S ART EDUCATORS

FALL 2020

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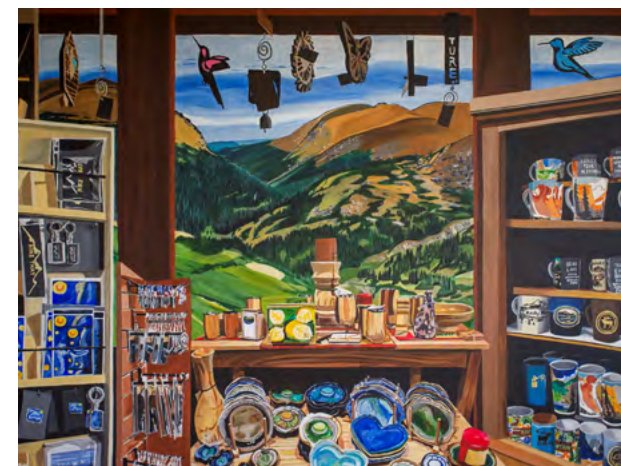
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In Every Issue

- 4. President's Message by D.J. Osmack
- 6. Letter from the Editor by Anne Thulson
- 38. CAEA Executive Board and Division Representatives Council Directory
- 38. CAEA Task Force Chairs and Publications Directory
- 39. Regional Representatives



Page 8. Curiouser and Curiouser: The Impromptu Stay-at-Home Artist Residency by Amy Felder



Page 18. Ideation Workout: A Creativity Exercise for Abstract Art by Steven Schaffner

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Page 14: You Gotta See This: iPads for the Elementary Art Teacher by Paige McGlaughlin

COLLAGE is published tri-annually. Submission deadlines for *COLLAGE* are: Spring Issue - February 1; Winter Issue - November 1; Fall Issue - August 1. Email all submissions to athulson@msudenver.edu. Contributions of articles, photos, and artwork are encouraged. Submissions of text should be emailed as Word documents. Accompanying photographs of student work or students at work is encouraged. Do not include images within a Word document. Images should be in .jpg format and sent as separate attachments. Refer to the attachment and the file name in the body of the e-mail. Whenever possible, include captions and, in the case of photos of original student or teacher artwork, include names of artists. Submitted items may be edited for clarity, length, and format. Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and publication does not imply endorsement. Lesson plan submissions must include lesson objectives, appropriate assessments, procedures, standards applications, and materials.

In This Issue

- 8. Curiouser and Curiouser: The Impromptu Stay-at-Home Artist Residency by Amy Felder
- 10. Balancing Act: Making Time to Wander by Nikki Sandschaper
- 12. Artist On My Mind: Louise Rönnebeck by Anne Thulson
- 14. You Gotta See This: iPads for the Elementary Art Teacher by Paige McGlaughlin
- 16. A Project Slice: Collections in a Jar (Adapted Curiosity Cabinet) Second-Grade Lesson Plan by Jesse Bott
- 18. Ideation Workout: A Creativity Exercise for Abstract Art by Steven Schaffner
- 20. Do-Over by Laurie Edmonstone
- 22. Show and Tell: Maintaining Community While Teaching Online by Deb Rosenbaum
- 24. Top Five Reasons to Apply to the Art21 Educator Program by Erica Richard
- 26. Access For All: Seeing Eye to Eye: How a Blind Student Taught Her Art Teacher New Ways of Seeing by Melinda Laz
- 32. ArtSource Colorado 2021 Call for Entries
- 34. Guest Letter from L. Jemil Miller



Page 26. Access For All: Seeing Eye to Eye: How a Blind Student Taught Her Art Teacher New Ways of Seeing by Melinda Laz

President's Message

Finding Kindness in the Chaos of 2020
by D.J. Osmack
Art Educator, North High School, DPS



Okay, 2020, we see you!

With so much chaos lurking around, one message I have received loud and clear is that we need to lead with kindness in all that we do. As educators, we are continually being asked to go above and beyond to meet the needs of our students. This is nothing new. We have been advocating for a more holistic approach to education and an emphasis on creativity and the arts. We have used our art rooms and creative spaces as ways to connect with our students on so many levels. We teach, inspire, and empower our students to use their art as a creative outlet and a way to respond to everyday life.

As we all know, when we approach art with a focus on the whole student, we must rethink teaching and learning so that we have balance between academics and students'

social-emotional needs. Our students are intentionally being taught skills to cope with or handle stress. Students are learning about mindfulness, executive functioning, and asset tools and are being asked to exercise them as they learn academic content and interact with peers and adults. But how often do we actually use these tools in our own lives?

Our focus has always been to create learning environments that support the whole student by creating physically and emotionally safe spaces that place an emphasis on building relationships.

Evidence confirms that supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development benefits all children and relates positively to the traditional measures we care about: attendance, grades, test scores, graduation rates, college and career readiness, well-

rounded citizens, and overall good humans. But it is equally important to remember that all students possess a full array of skills and values that they bring to your class. When we focus on their assets and not their deficits, they will be better equipped to be successful.

There is no big secret when it comes to meeting our students' social-emotional needs—all we can do is lead with kindness. Kindness is not just performing random acts that help others. Kindness is a lifestyle choice. My definition of kindness is concentrating on having warmth in your heart, showing gratitude, and finding joy in all that you do. When we approach others with warmth in our heart, we are more willing to be accepting of others, and we create a welcoming atmosphere or environment or society that defeats hate, bullying, and negativity.

Studies show that random acts of kindness can reduce depression. The boost in happiness occurs not only in the giver and receiver of kindness, but also in anyone who witnesses it.

I often feel that most of the time we are just scratching the surface and could go much further when we are talking about mental health, social-emotional learning, and kindness. By putting these skills into action through community service projects and other projects that include our students' artistic voices and creativity, I really feel like we will not only make a huge impact on our students but also the surrounding community.

One of my takeaways from my recent classes on Mindfulness and Cultivating Kindness is that our environment shapes our perception of the world and, therefore, shapes other people's perception. If we expose our brain to constant negativity, our world will look pretty negative and cruel. Constant negativity can come in the form of people who constantly complain, negative news, violent movies, bullies, and

coworkers who gossip, mock, and talk badly about other coworkers. Our emotions, either positive or negative, are contagious. We have a choice to be complicit and ignore, play along with, and spread negativity. Or, we can be an agent of change.

You are the best one to measure your need for self-care. As I have been told frequently, the only person you need to ask for permission to put yourself first is YOU.

I hope that you all find kindness in this chaos and can continue to share your kindness with your students, colleagues, and families!

Here are some resources that I have found that you may want to look into if you are looking for ways to incorporate more kindness:

[Kindness Beyond the Classroom](https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/high-school-curriculum)
<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/high-school-curriculum>
<https://healthyworkforceinstitute.com/spread-kindness/?sfw=pass1584642159>
<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-at-work>
<https://www.kindnessevolution.org/kindness-curricula> ●

Letter from the Editor

Be Onto Something
 by Anne Thulson
 Associate Professor of Art Education,
 MSU of Denver



August 2020

In 1993, my husband and I named our youngest son “Walker,” because of one obscure author whose character said one obscure statement in one obscure novel:

What is the nature of the search? You ask. The search is what anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life. To become aware of the search is to be onto something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair.

— Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer*

Because of my brain chemistry, I am the kind of person who can easily lean into despair. I actually look out for it at all times. When most things are going well, I’ll find the one thing that isn’t. So, I need strategies to not despair, especially now.

There are a lot of strategies for not-despairing: whistling, venting, self-medicating, denying, changing scenery, escaping in other narratives, defending, fighting, relying on others, believing in an air-tight creed, fixing things, and so on.

I have tried these and sometimes they work, but they are not the best strategies for me. They don’t dig me out far enough. The strategy that seems to always work for me is to *be onto something*. To me, that means looking for meaning through the making of things and the making of ideas. When we make something, we search what we don’t know and trust in a strange future. There is possibility. Possibility implies hope.

Lately, I’m search-making artifacts like: dinner, art, gardens, a website, curriculum, letters, protest signs, haircuts, and presents. I’m also searching for ideas on how to: effectively teach online, connect remotely with my 88-year-old mother, be woke

and helpful to POC, talk civilly about politics, incorporate new contemporary artists, and beat my husband at Scrabble. This searching and making is what keeps me from despair during this hot and sad summer. I realize I am writing to a community of makers and thinkers. I hope that you take hope in your making and thinking.

Since I started with a quote, I’ll end with a quote.

Inside the word emergency is emerge; from an emergency, new things come forth. The old certainties are crumbling fast, but danger and possibility are sisters.

— Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark*



CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER

The Impromptu Stay-at-Home Artist Residency

by Amy Felder, Artist



Amy Felder, *The Altar*, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 36x48 inches

I do not know what I would have done without my studio practice during the stay-at-home order. Immersing myself in my art helped me cope with the sadness and scariness of so many people dying alone. I remember one difficult day in particular when I sat at my easel and painted with tears streaming down my face. I just kept painting and, after a while, the act of painting calmed me. My art practice grounded me and gave me a sense of purpose.

