

**Kathy Connors Teaching Award 2005
presented to Karen Keifer-Boyd
by the NAEA Women's Caucus**

Mentors and Collaborators

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The Kathy Connors Teaching Award—initiated in 2000 with Kathy Connors the first awardee—honors, in particular, two types of teaching: mentoring and collaboration. In forming this autobiographical presentation, I reflected on my mentors, and the many collaborations I have had. I am fortunate to have had excellent mentors, most with whom I have also collaborated—Judy Chicago, Patricia Amburgy, Wanda Knight, Jane Maitland-Gholson, Beverly Jones, Rogena Degge, Doug Blandy, Melody Weiler, Kay Holbo, Elizabeth Hoffman, June King McFee, and Kristin Congdon.



June King McFee has not only been an inspiration and mentor to me, especially when I discussed and reflected on her life and work while creating the video, *Conversations with June King McFee*,¹ she has served as a role-model mentor to many. Those she has mentored, Rogena Degge and Kristin Congdon, have advised and supported me. Her legacy of mentorship lives on. When grad students asked June, “What is art education?” She responded, “It’s what we make it, and there are a lot of us making it.”

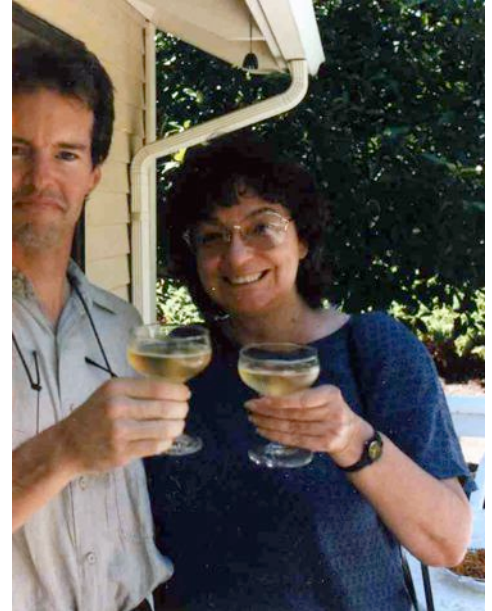
Kristin Congdon, I met in 1980 at Maude Kerns Art Center in Oregon. She shared with me her research process for writing a dissertation and encouraged me to pursue graduate studies, particularly at the University of Oregon.

I heeded Kristin’s encouragement after the births of my sons—Ovid was born on my 26th birthday in 1981 and Calder was born on John Lennon’s birthday in 1983. When my sons were two and four years of age, I began graduate school in art education. I balanced graduate studies with motherhood, artmaking, and teaching by combining these areas. At the University of Oregon, I worked with Jane Maitland-Gholson, Beverly Jones, Rogena Degge, Doug Blandy, and Linda Ettinger. Calder and Ovid were integrated with my graduate studies. They taught me much about teaching and children. They continue to teach me. At age three and five, they played with CAD programs on the computers in the



architecture computer lab while I worked with digital video editing as part of my dissertation research. At that time few art educators and few women worked with computers, so there were no rules that excluded children from architecture computer labs. In the early 1990s, for my doctoral study, I explored digital technologies for visual anthropology interpretive strategies to understand learning processes involved in performative art.

Doug Blandy chaired my master's thesis and Beverly Jones my dissertation. Bev wrote a grant that provided me with the technology I needed, and during one period of the research—when things needed to be accelerated due to Oregon passing the dreadful Measure 5, a property tax measure initiative, which closed down many programs, including the University of Oregon's art ed program—I spent weekends in her office. I often slept on Bev's office couch to take full advantage of focused time around the clock on Saturdays and Sundays while my husband, Ernest, took care of our sons. I thank Bev for the intellectual journey she took me on, as well as the other escapades with her and grad student friend, Liz Hoffman. They often involved shopping, desserts, and fabrics.



