DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 388 598 SO 025 562

AUTHOR Lasher, Rick, Ed.; Raichle, Elaine, Ed.
TITLE Issues '95 Art: A Cultural Connection - Conference '94 Keynote and Super Session Addresses.
INSTITUTION Art Educators of New Jersey, River Edge.
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 44p.; General Sessions addresses given at the Art Educator's State Conference (New Brunswick, NJ, October 1994).
AVAILABLE FROM Art Educators of New Jersey, 171 Cherry Lane, River Edge, NJ 07661.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Collected Works - General (020)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Art Education; Art History; Elementary Secondary Education; Inquiry; Interdisciplinary Approach; Symbolism; *Theater Arts; *Visual Arts
IDENTIFIERS Scene Design

ABSTRACT

In his keynote address, "Art the Effective Language", Ernest L. Boyer argues that education in the arts is crucial for five essential reasons: (1) The arts express what words cannot convey; (2) The arts are essential for stirring creativity and extending the student's way of knowing; (3) The arts integrate learning and create connections across disciplines; (4) The arts empower the alienated and disabled; and (5) The arts create community and build connections across the generations. Michael Anania, in "Theater Scenic Design", describes his experiences creating environments that visually support the vision of the playwright or composer. In "Art History and Inquiry--Making it Work in the Classroom," Mary Erickson recommends that cross-cultural themes should be integrated with other art disciplines, and that art historical inquiry be used to help guide students to their own paths of understanding. The document concludes with "A Discussion of the Conference Logo Symbolism" (Gayle Jones Reed). (MM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

EC 388 598

Issues '95

Art: A Cultural Connection---Conference '94

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

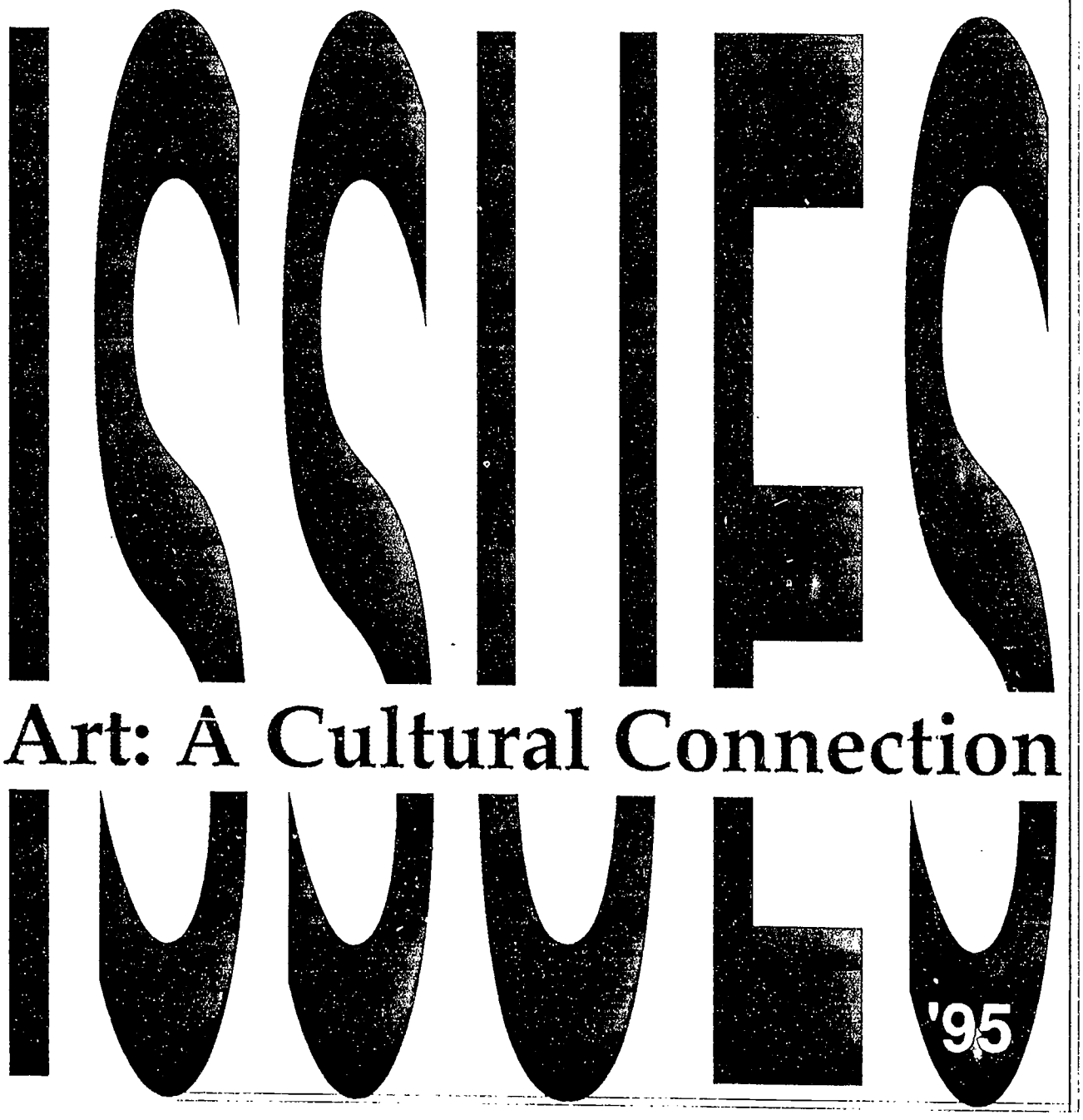
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

P. Valenti

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

5002562

BEST COPY AVAILABLE


ISSUES
Art: A Cultural Connection
ISSUES
'95

ISSUES '95

Art: A Cultural Connection— Conference '94

Keynote and Super Session Addresses

Keynote Speakers Chairperson: *Dr. Elaine Raichle*

Conference Chairperson: *Diane Fogler*

AENJ President: *Ruth Bodek*

Issues Editors: *Rick Lasher and Dr. Elaine Raichle*

This document is published by the
Art Educators of New Jersey
as a member benefit.

Executive Board
Ruth Bodek, President
Diane Fogler, President-Elect
Linda Pugliese, First Vice President
Debbie Greh, Second Vice President
Carl Hower, Immediate Past President
George DiBouno, Historian
Janet Soukup, Membership
Rick Lasher, Newsletter
Bob Williams, Secretary
Kathy Catanese, Corr. Secty/Publicity

Issues '95—2

Forward

ISSUES '95, containing General Session addresses from the Art Educator's October 1994 State Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Brunswick, NJ, is given to all AENJ members, extending the services of our organization.

Speakers for the general sessions are chosen to bring contemporary issues in art education, research and new methods of teaching to art educators, those who attend and network for the three day conference and for those who cannot be with us.

ART: A CULTURAL CONNECTION was the theme of the Conference '94, and brought to the meetings, multicultural performing arts as well as outstanding visual arts programs.

In the opening session, **Dr. Ernest L. Boyer** gave the keynote address *ART: THE EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE*, saying "It is my deep conviction ...that the arts are human kinds most essential form of language" and "a lifelong contribution for each and everyone." There was a standing ovation for Dr. Boyer from the audience of approximately 800 art educators. The day after the conference, at the White House in Washington, DC, Dr. Boyer received the Charles Frankel Prize for the Humanities, presented by President Bill Clinton, for his "leadership in the national movement for educational reform and for being a powerful voice, nationally and internationally for excellence in teaching and student service."

Michael Anania, in the Friday General Session, nationally known stage scenery designer, discussed his work showing slides of the development of stage sets, speaking of creating environments that visually support the vision of the playwright or composer. His experiences brought to the audience the imagination and artistry and work skills of the artist working in society. Mr. Anania is resident scenic designer for the Paper Mill Playhouse.

