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## *Risk and Renewal*

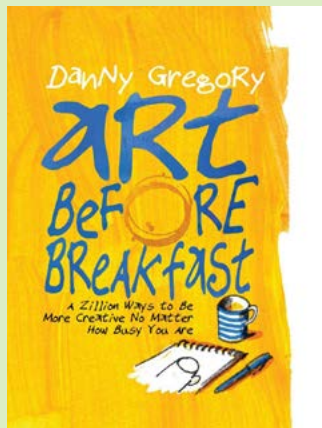
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## President's Message from Robert Wood



*"I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it."*  
**Pablo Picasso**

Why is fear often equated with risk? Is it because of perceived failure? Is it because of perceived danger? The fear of risk is not a restricted to youth, it is a life-long human condition. Every day, each of us face moments of risk.

The risk we speak of is not one of physical danger, it is risk in learning and thinking. This risk involves moving beyond the obvious to explore new ideas and processes. Art education, traditionally founded on the mastery of the elements and principles of art, has led to generations of students in low risk-taking production, resulting in facsimiles of art rather than visual evidence of creative thinking: actual art!

The biggest risk isn't failing; it is complacent, narrow thinking. A fundamental purpose of a 21st century education is to push boundaries and to move beyond the obvious, thus seeking richer and deeper concepts and solutions. Working outside of our comfort zone can be daunting. When we take a risk, we achieve new successes and recognition of a higher standard in our abilities and our personal expectations. Consequently, it feeds more creative behavior. The more adapt we become to realizing new abilities and potentials in ourselves, the more confident we become to continue to embrace the element of risk in our learning.

We can instill the practice of healthy, student risk-taking in our teaching. We can embrace open-ended questions that may be asked but not answered. Environments can support inquiry-based learning to analyze, interpret, reflect, and pursue alternative responses. We can create an environment supporting the innate curiosity to ask questions, and to push beyond obvious answers to a broader sense of communicative solutions. As art educators we can establish a nurturing environment in our classroom that fosters a positive and

creative risk-taking atmosphere. We can observe, predict, and experiment. Curricula must allow for uncertainty, experimentation, and ambiguity to foster artistic behavior. Mistakes and even failures can be a cognitive element of an inquiry and discovery process. The behaviors developed in this environment can take root in a student's own artistic behavior, engaging them to think and respond independently, ultimately branching out as practice to the way they perceive, process, and respond to the world as adults.

Risk taking can revitalize the student bound by certainties and boost the self-confidence of the emerging student artist. Ultimately, a true blank canvas is an exciting potential to explore the unknown in oneself. Unforeseen opportunities can indeed be created! Opportunities for true growth to not only produce new perceptions and new forms, but accidental outcomes worthy of reflection.

It is time to leave our comfort zone. It is time to go after what we are passionate about and time to achieve our dreams. We have had an amazing year. I wish all of you a wonderful summer of reflection and revitalization. Embrace and nurture what is within you that motivates you. May you continue to explore new abilities within yourselves, discovering the unforeseen outcomes and surprises that renew and strengthen confidence in your talents.

See you in September!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Wood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "W".

Respectfully,  
Robert Wood  
NYSATA President

# About the News

The **NYSATA News** publishes official announcements for NYSATA as well as commentary and research on topics that are important to art educators. The opinions expressed in editorials and articles are those of the authors and do not represent NYSATA policies. The *NYSATA News* encourages an exchange of ideas, and invites submission of news or articles for publication. To submit news or articles, please contact Editor, Marty Merchant at [nysatanewseditor@gmail.com](mailto:nysatanewseditor@gmail.com). Advertising inquiries should be sent to Pat Groves at [phgroves@aol.com](mailto:phgroves@aol.com).

Inquiries about receiving the *NYSATA News* should be directed to the Membership Chair Terri Konu, 9200 Sixty Road, Phoenix, New York 13135, (315) 695-2500, e-mail: [tkonu@twcny.rr.com](mailto:tkonu@twcny.rr.com). To change your address, please log into the NYSATA website and update your own address and contact info in your profile.

**Photo Submissions:** Graphics should be in jpeg, tiff, or pdf format, 150ppi. Photographs and print-ready art are always welcome in jpeg or pdf format. For purposes of accurate identification and acknowledgement, photos sent to the *NYSATA News* must be accompanied by the following information: your name, phone number, and e-mail; name and address of photographer; and first and last names of persons in the photo (in order from left to right, front to back). If art work is presented, the artist's name, school name, teacher name and NYSATA Region must be included. Additionally, any photos that depict students under 18 must have parental permission to be printed.

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*The NYSATA News is an award winning publication. It has been named winner of the National Art Education Association State Newsletter Award Category 3 in 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2016. Chosen by a panel of visual arts educators from across the nation, this award honors art education publications that demonstrate outstanding achievement and exemplary contributions to the field of art education. For information regarding advertising in the NYSATA News go to [www.nysata.org](http://www.nysata.org) or contact Pat Groves: [phgroves@aol.com](mailto:phgroves@aol.com)*



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## *Editorial thoughts on risk, renewal and babysitting*

Changing professions was a very risky decision for my family and me in 1998 – leave a career in photography and become a high school teacher? It was uncertain – but the next 18 years in an art classroom made me a new and better person. Although that first year almost killed me, I grew into a more thoughtful, reflective adult that could actually do something good for children everyday. I was renewed.

Likewise, retirement in 2015 was also a risky decision. Teaching, planning, and continuously adjusting your lessons, is a hectic activity. Circumstances promised to make retirement a good decision in many ways – though doubts troubled me . . . I didn't have time to give much thought to what I'd do after stopping. What do you do when you don't do what you've always been doing?



It worked out. I edit this newsletter, I supervise student art teachers, and I continue to teach adults. But babysitting grandchildren emerged as a new profession. The clichés about grandparenting are true – these infants and toddlers make me happy and renew my understanding of the world. Living with babies realigns your thoughts about mortality, reawakens feelings of joy and possibility, and renews your belief in a wonderful future for the human race. These young children live their days in astonishment, and you are filled with wonder too as their lives unfold in your arms.

As the 6-month-old studies a stuffed toy's tail of string; as the 3-year-old wants to draw everywhere – I am reminded of how primal and instinctual art making is. Before we learn language, before we can negotiate our world, we are investigating textures, shapes, colors, sounds, and trying to make our mark. I am continually enthralled by a child's insatiable urge to explore and experiment. And I realized I saw it everyday in the art classroom.



When we teach, we take risks – we step into the mysterious pool of our students' lives and guide them on the methods and the thinking they need to explore and react to their world. And now, as I babysit, I am constantly reminded of what an exciting privilege it is to be an art teacher, as we partner with children in the adventure.

*Marty Merchant retired from Hastings-On-Hudson High School in 2015 after teaching for 18 years. He was a commercial photographer for 20 years prior to that. He is currently teaching and doing Student Teacher Supervision for the Art Education Department at SUNY New Paltz.*





Paul Mommer, Self Portrait

## *An Adventure in Modern Art*

Loretta Corbisiero

*Loretta Corbisiero has engaged in a broad range of art teaching, curating and community service throughout her career – but recently had an “adventure/mystery” many of us might envy. By supervising and mentoring one of her students, she orchestrated the re-discovery of a prominent but long neglected artist from the last century. She shows us that taking a chance, acting the detective, pursuing an elusive goal can yield incredible rewards. Portions of this article originally appeared in the catalog written by Ms. Corbisiero for the 2016 exhibit of Mommer’s work at the Islip Art Museum.*

I recently curated the exhibition *Transformations of a Visionary: Paul Mommer at the Islip Art Museum*, which was a retrospective reintroducing the artist whose long-standing reputation and history seemingly died with him in 1963.

Presented with some old photographs, a few musty documents and little else to go on, I had to make a decision on whether or not I should put the last requirement for my Masters in Art History, my thesis, on hold. Three years of researching the iconography of the Madonna and Child in 12th century France; the sedes sapientiae, cult of the Virgin, the Cistercians and the Cathars. My research was done, bibliography done, outline done – I just had to write the thesis and needed the semester to do so. Was all of that worth putting on hold for a year or two while I helped a student research the artwork of this artist who I knew nothing about? An artist who was active during one of the few periods of art that I had very little interest in?

The answer is an emphatic yes! This adventure turned out to be an art historian’s dream come true – original documentation, insight into the New York art scene during a pivotal time for Modern Art, communism and the New York artist, and the list goes on. So what ever happened to my 12th century research? Well, it stayed in the 12th century. My research shifted focus to the art of Paul Mommer.

This “re-discovery” of Mr. Mommer’s work is an engaging

story, which involves one of my art students, my own curiosity, and a series of serendipitous events that combine the intrigue of risk taking and the chance to renew appreciation of a serious artist, whose significance was obscured by ordinary circumstance. The story starts with the inquisitive nature of a seventeen-year old girl, her passion for art, and her instinct to seek advice from her mentor regarding her great-grandfather’s artwork.

A student in my high school sculpture class, Jessica Ruppel, approached me in the Fall of 2014 regarding her great-grandfather’s artwork. The family was unsure of what to do with the paintings, sketches and notes. Knowing I had an art history, museum studies and curatorial background, she felt she could find the answers to her questions by reaching out to me. When she brought me some documents and images from the collection I knew at first glance we had the artwork and archival documentation for an exhibit of great

***Considered a distinguished painter of the mid-twentieth century, Paul Mommer was well known within the New York art community. His “circle” included Louise Nevelson, Milton Avery, and Mark Rothko.***

importance to American Modern Art. This was the beginning of a student and teacher uncovering the life and work of a very significant American artist of the 20th century, while embarking on the endeavor of researching, documenting, and finally exhibiting this collection.

Considered a distinguished painter of the mid-twentieth century, Paul Mommer was well known within the New York art community. His "circle" included Louise Nevelson, Milton Avery, and Mark Rothko. He was featured in shows at the Museum of Modern Art (1942 and 1943), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1950), and at the Brooklyn Museum (1958). His work is in the permanent collections of the Hirshhorn, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the State Museum of Munich, and the Walker Art Institute.

Born in 1899, Peter Paul Mommer arrived at Ellis Island in 1921 after soldiering in WWI and working at sea. He settled in New York City, working various jobs, and married in 1926 at the age of 27. Mommer, who had relied on painting to help endure his POW experience during the war, was challenged by his obligation to provide for his family while allowing himself time to paint. He opened a beauty shop, where he set up his studio in the back room of the salon and painted some of his most important canvases.

I started my research and began giving Jessica challenges to confirm Mommer's place in the art world, while learning about her ancestor. Our conversations went something like this: "Jess, I'm trying to get a show in the Historical Society, I need to know if Mommer had a connection to Suffolk County; paintings, articles, pumpkin picking, something – anything." A day later she sent me a picture of a painting and a message, "How's this? It's called Inlet Long Island." "Perfect, Jess, nice work." Further research and I found that painting received a National Arts Award and a similar version "Long Island Inlet" was in the Hudson Walker Collection.

I later found out when I interviewed Jess's grandmother (Paul Mommer's daughter) she would take day trips with her father to visit his friends, Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, out on Long Island. Going through paintings, Jessica found many portraits and would send them to me asking, "Who is this guy?" At one point I asked her to find something confirming that Paul Mommer was a friend of Milton Avery (one of the "guys" in the portraits). I explained that I could paint a portrait of Picasso but if I actually sat in a room with Picasso and painted his portrait it would have greater historical and monetary value. A few days later I get "How's this?" It was a handwritten note "Dear Paul, I won't be back by the 21st but you can have a painting of mine...for the show. Best regards, Milton Avery." So yes, he not only knew the artists of the time, Paul Mommer was an active member in this circle.

