



The Case for Clay in Secondary Art Education

*A Symposium Held at New York University
New York, New York
January 28, 29, 30, 1988*

Sponsored by Studio Potter Foundation and New York University



The Case for Clay in Secondary Art Education

A symposium on The Case for Clay in Secondary Art Education was held in New York, New York, on January 28, 29, and 30, 1988. Originated by the Studio Potter Foundation and conducted with the collaboration of and on the premises of New York University, the symposium focused attention on art education at the primary and secondary levels, and specifically addressed the value of working with clay for educational growth and development by bringing together women and men from wide perspectives in art education and related disciplines to share ideas and experiences.

Two years prior to the symposium, members of the Studio Potter Foundation identified problems growing within ceramics education on the primary and high school level, and were concerned these problems were not being adequately addressed in existing forums. At the same time, ceramic artists, teachers, and administrators expressed fears that the use of clay as a teaching material was suffering a disproportionate decline because of recent cutbacks in art education. Lack of supportive research on the educational value of three-dimensional media, they felt, tended to undermine those fragile programs. Furthermore, advocacy of a discipline-based education—a philosophy perceived by some to be detrimental to hands-on school instruction—became the focus of a lobbying effort by powerful institutions and exacerbated the problem.

The Studio Potter Foundation felt it imperative to call attention to the case for clay in secondary art education. A symposium of focused goals was developed. These were to assess the current status of art education in three-dimensional media; to emphasize the importance of three-dimension-

al education in the arts for the development of the individual; to survey current research and to establish directions for future research; to recognize excellent practitioners in the field and to provide models for success; and to develop an advocacy role for future action.

The three-day symposium was attended by over three hundred people from all parts of the country and from abroad. It was addressed by panels of distinguished art educators, scholars, artists, teachers, psychologists, and administrators. Awards of excellence were presented to teachers of innovative school programs, and grass-roots networking was begun.

The symposium concluded its presentations with a resolve to form a strong position of support for clay in elementary and secondary curricula. It recognized the importance of leadership at the university level in the need for increased cooperation between lower and higher educational institutions. It voiced encouragement for pursuing such future opportunities—germinated at the symposium—as might present themselves through publications, networking, and substantive academic dialogue. It forcefully supported the importance of political advocacy to persuade constituencies of power to continue curricula using the three-dimensional media in elementary and secondary education.

STUDIO POTTER is proud to have helped facilitate the Case for Clay in Secondary Art Education. Papers presented at the symposium are presented herewith.

Gerry Williams
Editor, *Studio Potter*

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COMMERCIAL SPONSORS of the symposium include The American Art Clay Company, Kohler Company, Miller Ceramics, Ceramic Supply of New York and New Jersey, Rovin Ceramics, Trinity Ceramic Supply, and Sheffield Pottery. DONORS include Irving and Bunzy Sherman, Karen Johnson Boyd, Mary Nyburg, Robert Turner, David V. Becker, J. Patrick Coady, Jack Larsen, Abbie Conick, and the University Council for Art Education (NYC).

SESSION I: PERCEPTION AND DEFINITION

Clay: Arguments For and With
Edmund Burke Feldman, *Keynote Speaker*

When Clay Is Play and Play Is Art
John Lidstone, *Moderator*

Education as Initiation
M. C. Richards

Perception—Past and Present: A Form Makes Thoughts
William Daley

If Clay Is the Answer, What Is the Question?
David Ecker

Clay: Arguments For and With

by *Edmund Burke Feldman*

INTRODUCTION

What follows is an attempt to understand why the timeless, universal art of ceramics has fallen to its present low estate in education. I offer you a grouchy diagnosis that is probably only half-right, but better than a passionate celebration of the warm, loveable qualities of pot makers, some of whom are my best friends. In presenting these remarks I am thinking especially of a great ceramics teacher, Wesley Arnold Mills, with whom I taught at Carnegie Tech in the 1950s. Mills has been retired for several years now, but his silvery head can still be seen at ceramics conferences around the country. Wes Mills knew his trade, of course, but he was a great teacher because of the man he was and is. I like to think that good teaching—especially in the crafts—is closely related to the moral integrity of the teacher. Years ago, Martin Buber said that education is first of all a moral enterprise. Some people thought it was a matter of applying the principles of agronomy to the problems of classroom management. Now we are finding out, to our chagrin, that Buber was right. Whatever we say about the advancement of some phase of education for the benefit of students, it comes down to the moral—including the intellectual and aesthetic—improvement of teachers.

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT

Shaped clay—most likely in the form of animal and human figurines—was our primal artistic medium. It belonged to the general corpus of Paleolithic technology and can be called primal in the sense of “first” or “original.” Ceramic art understood as the making of clay pots, jars, and utilitarian structures was a later—probably Neolithic—development. In both cases, clay is part of the prehistorical heritage of mankind. Also womankind, since pottery was in all likelihood a female invention.

If I am right—if clay is our primal art medium—what does that imply for art education? First, the evolution of humanity since

the emergence of *Homo sapiens* has taken place along with the evolution of art, starting with the discovery of clay as a material that can be shaped by man for distinctively human purposes. Second, ceramic art from the beginning to the present has transcended all the familiar dichotomies of art: religious vs. secular; useful vs. expressive; multiple vs. one-of-a-kind; practical vs. aesthetic; plain vs. decorative; representational vs. abstract; hand-made vs. machine-made. Third, ceramic art is well nigh universal because clay, like mud, is very widely distributed; objects made of clay are created and prized in all human cultures. Fourth, the ancient association of clay utensils with such basic human activities as eating, drinking, and storing makes it impossible to expunge their form and function from our collective consciousness. Fifth, making things with clay, like drawing with a pointed instrument, has not gone out of style despite the invention of new materials and technologies. From this I conclude that the perceptual, kinesthetic, and tactile dimensions of human behavior are so intimately related to our historic experience with making and using clay objects that the material has become a paradigm for our bodies and the things we make with our bodily extensions.

What I am saying, in sum, is that humanity is the product of an artistic as well as a biological process; that human biology is by no means independent of our tool-making and tool-using habits; that craft became part of our genetic heritage long before the emergence of art galleries and museums; that forming, throwing, molding, firing, decorating, trading, and collecting clay objects is something our species will always do; that no matter how wise or rich or sophisticated we become we shall continue to interact with clay objects because that is the way we shape and caress the stuff we are made of.

THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

From an economic standpoint the divorce of art from industry is a scandal. It represents the breakdown of the organic relationship between artisans, consumers, and the design process. That relationship is what we celebrate in the model of art derived

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from craft. When that model is abandoned, we get the proliferation of mass-produced ugliness due to the inability of industry to exercise artistic controls in the determination of quality in production. By “artistic controls” I mean the artisan’s ability to respond to a user’s needs while exercising the standards of making required by the craft tradition. The absence of such controls leads to the dehumanization of industrial work, the alienation of workers from their product, and the separation of function from appearance in the form of a debased art called styling. Styling represents the perversion of craft because it employs false signs of honest craft in order to sell things. There is nothing wrong with designing goods to sell, but it is wrong to misrepresent goods aesthetically. I believe this stricture about false signaling applies to painting as much as to pottery.

Now, we are not so naive as to think that the economic, social, and aesthetic evils characteristic of modern industrial production can be eliminated by a return to preindustrial or handcraft modes of production. That was the nostalgic dream of nineteenth-century Romanticism, eloquently expressed in the writings of Ruskin and in the teaching, writing, and practice of William Morris. But the *model* of handcraft remains valid; and it interests us now because of its implications for education and for the reconstruction of economic activity on a healthy foundation. That model—of an organized connection between human needs, the design of useful objects, the organization of work, the rational distribution of what we make, and the satisfying consumption of the products of work—has to be kept uppermost in our minds. This is essential if art education in general and ceramics education in particular are to survive. Otherwise the teaching and practice of the crafts become exercises in antiquarianism.

From the standpoint of economic competition, industry must ultimately repair to the craft model if it wishes to succeed in the retention of markets. The potter’s ideal of making containers that are durable, easy to use, convenient to maintain and agreeable to look at should be the ideal for all mass-produced objects. Increasingly, that is what will “sell” as new, cheap methods of energy production and transmission are developed, as markets become truly world wide, and as consumers acquire sufficient visual literacy to resist the blandishments of advertising and the deceptions of appearance design. When that happens the education of consumers as well as workers, craftsmen, and artists will be considered inadequate if it does not include direct, hands-on experience with the making of useful objects. This will be a necessity for moral and aesthetic as well as social and economic reasons.