Dr. Mary Erickson's dynamic address at Friday's Super Session, reproduced here, was *ART HISTORY AS INFORMATION AND INQUIRY: MAKING IT WORK IN THE CLASSROOM*. Her thinking challenges each educator to examine theory in classroom teaching. Dr. Erickson is Professor of Art, Arizona State University and this year's Visiting Scholar at the Getty Center for Education in the Arts. (California)

Special thanks are extended to these speakers and to the many who presented conference workshops. This conference points the way in increased understanding of the arts, the connections between disciplines and the more integrated view of life itself.

Dr. Elaine L. Raichle,
General Sessions Chair
Conference '94 — Art: A Cultural Connection
Art Educators of New Jersey

ART, THE EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE

Dr. Ernest L. Boyer

It is my deep conviction and it is the simple proposition that I present to you this morning, that the arts are humankind's most essential form of language. In most respects, the human species is far less well-equipped than other creatures on this planet. We're no match for the lion in strength, we're outstripped by the ostrich in speed, we can't outswim the dolphin, we see less acutely than the hawk, and yet, as humans, we excel in the exquisite use of symbols, which empowers us to outdistance all other forms of life in how and what we see, and how we feel, and what we think. This awesome and miraculous capacity to use symbols to capture feelings and ideas, leads to one incontrovertible conclusion: **the arts are not a frill**. They are deeply embedded in that which makes us truly human. Lifelong learning and education in the arts, in my opinion, are absolutely crucial for five essential reasons.

First, the arts express that which words cannot convey. I'm not an historian nor an anthropologist, but I suspect that in the early dawn of civilization our ancestors used grunts and groans and simple gestures to convey feelings and ideas. Then, words were formed, a vocabulary took shape, followed by written symbols, making it possible to send messages from place to place and to transmit our feelings and our ideas miraculously from one generation to another. What a stunning breakthrough in human development, in our relationships with each other. But with all of the power of the written and the spoken word, I believe that language is incomplete. Deeply buried in the bosom of the human spirit were experiences that could not be captured by the verbal utterances we called words. Words could not portray sufficiently the joy of a spring morning. They could not allow us to express, sufficiently, the grief and loneliness that marked the end of a love relationship or the anguish of a separation. I'm suggesting that for the most intimate and most profoundly moving experiences, we needed more subtle symbols. So it is that men and women have, throughout history, turned

Ernest L. Boyer

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

to music and to dance and to the visual arts, in order to convey their deepest feelings and ideas. Art is a language, if you will, that allows us to express and extend that which is within. And we've developed a full spectrum of arts to convey what's deeply felt inside.

A Call for Symbols Beyond Words

Several years ago, I read an interview with Victor Weisskopf, the world renowned physicist. He was discussing the Big Bang theory, and near the end of the provocative conversation he said that if you wish to understand the Big Bang theory—and I did—you should listen to the works of Haydn. At first I thought *The New York Times* had dropped a line. I thought he had to be kidding. You don't get a Ph.D. in astronomy to study the works of Haydn. But upon reflection, the point was absolutely clear. Weisskopf was reminding us that occasionally human experiences and understandings are so profound, so intellectually and evocatively overwhelming, that they call for symbols beyond words. The Big Bang theory, he was saying, must be felt as well as thought. Conductor Murry Sidlin put it this way, "When words are no longer adequate, when our passion is greater than we're able to express in a usual manner, people turn to art." Some people go to the canvas and paint, some stand up and dance, but we all go beyond our normal means of communicating and this is common for all people on this planet.

What I find especially compelling is the way young children, even before they learn to speak, turn instinctively to rhythm, to song, to color, and to visual patterns. I believe that the language of the arts is as innate as the language we call "words." Little children intuitively respond to the color and the motion of their environment.

Lewis Thomas said on one occasion that childhood is for language. I'm convinced that lifelong learning in the arts begins very early, long before school itself. It's in the first years of life when a child's knowledge exponentially expands. This is the time when curiosity abounds, when children are actively absorbing their surroundings, when they're listening, and touching, and feeling.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if singing and painting and rhythm were woven into the fabric of every family? Wouldn't it be wonderful if every preschool and every day care center were a place of beauty? Wouldn't it be wonderful if every neighborhood had music and dance and theater for little children? We have in the United States today, nineteen million preschoolers who, incidentally, watch television fifteen billion hours every year. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a "Ready to Learn" cable channel in this country, with music and poetry and theater and painting? A channel for young children dedicated exclusively to art. We have, after all, channels for news and sports and sex and weather and junk jewelry—in fact we have two channels for junk jewelry. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had at least one channel to enrich the aesthetic experiences of little children?

James Agee wrote on one occasion that in every child that is born, under no matter what circumstance, the potentiality of the human race is born again. Our youngest children should indeed learn to practice and to celebrate the aesthetic.

Arts Extend Child's Way of Knowing

This brings me to priority number two. Beyond the expression of deep and profoundly moving feelings, the arts are essential to extend the child's ways of knowing and to bring creativity to the nation's classrooms.

When children first come to school they're filled with questions. It begins before that, of course. In fact, someone reported recently that a four-year-old will ask an average of 437 questions every day. Anyone who has been around little children knows they keep asking, "Why?" Sadly, as they come into the schools, and as we fit them increasingly into the narrow boxes of the disciplines, curiosity begins to wane. They stop asking, "Why?" And by the third or fourth grade they begin to ask, "Will we have this on the test?" It seems to me that those two questions, positioned against each other, tell us a tremendous amount about what happens to learning as

children stop pursuing their own curiosity and begin conforming to the system.

Arts Are Academic Discipline and Creative Act

When I was United States Commissioner of Education, I heard heated debates over whether art was an academic discipline or a creative act. Shame on us! In education we're always arguing polar opposites where one will win and the other lose. It's my own conviction that the arts serve both objectives. I understand that there's an academic content to be studied in art education, just as in any other language system. But the other side of the equation is that it is a fundamental, creative act. What a sadness if children are only passively inquiring into a process by which they, themselves, can become empowered.

When it comes to words, we don't have children study the symbol system alone. We teach them, we hope, to become powerful in their use of words, writing with clarity and reading with understanding. It is an active, not a passive act. Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner, one of our most provocative and insightful colleagues, inspired some thinking, for me and for many others, on the concept of intelligence in his wonderful book, *Frames of Mind*. He reminds us there is not only verbal intelligence but also social intelligence and kinetic intelligence and spatial intelligence and aesthetic intelligence. Yet how often we define intelligence only around the verbal and the cognitive. And in our educational world—consider what we test—we tend to screen out all the other intelligences that make us truly human. Very early, children are denied the capacity to define fully who they are and what they might become.

Looking at it another way, in the cognitive world we ask children to learn in what might be called the linear fashion, but I believe we urgently need to encourage children to learn in what I might call the intuitive and the creative ways, as well, where they are not asked to conform to linear analysis but instead invited to think spontaneously and inventively. I am convinced that our schools should be committed, not to competition but to cooperation and not to conformity but to creativity.

Several years ago, at a commencement exercise at Mt. Union College in Ohio, I gave what I thought was an absolutely spectacular address. I'd spoken, I suppose, twenty-three minutes and I was followed by the valedictorian speaker, who spoke only three minutes. She won the day, and let me tell you why. She said that last spring, while she was home on vacation, she was asked one afternoon to baby-sit her little five-year-old niece. Preparing for the event, she got a new coloring book and a new box of Crayolas. The two sat at the kitchen table together and the little five-year-old quickly leafed through thirty-five pages of interesting drawings of bees and birds and bunnies and all the rest to be colored in. She got to the very back page which was totally blank and she began furiously to color. Then her aunt asked her why she skipped over all the interesting objects to be colored and went to the blank page in the back. This little five-year-old said, "Well, back here, outside the lines you could do anything you want." With that, the valedictorian speaker advised her classmates to go out in the world and color outside the lines, and she sat down.