Doug Blandy, a dear friend and long-time mentor, has the ethics of a saint, and yet was intrigued and supportive of my subversive actions (often conceived with Bev and Liz). I could not ignore injustice or be complicit in unfair decisions. He fueled my awareness by providing materials on social issues such as the Social Theory Caucus newsletters. On my thesis drafts in the 1980s, he wrote “leaps” and “elaborate” many times. When I finally connected the leaps and elaborated enough to master the thesis, I made rubber stamps with these words for Doug to stamp on other student papers.

Jane Maitland-Gholson, who guided me on both my thesis and dissertation, advised me not to indicate that I figured out my thesis research methodology in a dream. So, I edited my description of this dream in my thesis and called it a metaphor for the methodology. This teaching award honors the many mentors who have taught me much.

My first mentor was my mother, Lenore Treat Keifer. Watching her as a grandparent play with my sons, I was reminded of the games she created for my brother and I to play that were heuristic in nature. I also received a taste of what I must have been like while trying to keep up with my second son. Like my mom and myself, my youngest son Calder, displays an active nature. When I discovered that I could easily tip the buggy and crawl around to explore, as well as, remove the bars from my wooden playpen to effect an escape, my parents gave up on trying to contain me.



When I turned 4, I asked my mother if I could go to art school. Perhaps it was the Sunday trips to the Cleveland Art Museum near my grandmother's house, or my father's story of having taken classes at the Cleveland Art Institute, and his desire to study art that gave me the idea.

Neither of my parents had college degrees. Both came from economically poor single-parent households. In my father's case, due to divorce, he was raised by his mother. My mother lost her mother during her teen years, after years of fighting breast cancer. My father drew daily at a drafting

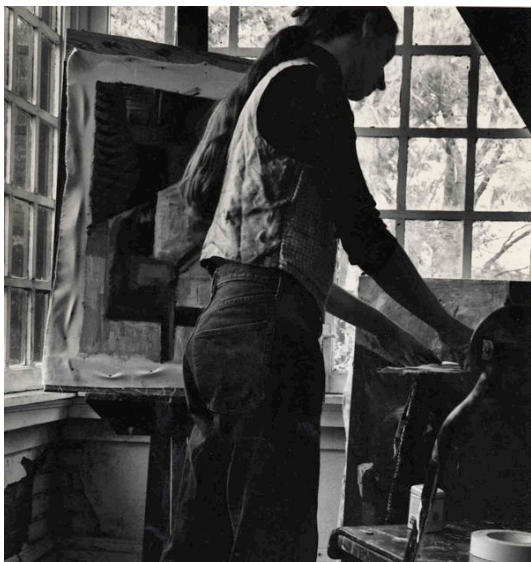
table for his job designing landing gear for airplanes and space shuttles. He sometimes turned our bathroom into a photo darkroom. Occasionally, friends asked him to design a banner or logo or to illustrate something. I loved to watch him draw ideas while discussing with friends. I would draw whatever I heard an adult request of him often before he had begun. It was a compliment to me, when he referenced my drawings to develop his.



When I requested to attend art classes, my mother responded that she did not have a car to take me to art school. Several months after our conversation, she got a car and I approached her ready to go to art school. She was surprised that I remembered and realized I was serious about art study. Off we went to enroll in an arts academy. At Willoughby Fine Arts, I was introduced to an interdisciplinary approach to the arts: dance, music, theater, and visual art experiences.

An interest in interdisciplinary arts continued throughout my life. In the late 1980s, as program director for ARTS Unlimited, an affiliate institute of the Lincoln Center's aesthetic education program founded in Oregon by Kay Holbo, I created programs that linked dance, theater, visual art, and music. The original 13 affiliates of the Lincoln Center model shared the belief that teachers should immerse themselves in the artform they planned to teach. Key to the program philosophy is that teachers develop with artists curricula that leads to selected performances and/or exhibitions. After earning degrees (a Ph.D. in art education and an M.S. in art education/cultural services from the University of Oregon and a B.F.A. in painting from the Kansas City Art Institute), between 1994 and 2001, I taught doctoral students in the Interdisciplinary Fine Arts Doctoral Program at Texas Tech University.