It was during these challenges Jessica became very interested in not only her great-grandfather but also art history and research. Once our "fact-finding" was completed, I secured an exhibit at the Islip Art Museum and began

extensive research with access to all of Mommer's documents in preparation for the exhibition catalog. I gave Jessica the task of reading through Paul Mommer's many journals to discover who he was as a person. I also asked her to pull quotes that meant something to her from his writings.

The richness of Mommer's paper and canvas legacy is exemplified by his approach to creating new work. He would begin by contemplating the collection of his paintings, sketches, writings, letters, and photographs. He accredited this multifarious experience to providing all that he needed to create a new painting. Before he painted, he meditated until ready to begin, stated "Let your instinct for the right result be your guide." (Pousette-Dart, Art News 38).

The artist preferred to use dynamic expression to paint individuals and things as he saw them, not how others wanted him to see. "The modern artist does not paint what he sees with his eyes, but rather what he knows and feels about his subject" (Mommer 379). Throughout his career Paul Mommer remained true to his individuality and personal vision. He was uninterested in selling paintings and would turn down commissions rather than paint in a way that was dictated by others.

Our adventure in art historical forensics was made rich by the haunting quality of his paintings. We may have been intrigued by the mystery at first, but we realized his canvases consistently presented an overall moodiness and somber feelings of melancholy. Employing a communicative and mysterious unity through subtle control of subdued color, Mommer created moods of haunting beauty. His paintings foster a subtle level of compassion and empathy that is both imaginative and meaningful. The visionary romanticism of his early years deepened and transformed into abstracts and symbolism yet always retained the mood and melancholia. Jessica and I were repeatedly drawn more deeply into her great-grandfather's mind and heart – and though it often seemed a somber place, the strength of his feeling made a connection to us.



"The Artist's Family Dinner" (1938-40) was invited to show in the International Exhibition of 20th Century Portraits at the Museum of Modern Art, 1943, along with the canvases of noted artists including, Renoir, John Singer Sargent, and



Jessica Ruppel, the high school student who brought her great-grandfather's work, along with questions about his legacy, to the author.

Thomas Eakins. As one of his largest paintings, Mommer portrays an intimate look into a quiet reflective moment as the family sits for an evening repast and humbly offers gratitude to the meal before them. The triangular composition and subdued tonalities provide an emotive quality that is both poetic and serene. There is an overall glowing richness to this canvas through the balance of realistic subject matter and aesthetic formalist aspects.

Given the appropriate title of "Curator's Assistant" for the 2016 exhibition at the Islip Museum of Art, Jessica is now pursuing a higher education in the arts with the intention of preservation, conservation and education with the focus of establishing a foundation in the artist's name. As her teacher, I could not be more proud of watching her grow and guiding her along this path, a path that could not have been directed or assessed through mandated curriculum. Jessica was quoted in the Suffolk County News "I wouldn't have [had that realization] if [Corbisiero] had just made me follow the normal curriculum" and told the NY Times reporter, "I couldn't get this experience from a text book." As a historian, I am honored to have had the experience of uncovering and rediscovering the art of Paul Mommer and hopefully reestablishing his rightful place in art history. Having the chance to meet with his family, especially his daughter Helen and listening to her stories of opening receptions at major New York museums, or family visits to Long Island's East End to visit Jackson Pollock or the de Koonings during what was arguably the most significant time for art in New York, has been a treasure I will cherish.

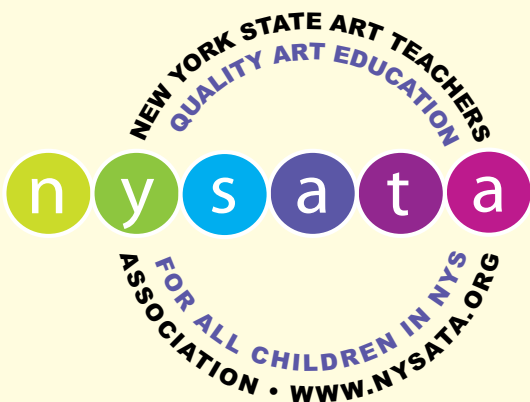
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 Pousette-Dart, Nathaniel. "Mommer Paints a Picture." *Art News*, March 1951: 36-38, 65-66. Print



Loretta Corbisiero is the Art Department Chairperson of Sachem Central School District, Adjunct Professor of Art Education and Director of Arts Enrichment at Dowling College and Co-Director of Heart for Art, Inc. a 501(c)3. She was the 2012 recipient of the NYSATA Region 10 Art Educator of Year award, has presented lectures at NYSATA conferences, Region 10 Art Symposium and adjudicates student portfolios. Loretta has led numerous large-scale community engagement projects at the local, national and international level. She holds a B.A. in Visual Arts and Secondary Education, Dowling College; M.S. in Educational Administration, St. John's University; M.A. in Art History (candidate), Queens College, CUNY

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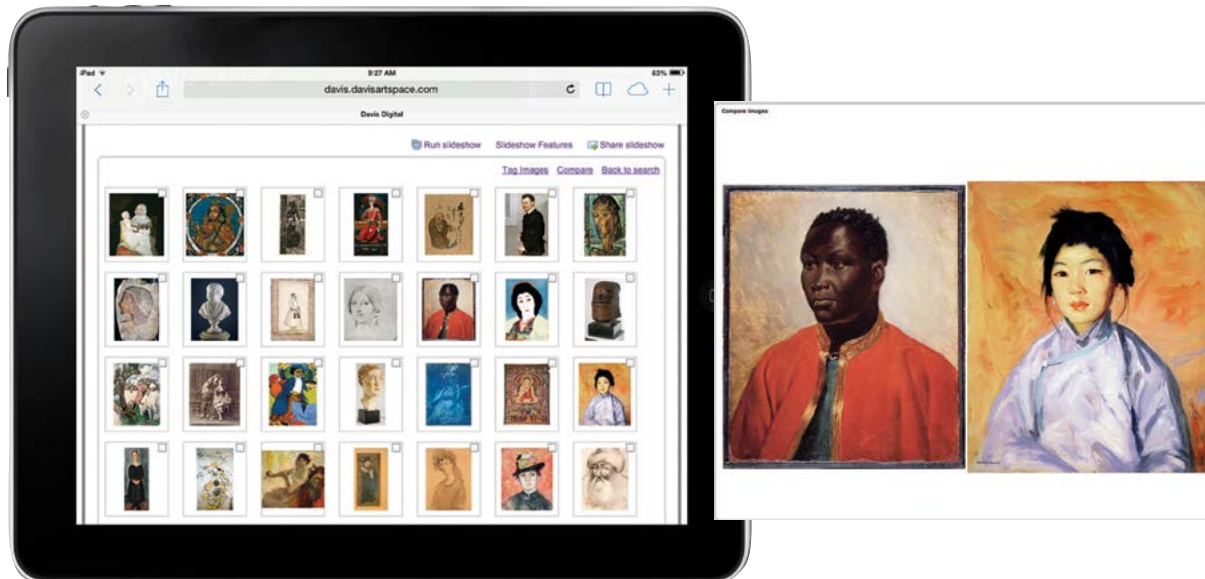


**Arts Standards Revision in New York State: NYSATA is working hard in collaboration with the other Arts Education Professional Associations this summer to make recommendations to NYSED regarding revised Learning Standards for the Arts in New York State. If you have questions, please contact NYSATA Standards Revision Co-Chair: Cindy Henry.**



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Volleyball team, with missing members and "special" hats added in Photoshop by Mrs. Flood

## *Pushing, Stretching, Growing, and Winning*

**Lauren Flood**

*Lauren Flood, the Region 3 Teacher of the Year, has developed several strategies for challenging and rejuvenating herself and her practice. Always vigorously active, she displays a total commitment to her teaching and students. In this article she shares some of her tactics.*

I was with a fellow art teacher while setting up an art show recently and we talked about how easy it is for teachers to slip into complacency. Some people like to do the same projects from year to year. Repeating lessons isn't wrong if they are dynamic lessons, but if there is a lack of energy while teaching, something needs to be revamped. I have felt this way from time to time but there are ways to snap out of it. The idea of risk and rejuvenation for this newsletter's theme is perfect for this time of year when complacency and fatigue might set in.

**Risk:** Each year I try to do a project that is community based and/or different than my usual lessons in the physical classroom. It typically takes more work and preparation than a normal lesson but the benefits are clear when students tell me it was their favorite project of the year. Below are a few projects I've tried. Listed first are some questions I try to consider when planning and preparing for the year.

What will the kids be enthralled with?

- What is important to them in today's world?
- Can I expose them to something new?
- Can I expose them to something they wouldn't get at home?
- How can it be community based?

Some projects and risks to keep things fresh: The Living History Veteran project, pit firing, having a field trip to SUNY Cortland for a raku firing, contacting a graphic artist from the National Football League for ideas, writing grants, school project installations, baking and decorating a cake a student designed from a school-wide competition, a new event each year for YAM, improving and changing the annual end of year art show. The benefits are huge after doing projects like these. I usually start small the first year and if I like it I will either go further the next year or scrap it for something else. I try not to take on too much.

Other risks I take involve trying new things that will push me to grow professionally and artistically. I find myself feeling bursts of adrenaline throughout the process. It's exciting at the beginning, sometimes arduous in the middle but rewarding at the end. Whether I continue with it or not, it is a learning experience either way. Some of these risks were



Group picture with sculpture pieces ready to assemble





Flood at raku firing, pictured with SUNY Cortland Professor Jeremiah Donovan



Pit firing with students



Veterans Project recipient



April student art show group



Veterans Project recipient

coaching junior varsity volleyball, being a curriculum lead teacher, writing a new course, being on the NYSATA Region 3 board, presenting at our conference, and trying new artistic processes. (Writing this article is a huge risk for me as well!)

**Rejuvenation:** A large number of my friends are other art teachers. Our relationships have developed over the years. In Cortland County (and beyond), we have formed a coalition and have annual teacher/student art shows in April and May. This year we developed a group sculpture project with student artwork and we spend time together at least once a month. We spend time together in the summer:

hands-on art activities, hiking, relaxing poolside, and social nights on the town. It is part work, part play and it has helped each of us stay fresh in the field, feel connected, and feel stress relief.

*Lauren Flood was born and raised in upstate New York and teaches in Homer Central School District south of Syracuse. After her undergraduate career as a studio art major and volleyball player at SUNY Cortland, she became an art teacher.*



Teachers having fun with Crayola Slick Stix

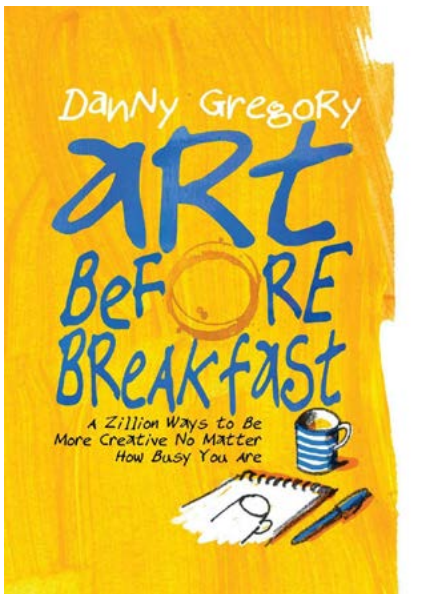






## *Art Before Breakfast: A Zillion Ways to Be More Creative No Matter How Busy You Are* by Danny Gregory

Reviewed by Cindy Wells



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I first read about this book *ART BEFORE BREAKFAST: A Zillion Ways To Be More Creative No Matter How Busy You Are* on an Art Teacher Face Book Page. I was curious about the title and wondered why so many teachers said they loved it. This is a fun book to look through with plenty of the author's own drawings, illustrations, encouragement, and inspiration. It gives the reader opportunity to play with visual art techniques. I think it is a book for everyone including art educators and those looking to find their art muse - all who need more time to make art. Many artist educators spend the majority of their time developing lessons and exemplars, leaving little time for their own creative work. This book offers a way and a renewal for adding creativity to each day.

