

## ENACTING CHANGE SURVEY RESPONSE

For information on the Enacting Change Survey Project, facilitated by Joanna Rees, see the NAEA Women's Caucus website at <http://naeawc.net/activism.html>

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In terms of leadership I see myself as a mentor and try to be a resource for my students. My background is in English Literature and classroom teaching. Those are two areas where I feel my suggestions are perhaps particularly helpful. I went to Northeastern University for my B.A. in Visual Art, English Literature, and Elementary Education (2003). Northeastern is very committed to urban education, and this was very influential for me. My teaching experiences were in elementary school teaching as a classroom teacher and then art teaching through middle school.

One of my first jobs was an after school program for girls in elementary school. This was a place where the girls' goals were listened to and valued. I explored a lot of art-related and community service-related activities in my early teaching experiences there. While at Harvard, where I completed my Master of Education degree in Arts in Education (2004), I worked at two museums and as an art teacher. These experiences deepened my leadership potential in art. I had some wonderful courses that touched on gender, race, and curriculum in ways that challenged and compelled me. Refining my teaching alongside my artwork and writing, I went through a lot of challenges finding and asserting my voice (something I am still figuring out now). I remember that Arts in Education Professor Jessica Hoffmann Davis observed that women are too often apologizing for or dismissing themselves before they present and share their work. This was something that I would notice amongst ourselves, and hope to counter as an educator too.

One topic I am currently exploring is the problematic role of motherhood as a metaphor for the clay medium, for pottery, and for women themselves within the field of ceramics. Sometimes motherhood is a taboo topic – it can be kind of unusual (both cliché and risqué) to discuss with students or other professionals. There are very personal questions of how your academic life will fit into that choice. There are also many female professors that are trying to take care of their parents or have grown children too – so motherhood and daughterhood can be closely linked for women. I've heard women in education talk about the odd compliment of "you're a great teacher" along with the prophecy that "you'll make a great mom." There are also these lurking, subtle differentiations in status and behavior, for example: who is being asked to get the food, take care of the administrative tasks, and/or get credit for the tasks at hand in K-12 and higher education?

There is also the perception that because women are the majority in art education, gender equality and camaraderie exists. However, there can be unspoken competitive elements due to the high number of female faculty members - encouraging the feeling that maybe less of us are needed. This can lead to many layers of passive aggression or bullying. Many of the incidents I've observed or heard about might seem to be very small (microaggressions) yet are slowly built up over a long period of time. Academia is so strict and yet there is a lot of open-endedness to exploit if someone wants to be a bully.

I am slightly younger than your average professor and have sometimes wondered if folks would have heard me out differently if I was older, male, and/or more aggressive. These are difficult imaginings because they are confrontational, uncomfortable, and impossible.

For the future of my field, one thing I'd like to see is more teacher-centered research to represent many different voices across genders, cultures, and different areas of education. I am fortunate to teach a research course of this kind with my own art education students, encouraging them to explore lesson planning, art-making, and other practices of teaching and art-making as part of research activities.

I also noticed that if you visited the art education Wikipedia page a few years ago, only men were represented and there was little to no mention of the major female figures in art education. This can be seen in some popular textbooks choices in the fields of art education and art history as well. I have wondered if men are more often academically encouraged in big, general ideas. It seems that women are often encouraged to be specific and focus in on fascinating, (but not necessarily text-book friendly) research topics. My own research explores ways in which contemporary women ceramicists often honor heritable and communal approaches to ceramics practice that echo a range of historically female craft traditions. I have observed that women in particular may respond variously and ambivalently to tradition: negotiating dualities of both acceptance and rejection/revision of that which might be considered female, feminine, and feminist within traditions of making. My current research seeks to collaboratively question, discuss, present, and exhibit the nuanced and layered ways in which ceramicists approach engendered craft histories within their practices. As an educator I try to consider carefully which views and voices are being represented and how I can be more sensitive to students so they can have diverse and meaningful encounters with research.