"I Celebrate Myself"

Walt Whitman wrote in the opening lines of "Leaves of Grass," "I celebrate myself." I wonder how many children in our schools get up each morning and hurry off saying, "Today—another day in which I celebrate myself." I absolutely believe we need art in every school from kindergarten to grade 12 in order to encourage students to color outside the lines, to understand that there are rules and regulations but in the end there is the inventiveness of the self. If schools do not affirm the creativity of each child, we have denied our future, which is urgently calling for creativity—not conformity—among our children. This leads me to priority three.

Beyond teaching children that the arts comprise an essential language, and beyond giving students new ways of knowing and creating, I believe we need the arts in school to help students integrate their learning and to discover the connections across the fragmented disciplines that we now call the forms of knowledge. The simple truth is that in today's academic world, students can

complete the separate lesson plans, they can cover the subjects, they can even get a high school diploma, but they often fail to gain a more coherent view of knowledge and a more integrated, more authentic view of life.

Einstein wrote on one occasion that all religion, all art and all science are branches of the same tree. Would that he could look at a school catalog in recent years. The geneticist, Barbara McClintock, wrote that everything is one. Is that the way we organize the curriculum for our children? Back to Victor Weisskopf again. When he was asked on one occasion, "What gives you hope in troubled times?" He replied, "Mozart and quantum mechanics." It's a dazzling thought to understand that both Mozart and quantum mechanics have elegant patterns that inspire the soul as well as stir the mind.

Work of Scientist & Artist Essentially the Same

Frank Press, who has recently retired from the National Academy of Sciences, sent me a copy of a speech that he gave several years ago, in which he actually affirmed that the work of the scientist and the work of the artist are essentially the same. To illustrate his point, he cited the magnificent double helix, which broke the genetic code, which he said was not only rational but beautiful. When I read Frank's speech I thought of the days when I used to watch the lift-offs at Cape Kennedy. During the final countdown, the scientists and engineers sat there with a great sense of anxiousness on their faces, and then it was three, two, one, contact, and the space shuttle rocketed successfully into orbit. If I read their lips correctly over the television, the scientists and technicians didn't say, "Well our formulas worked again." What they said, almost in unison, was the word, "Beautiful." It always struck me that they chose an aesthetic term to describe a technological achievement. This raises the question that perhaps all of us are, at the core of our work, regardless of the disciplines, searching for relationships and patterns that strike an artful chord. Is it conceivable to suggest that perhaps all of the disciplines are aesthetic at their core? We're looking for larger meanings in the fragmentation of our world. Oftentimes, we turn to an aesthetic response. But how much time do we spend in schools

building connections across the disciplines? We live, rather, in our intellectual boxes that often become political territories.

Mark Van Doren wrote, nearly fifty years ago, that the connectedness of things is what the educator contemplates to the limit of his capacity. The child, he says, who can early in life begin to see things as connected, has begun the life of learning. I am absolutely convinced that the connections across the fragmented disciplines can be accomplished most authentically through the arts. It is by definition an integrative exercise. This leads me to priority number four.

We need art education to help children who are emotionally or physically restricted. It is a powerful tool for children who are struggling with special disabilities. It can, in some fundamental way, give them power and a capacity they do not have under the typical language system we call "words."

Many years ago as a medical audiologist, I worked with children who were deaf. Because they couldn't hear, they couldn't speak, and I saw the frustration and rage that little children have when they can't communicate with others. All of us have this powerful urge to somehow reach out to one another. I've said often, first comes life, then language. We need to be connected and yet children who are deaf have extra obstacles in establishing social bonding and tend to live in a lonely and isolated world. But I often observed that through the arts, these same children would stand up and dance or put paint on canvas or weave an artistic pattern, and suddenly life became more fulfilling and complete because they had discovered a language that permitted them to express themselves visually or aesthetically to someone else. We should understand and celebrate the capacity of the arts to give to some of our children, the special facility to say what they feel when they cannot do it successfully in words.

The past dozen years, I have chaired Very Special Arts, including a program at the Kennedy Center that promotes arts for the disabled. I have seen time and time again how children and adults, who are physically and linguistically restricted, communicate joyfully through

painting and through dance and through sculpture and weaving. On one occasion, at a Kennedy Center symposium, Linda Bovee, a gifted actress, was the luncheon speaker. Linda happens to be deaf and used signing to communicate, which, incidentally, is a powerfully appealing aesthetic system of its own. She closed her comments by quoting from Robert Frost's poem that reads,

"Two roads diverge in a wood, and I
I took the one less traveled by,
and that has made all the difference."

As I sat in the audience and watched the expression on her face and the movement of the signs as she talked about two roads diverging in the wood, I wished the man who was translating her language into these funny guttural utterances would stop talking, so I could connect directly with her in this powerful visual and evocative way. It was an extraordinary, aesthetic experience. I'm suggesting that the languages of the arts have a very special meaning and potential for children with disabilities. Through music and dance and the visual arts, these children can become more confidently self-expressive and more personally empowered.

Arts Can Motivate Socially Alienated

I also believe the arts can be motivating for young people who are socially alienated.

During The Carnegie Foundation's study of the American high school, I became convinced that we have not just a school problem but a youth problem in this country. It seemed to me that far too many teenagers feel unwanted, unconnected, unneeded in the larger world, and frankly unable to communicate with it. Many students drift aimlessly from class to class, and I concluded that many drop out because no one noticed that they had, in fact, dropped in.

During that study, I visited a huge inner city school in New York City. The principal said that for years the students had vandalized the large wall next to the playground, covering it with graffiti. The school would paint it over, and the students would again apply slogans and symbols. The battle went on and on for months. One day

the principal called the student leaders in and said, "I give up, the space is yours." Soon the wall was cleared and a magnificent mural appeared and remained respectfully untouched. The children had been allowed to be expressive through the arts.

Expression in a Language They Understand

Troubled kids, it has been shown, who participate in dance and drama and music can become, almost overnight, less destructive and more creative, because they are expressing themselves through a language they understand. Vachel Lindsay wrote,

> It's the world's one crime its babes grow dull
> Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap
> Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve
> Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

The tragedy is not death, the tragedy is to die with commitments undefined, convictions undeclared, and service unfulfilled. I'm convinced the arts have a very special role to play in giving the nation's teenagers a larger sense of purpose, a language of their own.

When all is said and done, the arts, I believe, can help build community not only within the school but beyond the school as well—in neighborhoods, across the generations, and across the cultures too. I was fascinated by the theme of the 1994 conference that brings you here today, "***The Arts, A Cultural Connection.***" Louis Mumford, in *The Myth of the Machine,* reminds us that as societies grew, our cities moved from small villages into impersonal places. "They gained in productivity, he said, "but lost community." We need, somehow, a deep bonding from the first to the last moment of our lives. Biologist Mary Clark said that social bonds are not temporary contracts. "Social embeddedness," she said, "is the essence of our nature."

Yet, the sad truth is that in America today shared values have begun to fade. We're separating ourselves between the rich and the poor, the black and the white, and the young and the old. Many people are beginning to wonder if it's possible to discover common ground. Is there any way to bring us back together, or to put it another way, do we still have a common language? I am convinced that community

is not only possible but essential. I'm also convinced that the arts give us the one language, perhaps the only remaining language, that can bridge the chasms that divide. We sometimes seem not to listen to each other through words, but I still think we can communicate with each other through the arts, young and old, across the cultures. I mean, consider how Salvador Dali's painting, "The Persistence of Memory," speaks to everyone haunted by the passage of time, or consider how Picasso's "Guernica" makes a universal statement about war that can be felt by every human being. Consider how the gospel song, "Amazing Grace," creates a common bond among people, whether in Appalachia or in Manhattan. A friend of mine was in Europe at the time peace and freedom arrived for the Eastern Bloc. She was at a New Year's Eve party where no one was speaking English, and she felt a little bit out of it. Then, she said, at midnight, everybody joined hands and someone started to sing "We Shall Overcome." The babble of language melted as the evocative power of the music took over. A sense of community was created.