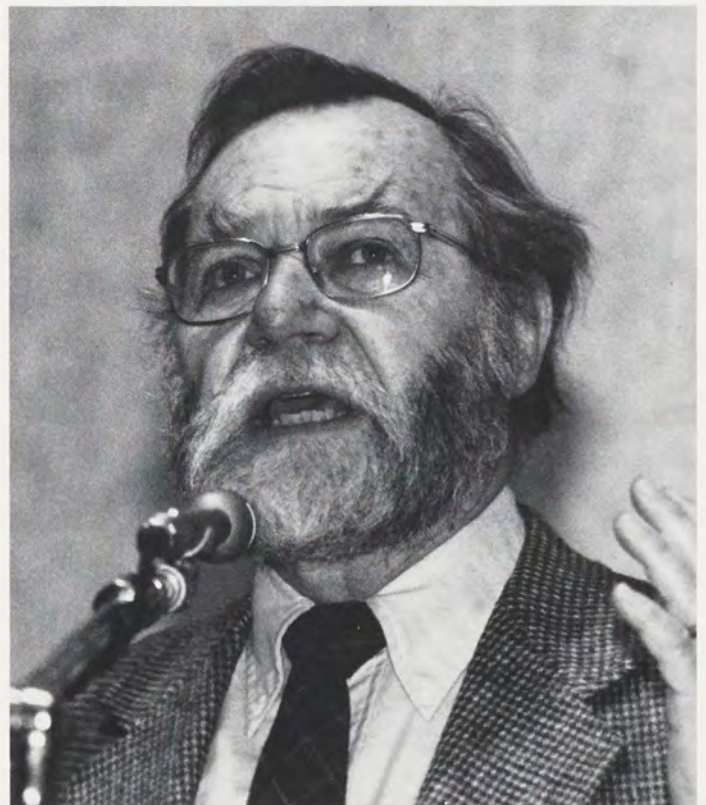
At the present time, unfortunately, a febrile aestheticism has crept into our educational thinking about the crafts in general and ceramic art in particular. Here Philip Rawson is right to speak of a “narrow groove” in art education “which reflects a ‘pure aesthetic’ attitude.”¹ By focusing too exclusively on the surface qualities of clay objects we run the risk of ignoring the vital

connections between visual form, human use, expressive meaning and social effect. It is all right to provide instruction in the so-called principles of design provided students learn that thinking about form in isolation is very misleading. Artistic forms, like ideas, have consequences: intellectual consequences, emotional consequences, behavioral consequences.

For the sake of a *complete* art education, there is no substitute for the critical examination of clay objects; we have to find out how they work practically, expressively, and symbolically in our lives.

This mention of criticism reminds us that teachers of ceramics have an obligation to instruct their students in the art of criticizing clay objects over and above the necessity of teaching the correct use of tools, useful creative strategies, and orderly habits of work. I venture to say that today’s decline in crafts instruction is due in no small degree to the neglect of crafts criticism in regular studio teaching. By this I do not mean the neglect of technical criticism; I mean the failure of teachers and students to examine craft objects in the light of their impact on our individual and collective existence. The danger in crafts education is that teachers will become like some teachers of the so-called fine arts—teachers of a “look.” When this happens, art education becomes an appendage of the fashion or the art boutique industry; then teachers of art and craft have no legitimate role to play in the education of young people.

Apart from criticism, teachers of ceramics must sooner or later confront the art vs. craft question. You and I know that it is a silly question; nevertheless it crops up again and again in educa-



tional as well as museum and gallery settings. Certainly, the position of clay artists is ambiguous, not to say schizoid, in today's artistic and educational scene. On one hand, they are proud of their craftsmanship, their mastery of technique, and their understanding of the close relations between form, function, and material. On the other hand, they would like to elevate their social and artistic status by creating objects that have no function other than to be seen. In other words, they want to be known as artists, not craftsmen. Now, all of us have learned that it is better to be known as a mortician or a bereavement counselor than an undertaker. In a democracy you can call yourself whatever you like; and in education changes in title may result in a higher salary. As for the great world of art, it is very tolerant: you can make what you want, charge what you like, and claim anything, provided you do not actually hurt someone.

The problem here is to persuade our betters that craft instruction, in the narrow sense, has as much educational value as fine art. I have just seen a television advertisement stressing the fact that Volvo automobiles are made in a Swedish town where almost everyone is a craftsman. Obviously, some Madison Avenue genius is persuaded that Americans want to buy cars built by part-time potters and wood-carvers. I think he is right; we are convinced in our bones that good craftsmen will not make shoddy cars; a Volvo is less likely to break down than a heap of Detroit iron. In this connection, I suspect that the success of Japanese cars in America is due, in no small degree, to the fact that the craft tradition is highly honored in that country. In other words, craft education promotes habits of seeing, doing,

thinking, and behaving that generate economic values even when handmade objects are a diminishing factor in our Gross National Product.

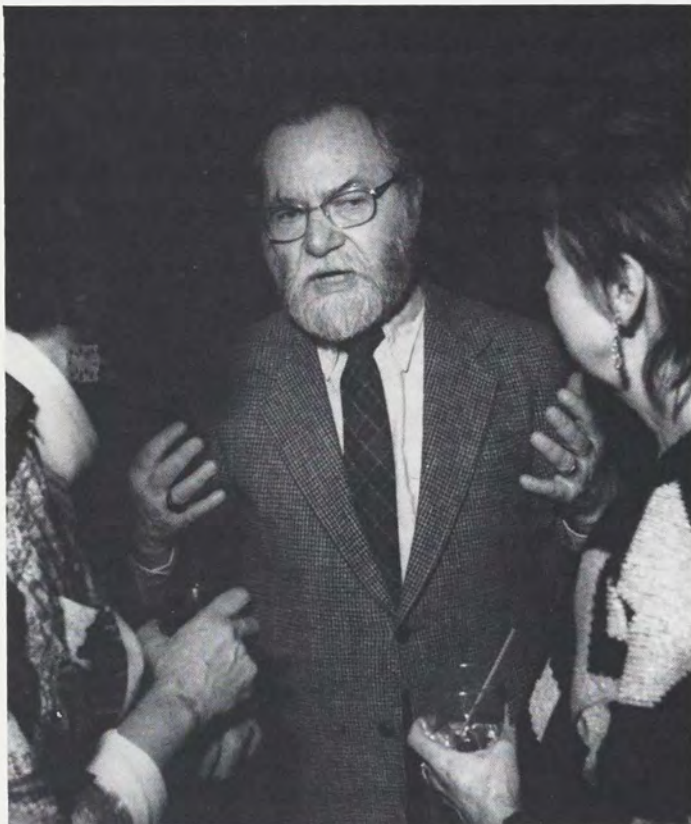
EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY

From the standpoint of educational strategy, the art/craft dichotomy suggests the following tactical points. First, the value of solid teaching in the crafts as crafts ought to be promoted as an *economic* asset. Second, we ought to resist the notion that bad craft is a sign of stylistic alertness and high aesthetic value. Third, ceramics teachers should stress the necessity of a close connection between practical utility, social expressiveness, and aesthetic value in everything that students make. In other words, personal expression should not be the only, or even the most important, reason for making something in an art class. Fourth, students should be taught to analyze all objects—handmade or machine-made—in terms of their adequacy according to the Vitruvian standards of firmness, commodity, and delight; this would make good on our first tactical point—to teach craft as craft. Adherence to Vitruvian standards in education—suitably updated—would do more for American industry than a roomful of congressmen arguing about the necessity of imposing higher tariffs on imported goods.

Ceramics educators have made several tactical errors leading to their present decline. One was to assume that ceramics is fundamentally a mode of self-expression. The second was to assume that ceramic art exists mainly to demonstrate pure aesthetic relationships. The third was to assume that the engine that drives ceramic art is interior decoration. Fourth was the assumption that clay manipulation transcends the activity of the mind and is thus ideal for the instruction of the noneducable. Fifth was the assumption that design for utility is a low form of creativity and hence incompatible with the spiritual mission of high art. Sixth was the assumption that the mastery of hand skills in ceramics automatically advances the goals of general education.

This list of erroneous assumptions could no doubt be extended, but their underlying weakness is apparent. I think they are examples of what John Dewey called the "confusion of categories." They confuse the category of art with the category of gallery chic; they confuse art theory with argumentation about taste; they confuse beauty with pretty things and attractive surroundings; they confuse the processes of artistic creation with therapy; they confuse self-expression with the disclosure of one's personal life and the inability to use tools and materials effectively. Beyond these confusions they fail to recognize the primary role of art as the communication of ideas and feelings about our common existence as earth creatures.

Now it is fashionable among education critics to make fun of basket making as a school subject. Presumably, the same sort of fun can be made about clay ashtray making; I have done my share in this department. Behind the easy humor, however, lies the ancient identification of handwork with menial labor and low social status. The modern counterpart of this ancient tradition is the identification of hand work with mindlessness. I fear that ce-



'Craft legitimizes and authenticates art because it represents the crucial connection between art and society.'

amics educators (and art educators in general) have unwittingly contributed to this prejudice by their strategy of promoting pottery and basketry as education through the senses or the muscles or the fingertips with little or no participation by mind and intellect. Hence ceramics is perceived as the ideal subject for the student whose light is very dim. All this, in turn, is predicated on the erroneous assumption that imagination, intellect, and good hand-eye coordination are divorced. This view is further promoted by psychologists and educators who are persuaded that the hemispheres of the brain are radically separated. That may be true in terms of neuro-anatomy but it is not true as a description of the way artists work and create.

The educational result of these doctrines is the identification of art and craft education as suitable mainly for the unintelligent, the nonliterate, the brain-damaged, and the socially intractable. This flies in the face of the English Arts and Craft Movement, the Deutscher Werkbund, the Weiner Werkstette, the Scandinavian Sloyd system, the German Bauhaus, and the numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century American movements devoted to the education of craftsmen for industry. What should scandalize us as art educators is that so many of our colleagues have taken their professional lead from psychologists who are, for the most part, blissfully ignorant of the history of art and craft but not reluctant to write books on how to teach art.

Well, if psychologists can teach art, let me venture beyond my competence and trespass on the land of language education. You and I know that one of the largest problems of the schools today is literacy. The federal government and the states have thrown millions of dollars at the problem without making significant progress. The main difficulty does not appear to be word recognition or the ability to read sentences. Students can read but they can't decipher; they certainly can't construe. The real problem is comprehension; students have great difficulty in discovering the *meanings* of verbal configurations. In terms of art criticism, they can recognize shapes, colors, and textures—image constituents—but they cannot *interpret* image patterns and relationships.