Pre-COVID-19, I had an idea for a painting of Rocky Mountain National Park as seen through the gift shop window of the Alpine Visitor Center. On March 24, the day before the stay-at-home order went into effect, I set up a makeshift studio in the dining room of my one-bedroom apartment and started painting. Freed from a 45-minute commute and all social commitments, I found myself with free time to focus on my artmaking. I spent five weeks

as an artist-in-residence painting within the comfort of my own home. Besides teaching obligations, the only responsibility I had was to make art! Any energy not spent teaching was dedicated to my artwork. The combination of 24-hour access and flexible workspace allowed me to be much more ambitious and complete the most elaborately detailed piece I have ever made. On April 26, the last day of the stay-at-home order, I finished my painting and titled it *The Altar*.

The Altar is part of my current exploration of the relationship between humans and nature. I investigate how contemporary recreation involves devices, screens, and windows that prevent an authentic experience of nature and narrows one's view. In *The Altar*, a wide assortment of souvenirs obscures a view of Rocky Mountain National Park and reveals that consumerism of nature has become the focus instead of reverence. When creating my work, I reflected on how national parks face many threats, of which humankind is most imminent. Rocky Mountain National Park is the third most visited national park with a record 4.67 million visits in 2019. Overcrowding of natural areas is a

problem of increasing importance in today's world. We depend on open spaces to provide a safe place where people can exercise, connect with nature, and enjoy a peaceful respite from our ever-changing and often stressful lives.

The Altar invites viewers to analyze their own relationships with nature and examine the dichotomies between the human desire to preserve the wilderness and to enjoy it. I am so thankful the stay-at-home order gifted me the time required to make this large-scale painting and start a discussion on how humanity might find a balance between recreation and stewardship of our sacred spaces.

More images and information can be found at amyfelder.com, amyfelder.tumblr.com, and [@amyfelderart](https://www.instagram.com/amyfelderart).

¹ National Park Service, (2020, February 27). *National Park Visitation Tops 327 Million in 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/2019-visitation-numbers.htm>



Home Studio

BALANCING ACT

Making Time to Wander

by Nikki Sandschaper
Art Educator
Seoul International School, South Korea

As I pull my flapping scarf out of my eyes again, I see my son laughing at me. His hair whirls around his wide-open mouth in a windy, open-air Safari Jeep. Although I didn't realize it at the time, I was having one of those moments that will cause a smile to randomly appear on my face for the rest of my life. My son is 10 years old, and this micro-sized memory perfectly captures the person he is and, as time goes by, this memory will only become more precious. I've come to realize that however seemingly insignificant these moments are, they are at the core of what keeps me content, and I suspect this truth will only grow deeper.

In my experience, traveling puts me in a place, both literally and figuratively, where I am more likely to have one of these treasured memories to add to my lifetime collection of experiences, ready to be conjured up when the world gets frustrating, cruel, or just plain boring. When I wander, I am often placed in a perfect storm of circumstances to have an aesthetic experience that will stick with me beyond that fleeting moment.

While there may be some semantic debate about aesthetic terminology, the novelty of trusting my instincts, hearing a new language, or perhaps needing to depend on the kindness of strangers causes everything to become more vibrant. Then, as if that wasn't enough, this moment of heightened perception, connection, and awareness continues to reincarnate itself into future reflections and appreciations, vividly creeping into my life when it's needed most.

When my life becomes overly routine, I find these moments coming across my path less often. The stress of day-to-day life becomes a black hole of memories where I can't remember if something happened a week ago or months ago, and my favorite moments get filed away in a dusty drawer in the corner of my mind, replaced by a mindless routine where my wide-eyed wandering mutates into numbly checking my email from my phone for mundane messages I can deal with later. I imagine there are people who live their best lives in a routine situation, but I simply cannot.

When I find myself inattentive to the only life I will ever live, I know it's time to reset and refill through a hike with a friend, some time alone at a museum, or, if I'm really lucky, an international adventure. Near or far, I am happiest when I make time to get lost. As an artist, or perhaps just a human, a fresh perspective makes me feel alive. A change in scenery creates an attention in my perception that is difficult to recreate at home and, over time, a variety of these experiences layers into a wider understanding that allows me to experience and reflect on treasured adventures more deeply.

If you're able, I recommend setting aside some time to get lost as soon as you can. You never know when your next favorite memory will happen.

Nikki, a former DPS teacher, continues her international adventure with her husband and son. Currently, she is teaching art at Seoul International School in South Korea.



ARTIST ON MY MIND

Louise Rönnebeck

by Anne Thulson

Associate Professor of Art Education, MSU of Denver

I often walk by Morey Junior High School on my way to work. Tucked beneath facing alcoves are two murals depicting students and teachers. Reminiscent of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, with their airy pastels and classically staged figures, these murals were painted by Louise Rönnebeck in 1934. Unlike many of the murals she painted in Denver, these still survive.

I'm grateful to the scholars who tenaciously revisit history. As the dust settles on the 20th century roster of "grand" artists, they uncover fresh and unexpected gifts of the artworld, like Louise Rönnebeck. Her story may resemble yours. Ms. Rönnebeck moved to Colorado as a young adult and balanced various roles: artist, parent, and art educator.

Like many regionalist painters of the early 1900s, her influences include the Mexican muralists, 15th century Italian painting, and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes. Her soft interpretation of cubism and regionalism glows with light and color.

At the Taos, New Mexico home of [Mabel Dodge Luhan](#), she met artist Arnold Rönnebeck. In 1926 they married and moved to the "wild and woolies" of Denver where Mr. Rönnebeck became the director of the Denver Art Museum. Meanwhile, Ms. Rönnebeck balanced motherhood, housekeeping, and artmaking.

"Being the mother of [two strenuous children](#) and the caretaker of a fairly large house, I have to budget my time carefully...Between the children's meal time, the mother rests while the artist works."



True to her time, she defined herself as a woman and mother first and, after that, an artist. Although her husband encouraged her as an artist, she insisted that he was "much more important than I."

During the Great Depression, she entered 16 government competitions for mural commissions. Many of these paintings contain scenes of strong women, child labor, education, and mining. She won two commissions for post office murals by the Treasury Department Section of Painting and Sculpture: "[The Fertile Land Remembers](#)" (1938) in Worland, Wyoming and "[Harvest](#)" (1940) in Grand Junction, Colorado. Ms. Rönnebeck was grateful, "What would the artist do without the government?"



Among her easel paintings in the 1930s and 1940s, she depicted some unusual representations, ahead of her time. In her painting about a sensational Denver trial, "[The People vs. Mary Elizabeth Smith](#)" (1936), she shows a woman on the witness stand as heroic victim, a role more often reserved in paintings for men. Previously, women in courtrooms were usually depicted as prostitutes. In addition, in "[4B](#)" (1937), a classroom scene set in her children's school, she depicts more racial diversity than was actually in public schools of this era.

After World War II and her husband's death in 1947, she started to share her expertise more intentionally



with others. She taught at the University of Denver from 1945 to 1951 and Bermuda High School for Girls from 1955 to 1959.

I encourage you to use this important artist in your curriculum soon and check out this great resource for your students: [The Louise Rönnebeck website](#).

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YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

iPads for the Elementary Art Teacher

by Paige McGlaughlin
Art Educator, Coyote Creek Elementary

A classroom set of iPads, or even just one teacher iPad, can be integrated into the art room. There are many creative ideas out there, so don't be afraid to dive in and give it a try! Working with the iPad can be very user-friendly and forgiving as a tool for art creation.

Filming and uploading videos to Vimeo or YouTube can be done with a teacher iPad. Technique demos and tutorials on classroom procedures can be made using the video function on the iPad. An iPad, or even an iPhone, coupled with a tripod or stand, makes it easy to film a video of your demonstration. Don't forget to make sure that the video area is well-lit. Using iMovie makes it easy to edit or splice together the videos and add music.

The benefits of using videos can include saving materials that would otherwise be used in a demonstration; rewinding and replaying the video for students who need to watch steps again; or leaving the video for a substitute lesson. A video can be used for students who missed a lesson as well. After a little practice with the camera, try the iMotion app to create stop-motion films to use as a hook to engage students. Once filmed, these videos can be used again and again.

A teacher iPad can be used to photograph student artwork and upload to Artsonia, an online portfolio tool. Artsonia allows artwork to be shared with families, and users can leave comments or feedback for students. Artsonia is a great tool for advocacy, and it can be used for raising funds without additional time spent tracking orders.

Artsonia can be a great platform to streamline the assessment process, as it allows one to keep a digital portfolio for each student. Keeping a running record of student work that can be accessed from anywhere is much easier than carrying around stacks of artwork. Since portfolios are rolled over each year, Artsonia makes it easy to go back and look at student growth from year to year.