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow"

In 1974, I traveled with the New York State Children's Theater to the Soviet Union for a presentation of "Wizard of Oz" at the Bolshoi Theater. At the end of that performance, and incidentally we were only one small row of Americans with three thousand or more Soviets in the audience, the students sang for the encore, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." They were applauded with such enthusiasm that they sang it again, although this time, in Russian. There was not a dry eye in the house, and for a few short minutes, it seemed the Cold War had melted away. There was something about the power of that musical language that cut through the bureaucracies, that cut through all the staggering walls that we had built up around our concepts of who we love and who we hate. Through the power of a simple melody, people bonded together for a moment of appreciation and joy. I am not trying to be sentimental, but that was what happened.

At the same time, I have to say that the arts do not always build bridges. We know that they create confusion and sometimes con-

ART EDUCATORS OF NEW JERSEY
ART: A CULTURAL CONNECTION
Issues '95—14

frontation. Nevertheless, I want to say that it's my abiding faith that ultimately the arts will heal. As one first grade teacher told me, "The arts are the language of the angels." But if the arts are to build community, not fear, we must celebrate diversity and, I believe, create cultural institutions in our cities that are, themselves, open communities, not enclaves for the privileged.

The Arts Are the Language of the Angels

In the end, as well as connecting cultures, we need the arts to build connections across generations, binding life's beginnings and its endings. It remains a language that little children and older people can use to talk to one another. Margaret Mead wrote, on one occasion, that the health of any culture is sustained by three generations that vitally interact. In America today, we've created a strong horizontal culture. The infants are in day care, and children are off to school and interestingly enough, layered by ages—six, seven, eight, nine—and college students go off to campus and live in a largely contained climate for four years or more, and older people are increasingly isolated in retirement villages. I think we need places where grandparents and grandchildren can joyfully communicate through painting, and through singing, and through rhythm, and through weaving—the languages that older people understand and children too.

My mother and father spent several years in a retirement village, but the village had a day care center so that every morning there were about fifty little three and four-year-olds that came trucking in. Every little child had an adopted grandparent to spend the day with. They celebrated Halloween and Thanksgiving, and the festivals of Hanukkah and Christmas all together. When I called my father, instead of talking about his aches and pains, he'd talk about his little friend, who he was sure was going to be Governor, maybe President, some day. They'd spend weekday afternoons painting and singing and quilting and coloring — even old people can color outside the lines.

The arts, I believe, are as evocative in the later years as they are in the

beginning, although they often have been tragically suppressed. Carl Sandburg seems to speak with special meaning about arts for the elderly in his magnificent verse,

"Once having marched
Over the margins of animal necessity,
Over the grim line of sheer subsistence
Then man came
To the deeper rituals of his bones,
To the lights lighter than any bones,
To the time for thinking things over,
To the dance, to the song, to the story,
Or to the hours given to dreaming,
Once having so marched."

In the end it's through the arts that life's cycle comes full circle.

In conclusion, then, I am convinced that to sustain civility and even humanity itself, we need the arts first to express feelings and ideas words cannot convey, we need the arts to stir creativity and extend a child's way of knowing, we need the arts to integrate the fragments of academic life, we need the arts to empower the disabled and, above all, we need the arts to create community and build connections across the generations. Learning in the arts truly is lifelong and as you well know, more than anyone else, it is a deeply satisfying journey.

Theater Scenic Design

Michael Anania

I taught at Emerson College for 10 years, so I truly appreciate being in the teaching profession. To go back a little ways, I got into the theater because of the professionalism of a high school English teacher who was also our drama coach. In my sophomore year, she wrote to a hundred summer stock theaters and found me a job for the following year. so when I was a junior, I worked at the Lincoln Opera House in Lincoln, New Hampshire as an apprentice, and that's how my career really began. I have great admiration for Patricia McDermott who was that teacher.

My chief responsibility as a scenic designer is to create environments that visually support the vision of the playwright or the composer. However, to go from the first reading of a script to opening night, a designer must work with many collaborators and make many compromises, and it is out of these collaborations and these compromises that a scenic design is born. To be a scenic designer, one needs the imagination and artistry of the creative artist and the skills of a stage artisan. This morning, I would like to share with you some of my experiences in the theatre, and try to explain to you how those skills have to merge, so that one can go from a first reading of a script to an opening performance on the stage.

The first thing I must do as a scenic designer is, of course, read the script or listen to the music, if I am doing a ballet, an opera, or a musical. A preliminary sketch of *"Windy City,"* was made for a play which was done approximately 10 years ago. The sketching stage comes a little bit further down the road than one might think. After reading the script, there are many conferences with the director, who really is our chief interpreter and the boss of the production team. If the director has a good, strong idea and we all can function together as a team, we tend to have a much stronger production. After a great deal of research has been done and many more conferences with the director, I will go to a preliminary sketch stage, such as the one for *"Windy City." "Windy City"* is unique in that it is a musical taken from a play and a movie, The Front Page. It is unusual for an American musical because it is basically a unit or a single set, meaning there is one set on the stage for the entire time. Most American musicals are known for their many sets and designing today is not only about what each set looks like but how you get from one set to another without stopping the flow of the play. Transitions from one set to another are as important in the design

process as each set is. This sketch was originally a pencil sketch and was printed in a brown line technique. I took this to the director, David Bell, and we used this sketch as the basis for one of our first production meetings. In the model for the set there is no theatre proscenium around it. One of the collaborators, and I like to think of this as a collaborator even though it is inanimate, is the theatre or the space that I'm going to use. This set was designed for the Paper Mill Playhouse and the top of the Lucky Strike sign is about the height of our proscenium arch, which is about 24 feet high and the space is about 40 feet wide and 50 feet deep*. Very often we will do a model in brown tone or one color to just check proportions and show the director what is most important to them, which is the space usage, or their floor plan. Many directors cannot read ground plans all that easily but they see a model and it is meaningful. The model, when I was first designing, would be a last step for us. It has now become an intermediate step. I will do sketches and then my assistants and I will begin drafting elevations and do a rough model to show the director, and also the producer, when he starts screaming about who is going to pay for all of this, which is always an issue. The producer also becomes one of my most valued collaborators.

A floor plan is developed. It's basically a birds-eye view of what the set is doing. It shows all the masking, backdrop, and levels (and actually this set had, I believe, three ground plans to show all the levels). So when we put this together with the model, it gives the director a very good idea of what he is going to get.

I'm also responsible for all of the detail that you ever see on the set, including any prop that you might imagine.

We design an elevation of one of the main wall units which shows all of the architectural detail and includes all the notes to the carpentry shop about how they would need to build this. That's also my responsibility, so as I'm visualizing a set, I must also think about how much it is going to cost, how it can be built, and can it be built easily in the facility that I have to work in, or with the number of carpenters who work there.

The backdrop for "Windy city." was done in sepia tones, a collage of actual buildings from the period, and was actually painted by approximately 10

*Photograph #1, page 24

painters. The next slide shows the actual set of *"Windy City"* in its reality. We kept it very much monotone of sepia colors to give it that feeling of a sepia photograph. Many of the costumes were also done in the same tones. So this brings in another aspect of collaboration - I must work very closely with the costume and lighting designer to get together a uniform concept and look for a production. The cost of this production was approximately $100,000 just for the scenery. It took a shop of 25 to 30 carpenters about six weeks to build and paint it. We did a great deal of period research into newsrooms, specifically those in Chicago and, actually, a pressroom from that period. This was part of the Prague quadrennial exhibit that was shown in Prague. Every four years there is what is known as a Prague Quadrennial, which is an exhibit in Prague of the international community's latest work in scenic design. The *"Windy City"* set was a part of that exhibit and that year we, representing the American exhibit, won the Gold (Cup), which is the highest honor that can be received.