At first glance and as an art educator I thought OK, I know these techniques. The book begins with keeping a sketchbook, a pen and yes, drawing breakfast. There are page after page of techniques and ideas. Some ideas build upon each other. The book is a good reminder of the basics which art educators may or may not use anymore. It is a fun book that allows one to create for just themselves and spend some time drawing each day. The ideas and techniques discussed in the book are there to get you to create. Last but not least another benefit of the book for art educators is that you just might find ideas you could use with your students.

Cindy Wells retired from the Baldwinsville Central School District after 34 years, teaching elementary, and junior high art. For Fifteen years she was an adjunct at Syracuse University, School of Education, Art Education Department. Currently she is a Coordinator for the annual State Conference and has served NYSATA in a variety of offices, including Treasurer and President (1989 - 1990). If you have read a good book, discovered a website, or seen a great video that you'd like to review for the NYSATA News, contact Cindy via e-mail at [cynthia296@aol.com](mailto:cynthia296@aol.com)



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## *“I Would Never Be the Art Teacher I Am Today Without Her”*

Rebecca Dupree

*Here is a touching story of how the cycle of teaching is both reassuring and emotional. Everyone has experienced the alarming feeling of being unprepared for our first art classroom; some of us had Rebecca’s good fortune to have a kind and patient mentor; and still others have found a soul-mate in our building or district who shares the joy and pain of teaching and living. It is a heartfelt and honest narrative that communicates all the feelings and fears that invest our professional lives at times – but it’s also a celebration of partnership and collaboration that leads to a deep connection and dependency that is characteristic of a truly close alliance in the workplace. Rebecca brings into focus the risks we take and the renewal and sustenance that risks can produce.*

I glanced around my classroom, observing it with a critical eye. She was coming and I had to be ready. Some things were out of my control. I couldn’t change the size of the room. I couldn’t change what we had for supplies. But I wanted it to be welcoming. Did it look clean? Did it look like it was conducive to creativity? The most important question loomed over my head: could we really fit two art teachers into this space? I was about to find out.

For one glorious week, the room had been all mine. I had celebrated this time with a cleaning frenzy – gone through each cupboard, sorted through each piece of paper, moved furniture, and threw out loads of trash. It was a time of renewal. Just as I had done each time before I had given birth to a child, cleaning was helping me prep for a new phase of my life. She was on her way, and the room would transfer from mine to ours.

I had been part time for four years, sharing the large room with the full-time high school art teacher. It had been a risk to stay in a part-time position for so long, but my patience had paid off. In 2012, he wanted a change – and we switched. He took the part-time position and I took the

full-time one. We shared the space as partners and we liked each other. I assumed he’d be there forever. Forever turned into two years. Suddenly, I was thrust into a new role. In a rush, I found myself reading through applications and pulling out my interview suit. For the first time in my teaching career, I had seniority. I was no longer teaching in someone else’s room. The new art teacher would be the one invading my space.

I remember her tentative knock. When she entered, she looked scared. Jen Hutchins. Her dress pants and carefully curled hair gave the distinct impression she was trying to impress. I was wearing jeans, a ton of bracelets, and ripped converse. With a bit of hesitation, I smiled at her and offered my hand. We talked in short halting sentences. It was

*Emotions swirled in my head. Would I like her? Would the kids like her? More importantly, would the kids like her more than me?*





pleasant, but awkward. As I gave her the grand tour, I tried to sound positive and knowledgeable, but the entire time I fiddled with the ragtag bunch of jewelry on my wrist – a mix of bracelets students had given me over the years. The baubles gave me comfort in this time of confusion. Emotions swirled in my head. Would I like her? Would the kids like her? More importantly, would the kids like her more than me?

During the first few weeks of school, I felt an uncomfortable mix of wanting to protect her and cool detachment. In the beginning, I had a rough transition into teaching, so on one hand I was trying to be as helpful as possible - on the other hand, I was silently evaluating everything she did, contemplating, and judging. I needed time to assess her ability to teach art -- and her personally. For so long, I had worked in shared space. I had developed a rhythm with my veteran art teacher colleague. I had looked up to him, asking his opinions and using his years of experience as a reference point. Mrs. Hutchins was pleasant, but she wasn't Mr. Seguin. I didn't know how our cadence was going to play out yet.

September gently turned into October. As the leaves turned from lush green to golden brown, I too began to turn. Mrs. Hutchins wasn't my old colleague, but I was learning that was okay. Whereas he and I enjoyed silence during homeroom, Jen would show up first thing in the morning, chatting, and ready to work. At first it was annoying, but soon I was used to it. I did my thing and she did hers. I watched from my side of the classroom as she struggled. She occasionally floundered, but her teaching was quickly improving. She learned from her mistakes and quickly honed her craft. She wasn't the best, but nobody is their first year. The thing I noticed through all the beginner stuff was the fact she wasn't afraid to take risks. That intrigued me, but I stood back. I still wasn't sure where this was going.



Right around Halloween, something turned inside my heart. Every year, the teachers at my school dress up and parade around for the students. This year, we were going to be Minions. I was having a hectic year, dealing with my own children's costumes, and I wasn't going to invest the time to make one of my own. She offered to help me. She was making her outfit anyway, and wanted to know if I wanted one too. At first, I dismissed her kindness. She insisted. The morning of Halloween, she presented me with perfectly awesome Minion attire. I was touched.



After the Minion incident, I wanted to return the kindness. On a whim, I asked Jen if she wanted to go to the NYSATA conference with me. I had been twice before and I knew how worthwhile they could be. Earlier in the year I had been doubtful if I wanted to risk spending three days in a hotel room with someone I didn't know. Now, it didn't seem like such a bad idea. She agreed. One snowy night in November, we piled into her jeep and headed down to Albany. To my surprise, we chatted nonstop the entire ride down. A three-hour road trip passed quickly as we talked about dreams and goals.



The conference that year was held at the Desmond Hotel. As soon as we entered, we were both charmed by its atmosphere. Crowds of art teachers were already bustling in. People carrying display boards and colorful props walked by us, laughing and joking. As we checked in, I stared at Mrs. Hutchins. She was covered head to toe in fat snowflakes, her eyes shining with excitement. Jen caught me eyeing her. Spontaneously, we both broke into giant grins. At that moment, we exchanged something. We were not co-workers. We were friends embarking on an adventure of mutual interest.

***The best thing is, we weren't just two co-workers that got along. We were an educational team.***

That first night I told her to get to bed at a reasonable time, because once we started early Friday morning, we wouldn't stop. Of course, I didn't listen to my own advice. We looked through the conference program and picked out what we wanted to do. We snuck down to the lobby at midnight to explore the ins and outs of the hotel. We lay on our hotel beds, eating Twizzlers, and made plans for our classroom. As I drifted off to sleep that night, I wondered to myself, "When did I start to think of it as our classroom?"

Over the next three days, we bonded. I don't think we separated once, as we ran from class to lecture, from lunch to dinner, and from keynote speaker to Saturday night party. We were a great balance. I preferred to attend workshops on classroom management and teaching theory. She liked workshops where we used materials and got our hands dirty. It didn't matter what we were learning, we laughed and joked at every moment. Each picture we took at the conference showed two professional women, having the time of their lives. I learned I liked Mrs. Jen Hutchins. She pushed me to get more out of the conference than I ever had. She coaxed me into doing a Friday art after dark workshop, where we learned how to carve sheetrock from Phyllis Brown. She made me sit with other art teachers when we were eating, forcing me to network. Jen and I made plans for lessons, talked about the future of our classroom, and gained a lot of knowledge.

When we got back to school, our program thrived. Just by going to the NYSATA state conference together, our entire art department underwent a sense of renewal. By nature I am a collaborator, so it wasn't long before I started a discourse with her. Instead of asking for advice, as I had done before she was hired, I asked for her opinion. As I talked with her, I learned she was creative and sharp. We blasted through the next few months. We tackled a Grinch themed art show. When NYSSMA was held at our school, we made a giant music themed art work display. For  $\pi$  day, we created art around Wayne Thibaud, and turned our school lobby into a bakery. Mrs. Hutchins and I, together, had created an extraordinary art department.



The best thing is, we weren't just two co-workers that got along. We were an educational team. We taught two separate classes, in the same room, at the same time. Other teachers at our school walked by our classroom and shook their heads, but we were happy. We had fallen into an effortless routine. In this case, two teachers were better than one. There was always someone to bounce ideas off. It didn't matter whose class a student was enrolled in, we were both there to guide them. I always laughed when I realized I was helping her student and she was helping mine.

The shining achievement of our work together was our Spring 2015 art show. The theme of the concert was Rainbow Connection. Together, our classes created the most visually stunning display our school district had ever seen. We had a giant rainbow, a beautiful mural, giant flowers, and the most artwork I've ever seen from our department. Our superintendent walked around our art show, with a look of pure joy on her face. She said out loud, "This is magical!" We glanced at each other and silently exploded into joy.

When our second year started, we were solid. There was no awkward "getting to know each other" period, we just jumped right into the art making. If the year before had been good, this year was better. If you saw an art project from one of our classes, you can bet the other one had something to do with it. We went back to the NYSATA conference, this time even presenting on holding fantastic art shows. As I walked around the convention with Jen, I noticed how different she was from the year before. She was more confident and knowledgeable. I smiled to myself when I saw her counseling a first year art teacher who was extremely overwhelmed. Of course, neither of us are experts in our field, but we both have

that desire to learn, to take risks, and to discover. I believe we brought that out in each other. I would never be the art teacher I am today without her.

Sadly, this golden afternoon of our partnership will be ending soon. Jen has found full-time employment in another district. I waited in the part-time position for four years for the full-time teacher to retire. I will not be leaving for several years, so understandably she needs to move on. It was a risk for her to take a part-time job, but in the end, it paid off for both of us. Now I stand on the path that we created together, and she is starting her own. She will be going through her own time of renewal as she starts her own journey at her new district. I am happy for her, but at the same time, I'm crushed. We had formed something special. Our students benefitted so much from our collaborative style. It makes me sad to know that future students will not have the same opportunities. Other faculty members stop me in the hall and say, "What will you do without your other half?" I laugh, and say "Probably cry!" They don't know how true that statement is.

Not all hope is lost. If I have learned anything from being an art teacher, it is to be adaptable. Yes, I am losing my teammate in the day-to-day interactions, but that is okay. We are already planning on doing cross-district collaborations, going to each other's art shows, and of course, we will still have NYSATA. Mrs. Jen Hutchins will always be part of my life. She has made me aware of the joy of renewal and the excitement of taking risks. And now, as I start on a new journey with a new art teacher, I hope I can make them aware too.

*Rebecca Dupree has taught at the Northern Adirondack Middle/ High School for nine years. She is a graduate of the State University of NY at Plattsburgh with a BA in Art History and earned her MST in 2007. She has been a member of NYSATA for nine years. When she is not teaching, Rebecca is a dedicated visual journalist, writes fiction, and enjoys hiking in the Adirondack Mountains. Catch more of her writing on her blog, [www.bobcatyebrows.blogspot.com](http://www.bobcatyebrows.blogspot.com).*



*Donnalyn Shuster and Julia Lang-Shapiro, NYSATA YAM Co-Chairs accept their YAM award at the NAEA Convention in Chicago, March 2016.*

## *The Power Of Art – Alive and Well with Youth Art Month in New York State!*

Celebrating our new national theme – *The Power Of Art* – the Youth Art Month program in New York was recognized for the seventh year in a row with the Award of Merit from The Council for Art Education, Inc. at the National Art Education Association Convention held recently in Chicago, IL. Under the direction of co-chairs Julia Lang Shapiro and Donnalyn Shuster, our continued involvement in grass roots art advocacy, evidenced by reporting of YAM events held annually in March, continues to raise the level of awareness of our visual arts programs and the inherent value across our state.