How does this pertain to ceramics and art education? First, I do not believe students will learn to read—that is, understand what they read—unless they have the opportunity to engage in discourse above the level of grunting or repeating the idiotic lyrics screamed by rock musicians. Second, their talk in class should have the potential for self-correction and refinement on the basis of recourse to images and objects they can see. Third, I believe the ideal discourse for building verbal comprehension is conversation about artworks and concrete artistic operations. Fourth, this means that students need *repeated* opportunity—that is, practice—in talk about art and artistic process. Fifth, that talk

should move from visible qualities and concrete operations to symbolic and metaphorical discourse, that is, from recognition, description, and analysis to explanation and interpretation or comprehension. This is what criticism is all about, and this is what art teaching is about. In my judgment, ceramics teachers have to engage their students in art criticism in order to function as real teachers. Here educational necessity and professional survival converge. You are the only ones who can engage students in critical dialogue about the materials, tools, processes, and meanings that make up the art of ceramics.

TEACHING STRATEGY

How can ceramics educators be better teachers? And how can they enhance the status of ceramics in education? We may see a process of mutual reinforcement in the answers to these questions. You cannot be a great teacher if your subject is built on minimal, trivial, or obsolete expectations. And you cannot advance the field of ceramics education unless you see it in relation to the goals of art as a whole and the goals of general or liberal education. Now any sensible person can subscribe to these aims; the trick is for ceramics teachers to carry out both missions simultaneously. That is, you have to advance the agenda of general education through art, ceramic art. You cannot afford to forget that students—even art students—are being instructed in the personal and social arts of working, living together harmoniously, acting as wise consumers, respecting the large-scale environment, coping with the economic facts of life, performing the tasks of intelligent citizenship, developing a healthy curiosity about the human condition, and learning to recognize and love excellence wherever it can be found.

Now that is a large order for someone who teaches children to make coil pots. But if ceramics educators think they teach pot making for the sake of making pots, then they deserve educational oblivion. You must find ways to instruct students so that they discover the grace or courage or foolishness of a pot; the way a pot sends signals about how it should be held, used, and understood; the reasons for decorating a pot or leaving it plain; the comparative value of containers made of fiber, clay, glass, stone, metal, and plastic; the pot as a means of converting labor into value; the pot as a personal or social emblem; the notion that the potter and his clay symbolize the very idea of creation.

Finally, what should the ceramics teacher know? Knowing the history of art would be good, but it is not enough. Reading the literature of aesthetics is good (if one can), but that is not enough either. Likewise, knowing about the growth, development, and interests of students is good, but not enough. You have to know all these things. Beyond that, you must be able to see your subject—ceramics—through the eyes of your students. This calls for pedagogical empathy—the ability to imagine that you are a student encountering a body of materials, tools, techniques, and ideas in the person of an enthusiast, someone who thinks life would be incomplete without having her thumbs in wet clay. Such persons are mad, but I think they are the only ones who can teach the subject. They know that the ceramics

education situation is hopeless. And they know that no one really needs their pots. They know their ceramic sculptures can just as easily be made with polystyrene or papier mache or chicken wire and wheat paste. Yet knowing all these things, they realize it is vitally important to teach ceramics.

A GOOD EYE

Among art historians, the expression, "He or she has a good eye," is a high compliment. The compliment suggests by indirection that the rigorous training of the historian—mostly through documents and lantern slides—does not necessarily or always produce a "good eye." Museum people like to think that their training and experience involving the *handling* of artworks results more often in "a good eye." Personally, I think studio experience, in depth, is the best way to develop an eye. In any case, what do we mean by "a good eye," and does it have any bearing on visual arts instruction?

To put the matter succinctly, I think "a good eye" is a form of intelligence that enables one to recognize similarities, differences, origins, copies, quotations, analogies, paraphrases, modifications, and inventions in visual form. The development of this kind of intelligence is a prime objective of the education and training of art scholars. I suggest that it should be a prime goal of the education of all students. In art education especially, a good eye is surely one of the most desirable outcomes of studio instruction.

When it comes to the crafts, the public tends to think of the training of the hand rather than the eye. But you and I know that a good eye is crucial for the development of intelligent manipulative technique. The ability to see and to imagine alternative size and shape relationships lies at the heart of artistic work. Of course, imagination is not enough; as Jimmy Durante used to say, "You gotta be able to execute." Still I venture to say that the ability to conceive, to recognize, and to create meaningful size and shape relationships has considerable value for a variety of activities—both intellectual and practical—outside the realm of art.

Mention of "intelligence" and "intellect" reminds me of the role of visual processes in human intellection. Rudolph Arnheim has developed this idea, with far more learning than I can muster, in his important book *Visual Thinking*.² In that book Arnheim gives us a rationale for art education that goes well beyond the usual pieties about creativity and self-expression; he places the artistic act on a solid cognitive foundation. I would only add, as an art critic, that the results of the artistic act are by no means uniformly significant. In other words, we need to *know* what a particular configuration of forms means; and having decided what it means, we must ascertain whether its meaning is good or right or true. This, of course, is where the philosophers and aestheticians get into the act. And that is entirely all right, provided that they, too, develop a good eye. In our business we insist on visual verification.

One thinks of the words that legend says were graven over the entrance to Plato's Academy: "Let no one enter who does not know mathematics." We might say with equal force: "Let no

one teach or philosophize about art who has not first studied art and shown that he can think visually."

CONCLUSION

Let me summarize these remarks in the form of a set of propositions. First, art is part of education because we expect it to improve the quality of society's most important economic resource: people. Second, the crafts are an essential ingredient of art education because *craft legitimizes art*. Without craft we get play art, school art, therapy art, and art for the sake of using art supplies. Craft legitimizes and authenticates art because it represents more than quality of workmanship: it represents the crucial connection between art and society, between our physical needs and our forming impulses, between the pressure of physical necessity, the joy of making, and the discovery of meaning in work.

What follows from these propositions? Forgive me if I answer negatively in order to emphasize the urgency of the situation. First, bad craft discredits art. Second, discredited art discredits art education. Third, a discredited art education demoralizes and impoverishes students. Fourth, demoralized students make demoralized adults, irresponsible parents, bad workers and citizens, and uncongenial companions. Fifth, a society whose workers and citizens are demoralized is a failing society. In this context, a failing society means a society unable to compete in a worldwide economy; it means a reduced standard of living for most people; it means political instability and a great deal of personal suffering.

What I am saying, more positively, is that a good society is made up of people who care deeply about well-made things. That is, they care about how people work, about how materials are used, about the way visual forms influence behavior, about the investment of energy and imagination for the betterment of the human community.

PREDICTIONS

Having given you this prescription for craft and the good society, what can I say about the future of ceramics and ceramics education? I think we can make one prediction on the basis of our experience with the computer-aided design of paintings, sculptures, prints, and graphic displays. People will get so sick of them that clay objects built by human beings employing a process no more sophisticated than the coordination of two hands, two eyes, and a few billion neurons will become as valuable as a picture of a field of irises painted in one afternoon by an alcoholic Dutchman.

I predict also that there will be colonies in outer space within one generation. They will be populated by scientists, engineers, and graduates of the Harvard Business School. They will capture oxygen trapped in rocks; they will collect and store energy from the sun; they will exchange memos by mental telepathy. On weekends they will make fantastic pots using a type of clay synthesized from human waste products and intergalactic dust. These pots will create a sensation on the New York art market. One of the pots will be purchased, for a record price, by the CEO of a Japanese firm that manufactures computer chips. He

will retire from his firm and spend the rest of his days contemplating the pot.

Another prediction: In two or three centuries some of our lesser known institutions of higher education will become world-renowned centers of research. For example, Oral Roberts University in Tulsa will be famous for pioneering work in archaeology, anthropology, and phrenology. One of its archaeologists, digging in a place now known as Babylon, Long Island, will unearth a strange ceramic object—a cylindrical form with two short appendages at one end and a small round lump at the other. He will conclude that he has discovered a human effigy made by an extinct race of television viewers whose arms and hands had atrophied. They died out because they could not eat and watch television at the same time. So they just watched.

A final prediction. In the twenty-fifth century all national armies will have disbanded. The world's only militia will be a United Nations peacekeeping force. The president of the United States, the chancellor of West Germany, and the prime ministers of Britain and Israel will all be women and part-time potters. They will form a political alliance whose sole aim is to require U.N. peace-keeping troops to wear high-fired ceramic helmets to

protect their brains against Soviet laser rays. The Soviet leader, a former tractor mechanic from Irkutsk, will insist that U.N. troops wear stainless steel pants, lined with lead to protect their genitals from radio broadcasts transmitted by the Voice of America. The ensuing debates in the United Nations will be long and acrimonious but a compromise will finally be struck: U.N. peace-keeping troops will wear ceramic helmets *and* stainless steel, lead-lined pants. These troops will be admired and celebrated throughout the world. After five generations of breeding among themselves they will form a new ruling class. When they have consolidated all political power they will have everyone but themselves sterilized. Thus the U.N. peacekeeping force will constitute the surviving remnant of humanity; it will have evolved into a new breed of men and women consisting solely of a brain attached to a genital. These people will look funny but they will be very happy.

1. Philip Rawson. *Ceramics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971, p. 1.
2. Arnheim, Rudolph. *Visual Thinking*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.