Some of my other collaborators are the actors. You would think I wouldn't have much to do with them but I do. If something isn't working, if the floor is too slippery, or if one of the actors has special needs, I will eventually get involved. "Man is the measure of all things," thus the actor brings a sense of scale to my design.

One of my favorite productions at the Paper Mill was the production of *"Sayonara,"* which is taken from the Mitchener novel and you might remember the movie. We are going from Korea to Japan here and we see the tori and the river. That's a muslin drop, with no seams, so we can light up from behind and it will be translucent. I had to provide the elevation and then again paint it. That drop is about 50 feet wide by 27 feet high*.

"Sayonara," was a new work at Paper Mill and so we did several workshops. As the work evolved, we came up with the production scheme of how to move the scenery from one scene to another very quickly because the story was written like the movie script. As I said before, the transitions are the most important thing, so I devised a series of shoji screens. Downstage, closest to the audience, were four translucent, actually transparent, bamboo screens and then there were six shoji's upstage that were your typical muslin shoji's. These screens would move in interesting and beautiful flowing patterns as the scenery was moving and being changed either upstage of it

*Photograph #2, page 24

or amongst it and when people were taking journeys. The screens would also go along with them and reinforce the journeys that they were taking. We wanted the American presence to be felt in this show in a way that made you feel that it just didn't fit in and was inappropriate. You can see this illustrated with the General's office, there, sort of looking at odds with the beauty of the Japanese architecture.

"Sayonara" is a show about the Takarasuka Theatre. It's about a theatre in Japan where the women play all the roles, including the men's roles We did a series in this show of production numbers called the Seasons, and this was the Spring set. The cherry blossoms were all papier-mache' (and I mean tissue paper blossoms that were hand done) and the backdrop is 10,000 pieces of gold leaf that had been hand applied by the painters on the drop. The cherry tree was painted over that and this was just one of a series in a sequence. We bring these drops in, way downstage, so we can be changing for larger scenes that are happening or about to happen upstage. The whole concept behind the show is to illustrate the pull and the clash between the two cultures and here we are getting just a feeling of the beauty of the Japanese culture.

Each little tree also gets its own elevation. Everything must be drawn and then built. This tree was drawn in my studio; I believe I actually did do this tree. I actually don't do much drawing these days, I have many assistants who help me along. We show the ground plan of everything we must design, a front elevation, and a section, which is probably the most valuable thing the shop does. We subcontracted this tree out to an independent contractor who specializes just in doing foliage and trees of this nature, and I think the cost was about $8,000 for this one tree.

One of my favorite theatres to work in is the Central City Opera House in Central City, Colorado, which is a turn of the century mining town. The theatre is an 1850's opera house which is only 24 feet wide and 17 feet high. In an opera here, I find it's much easier to get a concept going with the director than in many of the American plays, simply because opera directors - not always but often - are more willing to go along with something new or abstract, something that is not from the real world. American directors tend to be wedded to the reality of television and movies. In the Central City's

Opera, *"Magic Flute,"* the director wanted a very storybook feeling for the show. Central City has a very limited budget of about $30,000 to do one major opera and this is always a challenge for me. I decided to do it basically in white velour masking and everything else that came in was done on silk; the black panels were silk. Varying pieces of silk would come in to change a location or the feeling that we were going for, to help enhance the emotional impact of the scene.

Paper Mill is famous for its operetta productions and the *"Merry Widow,"* which was very much indebted to the baroque and the art nouveau. This is an ante-room of the ballroom, a portrait of the king is there. We had very strong color controls in this production. The first scene was all in black and gold, the second was basically green and blues, and the third was in red tones. Robert Johanson, who is the artistic director of Paper Mill, has very strong visions about the operettas and Robert, in fact, is very strong about his vision of the entire show. He often comes to me with definite ideas about how he wants a show to work. Not all directors function this way. There are some directors who just say to me, "I don't know what to do with this, you just do it." Some of them say, "No, I want a door stage right here and I need a bed, stage left here." You can try to convince them otherwise but sometimes you win and sometimes you don't!

In the garden scene, Act II of the *"Merry Widow,"* * the whole piece was on a huge 30 foot turntable, so that the center island and the bridge would all be able to revolve around to the different parts of the garden. The back drop was actually a scrim, which is a fabric that, when lit from behind, can be seen through. This scrim was backed with white plastic, so you don't see through it and you can light it from behind giving you a wonderful translucent glow. The costumes were by Gregg Barnes.

My favorite scene in *"Merry Widow"* is going to Maxim's. In the set showing the outside Maxim's was a huge stained glass window, a tribute to the art nouveau and two huge art nouveau ladies holding tall lamps. They were constructed by Nino Novelino, who runs Costume Armor, which is a sculpture house that does sculpture for the theatre. Nino will sometimes sculpt things in styrofoam and then they will be cast or he will do things in vacuform, which is plastic that is heated over a form. He actually built these

*Photograph #3, page 24

ladies on huge, overblown man
done with muslin, and all the l
We decided to go with the ver
into the next scene was wond
Before your eyes the painted p
portal back there, along with
Maxim's (not a historical rec
feeling for this play and the tin

My Fair Lady," is one of the cla
there is any place that does them
was a Victorian fan painted by
own facility in Edison, at Rari
everything. The curtain went up
to this was fairly traditional and
revival which was much more s

I think the next slide, which is l
sets. I've done *"My Fair Lady"*
You can see that basically it i
entrance.

It's probably about 21 feet tall. A
l'oeil. Much of the furniture w
chaise just the right size. It's v
books in the upper level.

"The Ballroom" scene was in g
the door, the study splits into two
the dancers are already dancing.
are almost more important than
have the coat of arms, mirrors a
happens within 10 or 15 seconds.

*** The Glory is not in never falling, but in rising everytime you fall. ***

The Flower Market - It's hard to believe but there are two backdrops there that are absolutely flat and through the magic of one point perspective, you really feel like you are in the Covent Garden Flower Market. I had an

*Photograph #4, page 24

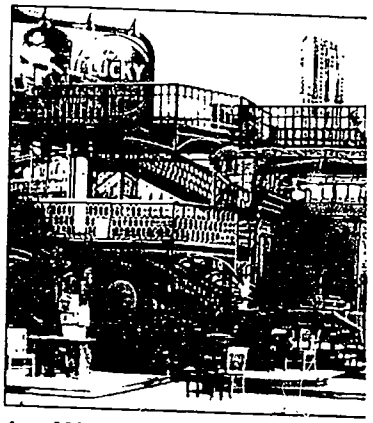
assistant working about two weeks laying out this perspective and then the painters had to do the same thing in full scale.

One of Robert Johanson's most successful adaptations was *"Great Expectations."* When the audience comes in, I like to set a mood and a tone with a show curtain." This had the words from the book printed on slatted wood, and then the sliders would open up to reveal different scenes. This entire production was done in all grey tone, very textural, lots of muslin overlays, and cobwebs and things. Really, Miss Havisham was the center of this piece, as she is in the book, as well as Pip.

Next, one of my favorite pictures of Miss Havisham, her cobwebs, her clock (covered in cobwebs) and her dressing table. We actually had to make cobwebs on a net, (bobbinet) because there's a scene where there are no cobwebs and we had to have the stagehands backstage put all these cobwebs back on during the play. Our crafts people were very clever in how they could accomplish this to create the haunting feeling of the book.

