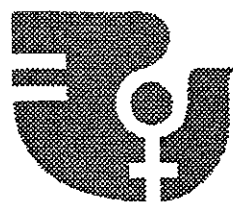


# the women's caucus report



Fall 2000

Issue No. 62

National Art Education Association Affiliate

*The Women's Caucus Report* wants to function as a reader's forum and welcomes articles, letters, book and exhibition reviews, news items and syllabi from courses involving women in art and education.

Deadline for next issue is  
December 1, 2000.

Please send your contributions to:  
Peg Speirs, *Report* Editor  
Dept. of Art Education and Crafts  
Kutztown University  
P.O. Box 730  
Kutztown, PA 19530  
Phone: (610) 683-4513  
Fax: (610) 683-4502  
email: [speirs@kutztown.edu](mailto:speirs@kutztown.edu)

## Elizabeth Saccá honored as the McFee Award Recipient at the 2000 NAEA Conference in Los Angeles.



Enid Zimmerman (left) congratulates Elizabeth Saccá (right) upon receiving her plaque for the 2000 June King McFee Award at the Women's Caucus Awards Ceremony in Los Angeles.

## In this issue

- 2 Letter from the President
- 4 WC Breakfast
- 5 Reply Letter
- 6 Minutes from Secretary
- 8 Elizabeth Saccá
- 14 Call for Nominations  
McFee Award
- 15 Call for Nominations  
Rouse Award
- 16 Call for Nominations  
Connors Award
- 17 WC Executive Board,  
Coordinators, and  
Representatives
- 18 Call for manuscripts: The  
Journal of Gender Issues in  
Art and Education
- 19 H.R. 2107
- 19 News Notes-Art Exhibition
- 19 Call for slides
- 20 membership form

## Kathy Connors Receives Teaching Award named in her honor at the 2000 NAEA Conference.



Past WC Co-President Debbie Smith-Shank (left) presents Kathy Connors with a plaque and a Goddess drawing Smith-Shank created in Connors' honor at the Women's Caucus Awards Ceremony in L.A.

a welding shop to replace the wooden tongue with a steel one. Then we were on our way.



Betty Jo, Nappy, and the trailer

My father explained things in ways I could grasp—and the principle behind whatever. He emphasized that it was important to learn the principle behind things, and to not merely memorize. He taught me about negative numbers using a thermometer years before the subject came up in school. I developed my own intuition and a kinesthetic sense of numbers and their relations.

This had its down-side. I had solved a problem on our 7th grade algebra test and got the right answer, but the teacher marked my answer wrong because I had not solved it the way she had taught us. This inflamed my 7th-grade indignation and sense of injustice. Because of this and other episodes where I had my own way of doing things, I never developed what you might call "a healthy respect for authority," but I am generally deferential in the presence of police and armed military.

#### Dissonance

When I was an undergraduate student at Penn State, I heard that three times as many men as women were accepted (3:1 ratio) on the basis that women got married and did not

pursue a career. I thought it sounded odd, but didn't make much of it.

I was accustomed to classes of 100 to 200. They called it "the factory" but I liked it. I was free. Now I realize I escaped much of the impact of sexism because of the anonymity of large groups and standardized tests. One exception was a small seminar attached to a huge philosophy lecture. After class, the graduate-student seminar leader asked me what book I had copied from. It took me a minute to even recognize what he was saying. Then my cheeks burned red and my palms turned sweaty; he was saying I had cheated. Of course I had not. That was my writing based on the readings as we had been assigned. He said what I had written was "too good" for me to have written it. Of course he had found no source from which I had copied, because he couldn't—it did not exist. This fact did not sway to his judgement of me. He gave me a "C" which I remember as a cowardly act. If the paper was "too good" to come from me, it deserved an "A"—He had no evidence so he split the difference between an "A" and an "F" and gave me a "C." This was before the student revolution. I assumed I had no rights, so wrong went unprotected.

I had many studio instructors who were enthusiastic about their obscure critiques. Instructors would rotate through the class commenting on each person's work. I had the feeling of anticipation and dread as I awaited his (it was always "his") critique and his concepts that were unknown to me. Also I had a strong sense that these were coming "from outside"—external criteria, alienating judgements—even when the comments were positive.