While working on a B.F.A. at the Kansas City Art Institute, I took education courses at Park College. In one education course, I decided to focus my research on Montessori methods and visited several Montessori Schools in Kansas City to observe classes and interview teachers. I taught at one of the schools for a summer preparing experiential activities that taught art and math concepts.



Throughout undergraduate studio work, the emphasis at the Kansas City Art Institute, I taught children on Saturdays at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art for three years. To prepare, I spent hours contemplating and drawing the art in the museum's collections. I sat in front of artworks reading about the artists, time periods, and origins of the work. One of the privileges of being a museum educator was that I could study the work when the museum was closed to the public. I based my teaching approach, at this time, on guiding students through stories I told about the work, to enter the work from the artist's world. Students learned about the thinking and making processes, and the ideas and issues of the time period, through these stories I told that concluded with a guided visualization. I later learned that some of these strategies were similar to the content-searches that are important to Judy Chicago's art teaching approach.

During guided visualizations, I ask a series of questions to encourage students to locate a “concrete” experience that connects in some way to the work. Next, I direct their thoughts to imagine visually a way to express that experience. Then the students gather materials that they considered most relevant to convey their ideas in a tangible form.

Years later during graduate studies in anthropology courses, I recognized that this teaching methodology was similar to the anthropological methods of experimental reconstruction. Experimental Reconstruction is an anthropological strategy to understand people by participating in the processes they use linked with their life-ways.



Janine King and I set-up an art studio and art teaching space in an old fish hatchery in the early 1980s. We set several days a week aside from teaching art to work on our art. We traded childcare so she could create pottery for a six-hour period while I cared for her baby, and then she cared for my two young sons while I painted for six hours, four days each week. Our young children benefitted from two moms and three dads. Janine lived with Bill and Jeff and her son Brooks, and I with Ernest and my two sons on a 40 acre undeveloped county park, along the McKenzie River in the foothills of the Cascade Mountain Range. It is the site of the oldest fish hatchery in Oregon, now developed into a public park.

Most of my life I did not seek jobs that already existed, but rather created avenues for art education in places, and for people of all ages, where there were none. I began teaching art in second grade.

My second grade teacher showed me how to do art projects, and then sent other students to join me at the round table where I was expected to teach them how to do things like turn

a bleach bottle into a pig. We did not, then, contemplate the affects of bleach on the environment.

My fourth grade teacher sent a group of about 12 students into a workroom closet asking me to lead them in creating items for a wagon train. First, I developed prototypes and, then, taught individuals and teams to produce the many items we needed. These were my earliest art teaching experiences.

Imagine 1000 children, myself included, in an elementary school, first through sixth grades, diving under desks and into closets when we heard nuclear bomb sirens in the 1960s. There were four to five classes at each grade level, with 35 to 43 students per class. The classes were hierarchically ranked, and it was rare to move outside of the rank once labeled. Teachers probably formed opinions about individual students by their class placement. I was in the “fast learner track.” I felt fortunate that in my overcrowded elementary school my teachers trusted me to work on my art alone in the supply closet, when I finished work before others. This motivated me to complete math and other boring work at top speed.

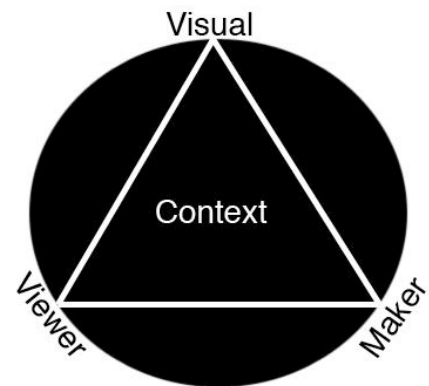
During the three years of junior high, my art teacher worked on his own art during class time. I learned by watching him work. He would show me how to do something, if I asked. Mostly, I derived ideas from the materials in the supply cupboards. I designed my own projects. Other students often asked me to show

them how to do what I was doing. I taught by modeling and giving suggestions. The teacher sent students who misbehaved to the office or gave them cleaning projects to do. They lost the privilege to create art. I learned that freedom to create art required being responsible.