When Clay Is Play and Play Is Art

by John Lidstone

Kids have had all sorts of satisfying and gooey experiences with mud long before they encounter clay. Once past the engrossing preschool fun of sand and water play, kids, regrettably, do not experience many natural materials in their art programs. Crayons and paper, brushes and paint, brayers and ink, effective though they may be, are still, at best, intermediaries between children and their artwork. Clay, however, provides the means for direct expression. Complete in itself, it is capable of supporting the entire creative cycle from idea through process to statement. I am old fashioned enough to put credence in

Cizek's dictum from the early days of art education: "The media is the teacher." Despite the mangled syntax, when it comes to clay, these are words to live by.

When nature itself provides the medium, children are eager and intuitive artists. I quote from *Working Big*, a book written by Clarence Bunch and myself: "The creative abilities and enthusiasms of the child are never more fully satisfied than when he or she is working with natural or found materials in an unstructured situation. When there are no space limitations; when techniques do not impose restrictions; when children through their own exploration of the forces and materials involved decide on their own ways of working; when total physical preoccupation is possible, the child is revealed as a consummate artist in his own right.

Observing youngsters work this way leads to the inevitable conclusion that for children, art is play and play is art."

Clay is not only a material with which children readily identify; but also it is both a concept and a reality whose dimensions they naturally seem to understand. When I was writing *Creative Movement for Children* with Jack Weiner, we were casting around for non-specific but universal images that would encourage children to create their own dance forms. One we hit on was clay. All the children we worked with seemed to instinctively grasp the idea that "a lump of clay can assume thousands of shapes and yet be self-contained. . . . The endless shape possibilities of real clay suggest to children the infinite shape possibilities of their own bodies . . . moving as clay they sense one shape moving into the next giving a reassuring

feeling of connection and flow as they create dance forms directly related to play experiences with clay."

Obviously, nothing positive will happen unless teachers have a genuine commitment to process and material. But if clay is all we know it to be, it would be difficult to think of a better material, or a more satisfying experience than clay experience, to imprint the kind of patterns in the psyche of an individual and thus ensure art becoming an integral element in his or her continuing lifestyle.

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Education as Initiation

by M. C. Richards

I will begin with a little poem called "Homage," that I wrote many years ago when I first began to work with clay. As it is when one falls in love, one sees the face as it were of the beloved everywhere. So everywhere in nature that I looked, somehow I made connections with the art of fire or the movement of the clay on the wheel.

Homage

Sun-up /
over the valley's lip a
running glaze,
lake, crazed and curdled.

Sun-down / and
the dense rim fires
nut-black, bone-brown.

Stoneware is the night,
its granite foot, aside, the
hills,
trimmed sills and shallows. O bene,
bene,
blessed be the jars that
burn with day, turn
smack
center on the whirring
dark.

I wrote that poem when I was at Black Mountain College, a little experimental college in North Carolina that has been

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in the news somewhat around here. I went to Black Mountain College to teach reading and writing. Because of the particular emphasis of the school on studio arts and community as well as on intellectual disciplines, my life took quite a different turn. I had been educated to be an intellectual of the verbal type, as most of us are. I grew up thinking there were two kinds of people in the world: intellectuals and artists. Or three: intellectuals, artists, and women! And what was one to do with that kind of assumption?

My own education was, I suppose you can say, verbal in intent. But partly that was because we didn't have any experience of the arts in elementary or high school. We had "art." I got a very poor grade in it. I couldn't keep within the lines. We also had writing, which meant "penmanship." I got a very low grade in that too. I did worst in art, writing, deportment, and application.

So I discovered through some explorations of the educational world, that going along the line of the intellectual virtues, as they were called, was to find myself in a desert as far as my temperament and nature were concerned. And so it was a great blessing, a great piece of luck, a grace that my destiny brought me to Black Mountain College, where the Arts were active and shared the rulership with the other disciplines.

And there I began to work in pottery. I also participated in dance, theater, woodworking, and printship, but it was the clay that hooked me. And I've wondered why, sometimes—

why that was. I'm not sure you will approve of this, but I think it was because it was so intimate. There wasn't anything between me and it! There was just the clay and my hand and the experience of the clay as taking on, as it were, the memory of my pressure and coming to see that the clay is really the earth's memory. To feel the clay suddenly alive in our imagination: as this ancient substance created by fire processes and water processes and air processes coming down into deltas and ditches and mines and being dug and made available.

And that substance, you know, in touch with or touched by the human hand. We didn't invent our hand. It is very ancient too, and yet that hand brings into that touch what is the warmth of the whole body, the breath coming down the arm into the hand. It is a soul touch, so that when the hand and the clay meet, it is a very big turn-on. It certainly was for me.

Now I haven't been willing to abandon my interest in words for an interest solely in clay. My development rather has been that which I talk about in the book *Centering*, which, I say, is the discipline of bringing in rather than of leaving out. So to bring into my consciousness and my behavior not only the verbal world but the nonverbal world and live them together, that seemed to be what I was about. It has become trendy now to talk about "wholeness," but I think that doesn't make it any cheaper.

It seems to me also that when you experience the clay and you experience words re-

ally deeply without a lot of programming about them, you will see that words are nonverbal too. That is, words don't come from words. Where is the word before we utter it? Well, it isn't in a verbal matrix. It is in something really nonverbal or preverbal. And the translation into verbal cues is like the translation of clay into artistic process.

I find that most of the teaching I do now is in a course or workshop which I call "Creativity in Clay and Words." And I have a series of exercises which we do to lead us from the clay into language and into color and into book and so on. And then I say, because I think I have discovered this, that this clay-words partnership is not just an accident of my own biography. There is something archetypal in it.

If you look at the scriptures of our Judeo-Christian world, you will find two main stories about how it all began. One of them is in Genesis, and it is about clay and dust and how the human being was made of clay, and breath was breathed into us. Breath, that is, spirit. *Spiritus* is the Latin word for breath! The inwardness came

'Unless education really changes the mind, truly opens the senses and lights up identity, what are we fooling around with?'



along with the breath in the clay so that clay and inwardness seem to have a natural connection.

Then in the New Testament Gospel according to St. John, you may remember how it begins: *"In principio erat verbum—*In the beginning was the word." I pondered on that for years. I couldn't figure it out. What does it mean? Is it God with a big dictionary trying to get it together? "Word," what means "word"? Well, I found out that "word" was the translation of the Greek *"logos."* And *logos* doesn't mean vocabulary in the verbal sense. I can't presume to tell you all that it really means, it is one of those really big words. But part of what it means is the spirit of inner forming, so you can

think that wordness and the world are connected with the experience of forming.

I have a little poem about that:

Wordness
Worldness
Autumn-fall
falls
inward
(earth word)
sows
heartseed
wordworlds.

So you see, my real intention is to muddy the waters.

Here is a poem that is entitled "Potter." I wrote it partly out of my wish to defend and acknowledge and celebrate the

activity of the potter-in-us who makes one thing after another the same. Cups, plates, bowls. And sometimes people may ask, "Don't you ever get tired of making those bowls, those cups?" . . . as if one might say, "Don't you ever get tired of the sun coming up every morning? Don't you get tired of planting lettuce every spring?"

Potter

This flat plate. This ladle and bowl.
Clay whirled on a wheel, raised slowly to the table.
Straight and curved, our primal gestures take and give—speak out about the way we stand and breathe.

Every leaf is saucer for the bread,
Every falling drop prepares its cup.
Always we are eating and drinking earth's body,
making her dishes.

Potters like sun and stars
perform their art—
endowed with myth,
they make the meal holy.

I have two or three little stories that have helped to keep me straight about this mystery of the creative and the delicacy that we need to observe in

talking about *what* people are learning and *when*. It used to be that the neighbor children of various ages would come into my studio and work with the clay. And once when I was stacking a kiln and they were bringing their things to me, one girl, Lisa, probably about nine or ten, came bearing this piece of clay that she had glazed and worked on very carefully and long. It had a curved shape, and could have been a shard, very small. She handed it to me carefully. I didn't know what it was, so I said, "Oh, Lisa, what's that?" And she answered solemnly, "It's art."

Now isn't that extraordinary! Isn't it extraordinary that she knows that! She has an intuition of form, and an intuitive confidence, an intuitive participation, in some kind of truth. So if you want to talk about the senses and recovering our senses, and the senses in art education and artistic behavior, I would like to include a sense of truth, sense of balance, sense of presence, sense of humor and sensuality, and really distribute over the body and the imagination more adequately our consciousness of connection between what we are experiencing and what the world is.

Now when I titled my talk "Education as Initiation," I didn't have any idea what I was going to say. And I had been thinking about education as initiation for a long time. It seems to me that unless education is initiation, what are we fooling around with? I mean, what are we doing?—unless it is something that really changes the mind, truly opens the senses to soul life, really lights up the sense of identity, the spirit, the "I AM" in ourself. The sense of self comes to be

perhaps less fugitive as we are able to feed it and nourish it.

So this other little story I'll tell. I went to visit my sister, who had a son about four years old. When I saw him, I said, "Oh, Kurt, how big you have gotten!" And he said, "Oh, I'm bigger than this!" We are bigger than this. These lines of the poet Rilke express some of this mystery.

I live my life in growing orbits
that stretch across the things of the world.
I do not know if I will achieve the last
but that will be my attempt.
I am circling around God,
around the ancient tower,
and I have been circling for a thousand years
and I do not know if I am a falcon or a storm
or a great song.

If you are going to work with clay in school, I think it would be a great mistake to confine it to art classes. The clay should be used in all the subjects. I mean, you don't have to be a quote "Artist" unquote to find working with clay fruitful. It is a great primary material for image making and therefore a basic resource for imagination.