#### Dr. Beittel

I was a subject in a drawing study by Dr. Ken Beittel (1966) and Dr. Robert Burkhart. As we drew

with India ink, a grad assistant with a camera mounted on a stand circulated around the room photographing our drawings at several-minute intervals as they evolved. The next week, Dr. Beittel sat down with me and unfurled a large roll of brown wrapping paper on which were taped photographs of my drawings in progress. Then he asked me what I thought and my observations of the drawing process. I was stunned. This was the first time in art school I had been asked to talk about my own ideas! I was fascinated to think that my ideas counted and that it was not only the teacher's ideas that I was to absorb. I looked forward to these regular conversations with Dr. Beittel. This distinction between "received knowing" and "subjective knowing" has since been developed by Belenky et al (1986). Miriam Cooley (1996), a graduate of Concordia's Ph.D. program, recently reminded me of this distinction in a presentation to my class and the Graduate Colloquium.

#### Debating

We always debated at home. In fact a family story is based in my sister's and my argument dividing the socks that came out of the laundry. In serious matters like these, Mother deferred to Father. Father said to bring all the socks to him. He spread them on the dining room table and divided them evenly. Then I started crying. "What do you want?" he asked. "All the socks," I answered, and he swooped up all the socks and gave them to me. I am afraid I still have that quality of wanting what I want, regardless.

It was in a seminar with Dr. Burkhart that I found my voice for arguing in academia. Dr. Burkhart posed these open-ended and challenging questions that drew on our understandings and our commitments. But a big factor was George Hardiman. Even though

he was a Ph.D. student and I was an undergraduate, he had these opinions that I just had to argue with. And then we would argue in the hall for hours after class. Occasionally he would end with the rejoinder: "But what can you know: you're a woman" further inciting me to argue.

This quality of building—or departing—from what another person says, is precious. So many conversations are like children's parallel play. One tells about their day and the other tells what they want to tell—devoid of give-and-take.

### The Thrill of Research

Around 1963 when Larry Kantner was a doctoral student and I was a senior, we were both hired by Dr. Frankston as research assistants to work on the statistical analysis for his study of art classroom dynamics. We were crazy about data and computers. We loved to prepare data and walk great piles of cards full of data out to the center and submit them for processing by computers that were then room-size. We would wait into the night for the cards to return with long sheets of statistical analyses wrapped around them with a rubber band. We sensed that we were on the edge of the unknown, and we were eager to study how the analysis sorted out the events of the study. This was thrilling.

I was so fascinated with the work of Dr. Beittel and this research culture that I did graduate work at Penn State. Lowenfeld's legacy of working from the individual's frame of reference was a cornerstone of that department and provided good grounding for working with students of all ages and working between cultures.

Larry and I did some research projects together, and we were always amused. We found a huge packing box, and constructed for Dr. Beittel a sensory deprivation chamber with all sorts of bogus labels on the

seriousness of the research conducted inside. Dr. Beittel had a good laugh and thoroughly enjoyed our surprising invention. Grad school was a wonderful era of exploration and friendship and searching out new ideas.

Marilyn Zurmuehlen, Tom Schantz, Clem Pennington, Roger Zellner, Larry and I found ourselves organizing events for the Grad Club and discussing everything that happened in the program. In the library, Marilyn discovered some 78 RPM records for training in Flander's Classroom Interaction Analysis, a system that could describe the give-and-take of a high level exchange. We worked together to learn the system which became a theme in our later work—teaching and research (Saccá & Zurmuehlen, 1979).

### Activism

My earliest academic activism was graduate students insisting that we should be represented in department meetings—a very radical, but fashionable, idea at the time. Dr. Ed Mattil, department chair, seemed tired trying to convince us that what went on would not be interesting to us. Now I am very amused to think back on how right he was.

My early teaching started in a mainly male environment, and brought some startling realizations. Far from the warm shelter of graduate school, I sat in a meeting where administrators discussed firing a woman because she was pregnant. I later testified in her court case.

Even later, while I was teaching at Concordia, the Art Education Department achieved gender balance, years before other departments. This department has always provided me with a solid base for work and activism.

Friend gay activist Film Professor Tom Waugh and I were among the founders of the Status of Women Committee in Fine Arts. The University Status of Women

Committee was formed later. We wanted a woman appointed dean, and made a fuss. A male candidate Bob Parker, who had been a doctoral student of Marilyn Zurmuehlen, then promised to address the status of women; he was appointed dean. Whether or not it was a campaign promise did not matter. He was swamped with coaching, guidance and dictates, solicited and unsolicited, and he did address the status of women. The committee monitored every development. The faculty achieved gender balance with 50% of women (the best faculty in the university), up from a paltry sum 20 years earlier.