In my ninth-grade “career report,” I wrote that I wanted to be an artist and an art teacher. For the report, I interviewed an art teacher who used the technology of the day (television) to teach and to make art. I continue to explore new technologies for art and teaching.

Since there were only five students out of a high school graduating class of about 900 who elected to take the senior art course, the high school art teacher taught all levels simultaneously. He juggled the demands of the larger class of tenth and eleventh graders with few, yet significant, art critiques with our small senior group. We turned a closet into studio spaces and worked, uninterrupted, from teacher oversight and from prescribed assignments. I left school around 11 a.m., with an “early release,” to work at a drug store. I returned to school, through a window at night, to work on my art. In the senior seminar, we were expected to produce professional portfolios to take to galleries to secure exhibitions and to send out for review in seeking acceptance from an art school.

We first learn about teaching art from the art education experiences we have had in our childhood and youth. In reflecting on my formative years, I realize I created most of my “school art” literally alone in a closet. This is one aspect of my K-12 art education that I don’t perpetuate. However, I learned from this experience the importance of setting up conditions for self-motivation and relevancy to the student’s life. My teaching goals include that students develop, as well as examine critically, their self-knowledge by looking at and challenging the structure of knowledge, especially art knowledge. Students transform their investigation into their art, and produce something tangible that conveys what they’ve learned about themselves and the world. I use an *Intervisual Process Model*, developed with Jane Maitland-Gholson over the past 15 years, to guide students to understand interpretation as a self-reflective process about how we act with the world and the world acts toward us.



I returned to Willoughby Fine Arts throughout my high school years, attended life-drawing classes with my father, a design engineer. Twice-a-week, for three-hours per session, I drew with passion—encouraged by an art professor who also taught at Kent State University. When the professor noticed that I struggled with the confinement of the bounds of the paper, he turned the six-foot table on end and covered it with paper to expand my work area. I continue to have the passion to draw and create visually, as well as the need for large work areas and to break through the confines of literal, discipline, and institutional boundaries. My research and creative work draws upon various disciplines, such as visual anthropology, ethnographic film, nonverbal communication, psychology, sociology, dance, visual arts, feminism, and imagery research in the contemporary cognitive sciences. I develop strategies to teach critical inquiry and creative approaches with dynamic/interactive technologies.

I taught in public schools as well, but was hired unlike most art teachers in other states. In Oregon, art teachers are not hired in the elementary schools. The classroom teacher is expected to teach art. A fifth-grade teacher paid me to teach art twice-a-week, throughout the year, in his class. Other school districts hired me through artist-in-school programs for semester residencies. The McKenzie School District hired me for three years to develop an art curriculum for their K-6 school, to pilot it, and to teach the classroom teachers how to teach art. The Springfield School District in Oregon invited me to develop a K-6 art curriculum for their district, and conduct a one-year series of teacher workshops to prepare regular

classroom teachers to teach art. I also worked for the Eugene School District in Oregon to develop drawing and watercolor curricula, implemented through teacher workshops. Other schools, that did not have art within the regular school hours, hired me to teach after-school art classes as regular offerings. I worked at several schools, teaching after-school classes, for six or more years.



My position as art program coordinator for a community art center in the 1980s was initially established with a grant, and then supported for a decade by an anonymous donor. I prepared proposals and made presentations to Weyerhaeuser and other corporate sponsors to fund special state-wide art projects, and received grants from the Oregon Arts Alliance and other resources.

I also worked for the Council for Human Rights in Latin America in Oregon and created art lessons about social justice. My courses continue to connect to real-world

issues, with student work presented in real-world contexts. Students in my courses have utilized the highly visible and political venue of parades, community gardens, sidewalks, posters, and murals to present their ideas visually to a specific community. My classroom settings have included shopping malls, playa lakes and other natural environments, festivals, city centers, and a range of public spaces.