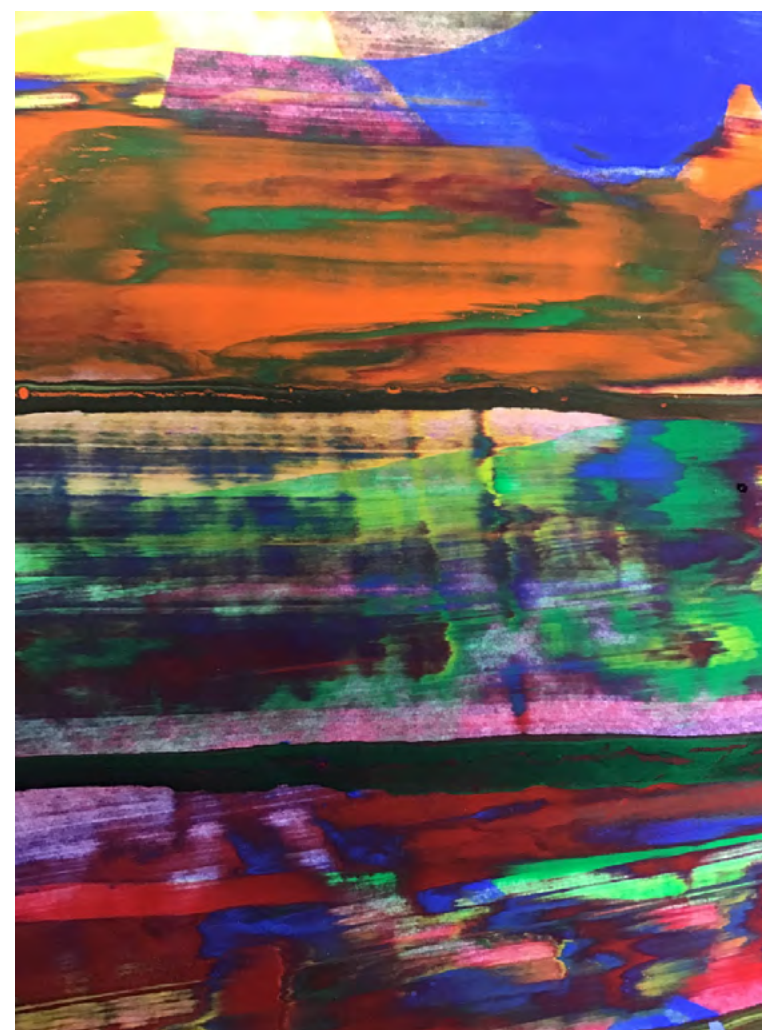
With a single teacher iPad, lesson planning and organization can be done on the go. The Planboard app is a great alternative to a lesson plan book. With Planboard, set up a custom schedule, write sticky note reminders, build assessments, and more. Planboard can be set up using a laptop, which makes data entry a bit easier, and then accessed from an iPad using the app.

With a classroom set of iPads there is so much to explore. Some of my favorite student apps for the iPad are iMotion, Tayasui Sketches, Snapseed, and Doodle Dandy. Engage students by having them create a stop-motion video using iMotion. With materials as simple as paper and markers, or Legos, students can create their own stop-motion videos.

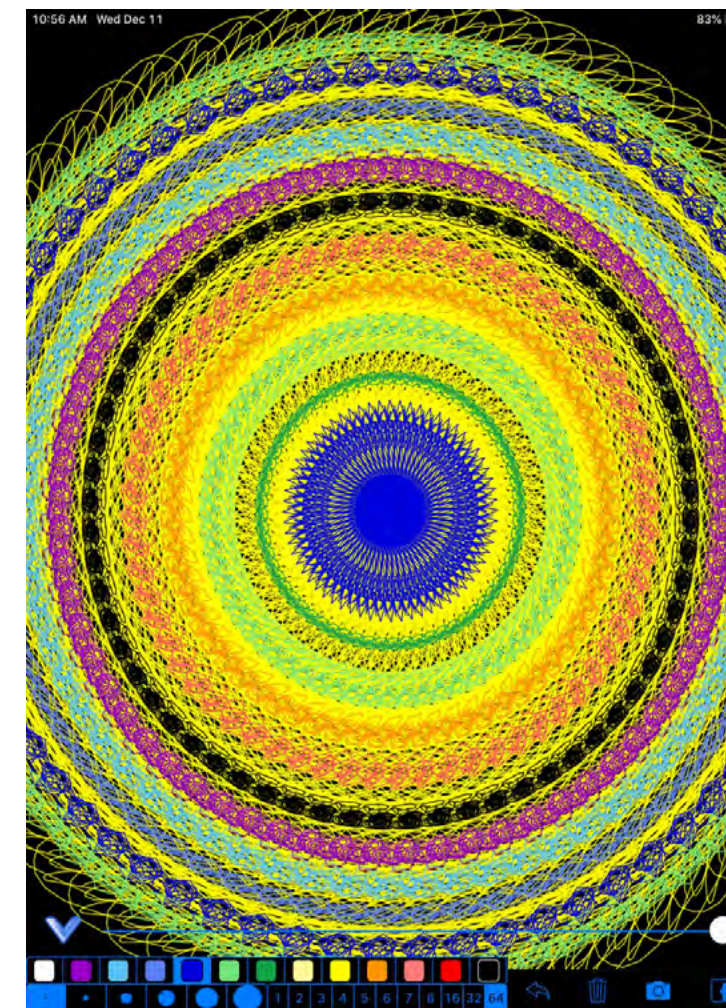
My students enjoy using the drawing app Tayasui Sketches to create digital artwork. Once a drawing is

created, it can be uploaded to the student Artsonia account and shared. We have also enjoyed using the photo editing app Snapseed for photographing art made with traditional materials and adding text or filters to transform it. The app Doodle Dandy allows students to explore radial symmetry easily.

Here are examples of digital photography and radial design that were made by several students:



Photograph of a painting made with tempera paint that was edited using the Snapseed photo-editing app.



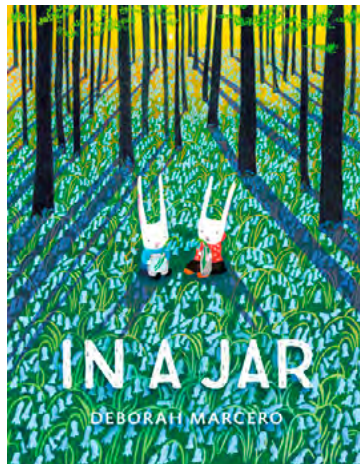
A radial symmetry design made using the Doodle Dandy app.

A Project Slice

Collections in a Jar (Adapted Curiosity Cabinet) Second-Grade Lesson Plan

by Jesse Bott
Art Educator, Brown Elementary, DPS

Read aloud the book *In A Jar* by Deborah Marcero.

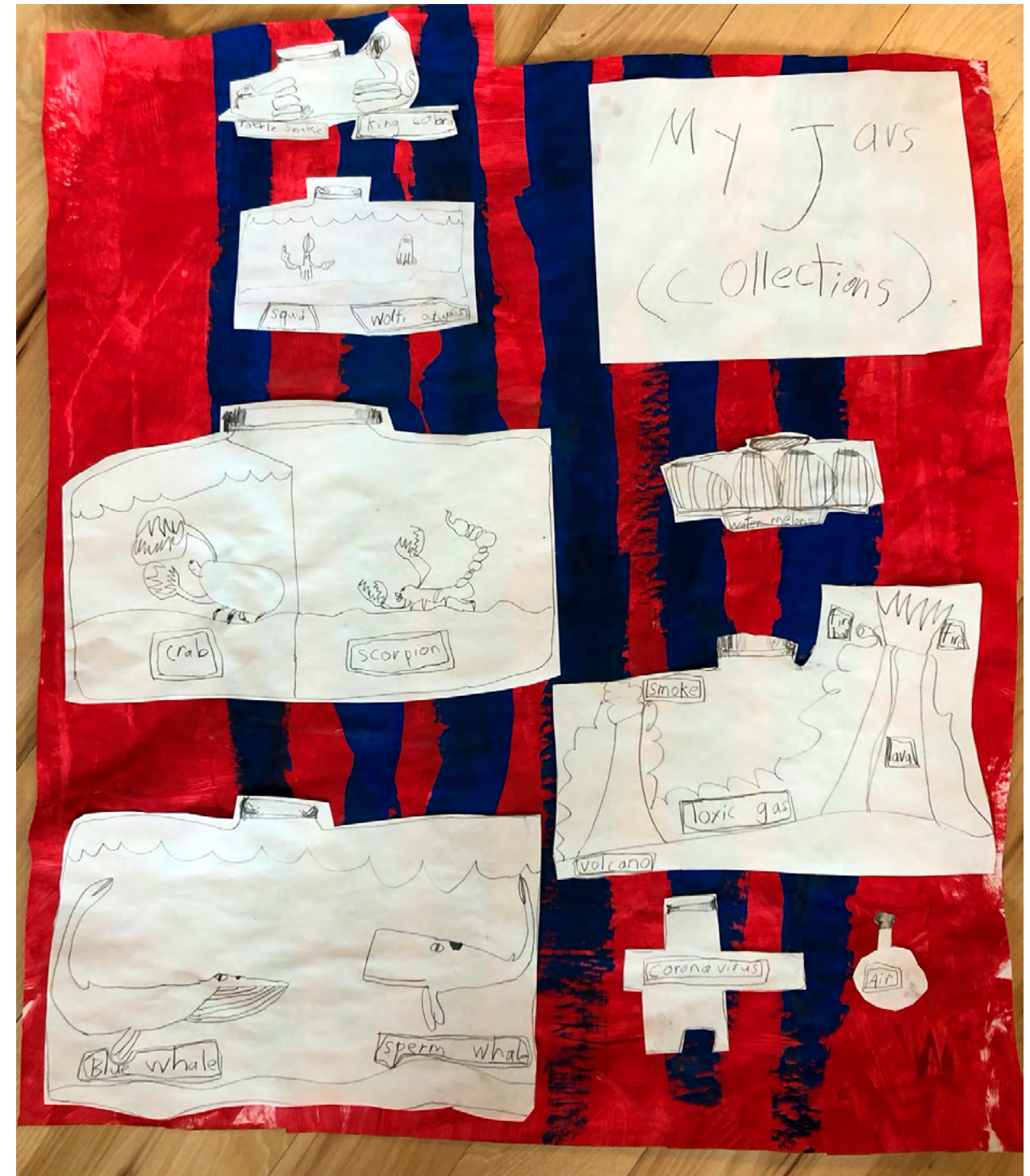


Prompt: Begin to think about all the things you would want to collect in a jar: Things you are curious about, things you notice, things you want to share with friends, your memories, etc. See what kind of collection you can make.