Speaking of living my life in growing orbits, I now live in an intentional community with mentally handicapped adults. It is a working community based on biodynamic agriculture and gardening. There I have a pottery studio and I am a fine-tuned weeder in the herb garden crew and I work in the household and I do things with poetry or whatever. So I live in this intentional community based on biodynamics, and one of the reasons I do has to do with this living one's life in widening orbits. Growing orbits. It has something to

do with getting my priorities straight. In the weaving of my life there has been the English major and then the potter and community builder and poet. So when it comes right down to it, where do I really want to put myself? Where do you really want to put your heart and your energy? What do we want to do? Unless the earth is nourished we won't have any place for our art or our households or our creative work or anything if we neglect the ground itself.

In this community where I live in Pennsylvania, if you stand out in the backyard when the moon is full, and you look out toward the horizon, there are hills: black shapes with the round moon above them;

Moon I

The black hill
like the nose of a seal,
and the moon
like a bright ball
bounced
upward and floating.
We hills are seals at play
in the night fall.
We moons, nudged by the
velvety snouts,
roll into a single gleam
returning the sun's aim.
I will paint these
veils and volumes,
I will paint the
bright single face
dreaming of suns.

Moon II

All day the sounds of
chimes and the gentle
toning
as from a swaying bell
leaning across the sky.
In the bright sun of
darkness,
the moon shines—shines
and tones—
a bell kept aloft
by measured beats.
O bell of my heart
through the darkness of
day
travelling! O bell
swaying in your arch
from rise to set, and
sounding!

Form Makes Thought: Perceptions of a Form-Maker

by William Daley

It's a grand time to be a Mud Person! So much is happening. American clay artists are making works that speak of the spirit with persuasion and certainty. Major private collections are being formed. National and international museums are acquiring works of these artists for their decorative arts and twentieth-century collections.

The most important testament to this phenomenon is that we are finding better ways to share our love of clay with our children and grandchildren. Educators have created a base for a growing audience of discerning participants. There is an almost unbelievable expansion of alternative education possibilities on all levels. More people are engaged in working with clay and enjoying

its magical satisfaction. I believe we are entering the second phase of a great evolution.

It has all happened since I made my first pot half a century ago in Miss Travis's sixth grade class. I am sure that you, like me, remember the thrill of making that first pot. I can remember the touch of cool clay and the call to make something from that soft lump of almost nothing. In all its transformations from dust to stone to glass, clay is the perfect subject for a Pygmalion. It embodies possibilities. It invites a seductive feeling that all thought can be manifested through making. From dust to vitreousness, thought gains its permanence as form.

This is the reason why clay is special: not alone to make projects and to learn techniques, but to form thought as well. Clay permits one to add or subtract in all the ways that

"form" words suggest: *form, reform, deform, perform, conform, inform*, and so forth. Clay is the material with which to sense physical possibilities and to carry them to reality.

Of form's forty-five dictionary definitions, the first is: "The shape or structure of anything." The third is: "A matter of method . . ." This means, to me, embodying thought through making. The purpose of making is to become informed. Making something you do not yet know is the way to become acutely responsive to our best possibilities.

If I were to make up a word I would change *inform* to *enform*. By changing "i" to "e," I would suggest that the process of shaping clay is a way of evolving the shape and structure of ourselves. We are in a time when much emphasis is placed on acquiring information, but very little on becoming enformed. This is a compelling reason why form-

ing materials should be part of general education in secondary schools.

Clay is a great material because it promises all and does everything, but only if you respect its constraints and work with its primary nature. Working through and around absolute constraints is a way to go beyond the ordinary and develop a sense of real achievement. We already know the consequences of ready-made achievement and prepackaged solutions. Long-term growth can only come from work that resolves real problems.

Our long tradition of evolving works of spirit through constraints can serve the future as we help our children become more enformed through art.

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If Clay Is the Answer, What Is the Question

by David W. Ecker

It might be well to ask at the beginning: What would make this symposium a significant event in the history of our field as was, by all accounts, the Seminar in Art Education for Research and Curriculum Development held at the Pennsylvania State University in the summer of 1966? After today will enough people remember the arguments of Ed Feldman and others for clay in the art program and act upon them in their professional lives? Will the poetics provide the guidance we need? In more personal terms, will we be inspired by the messages delivered here?

And let us not deny the value of polemics, defined as “an aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of others” or “the art or practice of disputation or controversy.” Nor should we denigrate politics—“competition between competing groups or individuals for power and leadership in government or other groups” and rhetoric—the art of oratory.

Taken together, if these ideas and arguments are to be considered as the means to some ends, then we must ask: What are the ends that we seek? Put simply, if clay is the answer, what is the question?

If clay is the answer, I believe art programs in American schools might well be enhanced by identifying—for ourselves and others—those questions or issues or challenges that have led us to advocate working with clay as an appropriate response.

Historically the utilization of clay as an artistic medium, a craft material, or design element was grounded in the living traditions of a culture or society and the constraints and opportunities posed by its stage of technological development. (The same is true, of course, of wood, glass, metal, and any other natural or manufactured substance.) That is to say, the working of clay might have been the conscious choice of an individual or it might have been already determined by the individual’s membership in a guild or subcaste; the clay artifact created or produced might have been made in response to a unique personal vision or need, or as the consequence of the demand of the marketplace or state, or the desire of a patron, collector, curator, or gallery director. This depends, of course, on which culture and historical period we are talking about.

Perhaps the oldest form of art education still holding the most potential social value around the world is that collection of human associations defined by the master-apprentice relationship. The newest form of art education to be promoted in this country is discipline-based art education, which, although it includes art production, emphasizes aesthetics, art criticism, and art history. In my view, this was a move in the right direction twenty years ago. In the present time, however, I believe that, given the failings of the schools to serve their constituents, what is now re-

quired is a multicultural approach to art education, and not just in the urban schools.

Young Americans need to discover who they are as Americans by building upon their own cultural self-esteem. Ethnic and cultural diversity is one of the great strengths of our country, but our Formalist aesthetic orientation has prevented us from building on this strength. Our monocultural treatment of the peoples of the world and their arts has likewise failed to educate students in any but Western categories of perception and understanding. Thus the possibilities of clay in art programs are restricted to one cultural perspective.

I want to suggest a strategy for relating the big questions of the cultural meanings of art, personal identity, success and failure, life and death to those questions that art teachers must answer every school day: What shall I attempt to teach these kids in fifty minutes under these conditions?

Now the big questions are the ones most people think of as requiring philosophical or poetic responses, but I think the smaller questions require reflective inquiry as well. Making the case for clay will undoubtedly move in both directions, and we need a way to relate all the responses—the general to the specific, the curricular to the instructional, the theoretical to the phenomenological.

The effective art teacher helps students to expand the meanings that students find in their present situations, and to move toward personally and socially fulfilling lives, whereas the curriculum specialist must relate these instructional elements by answering the standard curricular questions: What should be taught? In what order? To whom? By whom? Toward what ends? By what means? Under what conditions? By what criteria for judging success? Answers to these questions do require philosophical, political, and moral reflection.

With respect to making the case for clay in secondary art education, these answers address the evaluational issue of *what should be the case*; they do not address the first objective of our symposium: the assessment of the current status of art education in three-dimensional media. Those answers that collectively determine *what is the case* with regard to clay instruction require factual information gained by observation, field reports, and statistical data. Ethnographic, sociological, and psychological research findings as well as phenomenological descriptive studies would be appropriate, depending upon the questions asked or the hypotheses to be tested. Another range of questions addresses the speculative and imaginative issue of *what could be the case* in clay instruction.

I would add to these three logically and temporally distinctive kinds of questions a fourth, the historical question of *what was the case* regarding clay instruction in American schools.

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So the strategy I am suggesting is to identify the contributions made in terms of these four kinds of questions. That is, making the case for clay in art education may be made in the context of what was the case, what is the case, what could be the case, and what should be the case.

It should be clear that what is said here should be the object of quite different kinds of evaluation by the participants. Any claim about what was or is now being taught and learned can only be verified by historical and empirical inquiry; any projection of what could be the case, a product of the imagination, is to be checked against the anticipated constraints and opportunities of the future situation; and any proposal for what ought to happen in the school is properly the object of philosophical, political, and moral evaluation.

Unfortunately, typical curriculum efforts are restricted to making decisions about what should be the case. The logical relationships holding vertically and horizontally among the four kinds of curriculum questions, if properly understood, offer the



possibility of much more powerful—and coherent—school programs. Keeping all thirty-six questions in view forces one to attend to curriculum problems in relation to instructional and administrative problems without reducing them or confusing one with another.