When I was teaching at Emerson College, which I did for 10 years, we didn't have a large proscenium theatre. We had small, black box theatres, which are some of my favorite theatres to work in, and someone there wrote a new piece called, *"The Secret Life of Queen Victoria."* It's great when it's a new piece because you can do anything you want with it and the design was very much based on Victorian imagery. I would take things from the Victorian world and blow them up, super scale, to become parts of this set, so lampshades (pseudo-Victorian lampshades) became man-eating plants and the huge Victorian fans became trees, feather trees. They were all done out of ostrich plumes. It's great fun when you can attach some sort of metaphor like that to a show like this one.

When I was just out of college, I had the good fortune of working at Tufts Arena Theatre at Tufts University and we did, *"What the Butler Saw"* Tommy Thompson directed and used a very clean, clinical approach to a Joe Orton black comedy. Everything was black, white, and grey, and this gave nothing away about the play. This was the director's idea - you know - he didn't want to give it away, as this was an absurdest black comedy. Well, this was in August, then I did the show in October with another director at

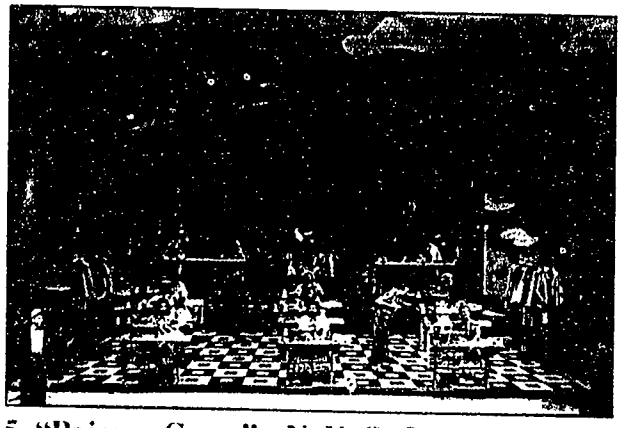


1. "Windy City" at the Pap

3. "Merry Widow" - Garde

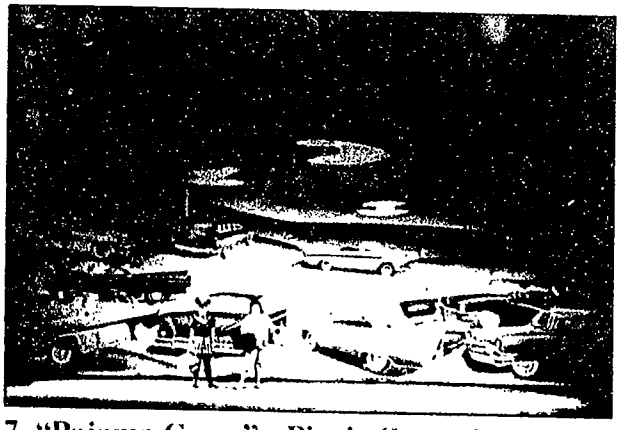
** The Glory is not in never falling, but in rising everytime you fall.**

ART EDUCATION
ART A CULTURAL CONNECTION
Issues '95--24



5. "Pajama Game" - N. Y. C. Opera

6. "Pajama Game" - Hallway



7. "Pajama Game" - Picnic Grounds

8. "Wizard of Oz" - "Off to See The Wizard"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Emerson College and Dr. Shar
sets too funny. There were ink l
the show did not work nearly as
has to be careful in dealing wit
the audience too much, too so
Cooney at the Paper Mill, (Ray
British farce in London) we're
are very careful to let the comc

I've also done eight productior
to open my ninth, "*Pajama G*
called me and asked me to do t
that old, show. What am I going
at lots of research of the fifties
if we are going to do this show,
which is wing and drop, with d
going to have a great deal of fun
and the populux period and eve
the show, the *"Sleep Tight Pa*
quality of the fifties and the sty

The next shot - this is the sewi
taking a year, 1953, and pushing
those funny girders, the patterns
in New York, the designers in
a designer got to do what he wan
who did not know what to do wi
the result was great.

Next - This is a corridor drop w
are doing a number but instead c
plaid fabric and that big chevro
plaid fabrics, why not?

In the office scene of *"Pajama Game,"* we carried the theme and the bright color throughout, and we just had a very good time - a lot of glass block, very industrial.

**** The Glory is not in never falling, but in rising everytime you fall.****

*Photograph #5, page 25, **Photograph #6, page 25

The next drop* that goes up, we're in the picnic grounds, the trees were all boomerang shapes, and the tree trunks were all of that paneling that started to become popular in the fifties. You can see the portal shape at the top of the slide giving you, again, the fifties outline in the shape.

In another traditional type musical at Paper Mill, *"Guys and Dolls"* - light was very important to give the sense of Times Square, the period (the forties) and lots of lit-up buildings in the background. It was performed on a raked stage, which is a slanted stage, with lots of signs flown in overhead. The signs, none of them neon, were all very standard, either light boxes or little light bulbs.

I have said *"Phantom"* was my greatest challenge at Paper Mill but nothing can beat the problems of staging *"The Wizard of Oz."* This was the most difficult thing to get on stage in the 24-25 years I have been doing this. Using a black and white scheme from the beginning, we tried to be quite true to the movie and I think we were pretty successful.

An important scene, the yellow brick road, was just a flat, painted hanger piece, like a ribbon just going off into space. The yellow brick road the actors stood on was vinyl, painted with what we call marlee, or a dance floor, and the mirrors in the background reflected all the scenery.** The corn stalks growing out of the floor were satin sculptures and the corn was vacuform.

In the scene inside Oz we actually had wonderful gates to the city, the beauty parlor, and the wizard's head. We had 60 stagehands backstage to run the machinery. The *Wizard of Oz* was one of the best plays we could do because it brought in a whole new audience of young people to the Paper Mill. They may never have been to the theatre to see something like this and they've been coming back ever since.

Mr. Anania described many other stage sets he had designed which could not be included because of limited space for slide reproductions.

*Photograph #7, page 25, **Photograph #8, page 25

Art History and Inquiry — Making It Work in the Classroom

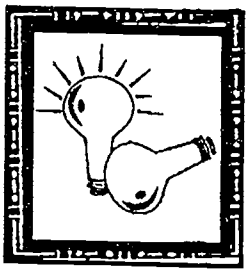
Dr. Mary Erickson

Through the discipline of art history, art teachers can open pathways of understanding that can lead their students to greater enjoyment and appreciation of artworks as well as to insights into human culture: who we are, who we have been, and who we might become.

Let me recommend two questions to consider when planning the art history component of an art program:

1) What should my students know?
2) What should they be able to do in art history.

Or, put another way, what information is important enough to spend valuable instructional time on and what inquiry skills should students take with them out of the classroom to use in the own lives?



Organizing Art History Information With Cross-Cultural Themes

Cross-cultural themes can be used to organize art history information. Themes can be overarching big ideas, rooted in very basic human issues, that cut across temporal and cultural lines. In the many histories of the many cultures across the globe, human beings have confronted many of the same situations. Those situations have been influenced by, as well as reflected in the artworks made in those cultures.

For example, one cross-cultural theme might be "Powerful Families." People live in families all over the world. Students can begin thinking about this theme by considering whether their own families have objects with special family significance, such as family heirlooms: a pocket watch from great grandfather; a great

aunt's handmade, embroidered table cloth; a special toy passed down from a parent, or an old wedding photograph. They might think about something they could make to express their best memories of some special time in their family.

Once students have begun to understand the basic theme, they can pursue more established domains of art historical scholarship. For example, with the "Powerful Family" theme, they might study how art has expressed the power of families in different cultures. They might, for example, study the sixteenth century bronze plaques that decorated the king's palace in Benin, West Africa, or the family crests represented on the totem poles, blankets, and paintings of Northwest Coast Native America in the nineteenth century, or Rococo paintings, such as Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" or portraits that Boucher was commissioned to make by royal families across eighteenth century Europe.