Instruction: Watch my YouTube video [How to Draw a Jar](#):

- Turn a circle sideways into a three-dimensional ellipse for the lid.
- Round off the bottom of the jar to make it a cylinder.
- Give the cylinder the illusion of three dimensions with value and line.
- Make variations on a cylinder with crazy-shaped jars molded to hold specific things, for instance, a long snake.

Check out some additional links for this lesson [here](#).



"I did a jar with the coronavirus to trap it."

IDEATION WORKOUT

A Creativity Exercise for Abstract Art

by Steven Schaffner
Art Educator, Radiant Elementary, Iowa

My focus in this short piece of writing is on exercising creativity. I simply want to offer up a description of an activity I used during an Abstract Art unit last year. My students have probably heard this more commonly referred to as an “imagination exercise.” I try to design at least one of these for every unit. They are a key component and, with them, you can make sensible connections to the Art Studio Habits of Mind. I also believe this is a critical part of the Artistic process. Visuals for the Art Studio Habits of Mind and the Artistic Process are posted in the classroom and referenced as needed. Without further delay, here we go – an *intentional* Abstract Art Drawing Game (or, creativity exercise).

1. Call out a random shape idea. Here are a few examples from our list: wiggly ovals, flying teeth, bumpy bubbles, lumpy leaves, toppling tear drops, a ribbed rhombus, squished waves. (We came up with about 40.)

2. Students then have 30 seconds to draw that shape. (Use a timer/signal!) A couple of notes:

- They can draw the shape as many times as they want; layering is encouraged.

- Mistakes are okay, it's intended to be rough!
It's important to discuss this beforehand if you want to preemptively squash a lot of frustrations. Be prepared, though, you'll still have a few students who get upset because they feel like they didn't have enough time.

3. After several rounds, they are given the opportunity to share their work and transform those drawings using the tools of their choice (adding, subtracting, coloring).

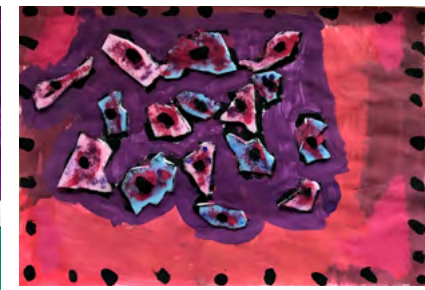
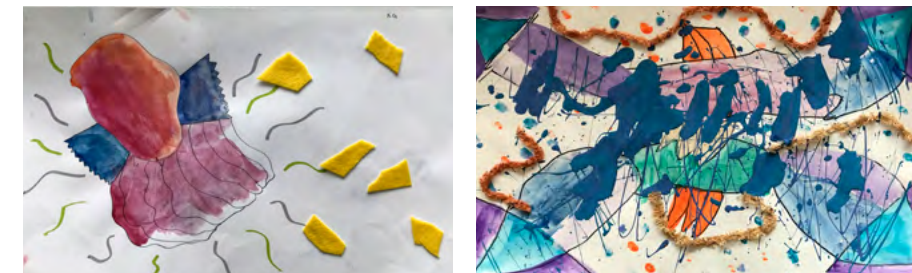
Beforehand, I did a teacher demonstration with a student helper calling out the shapes. We then spent one 45-minute class period working on this. Although we didn't finish that day, many students came back to it later during their free time. Additionally, I should mention that in a previous class there was an introduction to the unit.

One of the artists we observed was Liz Miller. Her abstract paper sculpture installations proved great for discussion. When asked what they saw, student responses were vastly different, and our creativity was further exercised in this way. Another reason I chose Liz Miller was for her innovative use of paper. One of our three open centers for the unit was collage, and we were attempting to expand our understanding of what collage can be, how paper can be used, and how to challenge ourselves to explore beyond traditional collage boundaries. Having choice is especially important to the kids, and I love the variety of resulting artworks. You might even notice in the included examples some very successful attempts at mixed media.

This was FUN, and the resulting images were often hilarious. Fun (and humor) is so important, especially now, and we have to remember that when planning.

I don't have images of the exercises, so I'm sharing some of their final projects instead. Enjoy, and may the challenges of your 2020-2021 school year bring numerous positive discoveries that will last beyond the curve.

Student Exemplars



Liz Miller (Artist Exemplar)



do-over

by Laurie Edmonstone
Art Educator
International School of Nanshan Shenzhen, China



Nothing says “do-over” like telling your family, “Pack your life up, we’re moving to China!” I chose to leave Colorado public education for obvious reasons — poor treatment in the school district, abysmal pay — but the main reason I chose to teach abroad was to quench my thirst for curiosity and adventure. As teachers, we know we need to constantly be learning and honing our craft. But what happens when we take that approach in our whole lives by opening our hearts and minds to a different way of thinking?

Yes, I drastically changed my location, but my pedagogy got an overhaul as well. Although I’ve always considered myself a choice-based art educator, I didn’t feel I was able to exercise it to its full potential in the high school setting with prescribed mediums (i.e., digital photography, ceramics). My deep connection with the concept of TAB is rooted in two distinct experiences: growing up as an IB learner and my education at Metropolitan State University. Both of these arenas helped me develop my teaching mantra: If I can

envision what the students’ work will look like, then I’m doing something wrong. After all, art is about personal discovery and self-expression in tandem with building skills.

Taking this philosophy, I developed groundwork for TAB by starting the year with the question, “What do artists do?” Students came up with their own responses and created a mini artwork. Artists draw what they think, feel, imagine, and remember. Thus far, the work my students have created this year is inventive and inspiring! The younger students never cease to surprise me with their ideas on how to use materials in a unique way. The older students start sharing personal stories and creating connections to their work in the way that artists do.

My autonomous art classroom was going great... and then everything changed. Coronavirus swept in during our Chinese New Year break in January 2020. People began wearing masks everywhere. The news was constant and we were attached to our phones trying to figure out if this was real. People were fighting for food at the supermarket. And we were starting online learning on the day we



were supposed to return. It felt as though we were learning to fly the plane while in the air.



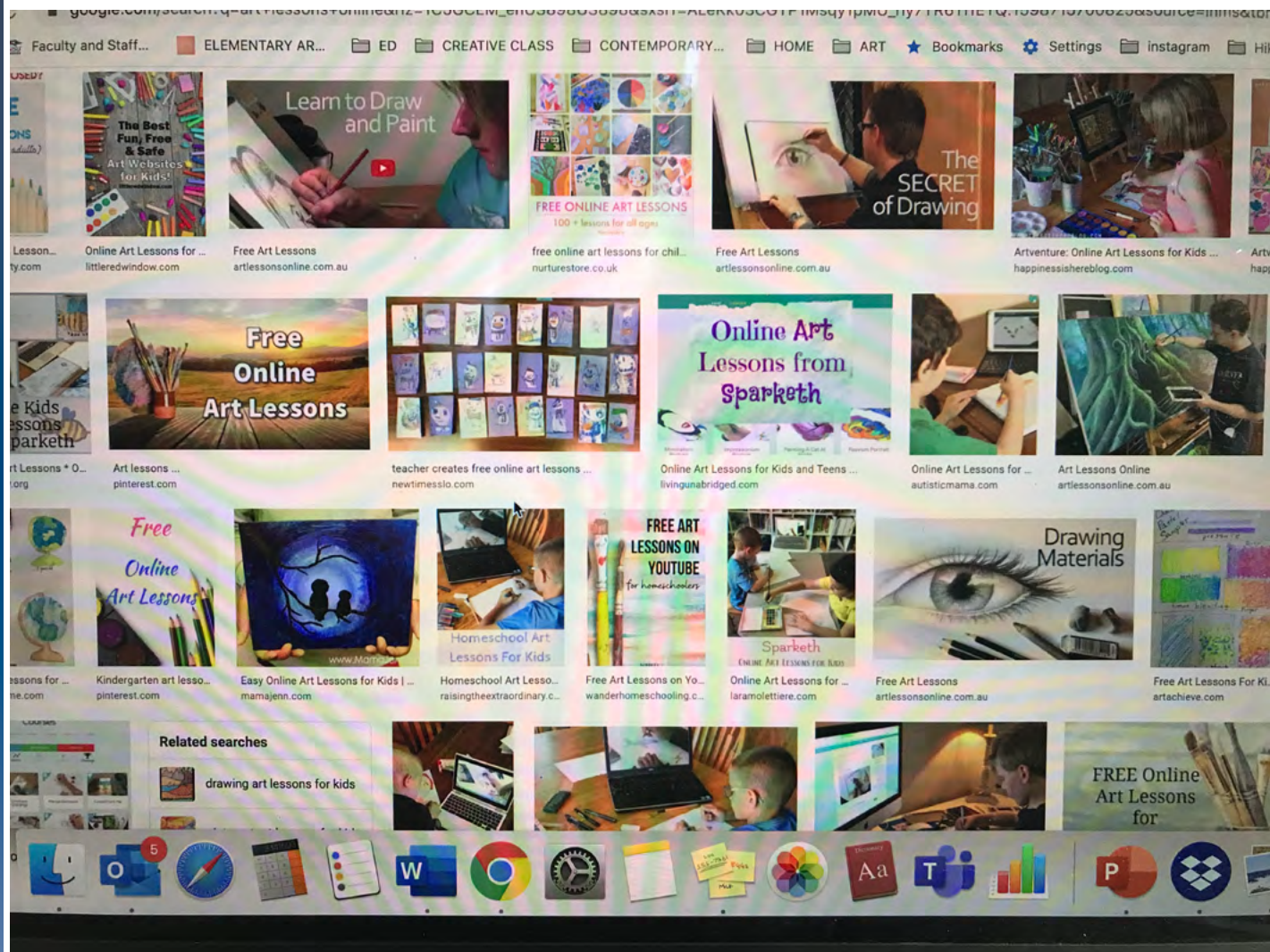
In the Chinese culture, it was frowned upon to leave the house at all — especially for children. Some of my students had only pencil and paper, and most of them did not leave their homes for more than two months. Art needed to be an escape for them, a creative refuge from what was happening in the outside world. Fortunately, because of our foundation of a choice-based classroom, students were able to adapt to the changes using what supplies they had on hand and create some beautiful work from home!