The Case for Clay in Secondary Art Education

| <i>A. What Was the Case? (Past Practices)</i> | <i>B. What Is the Case? (Current Practices)</i> | <i>C. What Could Be the Case? (Imaginative Projection)</i> | <i>D. What Should Be the Case? (Philosophic, Political, Legal, Educational, Moral Judgments)</i> |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1. What was taught? | What is now taught? | What could be taught? | What should be taught? |
| 2. In what order? | In what order? | In what order? | In what order? |
| 3. To whom? | To whom? | To whom? | To whom? |
| 4. By whom? | By whom? | By whom? | By whom? |
| 5. Toward what ends? | Toward what ends? | Toward what ends? | Toward what ends? |
| 6. By what means? | By what means? | By what means? | By what means? |
| 7. Under what conditions? | Under what conditions? | Under what conditions? | Under what conditions? |
| 8. By what criteria for judging success? | By what criteria for judging success? | By what criteria for judging success? | By what criteria for judging success? |
| 9. Who answered the above questions? | Who now answers the above questions? | Who could answer the above questions? | Who should answer the above questions? |

A program may be described in four ways: in the context of what was the case, what is the case, what could be the case, and what should be the case. Answers proposed to these thirty-six questions would be the object of different kinds of evaluation. Any claim about what is now being taught and learned in a program can only be verified by empirical inquiry; any projection of what could be the case, a product of the imagination, is to be checked against the anticipated constraints and opportunities of the situation; and any proposal for what ought to happen in the school is properly the object of philosophical, political, and moral evaluation. Hence, the speculative and normative activities of curriculum planners as well as the actual accomplishments of the program are to be assessed.

Any answer to any question in any cell of the matrix inevitably will have a dynamic effect on the answers one can give to the questions in all the other cells, whether or not the questions in these cells are recognized or attended to by the planner. The vertical interactions are fairly clear. The horizontal interactions are more complicated, but here is an attempt to summarize them. 1. Answers to Columns A and B cannot set limitations on answers in Columns C and D. 2. Answers in Column C will always include but may go beyond answers in Columns A, B, and D. 3. Answers in Column D cannot be justified solely with reference to answers in Columns A, B, and C.

The politics of art education is directly related to the questions "Who now decides what should be taught?" and "Who should decide what is taught?" It is one thing for a state department of education, a district school board, or a school administrator to legislate a curriculum to be followed; what really goes on in the art room can be quite something else.

Since art activities have a low priority in our schools, there can be a discrepancy between published educational goals and what

children actually experience. In reality, the success of an art program is perhaps already prefigured by the meanings and sense of accomplishment that young people find in their engagements in art. Such phenomenological recognition can be an exciting discovery for both teacher and student.

SESSION II: ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Drawing the Boundary: Building the Form
Dennie Wolf, *Moderator*

Putting It All Together
Judith M. Burton

The Preadolescent Sculptor and the Teacher
Angiola Churchill

The Development of Representational Concepts in a
Three-dimensional Medium
Claire Golomb

Putting It All Together

by *Judith M. Burton*

We know that knowledge has its dawning in the sensory-motor period of development, the years that span from birth to about four or five. Even before birth, sensory-motor action provides awareness of warmth, enclosure, movement, and sound in utero. Later, in the first years of life, increasing differentiation along all sensory channels allows knowledge derived through action to be internalized as "ideas" in the head. According to many theorists, the quality of early developmental supports has a direct effect on the richness of emerging ideas about space, time, causality, and the construction of classes, concepts, and categories.

SENSORY KNOWING: FEELING AND THOUGHT

For a long time, developmental psychologists such as Piaget, Bruner, and Werner have argued that however complex thought becomes it never loses touch with its sensory and motoric base. Attempting, thus, to reconcile an older philosophical debate which split asunder mind from senses, psychological models of development such as the spiral or branching tree are now offered to illustrate how complex thought and action derive from many and diverse modes of organization as, over time, experience is layered and organized into unitary wholes.

While the image is clear and rather compelling, the mechanism whereby sensory and conceptual responses feed and inform each other is not. Is there, for instance, a thread of ongoing sensory-motor development continuing throughout life? Alternatively, is all accounted for in the early years, leaving the



mind to draw from its own wellsprings at will? Or are there critical periods in human development when the sensory-kinesthetic apparatuses become especially volatile? Last, and most perplexing, is the contention by most theorists that while complex thought somehow remains glued to its sensory base, formal abstract reasoning is, in fact, quite untrammelled by sensory input.

If developmental theorists are in conflict about the mind-senses relationship, psychoanalytic investigators have been less so. The nature of the connection between growing sensory and physical awareness and the feeling system has been considered crucial to the healthy growth of inner psychic reality. In Winnicott's terms, the good enough environment—one that permits confident sensory-motor experimentation—breeds the kind of love and trust in the world essential to self-other relationships and strong ego constructs.

Whatever their different theoretical biases, psychoanalytic theorists such as Freud, Klein, Winnicott, and Erikson have argued that sensory-kinesthetic sensitivity remains crucial to emotional survival. In particular, they point to the period of adolescence

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when, in the face of rapid, radical, and unpredictable biophysiological change, the human sensory system achieves a new volatility that, if properly nurtured, leads to strong ego constructs and the development of a secure sense of individual and cultural identity. The harnessing of these new sensibilities, as Robert White has pointed out, not only enriches the inner world of self, but also allows the self to reach out with renewed competence toward the world of others.

Here is the paradox. On the one hand, we have a cognitive developmental theory that charts the emergence of complex thought while tipping its hat *en passant* to the role of the senses and action in thought. On the other hand, we have a psychoanalytical theory that places sensory action at the heart of the feeling system, the construction of the healthy ego and self-other relationships and yet diminishes the part of the intellect in any role other than its negative or inhibiting role.

THE PART THAT CLAY PLAYS

It is astonishing that more developmental investigators have not turned to the visual arts in their search for a broader vision of the operations of the mind, one that incorporates the contribution of the senses to complex thought. For the arts, like the sciences, are usually held to be humankind's highest achievement, but in the cultural-aesthetic domain. Also, almost more than any other behavior, the arts involve immediate sensory and motoric action in the transformation of concrete materials into aesthetic forms. Yet, as we know all too well, it is the sciences in their formal non-sensory abstract garb that have attracted the real enthusiasms of psychologists and, in consequence, have become paradigms of complex thought.

Let us then use the arts of clay as a basis for inquiry. By the arts of clay I mean those practices of composing in clay that express subject matter: real, observed, imagined, or interpreted aspects of human experience.

Now, looking at clay carefully, one sees that the plasticity of clay invites action: hands are the primary tools and as they encircle, push, pull, squeeze, and break apart, the actions they perform are guided by subtle interplays of muscle inflection, touch, and sight. Since the medium of clay exists in the same dimensions as human beings—it is a dense mass that both encircles and is encircled by space—it offers properties and qualities that directly stimulate inner experiences having to do with solid forms, movement, and space. As clay is worked with, it becomes a medium for the differentiation and organization of possible vantage points on an emerging idea. Here, complex artistic concepts such as mass, balance, tension, weight, and the interplay of planes are brought into play, as the idea is fashioned into a concretely present and integrated whole. In short, the idea becomes form. Lastly, the whole process of reflection, action, and shaping engages aesthetic decision making of a kind that serves both inner ideas and the values of culture. Acting aesthetically conjoins the forming efforts of the individual with the practices

of an artistic tradition that, perhaps more than all others, enjoys a proud and ancient history.

The importance of this descriptive foray into the demands and possibilities of working in clay is that it offers a background against which to observe the development of children as they learn to give representational form to their ideas.

A DEVELOPMENTAL LOOK

We know that when young children first encounter clay, they enclose it in their hands, push, pull, pound, and squeeze as they explore how it changes, tastes, and feels on different portions of their anatomies. Pure exploratory action is soon joined by attempts to organize actions and groups of actions. Clay is spread out in little environments, squeezed back into linear configurations or piled high into towers and such like. Enclosures emerge in clay just as they do in painting and drawing, and are often the prelude to the creation of pieces that tell stories—frequently highly fanciful.

Once young children have grasped the idea that clay can be asked to stand for aspects of their experience, they begin to fashion works that more directly symbolize their concerns. Now images of people, animals, and objects holding affective significance and interest emerge and, later, whole segments of the real world are re-created in clay. As children's worlds of direct experience stretch further and further in time and space, this expansion provides content for representational works in clay. Interest in how things work, actions people perform and places in which they perform them become subject matter for exploration.

With the advent of adolescence, there is a rapid and radical change in youngsters' interests, abilities, and imaginations. In the visual arts, such changes are usually thought to herald the demise of an earlier innate artistry except, that is, for the talented few. I do not share this view and would argue instead for a view of developmental change that incorporates the idea of a temporary disjunction between ideas about the world and ideas about materials, including clay. Quite literally, these two sets of ideas become unglued as a necessary prelude to a new process of dif-



ferentiation and integration. Over time, if all goes well developmentally speaking, youngsters will continue to use clay to explore aspects of the self and world that participate in the serious and often confusing business of identity formation, charting new facets of selfhood, creating ever more complex and aesthetically rich outcomes.

THE LIFE IN REPRESENTATION

What I have outlined all too briefly is the “best scenario” for development—all things being equal; it is a scenario set in motion by sensory-motor action and organization. It contains a problem, namely, what I have just called the disjunction of adolescence: the coming apart and reassembling of ideas.

Most of us have encountered youngsters who, artistically speaking, go off the boil during the early adolescent years, never to return to image making. The exciting, free, and expressive work of childhood is replaced by tight, constrained, maladroit works in painting, drawing, and clay. As mentioned, it is the pervasiveness of such images that has led many observers to stake out a developmental demise in artistry.

To illustrate this point, let me describe examples of clay pieces made by a group of sixth graders. This group had spent time making observational drawings from the human figure in various poses and, as a prelude to the clay lesson, had engaged in some discussion about the human form and the poses they would choose to fashion in the clay. The clay was passed out with final comments on subject matter, and the youngsters set to work.

Upon examining the results, it was clear that these youngsters had thought about the human figure, its parts, and how they were joined, but in mechanical ways. However charming the pieces, they lacked an essential ingredient—life and spontaneity. They did not capture much feel for energy, movement, or pose; nor did they reveal informed responses to the sensuous surfaces, plasticity, and robustness of the clay medium itself. Perhaps because of this, the youngsters said they preferred their original drawings.