A senior woman Religion Professor Sheila McDonough was my mentor in university power and politics. She was my assistant principal when I was principal of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, and we went through a lot together in the name of feminism. She advised me early to serve on some grievance or appeals committees to see how business is really done in the university. I did serve and I saw difficult cases, strong-arm politics, and a number of women who had not been properly coached on how to navigate university politics. I recommend this to all tenured (and I emphasize "tenured") faculty interested in equity. Get this training and then watch out for the patterns of discrimination, and try to mobilize allies to change these patterns. This is difficult and often very stressful work, so it is necessary to support one another. I am also convinced it is a lot healthier than ignoring injustice or being complicit in an unfair decision.

### The Pines

I discovered a beautiful pine and hemlock forest. In 1990, a group of native people from the community began standing around the dirt-track entrance to protect it, because the next town's mayor wanted to expand the whites-only

golf club through native cemetery and forest.

When I went nearby to draw, I met Joe David. He told me about his mother, grandmother and great grandmother's roles in preserving the Pines and resisting earlier attempts at development. As the protest escalated into an armed confrontation with 3,000 police plus military being brought to bear against the small community of 1,200 people, Joe was trapped, by choice, inside with other resisters.

Throughout the "Oka Crisis," I got to be friends with Ana Gabriel Nelson and Niki Canatonquin. Both told me more of what was really going on—a version quite different from the one we heard on the news throughout that summer. They told me how women appoint and remove the chiefs in the traditional Longhouse government and how the present band council system violates these principles. They explained the ideas of the land and lack of boundary lines; the Kanien'kéha language doesn't even have a word for boundary line. The Crisis, these stories and friendships immersed me in a new culture, which, according to Elizabeth Garber (1995) is the way to understand. From their stories, I recognized many new ideas. I saw again what Ruth Benedict meant by the "great arc of human potentiality."

Over 40 people involved in the standoff who were charged went to trial as a group. A jury found them innocent on the basis that they had defended themselves and their land and had not used excessive force (Saccá, 1993).

For 15 years Canadian Human Rights Commission has identified Canada's treatment of Aboriginal peoples as the worst human rights problem in Canada (Saccá, 1997). The House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, (1991) called this the "rising tide of alienation, frustration and anger" (p. 29). There is great personal cost such

as suicides and symptoms of despair as a result of the acute trauma of direct police and military action and the ongoing trauma of racism.

From the mayor's ambitions for a larger golf course and the European history of using boundary lines to exclude native people from their own land, I developed an installation of branches, plants, photographs, cellophane and string called "Lines, Lies: Thokki:nio:re Niehé:we Tanon Rotino:wens" (Saccá, 1992).

Suzi Gablik (1995) writes that "Empathic listening makes room for the Other and decentralizes the ego-self. Giving each person voice builds community and makes art socially responsive" (p. 82). She quotes Suzanne Lacy: "Like a subjective anthropologist, [the artist enters] the territory of the other. . . . The work becomes a metaphor for relationship—which has a healing 'power'" (p. 82).

Ellen Gabriel who had been selected as spokesperson for the community during the Crisis, Joe David, Chicky Etienne and I developed a community-based video project to tell traditional and personal stories of Kanehsatá:ke. The videos help to preserve the Kanien'kéha language which is expected to die out in several decades unless the present trend is reversed (Saccá & Gabriel, 1996).

### Perspectives

At the invitation of Ivone Mendes Richter, I developed in Santa Maria, Brazil, an installation of light, transparency and paper. It was called "Estamos vendo diferentes estrelas: Ouvindo Diferentes historias: Como poderemos compreender-nos uns aos outros? We See Different Stars: We Hear Different Stories: How Can We Understand One Another?" (Saccá, 1996). It symbolized the exchange of stories, the permeability of

cultures and understanding one another's feelings.

I learned another perspective from Clifton Ruggles, an activist art teacher and a graduate student finishing his Master's thesis (1998) at Concordia. Clifton's stories, paintings and drawings showed his love for people and his empathy for women, the poor, and the neglected.

Clifton was willing to talk, paint and write about racism, a subject many people avoid because it is so painful. In his painting, we see unfair stereotypes imposed on Black women. He has asked us to look critically at our society, and to work for social change.

He and his partner Olivia Rovinescu devoted much of their life together to doing anti-racism workshops with teachers and community members, and helping their two daughters be proud of their Afro-Canadian, Romanian and Native ancestry. Much of their work is described in their book *Outsider Blues* (1996). Clifton died two years ago at the age of 46.