With the East/West Foundation and the University of Oregon's Continuing Education program, I facilitated a cross-cultural art experience amongst families from Hong Kong and Oregon. Having worked both inside and outside the public school system, I have found that grouping by age is not the best condition for learning. I have taught professionals (lawyers, doctors, etc.), elderly grandparents, adolescents, and five-year olds in the same course, which included field trips to artist studios (e.g., glass blowers, wood carvers) and other sites (e.g., marine biology center, fish hatchery, dunes).

From the intergenerational and cross-cultural (students from Hong Kong and Eugene, Oregon) two-week summer course, and other experiences teaching, I recognize that we learn by teaching, so I set up situations in which students teach each other. Each individual has strengths, and having a range of ages in a teaching setting is a natural way to scaffold learning. Adults listen to the views of adolescents, and adults share their interpretations and knowledge.

I also find that motivation by alphanumeric grades can be an obstacle to learning, and by teaching in situations that do not require a grade or result in the reward of a degree, there are more genuine ways to motivate. Having long periods of time to work is necessary for engagement in art.

My future dream for public school art education is that classes are not organized by time or grouped by age, and that alphanumeric grades are obsolete. Instead, public schools are learning centers in which students select where to go and how long to stay. All K-12 graduates are given an equal lump sum of money upon graduation. Graduation is determined with an evaluation, based on criteria set by the student and experts in the areas of student interest, of an e-multimedia portfolio that reflects students' learning and thinking.



I have team taught with Jane Maitland-Gholson since 1987. We developed and taught *Symbol Systems* in 1987, with a larger team of faculty at the University of Oregon. We developed and taught *Arts & Visual Literacy* from 1990 to 1993, and later in the 1990s during the summer when we wanted to adapt it to an online teaching environment. We developed a book for our course, *Expose, Explode, Empower: Creative & Critical Visual Thinking*. Our book will be part of the "Art Education in Practice Series" published by Davis. I thank Wyatt Wade, president of Davis Publication, who approached me after one of my

NAEA presentations, and Laura Chapman who reviewed several chapters. I credit our dialogue about teaching, on a daily basis for several years, for the level of reflectivity and insights I have into teaching. Jane is a mentor and friend, whose sensitivity to understanding her self and others is unmatched in my opinion. Jane encouraged my creative thinking, and together we found ways to expose students to their taken-for-granted assumptions.

One summer, Ernest, Jane, and I shared an apartment in Eugene, Oregon. The photo above is of Jane and I debriefing our team teaching. While Jane and I worked together, Ernest fixed delicious meals for the three of us.



I am fortunate to have met Ernest Boyd, my partner for 28 years. He, too, does not contain or constrain me, but quite the opposite he encourages and supports me.

All, who knows me well, have enjoyed Ernest's meals, puns, dancing to his drumming, and spirited political talk. He speaks several languages, and his knowledge about history, science, plants, and politics is mind-boggling. Like our son Ovid, now teaching third graders in Beijing, Ernest has an incredibly deep mind, that I mine all the time to recall information and explain complex

systems. He knows the world through rhythms, a way of knowing that fascinates me.

In 1994, when I moved to West Texas to teach at Texas Tech University (TTU), I wanted to learn about the eco-system, since the environment was so extremely different from any I had known. Therefore, I invited eco-feminist artist, Lynne Hull, to work with my art criticism class in creating art in partnership with the earth. After several exchanges prior to her six-week stay in Lubbock, Texas, she asked questions about the environment that I never thought to ask. She decided that a playa lake would be a good site for an environmental artwork. With much effort to convince, we obtained permission to construct a site specific sculpture that would float on a playa lake.