I have had to change and adapt in a variety of ways this past school year and this “do-over” journey has pushed me to tremendous personal and professional growth!

Show and Tell

Maintaining Community While Teaching Online

by Deb Rosenbaum
Artist and Teacher



During the pandemic, all of my adult art classes have been cancelled. I hesitated to teach on Zoom, banking on being able to return to teaching in a short time, so I decided to make the most of my quarantine by taking three online art classes.

When a professional educator takes a class, it's impossible not to consider pedagogy through the

dual lenses of student and teacher. My instructors have all been talented, professional artists who make a living selling their work and teaching classes. Their methodology, styles, and techniques differ, but they were all experienced at breaking down techniques and demonstrating them effectively. The objective of these classes was to learn specific styles/techniques, not to “think like an artist,”

or explore creative expression. Still, for me, there was something missing in these online learning experiences.

While I learned some specific techniques, I felt adrift as a student in a sea of postage stamp heads seeing only those who chose to leave their video on. I longed to know the skill level, interests, and motivations of the other students, but we weren't invited to introduce ourselves. We didn't see each other working or talk to each other, however, we were invited to ask questions while the teacher demonstrated. Individual feedback was offered when a photo of our work was sent to the teacher. We received feedback either by return e-mail or during the next class, but never with participation from the rest of the class.

Is there a difference between a demo/tutorial and a “class?” A “class” denotes an ensemble group learning together and an art classroom offers a truly unique learning environment to do so. As they work, students talk to each other about what they're doing and see myriad solutions to the same assignment. They hear conversations between other students and comments from the individual teacher. When art is made in real time in a communal setting, students learn directly from everyone's struggles and successes. Having everyone dealing with the same challenges in different ways is an incredible educational opportunity. Feedback and insights come from many sources and they're immediate and imminently useful.

In my online art experiences, I felt a deep loss of community within the class and limited possibilities for learning from each other. I don't think it has to be this way. As teachers navigate the new normal of teaching online, these are issues to seriously consider and address. Clear distinctions between a

demo/tutorial and a “class” should be understood and clearly stated. When the teacher is physically distanced from the students online, it becomes very easy to be the “sage on the stage.”

The challenge to lead students as the “guide-on-the-side” involves a sincere effort to engage the audience as individuals instead of as tiny boxes of heads. Introductions are paramount. Who are the students, what do they want to learn, and how can the teacher best address their needs? How can the instructor bring in all participating voices? Stating objectives for the class, providing an outline of the lessons, and offering protocols for participation helps set up a shared group mentality in the first class. Everyone feels most comfortable when they know what is to come and can prepare for it.

Zoom offers many options for sharing images either through the host's screen or the Chat icon where participants can post directly. A class Facebook page was an excellent solution one of the teachers used but, by making it optional, few people posted or responded. Real-time critiques supplemented by individual student feedback are part of any art class and should be encouraged. All should be taught how to participate. Teachers must set up specific times for students outside of class so that the teachers are not on call 24/7 but can still give timely feedback.

Online learning offers many advantages to students who might otherwise not be able to take a class to learn from talented instructors. It gives students the option to learn at their own speed, especially when classes are recorded for later review by students. It may demand more from teachers initially but, as we get used to the platform, it may actually streamline much of what we do. ●



Rosemary Reinhart
Elisabeth Reinhart
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Top Five Reasons to Apply to the Art21 Educator Program

by Erica Richard
Coordinator of School Programs and Teaching Resources
Denver Art Museum



Participating in the Art21 Educator program has transformed who I am as an educator. I highly recommend applying to be part of this poignant experience. For over ten years, the Art21 Educators program has supported K–12 educators who are interested in bringing contemporary art, artists, and themes into **classroom teaching and learning**. As a **year-long intensive experience**, the program encourages teachers to consider new ways that contemporary art can support teaching and learning, both in the arts and the classroom.

Here are my top five reasons for applying to the program:

1. Expand your exposure to new artists!

In your classroom, what artists are you in conversation with? Do you have the same repertoire of artists that you introduce to your students each year? Maybe you are constantly searching for new artists because you enjoy invigorating your classroom with fresh faces. Either way, being part of the Art21 Educator program expands your breadth of knowledge about contemporary artists immensely. During the one-week summer intensive institute in NYC, you have the opportunity to view art with your colleagues, visit artists' studios, and participate in other interactive artist-led activities.

2. Consider multiple perspectives!

Grow your network of support to include teacher perspectives from all over! Art21 Educators come from all over the world and include teachers from many subjects and age groups. Meeting educators who come from California to Maine, I have seen the value of learning from others' perspectives. Some educators easily travel to get together while others build long-distance relationships via video chat and collaborative projects. I have learned much about art education outside of my U.S.-centric mental schema by engaging in conversations with my international colleagues from Mexico City, Winnipeg, Ontario, Saudi Arabia, Australia, and more.



3. Step outside of your comfort zone to make impactful changes!

The program is rigorous and you are held accountable to develop high-quality teaching materials with the help of a mentor group. Meaningful and thoughtful feedback provided by dedicated educators is combined with inspiration from firsthand encounters with artists' processes and art-viewing experiences in order to push your teaching practice to the next level.

4. Make professional connections that benefit your students!

As part of the Art21 program, you build relationships with other passionate educators as well as internationally known artists interested in education. Educators in the program have planned collaborative field trips, including schools from Boston and NYC meeting to experience art together at MASS MOCA. There have been many art exchanges and empathy-building collaborations among New York, Saint Louis, and Albuquerque.

Due to the relationships sparked at the Art21 institute, schools in Salt Lake City and Durham, North Carolina have welcomed Art21 artists into their classrooms.

5. Create a continuous network of support!

Do you have a hive of committed art teachers as passionate about contemporary art as you are? Can you call, text, video chat, or carrier pigeon your hive any day or any time? Whether they're causal chats about what is going on in a classroom or discussions about what is going on in a region's art scene, I have drawn inspiration from all of my colleagues in the classroom countless times. I would dare to say that these teachers are now some of my closest friends!