Let us now examine the works of another sixth grade group. This group also made observational drawings of the human form in various poses as a prelude to the clay lesson. Before beginning actual work, however, the teacher gave each youngster a small ball of clay for experimentation. The youngsters were invited to explore the clay with their hands and fingers, pushing, twisting, pummeling, and reassembling in new ways. Experimentation was followed by a discussion about what they had discovered about the clay and their action on and with it.

Following this, they were each asked to make a small ball and a collection of sausages of different widths and lengths in the clay. Again, another discussion ensued in which the group talked about how their clay forms might be combined in the creation of a person, what kind of person it might be, and what array of actions on the clay would be necessary to capture the particular character of their ideas.

Again, examining the finished pieces revealed a new dimension of what clay can offer to the representation of experience. In contrast to the work of the first group, these pieces had life, energy, and character in abundance. The range of “person” ideas explored was more diverse, as were the array of actions through which the clay was transformed. What was seen were almost moments of life; expressive forms in which qualities of the sensuous surface, pliability, and solidity of clay have been interwoven in the expression of some intensely personal ideas about human forms. In conversations afterward, this group was enthusiastic about their works, and well able to distinguish them from their original drawings.

PULLING THE THREADS TOGETHER

It is important to recognize the fascination that youngsters of this age have with the human form. This derives from profound personal experiences of bodily change. Youngsters are both curious about their own bodies and every bit as curious about the bodies of others. In consequence, this leads to knowing new things about anatomy, action, attitude, and appearance. Young people of this age also feel intensely about their bodies, and this leads to some confusion and stress, for what they know and feel are often at odds. Thus, at the outset, ideas about a subject (particularly the human form) for a drawing or clay lesson may be in some disarray.

If ideas about subject matter become more complex and disorganized as thoughts and feelings strive for some balance, physical change and development also contribute problems. Heads, arms, legs, and feet grow out of all proportion, and young people have to learn new coordinations. No one can have missed the awkwardness of many adolescent actions. Also, the hormonal invasion of the biophysiological system leads to heightened sensory awareness of almost all the world’s surfaces. Taken together, physical and sensory changes add considerably to adolescents’ sense of being disorganized, confused, and anxious. Yet, and paradoxically, all this adds spice and new dimensions to the possibilities of living.

Against this panorama of change, I think youngsters of this age desire to represent the human form in an attempt to encounter, reflect on, and organize new and somewhat discrepant ideas about “personness” and “humanness.” However, the degree to which inner ideas, thoughts, and feelings can be made accessible to organized forms of expression rests upon the possession of a sufficiently nuanced visual language. For the adolescent, old forms of responding to clay, while satisfactory for the ideas of childhood, are no longer sufficient. Thus, youngsters struggle to lay hold of and form complex ideas in a language that is restricted. Not only does this inhibit the availability, reach, and imaginative manipulation of inner ideas, but it inevitably limits the expressive characteristics of the created forms.

The lack of a sufficiently nuanced repertoire of actions in clay is exemplified in pieces made by the first group of sixth graders,

whereas the clay works of the second group seems to exemplify life and imaginative interpretation. What then made the difference?

The second group harnessed sensory-motor actions first in a free exploratory way, then in a more disciplined manner, and finally in a way directed toward the representation of youngsters' ideas. Note, no actual formal technical learning took place. Rather, actions and senses were stretched, provoked to coalesce into new combinations; new options opened up and were laid hold of as possibilities for representation. Youngsters engaged with the sensuousness, plasticity, and solidity of the clay that, set within the larger context of their subject matter concerns, allowed them to reach deep into their thoughts and feelings and then shape their ideas about the human form without losing life and vigor.

Developmentally speaking, it seems that there may well be two critical periods of growth, both involving sensory-motor thought and action. The first, of course, occurring during the years of earliest childhood when a basic repertoire of responses to clay is set in motion. The second critical period would seem to occur in early adolescence and involves activating new responses made possible by age-appropriate growth. I suspect, in

Through working with clay, youngsters share the same spatial dimensions as self.'



fact, that sensory-motor learning in clay is ongoing because the clay itself demands it. However, I also think that the two periods I claim as critical are so because of the radical developmental shifts they involve; both periods create demands for new and more refined skills of action and habits of mind.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL IDEAS

It would seem that close investigation of how and why young people fashion images in clay would have much to teach psychologists about the contribution of sensory-motor learning to the emergence of complex thought, especially in the representational domain. It would also have much to teach about how sensory-cognitive interactions allow for the integration of thought and feelings at critical times in young people's growth.

Looked at from the point of view of education—or what Winnicott called the facilitating environment—the more we know and understand about the subtleties of development the more insightful we can become about supporting it. Opportunities to reflect on and shape inner ideas and experiences in clay are crucial in education, not simply because they involve following in the footsteps of a time-honored artistic tradition, but because they enrich the mind. As youngsters build complex concepts of the world, each of the symbol systems that the culture has to offer challenges them to encounter their worlds in different ways. When all possible ways of knowing, encountering, and shaping are woven together, the individual has a rich, multidimensional tapestry of understandings and concepts to draw upon. The education of the mind cannot be a bad thing!

Working with clay has a particular significance for youngsters because it shares the same spatial dimension as the self. Unlike painting and drawing, where the third dimension must be constructed, in clay it is a given and can be manipulated directly, connecting viewpoint to viewpoint. This makes possible exploration and constructions of ideas about the appearance and solidity of the human body that has enormous import during the adolescent years. If all goes well in education and development is supported, then both artistry and love of fashioning images in clay will survive as part of the individual's way of life.

If development is not supported or if the youngsters' need to explore and work in clay is reduced to the acquisition of formulas and techniques, then the medium may well not touch the inner self, may well not contribute to the growth of mind and stretch of imagination.

We can teach youngsters the skills of engagement, or we can teach them the skills of disengagement. It is my dream that focused opportunities to work with clay will not only support representational and aesthetic development, but will also provide those kinds of engagements in clay that allow self-world relationships to be endowed with the mantle of art. Art, after all, is made from a human mind and by a human hand and speaks to the shared human condition of the maker and the beholder.

Preadolescent Sculptors

by Angiola Churchill

For fifteen years I have worked with children, aged three to twelve years, and clay, teaching five classes a day, and consider the clay experience to be as essential as the painting experience. My teaching techniques may be considered formal, as they are based on the beliefs that the child is behaving as a sculptor and that sculpture is what he or she makes with clay.

My method of working with children grew out of my knowledge of art—my passion for it, my excitement over what children were capable of doing, the constant observation of how children worked, and finally common sense about the best way to assist them in doing the things all human beings seem inclined to do at that age level.

In the days of which I speak—about forty years ago—there was little to guide us except Lowenfeld. One had to do action-research in one's own classroom. When I began, I reasoned that if I could do nothing more beneficial for the child than to have plenty of well-wedged clay available for their adventures, I would already be doing a good deal to ensure a successful clay program.

The art room I organized is still in operation forty years later. It is a room with stripped-down tables that seat two youngsters each. They are arranged in a U form. The teacher stands in the middle and surveys all—the figure about to topple, the too-thin arms that cannot hold the enormous ball, and so forth.

Each table has a tray with a tin water cup, a slip cup, several tools, a sponge, a bat, two sticks, a cloth, and a rolling pin. When children enter the room, they find these items already on their table, including—to begin with—two large lumps of freshly wedged clay. The previous class that left five minutes earlier prepared this setup for them. These children will do the same for the class that follows. Frustration and confusion at the start of the period are thus eliminated, and the children can devote their energy to all the wonderful things they want to make.

There are simple rules and regulations in this studio, and some basic skills are learned and reviewed periodically—how to make a coil, a slab, a ball, how to join two parts with slip, how to wedge, how to put work away on a wet bat for working on another day, how to clean up and set up for the next class.

The program not only includes experiences in the clay room for the six- to eleven-year olds, but a clay corner is also provided in every room in the school for all the grades.

In short, the most basic contribution I can make to their exploration is plenty of well-wedged clay, efficient and well-thought-out working conditions, insistence on adherence to rules and regulations, some clear simple techniques, many, many opportunities to work in clay, references to the world of art, and talk about ideas, feelings, and where to get factual information.

LIVING THINGS

First and foremost, the preadolescent sculptor has the

deep-rooted desire to model living things because they already exist in space and are alive. This is a characteristic not only of the preadolescent, but of all sculptors of all times. Even when very young, they put together a combination of forms that become the equivalent of the human figure or an animal: a round head, sticks or thin coils for arms and legs, and a rectangular lump for the torso. These basic attributes that constitute the figure satisfy them, depending on their age and finally on the tradition of their culture.

Preadolescents are apt to strive toward realistic representation with intricate details to exhibit their growing knowledge of the world. A generalized representation of the human figure is no longer adequate. Clothing is also important to indicate sex, or else the figure is rendered nude with sexual differences indicated.

Children of this age often try to show their figures in an environment depicted by props or objects that relate to the story they are trying to convey. Preadolescents work best by using their hands, forming and moving the human figures in various and endless positions, and by placing them in environments that occur to them—a skating rink, a skiing slope, a basketball court, a beauty parlor—or having them perform actions—shopping, boating, dancing, acting out a barroom brawl, fighting.

THE STANDING FIGURE

It is important that preadolescents learn how to make their figures stand up. If they are able to make them stand up, then it follows that they can make them do things. In pre-



adolescence, the fight against gravity is being won, and the children learn to distribute weight so that their people and animals can remain standing.