Sponsored nationally by The Council for Art Education, Youth Art Month is an annual observance, held in March, designed to emphasize the value of art education for all youth and to encourage support for quality school art programs. Youth Art Month provides a forum for acknowledging the imagination, innovation, and creative skills that a visual arts experience can nurture. Across the country, students, teachers, and communities direct attention to the value of a visual arts education that develops divergent and critical thinking; multicultural awareness; and technical, communication, and expressive

skills that are a key component of 21st century learning. To be eligible for an award, state chairpersons submitted documentation of their Youth Art Month programs.

Documentation was evaluated across a variety of key categories, including numbers of teachers and students, innovative events, media coverage, funding and event growth, based on predetermined criteria scoring rubric. Our state is proud to be among the ranks of those recognized in 2015 who are leading advocates for visual art programs including Texas (Claire Flannigan Grand Award), New Jersey, and Virginia, (Award of Excellence) and New Mexico, Alabama, Illinois, Wisconsin (Award of Merit).

With events recently concluded, we are looking forward to receiving your reports about the events conducted in your school and community during the month of March. If you did not receive submission information, please contact Donnalyn at [d\\_shuster@yahoo.com](mailto:d_shuster@yahoo.com) for a form and check our web page at <https://nysata.memberclicks.net/youth-art-month> for up-to-date news and information.



## *At the Beginning of the Teaching Life Cycle* Lisa Pastore

*Lisa Pastore, has been attending NYSATA Board of Trustees meetings in Albany and writing a column for the NYSATA News as emergent teachers, who were finishing their student teaching placements, teaching as substitutes and leave-replacements, and in Lisa's case, going on to another degree. Their insights and reflections on their late teacher training and early teaching careers provide some of us with inspiration, some of us with nostalgic mental images, and all of us with pride and best wishes.*

For pre-service educators, the greatest challenges of their final year often lie within the certification process. As I finish up the last year of my undergraduate studies, I have experienced the delicate balancing act that surrounds certification. Between student teaching, senior projects, thesis papers, certification tests, and the edTPA, college seniors typically become overwhelmed and exhausted. One way that I learned to cope with these challenges was to take risks that immersed myself in the process. Here are some of the risks that I have taken and encourage my pre-service peers to take:

**For Student Teaching:** Jump in whole-heartedly and immerse yourself in your teaching. Step out of your comfort zone in your projects and discussions with students – learn alongside them.

**For Senior Projects and Thesis Papers:** Have an open mind. You are going to get a lot of opinions and you will need to discover which will be the most useful to you. Don't be afraid to go in an unexpected direction and see where it will lead. However, if you are determined in your direction, stand your ground and see how your ideas can be modified or re-worked.

**For Certification Exams:** Don't be afraid to reach out to your cohorts for study help and/or advice. Remember that there is power in numbers – work together to tackle a study schedule.

**For edTPA:** Work as hard as you can and when you feel ready, take the risk to hit the submit button. This will probably be one of the more terrifying moments of the certification process. Have confidence in the work you have done!

It is important to stay positive during this daunting process. Once everything is completed, the feeling is like no other. As the semester winds down, I have been planning out

how I will de-stress and renew my creative practices. Here are some activities I have planned for the summer and would recommend:

**Try a New Medium:** Go for a class in a medium you have been yearning to learn! Try to take part in artistic play with something new and unexpected. For me, this involved signing up for a glass-blowing class that I had never gotten around to taking.

**Teach in a Summer Program:** Summer programs are a great creative outlet for working with students in a less structured atmosphere. It is amazing to see what kids can do when given more freedom. I often come out of these programs with many new ideas for both my own work and for future lessons.

**Read a Book:** Find an educator who aligns with your teaching philosophy or pedagogy. Reflect on how they fit into your own teaching practice and choose a new approach to try in the Fall. I plan to spend my train commute time with a few books exploring my interests in STEAM curricula.

While the final pre-service year can be stressful and overwhelming, it can also be one of the most rewarding. Try to slow yourself down enough to enjoy the whirlwind of your final year! As the summer quickly approaches, I hope to reflect on my hectic year and renew my creative spirit! Unwind, experiment, and CREATE!

*Lisa graduated from Adelphi University in May 2016 with a BFA in Art Education. In the fall of 2016, she will pursue her master's degree through the Arts in Education program at Harvard University. The following year, she hopes to be teaching art and chemistry with an emphasis in STEAM curricula.*





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## *From the Desk of Leslie Yolen*

**Associate in Visual Arts Education, Curriculum and Instruction Team  
New York State Education Department**

Dear NYSATA Members,

As you prepare to close out another school year, I'm preparing to bring selected arts educators to Albany for a revision of our state learning standards for the arts. There are elements of Risk & Renewal in any policy work group, and as this one brings with it change on a level that impacts every classroom in the state, I am keenly aware of the importance of managing the work of the writing teams as a means of ensuring a smooth working process in which all voices are honored. Any attempt to mindfully build consensus germane to applicable arts policy and classroom practice necessitates having a balanced representation of constituents that are stakeholders in arts education.

Over 260 applications were received from highly motivated and qualified arts educators across the state. The Arts Standards Steering Committee was challenged to balance the exceptional qualifications of individuals with the charge of assembling teams with various areas of content expertise, experience at a range of teaching levels, years of experience, and school demographics (region, urban/suburban/rural, etc.), to achieve a diverse representation of arts education professionals across New York State. Despite the large pool of qualified applicants, the Steering Committee had to arrive at small teams of about eight people to begin the writing for each Arts Discipline.

Standards setting serves as a mechanism for reaching consensus on what literacy and fluency look like in any given content area. An understanding of how to plan with the end in mind might be the most crucial shared attribute of standards and arts policy writing teams / work groups. The posted criteria for selecting broadly representative constituencies within the work groups underscores the notion that teams are complex organisms and that the perspectives of individuals

comprising teams can dramatically effect work products. Shaping leadership skills to support an overall group cohesiveness and effectiveness, with respect to group dynamics and engineering intentionally diverse work groups that represent the entirety of one's constituency will go a long way to ensuring harmonious work flow and high quality, appropriately targeted work products.

Although few NYSATA members are able to participate in the revision process, all will be asked for feedback on the draft standards next fall. Additionally, please look for the announcement and link to the survey on the Strategic Plan for the Arts in your inbox this summer. The multiphase Strategic Plan represents a vision for arts education in New York State over the next several years, and will affect changes in standards, state curriculum guidelines, and assessment models. We look forward to your feedback.

As you prepare to close out another school year, I wish you a summer filled with exploration and rejuvenation.

Sincerely,  
Leslie Yolen  
Associate in Visual Arts Education

***Look for the announcement and link to the survey on the Strategic Plan for the Arts in your inbox this summer. The multiphase Strategic Plan represents a vision for arts education in New York State over the next several years.***





## *Getting Back in Touch With the Inner Artist...*

**Bracken Feldman**

*Bracken Feldman relates a summer experience that combined nostalgia with renewal – a return to the roots for her – by going back to her undergraduate campus and reacquainting herself with the genesis of her studio material and method.*

Have you ever sat across the classroom looking at the materials to create your own artwork? As I type this there are three pottery wheels sitting no more than ten feet from me; they're quiet and still right now – it's the early morning hours before the school day kicks off. All I want to do is throw a pot and be creative with my own craft – instead mounds of paperwork pile high, midterm reports are due, an order list for next year's supplies sits next to me, and all I want is to be on the wheel.

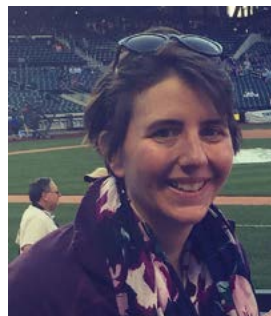
Last summer I left the classroom and its demands all behind for two weeks. The moment school ended, I jumped in my jeep and drove 5 hours to the quiet little college town of Alfred, New York. I spent four years there and hadn't returned for a visit in a long time. Months ago I had received an Alfred University mailer for a 2-week intensive workshop in ceramics. The Raku workshop with ceramicist Wayne Higby attracted my attention, so I enrolled.

Vacation/art-making tally: 336 hours, 14 days, 2 weeks of working with clay, firing, and forging new friendships. The first day was the only day I remember – after that time moves at a fast pace as you throw and hand build for 12+ hours a day. You fall asleep dreaming of where the clay can take you. The two weeks are filled with artist lectures, after demo lessons from graduate students and top notch ceramics professors. Everyone in Alfred is open and willing to share their knowledge with you. You have breakfast, lunch, and dinner with different people every day. You learn about different processes that other potters have developed. You're transported back to your college worldview. No one cares how you smell or that you wore the same clothes three days in a row. All people care about is learning from one another.

One of the high points of my return to Alfred, was the

morning lectures given by Wayne Higby, who started each morning with an inspirational quote. On day one it was: "Welcome to the first day of the rest of your life." The first thought I had was: could this be the first day of the rest of my life? Wayne was right, each day is the first day of the rest of your life. You can't return to the past; you can only move forward towards the future. Wayne's lectures were meaningful and insightful towards my daily practice. They provided just the right amount of inspiration to motivate me to move away from my comfort zone and feel supported in my work. My days were spent between the studio and the extensive Ceramics Library that Alfred University houses. As I pulled on to Route 17 to return home at the end of the two weeks, I had to wonder where the time went.

I can't tell you how many pieces I threw or how many Raku firings I did in those two weeks, but I can tell you that when I arrived home, I felt at peace with myself, because I had fed the inner artist. I had left the daily grind, lived in the mountains of western New York, and seen the rain clouds arrive across the familiar hills. I heard the cows in the morning, and felt like I was surrounded by the comforts of home once again. For two weeks in the summer you can revitalize yourself, and fulfill the yearnings of your inner artist.



*Bracken Feldman currently teaches ceramics and digital media at Hastings High School in Westchester County. She has been teaching in the lower Hudson Valley area for 10 years since graduating from Alfred University with her BFA and Manhattanville College with her MAT.*

# 10 things you need to know about NY's new registration and continuing education regs



**1.** Starting July 1, a new state law requires all permanently or professionally certified teachers and Level III teaching assistants working in public schools or BOCES to register online with the State Education Department. Re-registration will be required every five years.

**2.** According to SED, once the system is up and running, you can register at any time. Registration must be completed by the end of your birth month. There is no charge to register.

**3.** If you do not have a TEACH account, yet are required to register, you will need to create a TEACH account at [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/). There is NO cost to create a TEACH account or register. You cannot register on paper.

**4.** Retired or not working in a public school or BOCES? You do NOT need to register. If you want to substitute teach or work again in public schools, you should register. Note: The act of 'registering' has no bearing on your permanent certificate(s)

— your certificate is still valid for life.

**5.** School guidance counselors, school psychologists and school social workers are categorized as "Pupil" and are NOT impacted by this new requirement.

**6.** The law also includes new professional development requirements called Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE). Professionally certified teachers and Level III teaching assistants are required to complete 100 hours of state-approved CTLE professional development within each five-year registration cycle.

**7.** Teaching assistants with pre-2004 continuing certificates do NOT need to register their certificates with the State Education Department nor complete CTLE hours.

**8.** If you are required to register in 2016–17 and you fail to do so by the end of your birth month, you are subject to a \$10/month fee until you either register

or notify SED that you do not wish to register. NYSUT is working to have this fee waived in the first year.

**9.** Certificate holders who must complete CTLE hours are now also required to maintain a record of their CTLE hours for three years after each five-year registration period.

**10.** NYSUT continues to fight on behalf of members to remove the assessment of late fees in 2016–17 as this new process is

implemented. The state does not have a reliable means of communicating these regulatory changes to all impacted certificate holders — particularly individuals holding permanent certificates. NYSUT is also seeking an appeals process for those who miss the registration deadline and is pressing SED to recognize previously completed professional development hours for CTLE purposes.