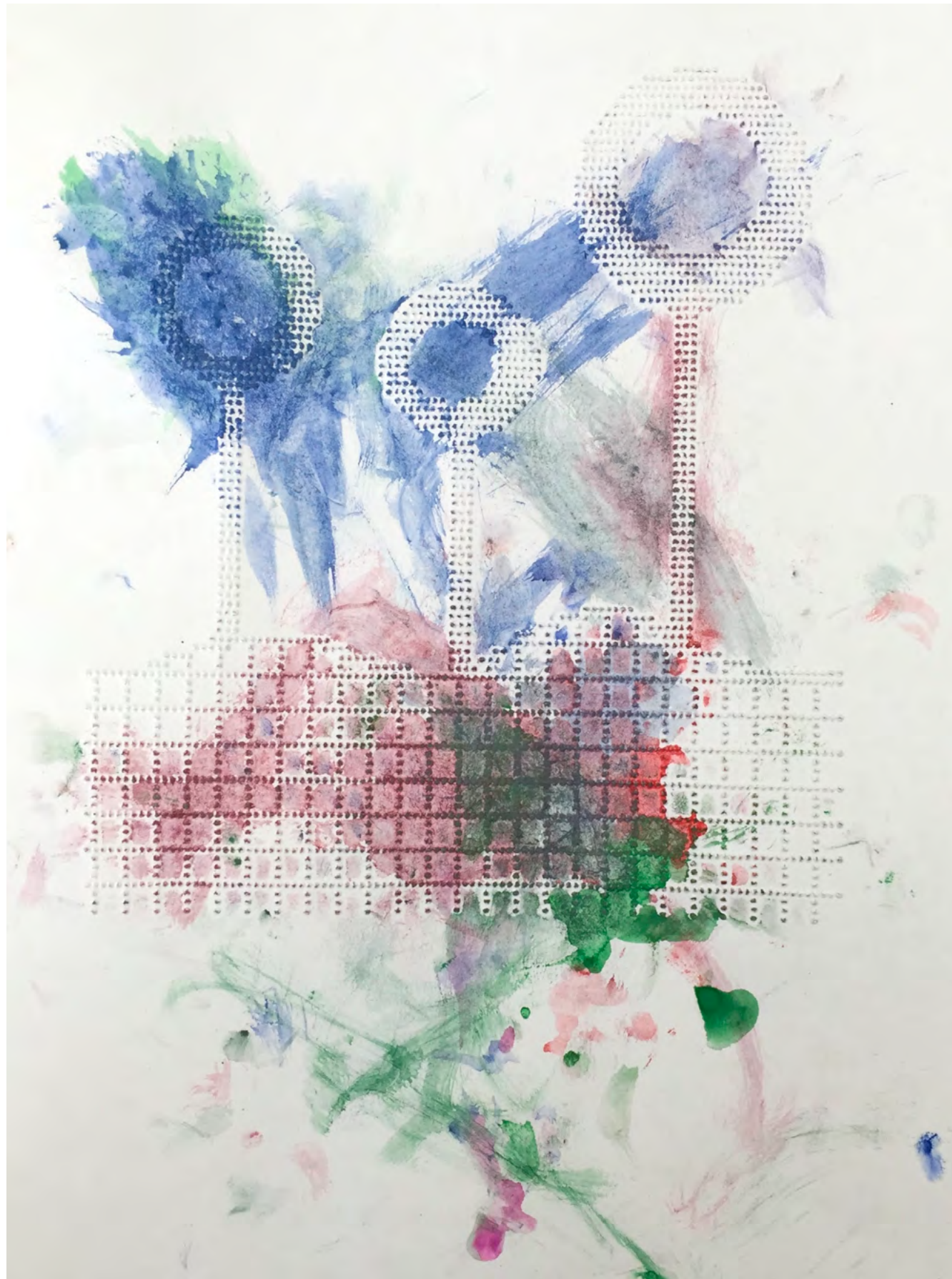
When the arts are brought into the classroom, the arts can enrich and deepen learning in other disciplines. Learn more about the Art21 Educator program here: <https://art21.org/for-educators/initiatives/art21-educators-program/apply/> ●

ACCESS FOR ALL

Seeing Eye to Eye:

How a Blind Student Taught Her Art Teacher New Ways of Seeing

by Melinda Laz, Visual Art Educator
McKinley-Thatcher Elementary, DPS



Vianca's dot-printed painting

Four years ago, when I started teaching at McKinley-Thatcher Elementary in DPS, I had all the typical nerves associated with meeting new students: Will I connect with them, and they with me? Will I be able to challenge and inspire them? In particular, I was especially nervous to work with a second-grade student named Vianca because she is blind. In May, this funny, self-confident, kind-hearted young person finished elementary school and continued onto sixth grade.

Over the past four years, my initial fear of working with Vianca subsided as I got to know and work with her, and to see things from her point of view. She helped me grow as a teacher, including allowing me to feel more comfortable with my own discomfort that I didn't know everything about teaching art. She also helped me realize that empowering my students to guide their own learning through discovery was one of the best things I could do as a teacher.

I had never worked with a student who had complete blindness before and had many apprehensions. I was worried about the type of language I used with Vianca – would I offend her if I used common turns of phrase such as, “Do you see?” or “Let's look at...” or “Watch me...” I felt ill-equipped to adapt lessons and materials for her that wouldn't lessen the content or process. For example, if her class was working on collage,

I often gave her sticky-back foam shapes while the rest of the class was cutting out their own. Other questions arose throughout the year such as, how should I describe colors to her? How would she be able to understand the artwork I showed the class? How could she understand a demonstration?

In that first year of working with her, I admit that I didn't support her as well as I could have. As a second grader, Vianca would often come to specials with a paraprofessional to support her. This gave me an easy excuse to allow the para to do much of the work with her and for her. It became clear over time that Vianca became too reliant on a helper and the para support became less and less frequent. I had to challenge myself to scaffold lessons differently for her. I remember one heart-breaking conversation we had when we were both frustrated by trying to adapt an art technique for her, and she said to me through tears, “Why do I have to be the only one who's blind?”

By the next school year, I made a more concerted effort to engage Vianca's Teacher for the Visually Impaired (TVI), Mrs. Russell, for help. Why do we as teachers think that not knowing how to do something is a sign of weakness? I've heard several colleagues admit to being embarrassed to ask for similar help and I, too, felt I needed to figure it all out on my own. Mrs. Russell assured me it was her job to help support me! Being the sole art teacher



Vianca sewing with hole punches

in the school did not mean I had the skills to help every student all on my own. I needed to learn to ask for help – this was a critical realization and it gave me permission to educate myself in new ways.

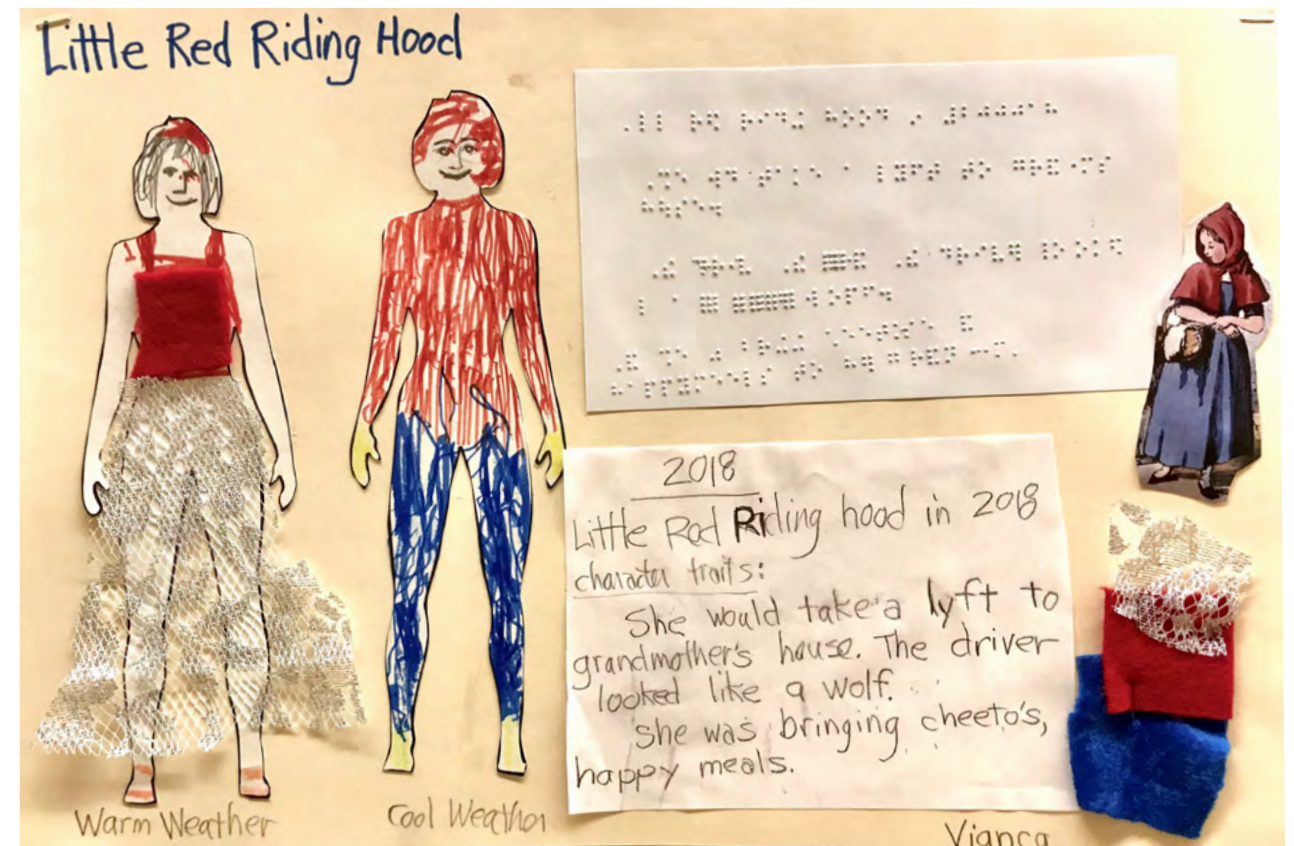
Russell's role is to provide access so that students like Vianca can use materials in every facet of her education, from providing manipulatives and hands-on tools to collaborating with teachers on adaptations so that the student can be as independent as possible. According to Russell, "In general, it takes kids with blindness a longer time to learn academically. It takes years to learn braille: the code has 187 contractions/symbols versus 26 letters of the standard alphabet. It usually takes until the end of fourth grade for a student to learn all the braille symbols. Meanwhile, students are also learning tactile skills, and learning important directional concepts like up, down, left, right, and also vertical and horizontal planes." These are skills that people without visual impairments often take for granted. I began to think differently about what it meant to "see" in the art room and ways I could make Vianca's experience more meaningful.

Soon, I began to alter how I described projects or artwork so Vianca could have a better understanding of what the whole class was learning. I paid more attention to how I arranged the space at her table.

I described specifically where I placed her paints (top, left or right, the order of the colors, and where a water container was located); I taped her paper to the table to create a tactile border so she could feel the edges; I cut out templates that she could trace or use as shapes; I punched holes in a line if we were using yarn; and I drew with glue and let it dry to create raised lines for her to follow with her hands.