### Gum Springs

A few years ago, my sister told me Gum Springs had recently been in the news. Arthur Ashe, the Afro-American tennis champion, was asked how difficult it was to cope with AIDS, and he replied it was less difficult than being an Afro-American. When Arthur Ashe died, citizens of Richmond Virginia wanted to erect a statue in his memory. Others objected. During the ensuing storm of arguments, his mother said, that would be OK. The statue could be erected in her home town: Gum Springs. The statue was subsequently erected in Richmond.

### Collaboration

At the invitation of Enid Zimmerman, I joined her to co-edit *Women Art Educators IV: Her*

*Stories, Ourstories, Future Stories* (1998) which we dedicated to Mary Rouse and Marilyn Zurmuehlen. We developed a strong empathy and attachment to the authors and artists and their work. We pride ourselves in working together to develop a collection that breaks new ground, allows identity to flourish and encourages us to work for social change.

In another installation, "Intersubjectivity, Identity / Taontate'nikonhraien:ta'ne, Tsinitewaia'tó:ten" (Saccá, 1997-1998), I invited Concordia students and colleagues from the video project to include their work.

### Mentors, Community & Action

Many people are our mentors: teachers like Dr. Beittel from whom we learn the most valued lessons; peers like Marilyn Zurmuehlen, Joe David, Ellen Gabriel and students like Miriam Cooley and Clifton Ruggles who pursue social activist work and open domains for identity.

A group can also mentor, and this is what the Women's Caucus has done. The Women's Caucus, as one of the earliest NAEA affiliates, opened a space for discussing equity. The work by the Caucus is so creative and ground-breaking that it is a leader and a high-point of NAEA.

Also among our mentors are people we meet through their art or writing, people whose ideas help form us. Such is the case with June King McFee. I read her *Preparation for Art* when I was a graduate student, and I was intrigued with her ideas of perception. She provided grounding for research in perception, and I wrote a dissertation on drawing and development of shape perception and referred to her work. She taught us the importance of culture in the classroom, and opened our eyes to expand our vision beyond any Euro-centric

approach and to embrace diversity.

In conclusion, these mentors call us to action. They help us envision a more complete and just form of education. We know we still have a long way to go, and let us work toward that vision in our classrooms, in our civic life in our schools and universities, in our profession and in society at large.

I am delighted and thrilled to have been nominated for this award, and to have been selected for an award that has gone to people who have had such an impact on shaping the field—an award that bears the name of June King McFee who has been such a great innovator that she has changed our view of society and the field in which we work. The Women's Caucus and other socially-minded caucuses are building community. Most of all, I am very proud to be a member of this community. Thank you very much.

### References

Beittel, K. R. (1966). *Selected psychological concepts as applied to the teaching of drawing* (Cooperative Research Project No. 3149). University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University.

Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B.M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Benedict, R. (1934). *Patterns of culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Canada. House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (1991) *The summer of 1990: Fifth report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. Minutes of proceedings and evidence*. Issue No. 59, Tuesday, April 9 - Thursday, April 18, p. 29.

Cooley, G. M. (1996). *Who is this self I'm supposed to be expressing?: Narrative inquiry*

*into the art and learning of twelve women visual arts students.*

Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Concordia University, Montreal.

Gablik, S. (1995). *Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism*. In Suzanne Lacy (Ed.), *Mapping the terrain: New genre public art*, (pp. 74-87). Seattle: Bay Press.

Garber, E. (1995). *Teaching art in the context of culture: A study in the borderlands*, *Studies in Art Education*, 36 (4), 218-232  
Goffman, Erving (1959). *Presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday.

Jacob, M. J. (1995). *An unfashionable audience*. In Suzanne Lacy (Ed.) *Mapping the terrain: New genre public art*, (pp. 50-59). Seattle: Bay Press.  
McFee, June King (1961). *Preparation for art*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Ruggles, C. (1998). *The intersection of the personal and the theoretical in the creation of the Back on Track experimental program for high school dropouts and youths at risk*. Unpublished MA thesis, Concordia University, Montreal.

Ruggles, C. & Rovinescu, O. (1996). *Outsider blues: A voice from the shadows*. Halifax: Fernwood.

Saccá, E. J. (in press). *Histórias conectando culturas*, Publicação do Laboratório de Pesquisa e Ensino das Artes, Faculdade de Educação de Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, Brasil.

Saccá, E. J. (1989). *Typologies in art education: How to live with them and how to live without them*. *Visual Arts Research*, 15 (2), Issue 30, 58-70.

Saccá, E. J. (1992). *Lines, lies: Thokki: nio: re Niehé: we Tanon Rotino: wens*. Faculty Biennale,