NYSUT has posted more information on the new regulations and a question form at [www.nysut.org/certification](http://www.nysut.org/certification).

## NYS Certificate Registration and Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) requirements

### Who Do These Changes Affect?\*

	Registration Requirement	CTLE Requirement	Hours required every 5 years
Permanent classroom teachers/educational leaders	✓	No	None
Professional classroom teachers/educational leaders	✓	✓	100
Teaching Assistant Level III	✓	✓	100
Teaching Assistant with a continuing certificate	No	No	None

\* Requirements take effect July, 1, 2016  
Source: NYSUT Research and Educational Services





## *The Olympics Of The Visual Arts: the Ultimate Experience of Risk and Renewal*

**Amy Pape**

*Amy Deller-Pape supports her students every year as they risk their time, talent and ideas in NYSATA's annual Olympics of the Visual Arts competition. Invigorated by the challenge, inspired by the contest, she and her middle school students find reward and fulfillment in this yearly odyssey. She draws a whimsical yet insightful parallel to TV cook-offs – and would like us to think of ourselves as Visual Arts Chefs. [To see a video of OVA click on the fashion entry image \(this page\).](#)*

Ever watch those culinary competition shows? Make a divine appetizer for four in 30 minutes out of squid eyes, birch beer, and a piece of bubble gum. Blind folded. Over a tank of man-eating sharks. As crazy as it may sound we think – hmmm... “I would make a reduction of the birch beer...” you know how this goes. As an amateur in the kitchen, I admire the courage it takes to face these outrageous challenges – and to do so as entertainment with your reputation on the line! This experience is not unlike being involved with NYSATA's Olympics of the Visual Arts. This is my sixteenth year of participating in the OVA program, held each spring in Saratoga Springs, NY.

Each school year starts the same in my district...

- September: “Mrs. Pape! Are the OVA problems out yet? When are the sign ups?”  
Answer: “Check the NYSATA website under programs. We will sign up in November.”
- October: “Mrs. Pape! Are the OVA problems out yet? When are the sign ups?”  
Answer: “Check the NYSATA website under programs. We will sign up in November.”
- November: “Mrs. Pape! It's November first! Where are the OVA problems?!”

OVA is an opportunity for you to watch your most enthusiastic artists do what they do best: problem solve and create. This is a time for coaching more than actual teaching. Students brainstorm solutions to one of the eight visual arts categories as a team. You play devil's advocate and make them defend their solutions. They scrap those ideas and do more research. They come back telling you they want to have a jet-propelled sculpture. You remind them they have your back room of collected items and art materials to use. (The

equivalent of squid eyes and birch beer). And they need to get their own bubble gum. We do not have access to jet-powered rockets.

They rethink. They make new sketches. You agree to spend every lunch period as well as after school in your second home (aka “art room”) to allow them to work. You resist the temptation to save them by giving them an easy solution. You watch them struggle, squabble, and take risks. By April, there is always a solution brought to Saratoga Springs. A creative roller coaster of a project that we hope tastes as good as it looks. We wipe the paint from our brow, adorn our OVA shirts and plan to enjoy the day no matter what the judging outcome brings. The students buzz with excitement for the dessert round: Spontaneous Problem and Modeling of the Fashion Design entries. You give them their materials – help them tape on the coffee filter-couture ensemble and wish them luck. Your heart does a little leap. We are proud of our work. We are grateful for the experience. This is OVA.



*Amy Deller-Pape has been teaching in Clinton Central Schools since 2000. She is currently teaching Art 6, Art 7, Art 8, and Studio Art. She enjoys many art media, but especially loves to paint. Besides her love of art, she enjoys cooking for friends and family. She enjoys participating in OVA each year with CMS students - together they have won over 25 First Place Awards in this statewide competition! Other extra curricular areas include art shows and middle school and high school musical set design.*

## An OVA Competitor Speaks Out...

Molly Dennison is in 7th grade and is in Amy Pape's art class. She is a high honor student and is very active in the school. Her older sister also did OVA and is now in college. She enjoyed bouncing ideas off her sister. Here she gives us adults a student's perspective on the OVA process. She relishes the pressure and the collaboration.

Three years ago my elementary art teacher, Mrs. Hall, asked me if I wanted to try the Olympics for the Visual Arts (OVA). At the time I didn't know what OVA was but I knew that it had to do with art, and I love art. I also like sports and this sounded like a great combination. Teams of artists compete against other teams of artists in several different areas like drawing, architecture, fashion and photography. You work with your team on one project and then your project competes against the project of teams from other schools. It's such a great experience for students who like to work in groups and who are creative. For me, now doing it for the third time, it always opens up a world of new opportunities and ideas.

The team building is an important part of OVA. Learning to collaborate with others and make something better is not always easy. But after many weeks of working with others it just begins to happen naturally. When you go to the actual competition in Saratoga, they observe how well you've learned this by asking each group to solve a random "short term problem" over the course of an hour. This is factored into your team scoring. By working in groups, you get to see and hear other people's perspective and learn to make quick group decisions. This is also true when you're viewing other schools as they take on the problem. When you see other groups' perspective, you realize how many ways art can be interpreted.

Judging at the competition is interesting because you get constructive feedback. It's also fun to compete against other schools because everybody loves friendly competition! During the process, challenges pop up which make you problem solve and think of new ways to do things since nobody has ever really done it before. And in closing, I leave you with one tip, there are many banned items the day of competition, hot glue. Think creatively as you pack your supplies. One year, when part of our project broke on the bus, we used chewing gum to hold it together!

If you have the opportunity to participate in OVA, don't think twice, remember the Nike ad campaign and "Just do it!"



## Call for Contributors

The NYSATA News, an award-winning periodical in both print and digital formats, seeks talent that can serve on a Contributor's Board. These members may be responsible from time to time for writing content, but primarily they find resources that will write articles, essays and reaction pieces that inform NYSATA membership about issues, theory, and practice. As the NYSATA News grows, more people are needed to produce a publication that continues to be relevant and timely. We are looking for two people to be responsible for each category. These categories potentially appear in each issue:

**Technology:** *The Connected Classroom* (already has one Contributors Board member, seeking one more)

- How digital technology impacts and supports the art classroom
- New frontiers in technology that have an art component

**Professional Development:**

- Innovative activities that lead us to new practice
- Comprehensive district or building programs
- Supporting art teachers.

**Teaching Around the State:**

- Stories about best practice in action that are unique to the environment – rural, urban, suburb, declining enrollment, consolidated staff, etc.

**Philosophies:**

- Current thinking on theory, research, and practice.

**Exhibition Showcase:**

- Exemplary public display (for advocacy, celebration and beautification).

**Current Issues in Art Education:**

- Guest essays that tackle controversial issues, new mandates and requirements, teacher evaluation regimes, and other pertinent topics affecting membership.

**Interested? Please e-mail Marty Merchant, the News editor [nysatanews@nysata.org](mailto:nysatanews@nysata.org)**



# Risk and Renewal



Phyllis painted the car

*“... things I want to do for ME!”*

**Phyllis Brown**

*Phyllis Brown, who received a Special Citation this last year at our 2015 annual conference, retired in 2012 after teaching for 36 years. She has been a phenomenally active member of NYSATA, bringing performance and workshop ideas to the conference for 14 years, while managing to maintain a vigorous and adventurous personal life filled with exploration. This is an adaptation of some recent entries to her blog “There’s a Dragon in my Art Room” which is an apt metaphor for her high-flying and spectacular approach to art and life. Her enthusiasm is infectious, her energy exhilarating, and her plans so ambitious that you’ll have to resist leaving your seat right now to go for a walk.*

Break out the overalls and do a happy dance with me, because this little blue-haired lady is going to be doing some painting this summer! And by the way, I don’t mean painting the ceiling of our shed again, though that was kind of fun. (My husband doesn’t often trust me with a paintbrush on our house. I think he’s afraid it will end up embellished like my car, or my purses, or my shoes, or my iPad). But let me explain about this summer...

Do you ever see opportunities and say “I wish I could do that someday”? We all get so busy with our commitments, work, family, crazy projects, while taking care of our homes, our cars, our health, and so on, that it’s easy for it all to pass by. Since I retired four years ago, I have realized that the “someday” has arrived, and if I don’t take the risk to try out these opportunities while I am able, it may be too late. One of the first things I did shortly after my retirement was to tell my college roommate that even though we live on opposite sides of the country and never see each other, we needed to get together somewhere crazy to celebrate our milestone birthdays (which occur just days apart). Neither of us had ever had any real desire to go to Las Vegas. It was the most ridiculous option we could come up with, given our personal tastes and lifestyles – so that’s where we went. It took some effort to convince her, but we are both glad we took the risk and had the adventure (though I doubt returning to Las Vegas will reappear on either of our travel wish lists).

But I’m not only talking about vacations – I am talking about MYSELF. Things I want to do for ME. This is not just laying on a beach, sitting on the dock with a good book, or paddling in my kayak on a calm lake, though I love and do all those things. I don’t mean bungee jumping, swimming with sharks, or other risky-sounding adventures; I’ve never been that sort of risk-taker. I’m talking about genuine learning experiences that will take me out of my comfort zone and impact my life, like signing up for classes, meeting people I’ve never met before, learning a new skill, or re-discovering an old passion. Assessing what I want to do with the life that I have, I recognize that being creative has always been a large part of who I am – so it needs to play a major role in choosing experiences.

I began retirement by signing up for some classes at the Adirondack Folk School. Only 1/2 hour away, it had always looked interesting, but the classes always seemed so expensive. After retirement, I thought “What am I saving for? DO IT!” So... in the last 4 years, I have woven a beautiful rug out of sock tops (fun!), learned to use fabulous PMC (precious metal clay; most of the jewelry I wear these days has been made from this, by me), made lampwork beads (which was a great experience, but in the name of safety, this little klutz will not be using a torch any time soon in my own home), used bead embroidery to embellish a purse I made (quite the ambitious



Phyllis paints the shed



Phyllis making a sock rug



Phyllis and a friend in Las Vegas



Phyllis making jewelry

endeavor; I'm very proud of it and doubt I'll ever do anything like it again), and made a purse from a gourd (which is very cool but not particularly practical), and more.

I traveled to Santa Fe for the Crizmac/School Arts International Folk Art Extravaganza in July 2014, which I had been eyeballing each year in School Arts magazine. The photos were always colorful and vibrant, and the people in the pictures were smiling, but it seemed unreal; just something in a magazine. I didn't know a single person who'd experienced one of Crizmac's travel/professional development opportunities, so it was a gamble, and it was wonderful; worth every dime, and every bit as colorful and vibrant as those glossy magazine photos. If you are looking for a way to have an exciting cultural and learning experience under the guidance of knowledgeable and informative hosts, meet terrific like-minded people, and feel safe and welcomed while traveling alone, I highly recommend the programs offered by Crizmac in conjunction with School Arts magazine. <http://www.crizmac.com/travel.cfm>

This July, I'm taking another such gamble, and I will leave home/husband/cat/kayak for an entire week and go to the beautiful campus of Bennington College in Vermont, where I am enrolled in an Art New England summer workshop class. <http://ane.massart.edu/workshops/> For years, I have received the annual flyer advertising these classes, and thought "This program looks so inspiring; I wonder who the people are who take these classes?" I now realize that the only reason I have not been one of those people is that to participate, you actually have to voice your desire, take the risk and sign up. Not having used them for decades (due to time/space/life considerations), I hope to rediscover my love of oil paints and use them daily out-of-doors, weather permitting. Lately I've done a lot of reflecting/talking about using authentic source materials for my art, in particular regarding painting from observation (as I recently blogged at <http://plbrown.blogspot.com/2016/03/truth-or-fiction-drawing-painting-from.html>). So I'm putting my money where my mouth is, and now I have to acquire all the materials I'll need; the list is extensive and I'm eager to start shopping.