Mrs. Russell created braille color name labels that I could stick onto a watercolor palette, and she printed pictures out on a dot printer that could translate a drawing or photograph into raised dots so they could be felt. I assembled a three-drawer supply bin especially for Vianca filled with tactile materials and labeled with braille, so she could self-select supplies that she wanted. I was also given a "Sensational Blackboard" created by local sculptor and tactile artist Ann Cunningham. This unique drawing surface allowed Vianca to draw on a paper using a ballpoint pen, and it created a raised, textured line that she could feel. All these somewhat simple adaptations began to come more naturally to me as I worked more closely with her and began to listen to how she experienced things in the art room.

According to Mrs. Russell, the benefits of visual art class for visually impaired students are many.



Vianca's fashion design example

"During art, she is participating alongside her peers and learning important tactile skills. She is experiencing specific teachings that would be incidental to any other student. Tactile and auditory learning are the two ways Vianca learns, and art class provides both opportunities."

By her fourth-grade year, the art concepts and projects became more challenging and independently oriented, and I continued to explore new ways to engage Vianca in her own learning. I had a classroom volunteer, a retired art teacher named Maria, who developed a lovely bond with Vianca. Together they worked on projects, discussing Vianca's ideas and exploring ways to adapt art materials. I began to ask Vianca directly what her ideas were for adapting a project, or what materials she wished to work with and how I could help her be successful. Sometimes, we would brainstorm together; other times, she had her own ideas for how to use materials in slightly different ways.

One project, for example, asked her class to modernize costumes for fairytale characters and create a design board with fabric samples and a

written description. She chose Little Red Riding Hood; I cut out paper-doll-style templates that she could place on her paper as a guide. She selected textured fabrics in which to dress them and, in her artist statement (written in both braille and print), she wrote about the character traits of Little Red Riding Hood in 2018: "She would take a lyft to grandmother's house. The driver looked like a wolf. She was bringing cheeto's, happy meals."

Partner work was often a challenge, and I noticed her classmates would try to do her work for her or leave her out of the group completely. Occasionally, a student would be very resistant to being paired with her, and their tone of voice sometimes verged on condescending. Russell explains, "Vianca's vocabulary is very mature and she can converse with adults easily – this is very common with kids who are blind, perhaps because adults are [oftentimes] more accepting than kids." When other students take on a caretaker role and speak to her differently, Russell says, "It's ok to call kids out on their tone with her so they notice what they are doing. But Vianca enjoys most any interaction with her peers, period."

Earlier this year, (now a fifth grader) Vianca's class worked on a sewing project to create soft sculptures about their favorite foods. The students made a paper template of their favorite food, cut out simple felt shapes, added embellishments by gluing or sewing, and then sewed and stuffed them. Given Vianca's desire to become more independent and use more advanced materials, I created an adaptive method of sewing. Using her cut-out round felt pieces (representing a donut), I pinned the edges together all around the circle every 1/2 inch or so, then sandwiched the sharp pin edges inside folded tape for safety. The pinheads created a texture similar to braille around the sewing edge of her felt. I then offered her a verbal image of jumping into and out of a swimming pool to help her understand the sewing pattern. Slowly and methodically, Vianca was able to independently sew around her entire shape, add stuffing, and close up her pillow.



Vianca sewing

Mrs. Russell and I then invited the *Braille Buddies* (a group of students with visual impairments from around DPS) to McKinley-Thatcher to have a similar adapted sewing experience. One lunchtime this past February, a few weeks before the pandemic closed our schools, a group of eight students in second to eighth grades and their TVI teachers came to McT for a pizza party and pizza pillow-sewing experience. While the kids ate pizza, Vianca shared her thoughts about the project with

her peers and took on a leadership role. It was a joyful experience to watch this multi-aged group of students work with needles and thread, some for the very first time. One student told her TVI that she wanted to do more sewing now that she had learned how to do it.

According to Russell, "These kids love getting together. We've never done anything art related as a group, and they all learned a new skill. It also provided some work in our expanded core curriculum, particularly in the areas of recreational and independent living skills." She explained further that most kids with sight, even if they've never sewed before, have a point of reference because they can see and understand a needle and thread. "Students who are visually impaired have to experience many incidental learning skills, such as what a needle or a pin feels like, to understand the sharpness of it, etc."

The experience of working with a blind student has opened my eyes to the importance of having great communication with your students. I am not

the all-powerful art teacher with all the answers, but rather I want my students to take ownership of their learning with me serving a supporting role. Just as we push ideas of growth mindset for our students, teachers must model and embrace that concept. Working with Vianca became a transformational process, one that I will continue to think about over time. It reignited my ability to persevere through challenge, and I was able to model that skill for my students.

Over these four years, I've seen Vianca blossom into a more independently motivated student. She has gained valuable life skills, and has become a self-advocate for her learning. For Vianca and for me, we were both thrown into a situation of not knowing what to do. I sought out help from experts in order to support her and I experimented using my instincts as artist and teacher. She, in turn, had to be open to work with and trust me, and to learn

a new language in the art room. It is said that our weakness becomes our superpower and, for Vianca, her ability to listen closely and feel her way through every situation (both literally and figuratively) is certainly hers. I see only great things for her in the future, and it was my honor to help her in a small way on her journey.

Thanks to Erin Grossi, Visual Art Peer Observer, Barth Quenzer, Instructional Curriculum Specialist (Visual Arts), and Melinda Russell, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, for their support, feedback, and collaboration. Special thanks to Vianca and her family for allowing me to share her story.

For information about the *Sensational Blackboard*, and other resources for teaching art to visually impaired students, visit: <http://www.sensationalbooks.com/products.html>. ●



Laz's adapted sewing example

ARTSOURCE COLORADO Presents: **2021 Residency**

Art as Instrument

Coming June 13-18, 2021

Inform
Bring Joy
Please Yourself
StArt Something
Tell a Story
Subvert
Transmit Culture
Send a Message
Change Minds
Take a Stand



ArtSource is proud to provide the opportunity to support its members in showing their art and sharing their voice.



This year's theme is *Close Distance*. We are seeking thought-provoking work that explores the dynamics of closeness and/or distance.

Eligibility:

ArtSource members that have attended any institute/residency since 1998.

All media and all sizes are accepted.

All work must be ready to install. Framed and stretched wire for hanging.

Entry requirements:

There is a \$10.00 non-refundable fee per submission. Each artist can submit up to two pieces.

When considering sale price, the artist will retain 90% of the sale price with 10% going to Next Gallery.

Dates:

Deadline: Sunday, November 22, 2020 Submissions due through this [Google form](#) or on our website at [ArtSourceCO.org](#)

Dec 1-5- Juror selection from images submitted

Dec 7- Announce selected works

Dec 26, 27, Jan 1,2,3- Drop off of selected art (Fri 6-10, Sat & Sun 12-5)

Jan 6- Show set up

Jan 8- Opening night 6-10pm

Jan 24- Show ends

Jan 24- Pick up art 5-8pm

Jan 25- Pick up art 5-7pm

Contact Information:

Email us: mansfield274@gmail.com

Visit our Website: [ArtSourceCO.org](#)

Find us on Facebook: ArtSource Colorado



Creating Today to Inspire Art Education Tomorrow

Guest Letter from L. Jemil Miller

Editor's Note: This letter was posted in the National Art Education Association (NAEA) open forum and is reprinted here with permission. The letter was dated June 9, 2020.

To my Black, Brown, and Beige family, teach people what you want them to know and understand. The hardest part of that task is to execute it without the passion that others view as aggression. I have always felt that indifference is born of the inability to empathize or a lack of access to the facts. Biases and stereotypes are not necessarily racism, but they can lead to racist actions.

Let me first say thank you to all who played a role in the development of smartphones and social media. You are accidentally responsible for the biggest catalyst for change in this country. Unfortunately, many are only able to process or believe what they actually see. Exposure to the mindblowing and body blowing level of stress with which we live on a daily basis has opened

the eyes of many. Specific facts, actions, and lack of actions are no longer deniable. We need every one of every complexion, ethnicity, and geographic origin, who has been misinformed, to feel like they can ask us what they need to know. The conversation is critical to keep the momentum in motion. We don't know for certain what anyone has heard or been taught — although we often guess correctly. We can help clear up unwarranted biases about each other. We need every one of every complexion, ethnicity, and geographic origin who is not blind to our color or the realities that accompany brownness and blackness to be part of the process.

I want to share a visual pigment event that reflects an opportunity to talk about the visual impact of color contrast. I purchased two 28" Caucasian nutcrackers with identical features at an after Christmas sale for \$7 and put them away for the next year. By the following Christmas I had only painted one of the faces brown. A

guest in my home asked me, "Why does the black nutcracker look so mad?" I told her he looks just like the white one, but she disagreed. I told her to take a moment and compare them and tell me where you see a difference. She could not deny that the placement of the eyebrows, the shape of the eyes, and the formation of the mouth was exactly the same. I informed my friend that she was impacted by one of two things, the propaganda about black men or she was having a visual response to the intense color contrast that existed between the dark brown of the skin and the stark white of the eyes and the teeth of the nutcracker. The Caucasian nutcracker was already a color that was very close to the color of the eyes and the teeth, which gave his face a consistent neutral impact.

I'm not sure how moveable the hearts and minds of existing generations might be, but hopefully,

we are going to make an impact on everyone born after the death of George Floyd. May he be the last. Then we can simply teach them the beauty in the contrasting colors on everyone's face.