Integrating Art History Themes With Other Art Disciplines:

A large, overarching theme, such as "Powerful Families," lends itself to a variety of art making possibilities. I've already mentioned the possibility of students making an object expressive of a good family memory. For example they might make and decorate a small clay serving dish, or embroider and decorate an often repeated family saying. Or they might draw or paint a portrait of a favorite relative.

The theme, "Powerful Families," can be expanded into art criticism by using it as a starting point for students' own interpretations of more recent artworks, such as Grant Wood's "American Gothic" or Diane Arbus' photographs of families.

Issues in aesthetics can be raised by the theme of "Powerful Families." For example, around the issue of family patronage, two student teams might debate: one team might argue that artists control all the important aspects of the art making process and the other team might argue that patrons control very significant aspects

of art making.
Connections beyond the art curriculum can also be built on the theme of "Powerful Families." Students might discuss the role of family in today's society. Other family theme activities might include intergenerational interviews, guest visits by senior citizens, or family tree investigations.

Organizing Art History Information Themes:

I've been working on an art history based curriculum resource which is structured around ten roughly chronological, cross-cultural themes. I call this curriculum resource "A Story of Art in the World." Here are the ten themes I've come up with to help tell my story:

Our Place in the World, Farm Folk City Folk, Great Teachers Long Ago, Spiritual Worlds, When Cultures Meet, Powerful Families, Revolution, Technology, The Individual, and Global Village.

There are many different stories of art in the world. As the art history component of an art curriculum is developed, it is important to consider the range of time periods as well as cultures students should know about and the big ideas, or themes, around which they can organize information.

Engaging Students Actively Through Art Historical Inquiry

I've talked about ways to organize art history information, now let's consider how students can be actively involved with art history. Chances are, no matter how exciting we think a presentation of art history information is, students are all too likely to start getting bored if they are only passive viewers and listeners.

Art historical inquiry can engage students actively. No matter how well artworks are selected for study, all the artworks that might be

of special interest to all the diverse students in today's art classroom are not likely to be included. If students learn inquiry skills, they can ask their own questions to lead them to information, around which they can develop their own stories of art in the world.

Art historical inquiry can be seen as involving five art historical inquiry abilities. Students can learn to use these skills with any artwork that they judge worthy of their attention. Quickly, they are, imagination, two kinds of fact finding, interpretation, and explanation.

Imagination:

Art history exercises the imagination. If students are going to understand what artworks meant in the culture which produced them, they must learn how to imagine themselves in that culture. I've found it helpful to plan what I call "Here and Now — There and Then" Imagination Exercises.

For example, with the "Powerful Family" theme, students can think about things in their own homes in the "here and now," things that express their own family values. Or students can look at monuments, parks, sculptures, or buildings in the community which were made possible by, or even named after, powerful families in the community. Students can analyze the appearance of some object associated with the family theme, for example, a tablecloth passed down from a grandmother, or a local museum that carries a family name. Questions such as the following can help guide students analysis:

> Do you think that the family cared about the appearance of the object?
> Why?
> Do you think a family member influenced how it was made?
> Did a family member actually make it?
> If it was purchased, why do you suppose it was selected?

Having helped students understand that families can be important art patrons, they can begin to imagine themselves out of the "here and now" and into the "there and then." For example, they might imagine

what family life was like in eighteenth century England when Gainsborough painted the "Blue Boy," or in a Haida village along the Pacific Coast of Canada in the late nineteenth century when family crests were carved on poles erected in front of family meeting houses. The same questions posed above, about the "here and now" family objects, can be asked about the "Blue Boy" or a totem pole.

Such imagination exercises should lead students to formulate questions to direct their own inquiry about artworks made in other times and cultures.

Establishing Basic Facts About the Artwork:

A second art historical inquiry ability is the ability to establish facts about an artwork. Basic facts include: how the actual object looks, as distinct from a reproduction of the work; how the artwork looked when it was new; how the artwork was made; what subject matter, if any, the artwork depicts; and how sensory elements were organized to make the artwork appear as it does.

Let's think about a Northwest family crest pole as an example. Students viewing a photographic reproduction of a totem pole need to understand how tall the actual pole is and whether their arms would reach around it. Students can figure out how high up they could reach on a pole if they were standing next to it. They can imagine walking around the pole to see the back, or standing right next to it and looking straight up toward the top.

Another important fact about an artwork concerns its condition. Students need to imagine how the artwork appeared when it was new. Students can look carefully to see whether there are cracks, or evidence that parts may be missing from the totem pole. Maybe there's evidence that the pole has been repaired or that the paint has faded and worn off.

Students also need to understand something about the materials, tools, and processes used to make the artwork. Here are some questions to lead technical inquiry:

What kind of tree would be needed to make such a straight pole? a palm tree, oak tree, pine tree —
What tools would be needed to carve the wood and erect it in front of a meeting house?
How do you suppose the carver went about carving the pole? Do you think the carver had a plan before beginning? How did the carver decide which part to do first?

Students can describe the artwork in detail. They can start with any obvious subject matter. For example, a totem pole is likely to show eyes, noses, mouths, beaks, legs, fins, and tails. However, students may come to realize that they can't be sure whether an animal is a beaver or a bear. Such an experience helps students understand the need for more information about the artistic traditions of the Haida people.

Finally, students can describe and analyze the sensory and formal structure of the artwork. Here are some questions to guide such analysis:

How would the carved wood feel if you could touch it?
How can you describe the shapes made by the carver?
What colors can you see?
How are the shapes put together?
Are any shapes repeated?

Establishing Facts About Life "There and Then": A third art historical inquiry ability is the ability to establish facts about life "there and then." Students need to be able to inquire into what it might have been like to live at the time and in the culture from which an artwork came. Students can locate the artwork in various contexts, such as the natural context, the functional context, the general cultural context, and the artworld context.

Let's turn our attention once again to the family crest poles of the Haida people. Students can investigate the natural world in which the Haida people live. They might begin by locating the Queen Charlotte Islands, for example, off the coast of British Columbia.

Then students can seek out geography reference sources to identify the vegetation, animal life, land forms and climatic conditions of the region. Finally they can speculate about how this natural world might have affected the appearance of artworks made by the Haida.

Students can also learn to ask questions about the functional and cultural contexts of artworks. Questions about the functional and cultural context are easily connected. Students can learn to formulate questions to help them better understand how Haida society was structured, and what function the family crest poles served in that society. Older and more independent students might seek answers to their own questions. The teacher can write younger students' questions on the board and use them to guide her or his presentation of information about Northwest Coast art.

Traditional Haida people believe that some families have a special relationship with animals. The family sings to the animals, shows them respect, and in return, the animals allow themselves to be killed and do not come back to haunt the family. Certain members of the family are called by a special name, or title, because of this relationship with the animals. The family crest includes carvings, paintings, and weavings that tell the stories of the special animals and families. But the family crest includes more than just these objects. It also includes the stories, chants, and dances of the animals. Pursuing inquiry questions about functional and cultural contexts can lead students to a fuller understanding of the meaning of artworks to the people for whom they were originally made.

There is another important context which students need to understand. Questions about the artworld context can guide students' investigation of the art traditions and conventions with which the historical art maker and viewers were familiar. For example, if students examine other Northwest Coast artworks, they can begin to appreciate that the pole carver learned a great deal from other art makers of the time. Students can attempt to identify general stylistic characteristics, such as the use of rounded rectangular shapes, red and black colors, and bilateral symmetry.

Interpretation:

Perhaps the fourth art historical inquiry ability is the most essential skill. Students should learn how to interpret the cultural/historical meaning of artworks of other times and cultures. Students need to use their imaginations and they need to establish facts about artworks and about life "there and then," in order to interpret the artworks. With such information they can begin to interpret what artworks might have meant to the people who made them, to the people who viewed them, and to the culture at large at the time the artworks were made.