I picked Lynne up from the airport and took her directly to the playa lake, that we had permission to use. To our surprise, the lake was dry, but had areas that felt like walking on a sponge. Later, when working at the site, a student bounced a few times too much and broke through into the smelly glop. During one of the art criticism class sessions, a playa lake expert joined us at the playa lake, and "read" the mud cracks

to understand the eco-system. He also told us that it is healthier for a more diverse eco-system, when a playa lake dries out. Students participated in, and documented the process for an exhibition, and gained an understanding of “green criticism.” One of the students reflected: “Working with Lynne I realized . . . how little I pay attention to my own environment and how much it has an affect on me . . . I really enjoyed working with Lynne, not because she’s famous, but because she is thoughtful to things that I’m not.”

I collaborated with the students to create a video, and I wrote about this teaching experience, which was published in *Contemporary Issues in Art Education for Elementary Educators* (2001). Photographer and author, Kippra Hopper, joined the class, interested in environmental art and art criticism as she had embarked on a book about West Texas women artists. Kippra and Lynne Hull, with whom I have developed close friendships, have inspired me in many ways and taught me to see beauty in mudcracks, empty spaces, and other aspects of the West Texas landscape.

I also taught at Texas Tech’s extension campus in Junction, Texas, five hours southeast from Lubbock, in the hill country. I took one class of graduate students in my technology class on a field trip to Paint Rock to experience the equinox light that animated the pictographs. I created “Write/Erase,” an interactive watercolor installation from this exploration into the 9000 year-old memories, recorded at Paint Rock, Texas, in the form of pictographs. The artwork connects the history of a woman painted at Paint Rock to contemporary issues of an erased cultural memory of women’s contributions to society. Viewers of the work could dampen the cloth in the water bowl—that rests on a shelf that creates an empty space in her torso—to erase another’s history, and write their own on the stones.



Dennis Fehr, a colleague since 1997 at TTU, invited me to conceptualize, contribute to, and edit an anthology, *Real-world Readings in Art Education: Things Your Professors Never Told You*, which was published in 2000 by Falmer Press. I also designed the cover. While the reference to lowrider art remained in the final version of the cover, it does not include the gorilla as you see in this earlier version, which referenced a chapter in the book by art educators, Gayle Marie Weitz and Marianne Steven Suggs, titled, “A Field Guide for Art Educators: Guerrilla Tactics for Change.” Gayle and I had met through the Social Theory Caucus and bonded like sisters, sharing guerilla tactics against injustice.

Dennis Fehr, Ed Check (also a colleague at TTU since 1996), Future Akins (then a junior high art teacher), and I, spoke out against the homophobic attitudes in Lubbock, Texas. We wrote about our activism in an article we called, “Canceling the Queers: Activism in Art Education Conference Planning,” which was published in the *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education* in 2002.

In fall 2000, I invited Sara Wilson McKay, who grew up in Amarillo and had studied Stanley Marsh III's art, which some referred to as antics, to guide my technology class of pre-service art teachers on an expedition to Amarillo, Texas to investigate the over 4,000 diamond-shaped quasi-street signs posted in the front yards, empty lots, and by-ways of Amarillo. We delved into the multiple significations of the signs, framed by questions about what constitutes democratic practice and public pedagogy. Later, Sara and I wrote about this teaching experience, and Debbie Smith-Shank, an art education professor at Northern Illinois University, published our paper, "Steal this Sign: A Semiotic Expedition into Dynamite Museum's Public Pedagogy" in her book, *Semiotics and Art Education: Sights, Signs, and Significance* (2004).



Michelle Kraft, then a doctoral student at Texas Tech University, met with me, in the late 1990s, to discuss a dissertation focus. I asked her what she had experienced as a middle school art teacher that she would like to better understand. She described that she was not prepared to teach those experiencing moderate to severe mental and physical differences. She stayed with that focus and researched the least restrictive environment (LRE) mandate of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997, and conducted a case study in an art class particularly focused on an autistic student.



After writing her dissertation, Dr. Kraft and I decided we should enact one of the recommendations of her study. That is to prepare pre-service art educators to teach individuals experiencing moderate to severe mental and physical differences in an inclusive art class community, alongside "typical" high school art students. We conceptualized the project we called HEARTS (Human Empowerment through the Arts), and team-taught it even though we were faculty at different universities. We simply listed the class in our respective universities, and students enrolled from both attended a shared classroom at Texas Tech.