Thank you NAEA for supporting us as people first and artists and educators.

L. Jemil Miller

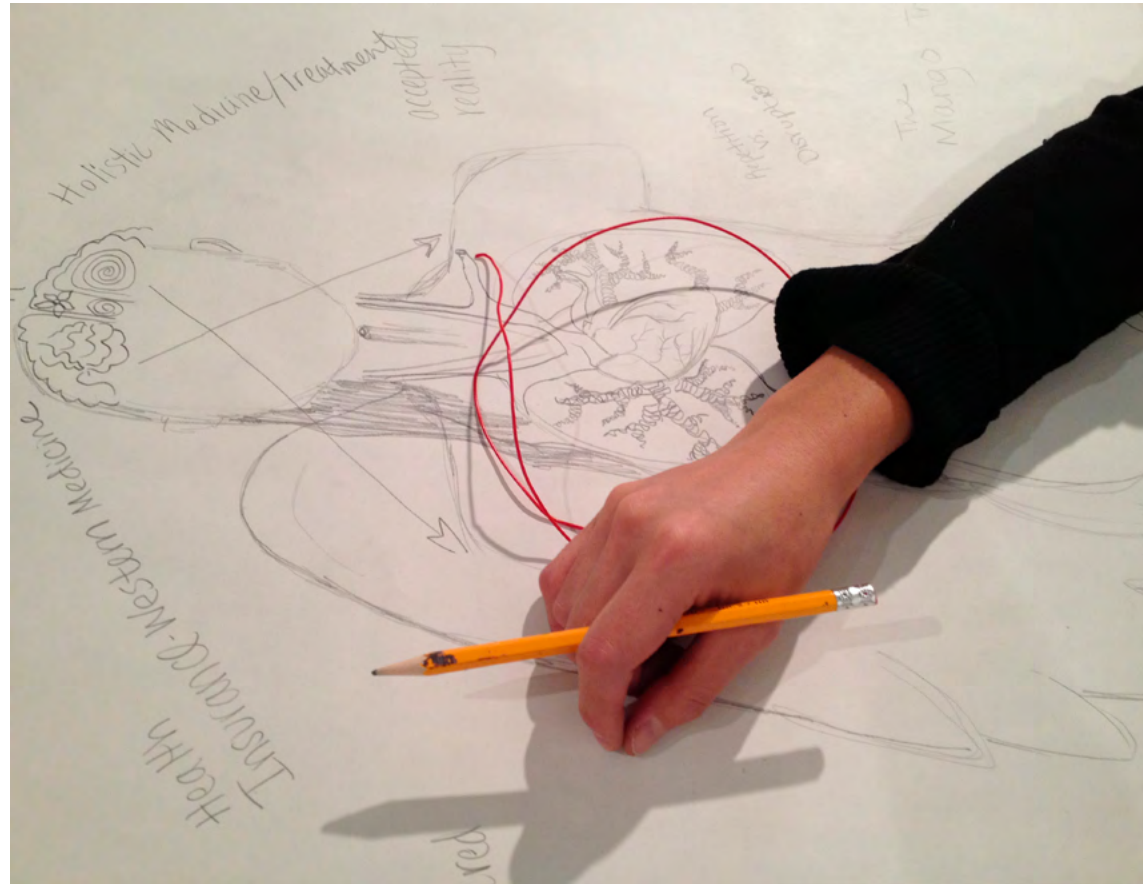
Visual Art Resource Teacher
Thomas Claggett
District Heights, Maryland

If you pursue what you love for a living.....No one else can ever make you hate your job.

— Jemil: Maximizer, Relator, Strategic, Connectedness, Individualization



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO COLLAGE MAGAZINE



Hi, Artist-Teachers,

I am the editor of Collage magazine and I am seeking submissions for short columns and one longer column on the themes listed below.

Submissions are due:

November 1, 2020 for the Winter issue

January 1, 2021 for the Spring issue

August 1, 2021 for the Fall issue

Please email me at athulson@msudenver.edu.

Thanks!

Anne Thulson, Editor of Collage Magazine

SHORT COLUMNS (500 words or less and a photo or two)

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER What are you investigating?

BALANCING ACT What are you doing to balance yourself as a person/artist/teacher?

ARTIST ON MY MIND What artist/artwork has inspired you this year? (We'll need the artist's permission to show an image.)

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS What podcast/YouTube/techy-tool has inspired you this year?

A PROJECT SLICE Share a lesson plan from your practice that generated creative thinking in your students.

IDEATION WORKOUT Describe an idea-building exercise you have used with your students.

THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE Share something physical from your classroom that improved students' access, autonomy, collaboration, engagement, or craft. For example, a new way you organized tools, a table configuration, a gathering place, or a technology set-up.

RITUALS Share a ritual or protocol from your classroom that humanizes classroom culture. For example, table names, buddy critiques, conversation protocols, clean-up songs, etc.

DO-OVER What aspects of your practice are you going to revise next time?

SHOW AND TELL How do you share your students' thinking with the broader community? (Analog and/or digital?)

BOTH SIDES NOW A column from the point of view of a new teacher or a retired teacher.

Pre-service/first-year teachers: What are you thinking about your first experience of teaching/your future career?

Retiring educators, veteran teachers: What are you up to? How does your previous life as an art teacher affect what you are doing now?

COMMUNITY PARTNERS SPOTLIGHT A column from the point of view of art institutions outside of traditional schools: What's happening in your space that connects to K-12 art classrooms?

ACCESS FOR ALL What are you doing to help all people access opportunities for thinking, making, and sharing creative work? This is Kelley DeCleene's column. Contact Kelley via athulson@msudenver.edu if you would like to write for this column.

LONGER COLUMN (500 - 2,000 words with many images)

THE PLOT THICKENS Share and explain documentation of student process through a long project. ●

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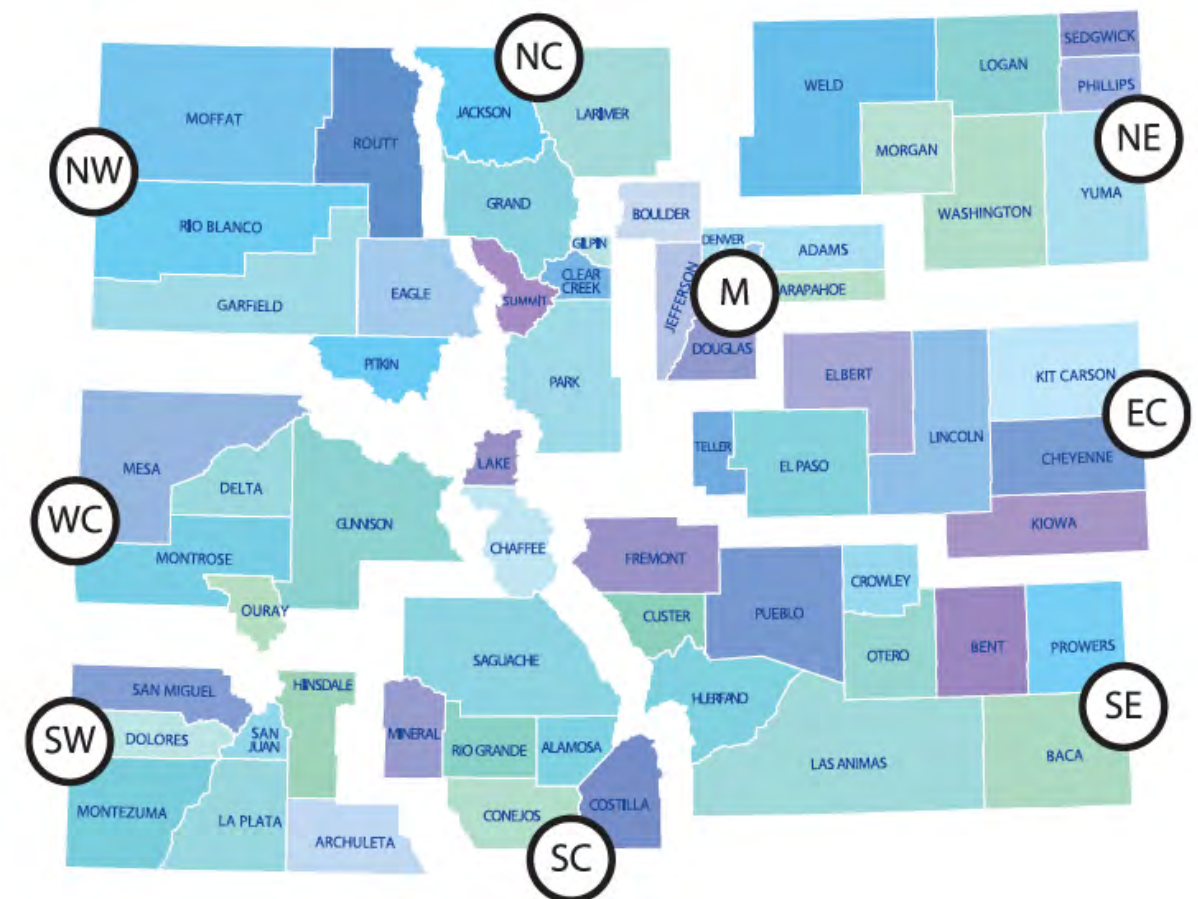
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COLORADO ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

For CAEA details and event information: go to www.caeaco.org