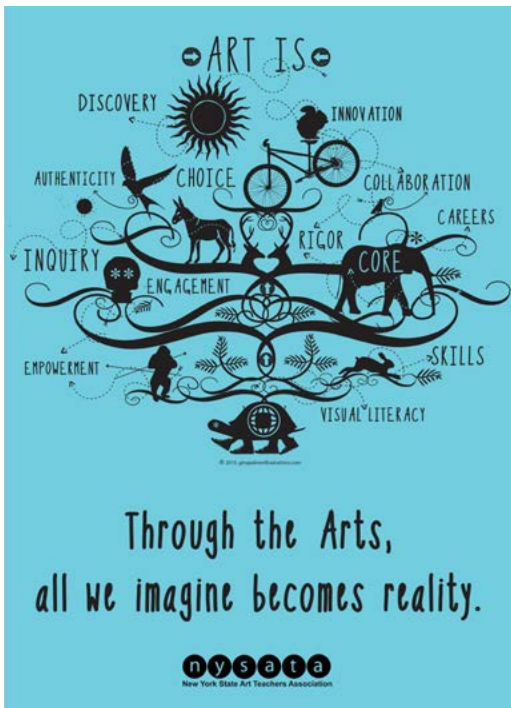
I graduated from college with two primary artistic passions: darkroom photography and oil painting. I taught darkroom photography for 8 years, until a job cut meant I no longer had a free accessible darkroom. I painted with oils until I got married, more than 28 years ago, moving with my husband into a house that had wall-to-wall carpeting, making it a poor location for oil paints and solvents. Since that time, I've many taken artistic detours, exploring batik, acrylic paint, and papier-mâché, in particular. (With a different educational background, I might have become a sculptor, like my grandfather Harry Levine. But fates didn't lead me that way, though there's still time....). I still love photography however the darkroom is a thing of my past, like scuba diving. But that fishing tackle box full of tubes of oil paints was never discarded, and the luminosity of their colors was something I never felt I achieved with acrylics. I became just an occasional painter, and I'm looking to remedy that, this summer. Wish me well!

What opportunities have you looked at longingly? Can you take a risk, and find a way to make room for those restorative opportunities in your life?

*Born in the Bronx, Phyllis Levine Brown grew up in Saratoga Springs and earned her art education degree at New Paltz. She retired after 27 years at the North Warren Central School district, and was involved in union leadership throughout her career. She maintains the popular blog *There's a Dragon in my Art Room*, and continues to be active in NYSATA workshops and events while representing Region 6. She also has an independent business called *Dragonwing Arts*.*







## *Factors Affecting The Future of Your Art Program and What You Can Do About It!*

**Dr. Susan Lane**  
NYSATA Art Advocacy Chair

As an art teacher, nothing is more frustrating than when a student is taken out of art class for remediation or when an art program gets cut to half time because administration needs to find more time to provide academic intervention for students. I overheard colleagues refer to art class as their “planning time” and parents parent say that art is not that important because their child does not need it for college. How can one advocate for their art program when so many things, big or small, undermine the validity of the subject taught? To begin, advocacy starts with understanding factors that threaten art programs. Three main factors that threaten art programs are education mandates, antiquated attitudes toward art, and teacher quality (Steinbach, 2013).

The New York Education Department mandates that public schools assess student performance on ELA and math. Scores from those assessments are tied to the school district’s fiscal stability, known as the “adequate yearly progress” (AYP). Districts which have a low AYP face higher costs for supplemental educational services, district restructuring, students transferring to higher performing schools, and the threat of State takeover (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). That pressure causes administrators to take time away from non-tested areas, like art, and add time for academic intervention and test preparation (Gadson, 2008; LaFee, 2008; Jennings, 2012).

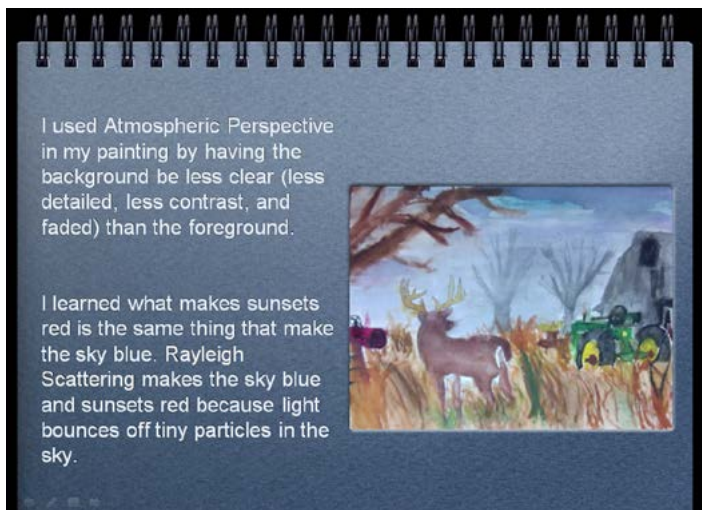
Antiquated attitudes further harm art programs. An administrator is less likely to support their school’s art program

if he or she never took a quality art class in college, visited an art museum, or attended an art event at their school (Luehrman, 2002, Martin, 2012). In addition, if the school’s tradition relies on art students to create seasonal centered art, the belief that art has no educational significance beyond the art room will persist (Efland, 1976).

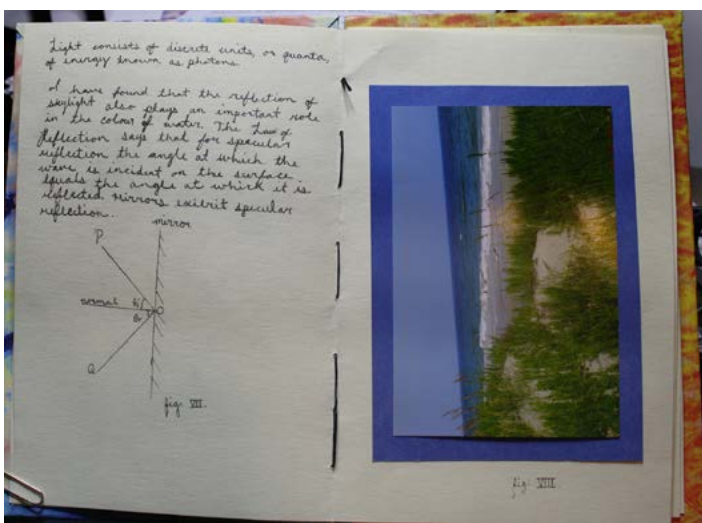
The third factor negatively affecting perceptions of art education is poor teacher quality (Steinbach, 2013). The work your students produce represents you, especially during a formal observation. If you are pulling arts and craft ideas off of Pinterest that demand little or no cognitive or technical skill, the authenticity and connectivity of the activity will be lacking and your administrator may miss the quality art instruction that should be going on. On average, principals spend 10% or less of their day conducting 1 to 10-minute walkthroughs and/or formal observations on teachers (Grison, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Turnbull, et al., 2009). Make those minutes count. You can use ideas from Pinterest, but enrich them; make connections to what real artists do. Foster critical thinking skills, make connections to other subjects, build

*How can one advocate for their art program when so many things, big or small, undermine the validity of the subject taught?*

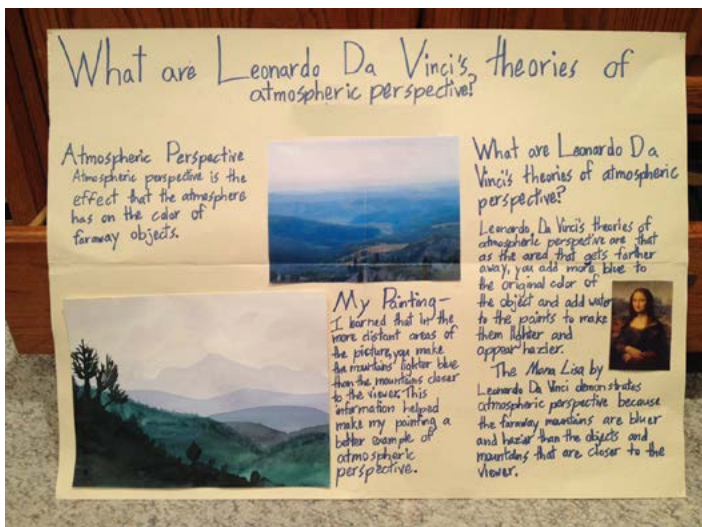
**Just as there were three things that threaten art programs, there are three things you can do to bolster your program: show enthusiasm for your subject, showcase your students' work, and provide quality instruction.**



Slide from student presentation on atmospheric perspective research.



Student notebook detailing observations on atmospheric perspective.



Student poster explaining Da Vinci's theories on atmospheric perspective

aesthetic awareness, and help students understand the world while they express themselves with that art or craft.

The constraints of State Assessments, stereotypical beliefs about art class, and few opportunities to demonstrate good teaching practices pose a challenge to art teachers who wish to advocate for their program. The task may seem overwhelming. However, if the process of advocating for one's program is taken one small step at a time, the task will be less daunting. Just as there were three things that threaten art programs, there are three things you can do to bolster your program: show enthusiasm for your subject, showcase your students' work, and provide quality instruction.

One of the first things you can do to bolster your art program is lead with enthusiasm. A teacher's enthusiasm for their subject has a positive impact by encouraging student participation and career interests (Keller, 2014). I requested a group of Studio Art students conduct research on the science behind atmospheric perspective to improve their artwork in a manner similar to Leonardo daVinci. As you might expect, those students were not excited about the research component. We looked at paintings by Hudson River Valley artists and wondered, "How did they create those atmospheric effects"?, "Why do mountains look blue in the distance"?, "Why do we see less detail, contrast, or color in the distance"?, "Why are sunsets red"?, and "What do you think sunsets will look like 100 years from now"? My enthusiasm continued when I demonstrated how they could find answers to those questions fairly quick and easy if they worked in small groups and divided up the tasks. As students found answers to their questions we enthusiastically shared out the information. Students kept records of their findings and practiced atmospheric techniques in a notebook. Each group created a poster or PowerPoint presentation of their findings and a painting showing atmospheric perspective. Before the unit ended, I invited the building principal to my classroom to see the great work my students were doing. As he walked around the room, I explained what the task was, the process students went through, and asked students to share what they learned and how it applied to art. At the end of the unit, I displayed the posters and printed PowerPoint presentations for the rest of the school to see.

The Studio Art research unit was a series of lessons developed around a big idea that research is at the heart of an artist's work. I developed the lessons based on what I learned from the ELA teacher, science teacher, and my own exploration of the topic. Students closely examined Thomas Cole's paintings for atmosphere and artistic techniques which created the illusion of distance and drama, conducted research about the atmospheric phenomenon and visual perception, learned artistic techniques and effective





presentation methods. Each lesson was a learning experience rather than an activity. Learning experiences involve the instruction of real-world skills and concepts, connect to other subjects, are open-ended, and provide opportunities for students apply their new knowledge in a meaningful way (Anderson & Milbrandt, 1998). While activities keep students occupied, they lack intentionality, challenge, performance and growth that learning experiences provide (Seidel, et al., 2009).

Enthusiasm for your subject, developing rich learning experiences, and marketing the quality of your students' work goes a long way toward advocating for your program. Unfortunately, few people will know about the great work your students are doing if you do not showcase their work outside the classroom. Research shows that people remember images long after they are viewed (Konkle, Brady, Alvarez & Olivia, 2010), so why not use that to your advantage? Display your students' work where other students, teachers, administration, and parents can see it. I like to display my students' work in the school halls, library, offices, and the Board of Education room, anywhere there is traffic. I also take note of events that bring the public into the building. I make sure, at least a small display artwork is present for those events. Chorus or band concerts, parent teacher conferences, open house, the board of education meetings, budget votes, and athletic events provide great opportunities. Include a short description of the task, concepts, and skills learned. If possible, attend events so you can speak directly to administrators and parents. Your efforts will build your students' self-esteem and broaden the view that art class provides authentic and valuable educational experiences.