We contacted an interpreter, a special education teacher, and friends' children to find 20 students for the HEARTS program. When we had a balance of gender, and of typical and non-typical students with a broad range of differences, we ended our search for class participants.

We developed the HEARTS program to practice what we understood as inclusion in the art class. The model for, and mission of HEARTS is based upon the study of special education law and its philosophy, which we believe aligns with a "communitarian," (Turnbull, 1991) perspective of the values of equality, liberty, and efficiency. Joyce Centofanti, then a doctoral student at Texas Tech University who wrote one of the letters of support for the Kathy Connors Teaching Award, participated in the course.

Michelle and I wrote about this team-taught course, and our article "Inclusion Policy in Practice" was published in 2003 in *The Journal of Art Education*.

While I had corresponded with Judy Chicago regarding *Cyberfeminist House*, a parallel project to her *At Home* teaching project in Kentucky in 2001, I first met Judy Chicago in person, in November 2002, when she accepted my request to interview her about feminist art pedagogy and collaboration. I thank art educator, Laurel Lampela and her partner, for letting me stay at their house in Albuquerque, when I made the trip to Belen, New Mexico for this interview. Prior to being interviewed, Judy asked me to tell her about myself. The advice she gave me as I unraveled my life continues to influence me. After about four hours of talking, Judy left momentarily to get us water, and when she returned she proposed that I visit her again in June and observe her teach in Fall 2003.



In June 2003, Ernest and I spent three days at Judy's home and studio. While Ernest and Donald (Judy's partner) cooked our meals, Judy Chicago and I discussed the framework of her art teaching methodology. She invited me to not only observe her approach to teaching art to artists and art professors, but after hearing how I led content-searches she asked me to lead a visualization as one way to facilitate content-searches. During the three-month project, *Envisioning the Future*, I studied—in dialogue with Judy—the eight facilitators' translation of her methodology, with the 67 participating artists and students. We have become friends. She has opened many doors for me. She mentioned that my meeting her is like her meeting her mentor, Anais Nin in the 1970s, who inspired Judy to write. Judy has inspired me to strive for excellence.



My research concerns the development of teaching strategies that integrate new media in art education. *CyberHouse*, a computer game I am developing with a programmer and animators, funded in part by a grant, will provide a learning environment to investigate how subjects' positions in society are constructed by conventional expectations informed by pervasive visual culture. In my courses, students critique visual culture, which includes art, but do not start with the assumption that something is or is not art. Students investigate meanings in cultural artifacts by uncovering the signifying practices and contexts of power and privilege in which an artifact is situated.

I am attempting to translate feminist art pedagogy into this online art education “game” environment that I call *CyberHouse*. In *CyberHouse*, players explore perception, production, and dissemination of visual phenomena as cultural practices, in terms of inclusion and exclusion from power and privilege. In this art education game “rooms” are assembled from the choices that players make. *CyberHouse*, a computer game of inquiry, provides for continuous reflections on self, and possibilities to reconstitute self.

Currently, the team working on *CyberHouse* includes Kumar Desai, a programmer in California that Judy Chicago introduced me to, and animators: Ovid Boyd, my 23 year old son, and Hui-Chun Hsiao, a doctoral student at Penn State. *Cyberfeminist House* began as a collaborative project with Glenn Hill, Director of the Environmental Visualization Program at the College of Architecture at Texas Tech University; and grad students in a course I taught at Texas Tech's School of Art, including two who wrote letters of support for the award: Dr. Joyce Centofanti who teaches art at Adam State in Colorado and Adetty Pérez Miles, a doctoral candidate who began at Texas Tech and is completing her degree in art education and women's studies at Penn State.



Debbie Smith-Shank and I were upset concerning a specific anti-feminist and anti-gay occurrence at NAEA in Miami in 2002. We decided to write something together in response. The next year, at NAEA in Minneapolis, we decided that in addition to writing for an NAEA publication we needed to shake things up using humor and performance. In 2004, at NAEA in Denver, we performed “Who’s in Bed with the Handmaiden?” which was followed by a spirited discussion.