Let's go back to Gainsborough's "Blue Boy." Students need to understand that they can continue to interpret artworks in the "here and now" by asking new questions which might never have occurred to people of the time when the artworks were made. However, they should learn that art historical interpretation attempts to interpret artworks in the "there and then," that is, within the artworks' own historical/cultural context. Here are three questions to guide students' art historical interpretations:

Why do you think Gainsborough wanted his painting to look the way it does?

Why do you think the patron might have thought the portrait was interesting?

What do you suppose most people living in England in the late eighteenth century might have thought about the portrait if they had had a chance to see it?

In pursuit of answers to these questions, students can seek information about Gainsborough's other works, information about the life of wealthy English families, and information about class structure of late eighteenth century England. Such contextual information can help students understand the role Rococo artists played in maintaining the status and style of powerful families of that era.

Explanation:

Finally, we reach the fifth art historical inquiry ability. Students

should learn how to explain relationships among artworks from different cultures and time periods. Students must be familiar with a number of artworks before they begin to speculate about relationships among them.

We've already considered a couple of ways to find relationships among artworks. One is to use large, overarching themes, such as "Powerful Families." Another is to look for similarities. Artworks that share many similarities are said to be in the same style. Finally, themes and styles can be used as plot twists to tell a story (or history) of art.

Returning to Gainsborough's "Blue Boy," here are some questions to guide students' explanations of how this single painting fits into a larger history of art:

What are the characteristics of Gainsborough's personal style?

How do Gainsborough's paintings reflect the general characteristics of Rococo art?

In addition to the expression of family power, what themes (big ideas) tie "Blue Boy" to other art of its time?

What did Gainsborough learn from the Baroque painters who preceded him?

How and why is Rococo painting different from Baroque painting?

What influence did Gainsborough have on painters who followed him? Were his ideas built upon, or rejected and replaced by other ideas?

In what other eras in Western culture is the patronage of family an important factor in explaining art of its time?

In what eras and other cultures is artwork an expression of the power of families?

Sequencing Inquiry:

To recap, the five art historical inquiry skills, we've considered are: imagination, establishing facts about artworks, establishing facts about life there and then, interpreting historical/cultural meaning, and explaining relationships among artworks from different times

and cultures. These skills all interrelate. Students can begin by focusing on any art historical inquiry ability. Interpretation and explanation generally require more prior knowledge about art and culture than is necessary for imagining, and the establishment of facts.

Integration of Information and Inquiry

How do all these inquiry abilities relate to the ten overarching themes I listed earlier? Each theme takes a look at artworks traditionally included in surveys of as well as artworks from around the world. Each theme makes cross cultural comparisons. The first theme includes prehistoric cave paintings; the second includes Mesopotamian and Egyptian artworks; the third includes Greek and Roman art; the fourth, Byzantine and Medieval; the fifth, Renaissance and Baroque; the sixth ("Powerful Families") includes Rococo paintings; the seventh includes Neoclassical; the eighth, Impressionist; the ninth, PostImpressionist, Expressionist, and Abstract Expressionist; and the last theme, "Art and the Global Village," looks at ignored and neglected artists, crafts, folk art, and environmental art. Among the ten themes are artworks from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. The chronology used to organize my story is largely Western. Other stories of art could be organized around the chronology of art of any number of non-Western cultures. Although I find chronology helpful in telling my story of art, other stories can be told using other structures.

I introduce each theme in my story by relating it to the lives and interests of young people today, in an effort to stimulate their imaginations. I'm asking students to use their imaginations to transfer their "here and now" knowledge to help them understand "there and then" artworks. My "Story of Art in the World"* is an explanation, which includes many individual interpretations, and which is built upon a great number of facts about artworks and life in other times and places. Although art history study should be based in fact, many different true stories can be told about art from around the world.

In summary, I have two recommendations for art teachers planning the art history component of their art programs:

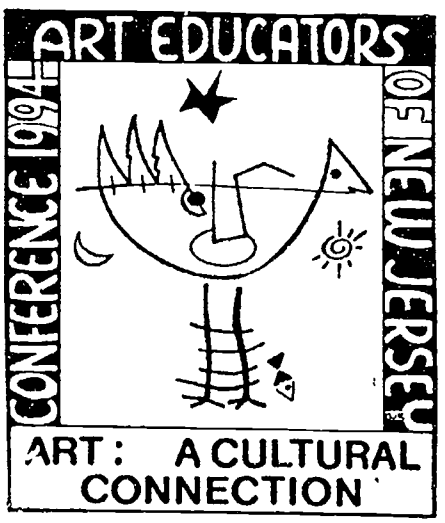
1) consider using cross-cultural themes to organize art history information, and
2) consider using art historical inquiry to help guide students to chart their own paths to understanding.

*The art history information themes and art historical inquiry abilities outlined in this paper form the structure for "A Story of Art in the World," a curriculum resource package scheduled for publication in 1995. For more information and a free catalog write to CRIZMAC, 3721 E. Hardy, Tucson, AZ 85716 or call 1-800-913-8555.

A Discussion of the Conference Logo Symbolism

by ***Dr. Gayle Jones Reed***
Logo Designer and Art Educator, Wayne, NJ Schools

"Culture," in the words of Sherry B. Ortner, might be positionally described as "a body of symbols and meanings in play in a given society at a given time" which "operates largely as a pool of symbolic resources upon which people draw, and over which people struggle, in the course of social and political differentiation and conflict." If cultural symbolism defines discrete societies, which of these symbols are cross-over images? Perhaps the logo for this year's AENJ conference could be a catalyst for symbolic analysis on the part of our members. I chose the following images as reflective of the imagery of cultures in general and of children's visual expressions.



Horizontally cutting the visual plane is a base-line, separating ground and sky. A row of trees is on the line to the left, creating "landscape." Representing the animal kingdom are "bird" (air), "man" (earth), and "fish" (water). The image of man represents "portrait." There is no "still-life,"...or is there? The picture has a North, East, South and West, represented in symbolic form. A star represents the heavens to the north. The sun rises in the east and is flanked by the moon in the west. Are the sun and moon representing the day-night pattern of life? The star representing "above" is countered by the fish "below," both straight-line images. Arcs are used in the bird-face image. Line is primary to form and

has been used in this logo to represent "early art" of whatever kind, from whatever culture.

In Tibet, picture hangings (thankas) are framed as windows which allow devout to see into the sacred realm of Buddhism. Brocaded borders, usually three in number with the outer one blue, act as the window edge. This AENJ logo border includes word symbols for decoration in the blue border, as the brocaded silk included repetitive forms for decoration and light-catching enhancement.

Color, in some cultures, was more than just a decorative finish. It was a way of joining, by association, the spiritual life with the daily life of the people. Dubin, a bead researcher, discusses color as reflective of primal substances, association red (coral) with blood, fire and light; blue (turquoise) with water, sky and air; and yellow (amber) with earth. Wolf feels that "the first and most important meaning of color to man was a talisman beckoning friendly gods and warding off evil spirits." The Greeks associated earth with green, air with yellow, water with blue and fire with red. The colors of the conference poster were chosen, first because they are primal and symbolic and second because they are primary to the (young) artist's palette.

If there is more, I hope you will enjoy making the associations between symbol and style. I'm sure the students will recognize Miro and Klee-like images.

1. Culture Through Time-Anthropological Approaches. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, ed., Stanford University Press. p. 59.
2. Lois Sherr Dubin, The History of Beads. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987. p. 206.
3. Thomas Wolf, The Magic of Color. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1964, p. 17.

The Conference '94 logo included in a piece of student art by Amanda Newell, a fourth grader in the Kuser School, Hamilton Township, New Jersey. Her art teacher is Kathy Catanese.

Issues '95

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Art Educators of New Jersey