In summary, as a fellow art teacher, we must resist the daily negative attitudes of art as a second-class subject and use every opportunity to challenge students to make connections between what they do in the art class and the outside world. We should seize every opportunity to showcase our students work to motivate them and broaden others' views about what goes on in an art class. Quality learning experiences in art class develop habits of mind and cognitive processes linked to academic success (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Winner & Hetland, 2008). Let's make that known through our intentions, actions, and student products

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## *Better With A Buddy!*

**Samantha Noles and Christina Wallace**

*Samantha Noles and Christina Wallace, who were the dual Art Educators of the Year for Region 6 in 2015, formed a partnership early and sustained it vigorously as they worked the classroom and the system to establish a strong program in their district. Obviously not the kind of teachers who avoided taking chances, they joined forces, achieved their expectations, and thrived on their special kind of collaboration.*

### **Risk is easier when you have a partner in crime.**

We were both hired straight out of college in 2010. There were just the two of us new art educators in our building, with no district arts supervisor, no art department chair, and no other veteran art educator to turn to. We had to lean on one another to get through those tough first few years. We had to function as a team in order to successfully handle the risks we've taken as individuals or as a department. The jokes of us being attached at the hip were aplenty.

Thankfully, we had (and currently still have) an amazing amount of support from our board of education, superintendent, administration, and guidance department. Together, we took risks that we thought would be beneficial to our student population and surrounding community, including revamping the existing art program and the courses offered. Over the past six years, we added six new courses in a small high school of about 200 students. We now have a total of nine courses in the high school program, including advanced level courses, graphic design and two 3-credit college-level courses in art history via connections with Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC). We also established an "Artist of the Month" award, formed a NAEA National Art Honor Society chapter, and an after school art club. In addition, we also encouraged students to compete in NYSATA's Olympics of the Visual Arts Program (OVA), and other contests and exhibits.

Collaborating is hard work and can be frustrating at times, but we both have come to the realization that we are a stronger program as a team and will have longevity if we stick together. We each have our strengths and weaknesses and luckily seem to fill each other's gaps. We equally share many responsibilities, but feel comfortable delegating out when one or the other is overwhelmed.

We are both very driven and competitive people so the failure of our program was never really an option in our minds. We advocated strongly for the things we needed and wanted for our department, in a professional way with evidence and data to back up our requests. These included a new printing press, digital tablets for manga design, cameras, more bulletin boards for displays, and high quality inkjet printers. We pride ourselves on exposing our students to the outside art world, as well as higher education and careers in the arts, so we found funding and support for field trips ranging from local galleries to New York City.

*We had to lean on one another to get through those tough first few years. We had to function as a team in order to successfully handle the risks we've taken as individuals or as a department.*



## Renewal is the thrill of conquering those risks.

It is sometimes overwhelming for just us to keep an entire program afloat. To keep our work-lives from getting stale, we are constantly researching and renewing our curricula. If we get bored, our students will inevitably be bored. We go to conferences. We take classes. We see where we can implement that new knowledge into our projects. We meet at the end of each year and discuss the scaffolding of the entire program to assess its effectiveness and where the students' skills are. We see where collaborations with other content areas can be done to reinvigorate us, as well as show our appreciation and support for other colleagues.

We take a general break from one another in the summertime, with a lunch date here or there. We spend so much time together at school, after school, and at evening and weekend events during the school year; summer is the time for us to recharge as individuals, spending time with our own friends and families, doing our own thing. This way, we are refreshed and raring to go as the Dynamic Duo once again in September.

Did our challenges bring us together? Or were we – luckily – “made” for each other as an art teaching team? Was fate kind to us, or did we forge a successful, productive partnership out of necessity? The answer is probably somewhere in between. Reaching out, forging an alliance for a common goal, is risky. Making it work – being passionate, flexible, understanding, and patient – renews and rejuvenates us personally and professionally. There is still plenty for us to learn. We certainly don't know it all, but our advice is to try and form those relationships with your colleagues. Start small. Try to connect in some way, either through a collaborative exhibit at school or taking a day to shop together at the outlets. Being on an island by yourself might be slightly easier, but it's harder to keep your raft afloat without help.

*Samantha Noles and Christina Wallace have been Middle/High School Art Educators in the Berlin Central School District in Cherry Plain, New York since 2010. Samantha has a BS in Art Education from the College of St. Rose, and continued her graduate education there with a double MS in Childhood Education and Special Education. Christina got her BA at SUNY Plattsburgh and her MS in Art Education at St. Rose. Colleagues in a rural district, they have collaborated on expanding the art program and providing students with a broad range of classroom, exhibit, extra-curricular, and field trip experiences.*



*Noles (top) and Wallace (bottom) expressive portrait assignment as rendered by Alyssa Bierwirth (Grade 11)*



## *The Power of Art Conference*

**Dr. Susan Lane**

*Dr. Susan Lane has been teaching art for over 27 years, and she continually searches out workshops and conferences that renew and invigorate her program and practice. Follow along with her, as she shares these experiences at a renowned program that explores the field of language-based learning disabilities and art-infused learning.*

In any industry where excellence is desired, one seeks out other innovative individuals and institutions to learn from. Always looking for ways improve my art program, I jumped on the opportunity to attend the Power of Art Conference, a partnership between the Lab School of Washington and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. I wanted to learn from educators who successfully implement arts-infused curricula that help students with learning disabilities excel. During this three-day conference in April, I joined 40 educators to learn about the Lab School approach and discussed the role of arts in education.

The Lab School of Washington grew from a summer school program in 1967 to a first through twelfth-grade school of approximately 375 students. Sally L. Smith, the founder, built on the work of physiologists and educational theorists like John Dewey, to create arts-infused, multi-sensory, hands-on learning environments to help bright students with ADHD, dyslexia, and other language-related learning differences achieve their full potential (<http://www.thelabschool.org>). The Lab School partnered up with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation which “fosters the legacy of Rauschenberg’s life, work and philosophy that art can change the world” (<http://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org>), to share the innovative program with art teachers, special education teachers, teaching artists, and administrators during the Power of Art Conferences.

I brought a mix of enthusiasm and optimism to the Power of Art Conference and was determined to garner knowledge and insight to take back and use in my district. I was most impressed by how infused the arts were in educational experiences, the unique teaching approach of academic clubs, and scaffolding of occupational, behavioral, and academic support from first through twelfth grade.

Educators at the Lab School know that “one key to unlocking the ability to learn is approaching academics through the arts” (<http://www.labschool.org>). Art attaches meaning to experience, helps recall, and supports the thinking processes used to create art – all valuable tools for solving problems in other subjects (Dewey, 1935; Jensen, 2005). Identifying the problem or challenge, brainstorming, testing ideas or approaches and reflecting and assessing collaboration can just as easily help a student successfully communicate an idea in a painting, write a persuasive essay, solve a math problem, understand the digestive system, or understand the events leading up to a war. Lab School educators guide students to make connections between subjects and express themselves through the arts. The connections are evident in the multitudes of student art displayed throughout the school buildings.

Another aspect of the Lab School that I found inspiring is the creation of Academic Clubs. Sally L. Smith designed Academic Clubs to provide students with a yearlong





Dr. Lane and Lab School Head Katherine Schantz

exploration of a social, historical, or scientific theme. Each club is highly structured with a code of behavior; formalized entry, seating, and dismissal rituals; visual effects, costumes, and props to establish atmosphere (Smith, 2005). Academic clubs offered by the Lab school include:

- Club Discovery, where students explore the world outdoors,
- Gods Club, where students learn about mythologies of ancient world cultures,
- Medieval Knights and Ladies Club, where students explore a feudal society,
- American Revolution Club where students learn about the birth of our nation,
- Renaissance Club where students learn about the rebirth of philosophy, art, and literature
- Museum Club where students curate collections of art and artifacts
- Industrialists Club where students learn about the industrial revolution and entrepreneurialism

Activities common during daily Academic Club time include examining, reading, and discussing primary source documents; conducting research, reenacting events, and creating artwork. Problem and Project-based learning is emphasized, which encourages deeper understandings and fosters independent, critical thinking.



Industrial Club Artwork

The third aspect I found interesting was the supportive and adaptive environment provided for students to help them gain self-control and manage their learning disability. At the elementary level, every classroom had specialized furniture to allow students with ADHD to move and fidget without being disruptive, along with concrete objects held and manipulated to focus and demonstrate new learning. One classroom had a stationary bike with a desk attached. Another classroom had a sealed jar of water and glitter sitting on a desk in a quiet part of the room. The glitter serves as a metaphor for the child's thoughts (Rappaport, Trantham, Surrey, Chang, & Mullin, 2013). Shaking and watching the glitter settle is intended to calm an agitated child. Fewer tangible supports were seen in the middle school and even fewer in the high school. The Lab School scaffolds their students' growing ability to self-manage behavior and become independent learners.

***The Lab School scaffolds their students' growing ability to self-manage behavior and become independent learners.***

Students appeared enthusiastic about learning and excitedly shared what they learned with me. I saw evidence of their involvement in arts-based, hands-on experiences in the halls and classrooms. On the surface, the Lab School environment is rich with learning and doing. However, I wonder how much is learned, retained, and transferred beyond the classroom and school year. The Lab School is not



Museum Club Room



Lab School attendees tour the middle level Science room.



American Revolution Club



Renaissance Club Room

**If you are interested in attending *the Power of Art Conference*, visit the website before January at, <http://www.labschool.org/Page/outreach/RauschenbergThe-Power-of-Art/POA-Apply>. It may seem like a lengthy application process, however, you receive a lot for your efforts. During the conference, you have opportunities to talk with other art teachers across the United States, visit museums, and be inspired. The cost of your hotel room will be covered and most of your travel expense.**

constrained by Standardized Tests, however, they do follow DC Standards and I was told teachers assess students based on individualized goals. Learning exactly how students are assessed and how much is transferred would be valuable information that could inform infusing arts in New York public schools.

I have been teaching for over 27 years and still have that desire to help others and make a difference. However, my energy and optimism escape me at times, and I often wonder if I'm challenging the status quo. There are few people and little time to bounce ideas off of and discuss things that happened in the classroom. Where I work we have two full-time and one half-time art teachers, and although I would like to share experiences, we rarely find time to get together. In addition, a lack of credible feedback, unmotivated students, and challenging administration sometimes causes me to second guess the effectiveness of my intentions.

The only way I know how to persevere and maintain a constructive mindset is to seek out opportunities to meet with other art teachers through regional events, workshops, or conferences. I also seek opportunities to attend workshops on other subjects like motivating students, intervention, STEAM, watercolor painting, etc. that can broaden my perspective and add to my teaching skills.

Attendance at workshops and conferences have paid off tremendously for me because afterward I feel rejuvenated and excited about teaching. I find that many teachers experience the same struggles and have similar doubts as me. At some of these conferences I get reminded as to why I originally became an art teacher. I see some of the cool things my colleagues are doing to innovate. Also, I hear how my colleagues at different schools deal negative attitudes toward art, challenging administration, and with unmotivated students. We share common ground that is fertile for generating ideas and finding solutions. The best part of putting myself out there is meeting new people and making new friends.

In closing, I would have to say that if you are feeling a bit down about your students and teaching environment, challenge yourself to attend one of these events and maybe you will come away from it like I did, with a few solid actionable ideas and a refreshed teaching spirit.