In spring 2004, we showed Atwood’s film in our individual classes at two different universities, and provided a draft of our paper for students from both classes to discuss together online. Graduate students at Penn State in my class: *Artistic Creations and Theories of Knowing* and Deb’s students at Northern Illinois University in her course, *Women Artists and Feminist Aesthetics*, had a lively online conversation, connecting Atwood’s speculative fiction and the handmaiden metaphor to the current education system.



In our paper, we reinvent the “Handmaid Art” tale from a feminist-postmodern-semiotic perspective and insist that all teaching is political. This project is one attempt to disrupt the hegemonic patriarchal narrative of art education that privileges disciplinary boundaries and prevents it from becoming what isolationists fear most, a handmaiden to social studies.



Jan Jagodzinski, Mike Emme—both art education faculty at the University of Alberta—and I have been collaborating on the book: *InSIGHT/InCITE//InSITE: 25 Years of The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education* (JSTAE). Our book celebrates and critiques a quarter of a century of social theory in art education for significance to issues in the 21st century. The book begins with responding to the question “What is Social Theory?” and discusses this in terms of how the JSTAE authors over the past 25 years have defined social theory in art



education practice. Following the introduction to social theory, three concepts frame the book: InSIGHT, InCITE, and InSITE.

InSIGHT concerns “Unique Views that are Now Mainstream Discourse” and “Unique Views that are Still Unique.” InCITE is a section on ways that art educators incite action—through “Politicizing Culture” and “Complicating Criticism,” while InSITE speaks to future lines of flight foreshadowed in some of the recent JSTAE articles.



I met Wanda Knight and Patricia Amburgy when I joined the art education faculty at Penn State in January 2002. By our second year together, we began to work collaboratively on several writing projects and eventually collaborated in an online team teaching project. By our third year since meeting, we have had five collaboratively written papers published in scholarly peer-reviewed journals (one in press), and a sixth accepted for publication as a chapter in Paul Duncum's anthology, *Visual Culture in the Art Class: Case Studies*.² Sometimes these writing projects involve field trips and always much conversation and food sharing.



Over the past 30 years, I have taught art in museums, art centers, public schools, universities; and in public markets, malls, and at festivals. For me, teaching is a social action that furthers justice and democracy, and involves research, creative planning, spontaneity, self-reflection and critique, and, multiple forms of communication.

I thank the hundreds of students whom I have had the privilege to know and the teachers, mentors, and collaborators for making my life meaningful.

END NOTES:

¹ *A Conversation with June King McFee* (1995), is sold by the Arts and Administration Program at the University of Oregon and archived by the National Art Education Association in Reston, Virginia. The premiere showing was on April 11, 1995 at the National Art Education Association Annual Conference. In September, 1995 the video was shown at the National Taipei Teachers College by Dr. Ju-i Yuan. On Oct. 12, 1995 it was shown at the Third Penn State International Symposium on the History of Art Education. The video project was funded by the University of Oregon, The Center for the Study of Women in Society, The Women's Caucus of the National Art Education Association, and the University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program.

² The following were co-authored with Wanda B. Knight and Patricia M. Amburgy:
(in process) Revisioning the self-portrait and still-life as visual culture. In P. Duncum (Ed.), *Visual Culture in the Art Class: Case Studies*.

(2005) Visual culture explorations: Un/becoming art educators. *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, 25.

(2004) Schooled in silence. *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, 24, 81–101.

(2004) Revealing power: A visual culture orientation to student-teacher relationships. [Commentary]. *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research in Art Education*, 45(3) 270–274.

(2004). Postmodern art education in practice. Gude, O. (Ed.). (n.d.). Spiral Art Education. *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, 24, 300-307.

(2003). Three approaches to teaching visual culture in K–12 school contexts. *Art Education: The Journal of the National Art Education Association*, 56(2), 44–51.