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*Dr. Susan Lane is an art teacher and Fine Arts department chair at Clyde-Savannah High School. She earned her Ed.D in Teacher Leadership from Walden University. After 27 years teaching art, she expanded her role as art educator to include teacher mentor and instructional coach in 2013. She has recently been appointed Advocacy Chair for NYSATA and serves on the NYSATA Board of Trustees.*





# Risk, Rewards, and Renewal



Grabiarz School Of Excellence, Buffalo Public Schools

*“... just another day.”*

Jan Dylewski and Veronica Kruger

*Jan Dylewski and Veronica Kruger teach in urban schools where many families and their children face economic, social, and cultural challenges. However, because of their students, these teachers have extraordinarily resilient attitudes and positive worldviews that shine through their experiences and trials. As you will see, these teachers self-renew, through their NYSATA camaraderie, grit, sense of humor, and a firm belief in the power of teaching and learning.*

It's Friday! Every teacher knows the relief that "TGIF" brings. We had a NYSATA get together on this particular Friday, making it an extra special day. "How was your week?" I asked the two colleagues from my district. One told me that her resource officer was pulled to another building for an incident, the other teacher stated that an altercation broke out before 8:30am. My day was about the same with a bomb scare phoned in during the NYS Math assessment... instead of being upset, we laughed. Not all weeks are like this, we just had a triple whammy—it must have been a full moon. So why are we all smiling, laughing and feeling like we wouldn't want to teach in any other place? I've been pondering this question since the last NYSATA Board of Trustees meeting in April.

Veronica, one of the ladies that I enjoyed that afternoon with, was with me that weekend in Albany at the BOT. We had the pleasure of having breakfast with Martin Merchant, executive Editor for the NYSATA News. He listened intently as Veronica and I talked about our students and the struggles and the joys of teaching in the inner city. Imagine being stunned and amused at the same time—that was the look on Marty's face. He leaned in and asked if we would consider writing an article for the newsletter. What would we write about? Resilience, love of teaching, love of life and how you rejuvenate when everyday you are faced with tough situations, he said. Neither of us are experts, but we can certainly tell you how we stay centered and refuel.

One way is that we purposefully choose to keep our glasses half full at all times. We look for the good, the goofy, and the soul-feeding moments in each day. Veronica teaches what some might consider challenging urban high school art classes. Her dye-stained hands from her fashion design class and layered paint on her clothes from drawing and painting always bring a smile to my face. She inspires her fellow art teachers with tales of her student's accomplishments. She talks about their many achievements, boasting as if they were her own children.

An occasional difficult day brings out the essence of what I love so much about her. She told me a story of an incident that broke out in front of her desk. A student asked her to hold his glasses so he could pounce on another student.

***These children are not mature adults; they make mistakes and say, "I'm sorry Miss, I'll try harder." It would be easy to write them up or write them off. It is too easy to be shaped by the negative, so Veronica, and I, purposefully seek out the positive.***



She thought he was joking, but he wasn't. An altercation took place and papers went everywhere. Her comment to me about the encounter was not what one might expect "I was almost finished with my work and I had to start over," she stated. This did not express a lack of concern, just the opposite. She was choosing to use humor to brighten an occasional tough situation. All I thought was, what an amazing teacher! Veronica hadn't labeled this child as trouble, but choose to spin it into laughter. Her positive outlook and empathy for this student didn't produce a hasty verdict. More folks need to postpone judgment about our students and search for the good in each as Veronica does. These children are not mature adults; they make mistakes and say, "I'm sorry Miss, I'll try harder." It would be easy to write them up or write them off. It is too easy to be shaped by the negative, so Veronica, and I, purposefully seek out the positive.



I teach Pre-K through 8th grade. We all have memorable trials; there was the smoker in my bathroom, the thrown chair, hurtful curses. What keeps teachers like Veronica and I going when things like this pop up? We persevere by remembering the good in each student. We persevere because we love our students. We know that those instances are blips on the radar and we purposefully seek balance. It isn't always easy, but a silly hair cut, a funny comment from a student or a heart-felt apology are sunshine on a cloudy day.



We help our students reach beyond school and help them become the best that they can be in life. A few months ago I was able to fund three sewing machines for my classroom. My 7th grade students used them to make screen-printed pillows for the Pre-K students. Fostering a positive contribution to our school community helps strengthen character and attitude in the wider world. We know that many have home lives that we could never imagine and yet they come back to school every day with an open mind and are willing to give back to others. Sometimes they inspire us but often they need our guidance and support. So, above all, when they do go astray we can't take it personally. When I have to speak to a student about a behavior issue, I remind them that next class is a new class. The slate is clean and we start all over again. Trust becomes the glue that solidifies the respectful student-teacher relationship.



When completing this article, during Teacher Appreciation Week, Veronica received a message from a former student thanking her for supporting her as an artist and for being in her life. This student has long since graduated, but continues to check in with a teacher who gave her a chance and never gave up on her. Veronica and I often share stories and discuss the love we have for our profession and students. We love a good "TGIF" but thanks to teachers that find the rewarding moments, Monday through Thursday are pretty good too.

*Jan Dylewski was the Art Educator of the Year for Region 1 in 2015. She teaches over 500 students in Pre-K through 8th grade in Buffalo. She graduated from Fredonia with a BA in 1985, and was a working artist with gallery representation for 20 years before receiving a Masters in Art Education from SUNY Buffalo and started teaching.*

*Veronica Kruger has been teaching high school visual arts in the Buffalo Public Schools for 10 years. She graduated from Buffalo State College with her undergraduate and masters degree. She has been secretary of NYSATA Region 1 for two years. Veronica is also a practicing artist and is constantly looking for new techniques and materials to explore.*





# 2016 NYSATA Annual Conference

## TRADITION & INNOVATION

### THE PIVOTAL VISION of ART EDUCATION

#### NYSATA 68Th Annual Conference

Nov. 18-20 • The Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, Albany NY

#### Conference Highlights Include:

- **Four fantastic KEYNOTE sessions! 5 Keynote speakers!**
- **Workshops and Seminars:** We had the most proposals submitted in 68 years! You will not be disappointed in the variety and scope of workshops this year.
- **Pre-conference: Olivia Gude** returns as a keynote and will hold an all day workshop on Thursday November 17th. More info will be coming soon.
- **The always popular Commercial Exhibitors and College Showcase!**
- **Artisan Market:** Purchase items created by your talented peers!
- **New! ARTSONIA joins NYSATA for a BYO Device workshop!** Attendees will walk away with first-hand experience of publishing artwork via the Artsonia app. This will be a free ticketed workshop.
- **New! After Dark Art Party! We are changing it up on Friday night!** This will be a ticketed event that will be open to all and will take the place of the traditional FAD workshops.
- **Extended Studio Workshops** for those who want a more in-depth artmaking experience.
- **President's Dinner and Reception followed by dancing with Albany DJ "Dr. Kwazy Toons"**
- **Scholarship Fund Gift Basket Raffle!** Bid on fabulous gift baskets provided by the Regions.
- **Complete information will be available on our website later this summer and in the Fall printed and digital issues of the NYSATA News. Registration will open in late summer. Early bird deadline is November 1st.**

#### Back by popular demand! Olivia Gude



Olivia Gude is the Angela Gregory Paterakis Professor of Art Education at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a Professor Emerita at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In 2014 she was awarded the National Art Education Association's "art education article of the year" Manuel Barkan Award as well as the Illinois Art

Education Association's Higher Education Art Educator of the Year. Gude received the 2009 NAEA Viktor Lowenfeld Award for significant contributions to the field of art education. Gude is a member of the Council for Policy Studies in Art Education and of the Educational Advisory Board of the PBS series Art 21. From 2012 to 2014, Gude was a member of the Visual Arts writing team for the Next Generation National Core Visual Arts Standards. Olivia has agreed to do a full day workshop as the Pre-conference on Thursday.

#### Dennis Inhulsen Chief Learning Officer of the National Art Education Association.

Dennis' primary role is to help create professional learning opportunities of member and future member art educators. Dennis is a Past-President of the National Art Education Association; previously he served as Vice-President and delegate for NAEA, President of the Michigan Art Education Association and Convention Chair for MAEA and NAEA. Dennis is a frequent presenter related to arts and general education. Dennis is recently retired as Patterson Elementary principal in Holly, Michigan. He has served in school administration for 15 years. Dennis taught art in grades kindergarten through university for twenty-one years. He served as the Writing Chair for Visual Arts for the National Coalition of Core Arts Standards. Dennis holds BFA, MA EdS. Degrees in Art & Education Leadership.



## Emerging Artist Lecture: Beth Giacummo and Kathryn Bilharz Gabriel



**Beth Giacummo** is an artist, curator and educator living and working on Eastern Long Island. She holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts and an MFA in New Forms from Pratt Institute. As an artist, she has exhibited her work both regionally and internationally in places including New York, Romania, Russia, Spain, Italy and Denmark. Her interest in blown glass and travel has led her to many cities and countries where she has had the opportunity to live, study and participate in artist residencies. Giacummo has received a number of grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) and the NY State Council for the Arts (NYSCA) in support of her projects and residencies. Wearing many hats within the art world, Giacummo's professional experiences range from arts education, higher ed, curriculum building, curatorial work, museum management, gallery management, exhibition direction, non-profit building, arts activism, fundraising and international program development for artists and students. In 2010 Giacummo was appointed Exhibition / Curatorial Director and Senior Curator at the Islip Art Museum. Dedicated to the development of arts and culture on Long Island, Mrs. Giacummo has created a number of new programs and collaborative initiatives on behalf of the Islip Art Museum.

**Kathryn Bilharz Gabriel** was born in Syracuse, New York, in 1984, and currently resides there with her husband on a gentleman's farm and studio outside the city. In 2010 she concluded eight years of academic and professional work in Albany, New York, with a BFA in Painting from The College of Saint Rose, a dual degree in Art Education, and an MFA in Fine Arts from The University at Albany. Kathryn spent several years instructing undergraduate drawing courses at The University at Albany before returning to her hometown of Syracuse to unreservedly accept a full-time faculty position at Fayetteville-Manlius High School, where she currently teaches fine art. Kathryn takes pleasure in teaching others how to see, continuously bringing regional and national attention to the students that she educates, while maintaining her studio and exhibition routine as a professional artist.



### Artist Nathalie Miebach

**Nathalie Miebach's** colorful sculptures look like children's toys gone awry, as if the designer included far too many twists and turns for a child to possibly follow. It would make sense that these twisted routes would throw one off course, as they are modeled from scientific data pulled from wind patterns, often from storms, gales or blizzards. Miebach translates this quantified data into physical forms that mimic the twirling motions of the invisible weather they aim to imitate.



"The method that I use is basket weaving because basket weaving is a very simple three dimensional grid that I can use to translate data with," said Miebach. "Everything in the sculpture, whether it is a colorful bead, a string, whether it's a dowel or reed, represents a different data point. Nothing is put on there

for purely aesthetic reasons."

The Boston artist discovered this process while simultaneously taking an astronomy class at Harvard and learning basket weaving as an extracurricular activity. She yearned for a way to physically display the data she was learning about in class, and thus her 3D scientific models were born. In a field where one is not able to see the data they collect, her sculptures give a form to that which was previously only able to be felt, tasted, and smelled.

To see more of her work go to: <http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2016/03/nathalie-miebach-weather-sculptures/>



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**Please note: The information on this page does not reflect recent election results or appointments that will take effect July 1, 2016.**

**NYSATA welcomes your involvement. Contact Your Region Chair or any BOT member for more information on how you can volunteer.**

## NYSATA Region Counties

Region	Region Name	Counties Included in Each Region
1	Western	Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming
2	Finger Lakes	Allegany, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Wayne, Seneca, Steuben, Yates
3	Central	Cayuga, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence
4	Southern	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Otsego, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins
5	Adirondack	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton
6	Capital Eastern	Schoharie, Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington
7	Southeastern	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
8	NYCATA/UFT	Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Richmond
9	LIATA-Nassau	Nassau
10	LIATA-Suffolk	Suffolk