In its simplest terms, one needs a sphere for the head, a rectangle for the body, and cylinders for the legs and arms, and then to make a figure stand up one needs to mount the parts on sturdy legs. If the figure is to stand up, the most important factor is the quality of the cylinders, or possible rectangles, for the legs. If they are not solid all the way through, they will not support the body. Then too, if all the parts of the body are not solidly attached, they will fall apart during the drying or later in the firing. The use of slip assists in securing the parts, and children willingly use it as they consider it a kind of paste that, along with roughing up the surface and smoothing the cracks, first in one direction then in another, gives them the assurance that their figures will hold up.

MOVEMENT AND ACTION

The preadolescent, intent on mastering the lifelike qualities of the human or animal figure, becomes involved in the action of the pose, the mood they are capturing, the story they are telling. The most essential char-

acteristic of living things is movement and their capacity for movement.

Physical fitness and ability in sports are particular to the active preadolescent. They can become involved by trying out poses with their own body. They understand that they must choose a position that implies action, as when the figure gathers energy to move or when movement is stopped at a critical moment and/or is exaggerated to create the illusion of action. They can even create action through textural qualities.

The preadolescent can learn to deal with weight distribution, the invisible axis of the body, leverage, temporary armatures to offset the effects of gravity, and squeezing and compressing parts in order to grasp the meaning of a sculpture as a whole.

NONOBJECTIVE SCULPTURES

Nonobjective sculptures can provide enormous satisfaction

for the preadolescent in discovering what clay can do. The intrinsic qualities of clay can be fully explored through the construction of nonobjective sculpture. This gives the experience of molding or shaping the space in and around the clay, intensifying the three-dimensional aspects of the object through articulating the interplay between solids and voids, space and perforations. Interior forms and exterior forms unite in a process of transformation of forms as the piece is seen from all sides.

Experiences of this kind provide an enormous sense of order and harmony, a pleasure in themselves, and learning from them can be carried over into the content work as well.

GUARANTEED SURVIVAL

The preadolescent should not be exempt from learning the requirements of the material. When they understand the need to abide by clay's basic tendencies, they become will-

ing to put effort to complying with them.

The lack of organization that sometimes occurs in studio management in conjunction with not demanding mastery of basic skills contributes to the ruin of an individual's work and ultimately discourages her or him from trying again. An object created with fantasy and love should survive at least during the process of making and hopefully beyond that through the firing. The teacher can give a minimal guarantee of this by making sure that some basic skills are learned and that the studio organization and procedures support goals.

IN SUM

The central idea is that the preadolescent is acting as a sculptor. She or he deals with all aspects of the language of three-dimensional art. The pull of gravity, the intrinsic qualities of the clay, spaces, shapes,

light, repetition, direction, movement, balance are the means they use to express their desire to create a sense of living things that communicate anxieties, joys, personality, and perception of environment and culture.

The reason why preadolescents make clay sculptures is to assist them in their exploration of who they are. There is perhaps no material that offers them better opportunities to express the full range of their emotions, their engineering skills, their expanding intellectual concepts, and the hopes and wonderings about their existence.

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Early Representational Concepts of the Human Figure in a Three-Dimensional Medium

by Claire Golomb

The last hundred years have seen a tremendous interest in child art and a growing appreciation for the simple forms that characterize early repre-

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sentational efforts. While the issue of child art has been approached from different—and at times opposing—theoretical positions, the focus has almost always been on children's drawings.

The reasons for this singular concern with children's drawings has to be sought, at least in part, in the ease with which drawings can be solicited, collected, and stored. Since age-

related changes in children's drawings show certain regularities and the drawings become progressively more detailed, it is not surprising that they have been analyzed from a cognitive developmental perspective—that is, for what they can tell us about the child's mental maturity—and from a psychodynamic perspective for clues to the child's personality.

Unlike the fairly long tradition of examining children's drawings, the study of the development of sculpture and modeling has lagged far behind. In the beginning of this century, several students of child art reported interesting findings on children's modeling of the human figure, but these studies lacked the necessary experimental and statistical controls.

The first systematic exploration of the development of three-dimensional concepts and modeling skills in young children's representation of the human figure was published in the seventies (Golomb, 1971, 1974). The publications that have appeared since that time are few in number, and their focus is primarily pedagogical; that is, to facilitate the use of the medium in creative and expressive ways. By and large, a review of the published literature indicates that the development of three-dimensional representation is a much neglected area.

In the two-dimensional medium of drawing and painting, children—like adults—face an acute problem of how to represent three-dimensional space and the many sides of an object with materials that bear no resemblance to the world that is to be portrayed. The distance between the object to be represented and the medium of paper, pencil, crayon, and magic marker seems unbridgeable. Individuals learn to compensate for the deficiencies of the medium and to use its properties in ways that create an essentially imaginary world, one that comes into existence through the magic of lines and use of color.

It has taken psychologists many decades to understand that representation is not to be mistaken for the imitation of nature in any literal sense, and that art, even child art, is not intent on copying per se. Much of the debate on the meaning of young children's drawings has focused on deficiencies that involve the missing third dimension. For example, attention has been called to the so-called transparency of a drawing that depicts the inside of an object not di-

rectly visible to an outside observer, or that fails to eliminate lines when objects overlap each other.

When children attempt to portray more than a single view of an object—for example, a cube—the different faces do not line up properly, and such errors have usually been interpreted in terms of cognitive deficits rather than of technical naiveté. Given the restriction of the flat medium, all early representations limit their depiction to a single side or face of the object, and much has been written about the canonical orientation of the drawn figure—for example, the frontal view of humans and the side view of animals.

Another early childish tendency or error is often described as the horizontal-vertical bias that leads to such oddities as a chimney drawn at a right angle to the slanted roofline, instead of being drawn as a vertical upright.

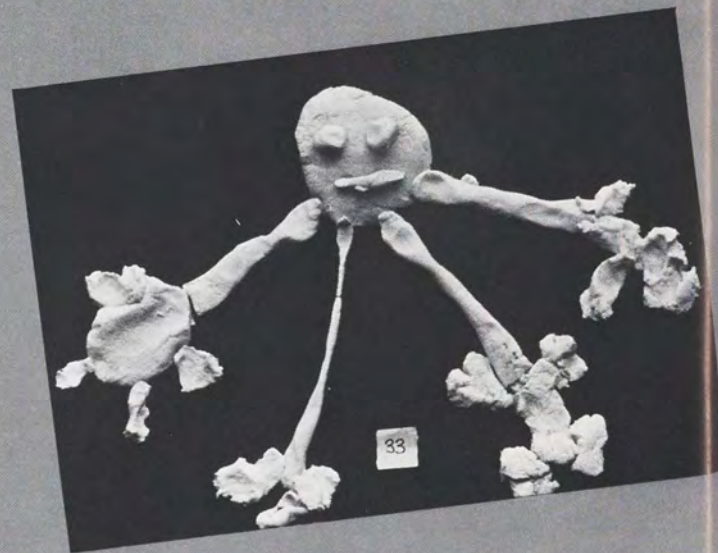
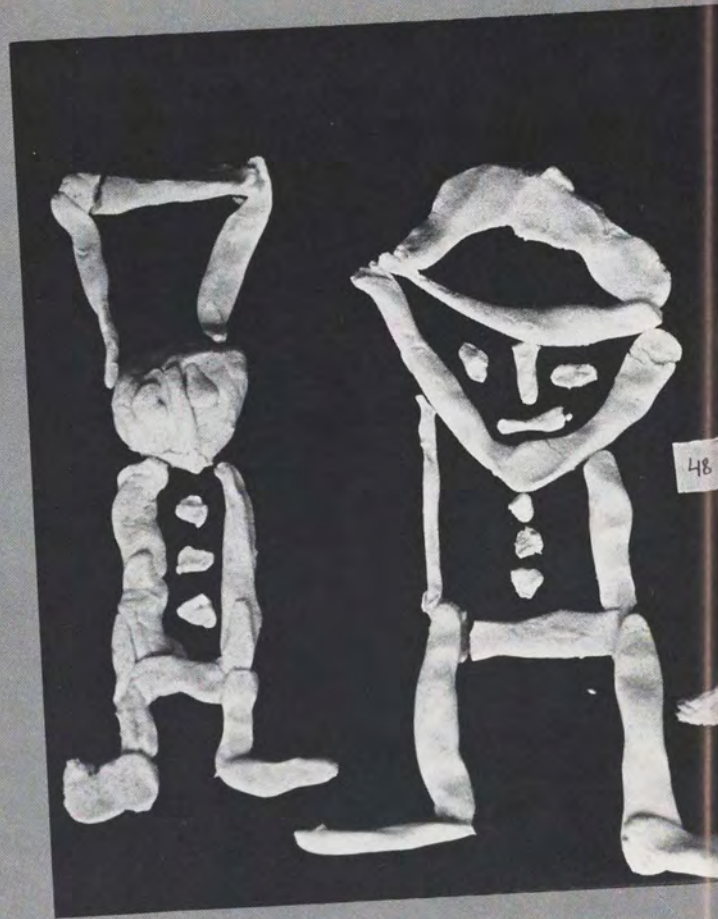
However, exploring the development of modeling in clay or Plasticine is important in its own right, and not merely as a means for resolving controversies about drawing development.

In this context, a series of important questions needs to be addressed.

What is the general course of differentiation in the plastic medium? Does it proceed from an early, undifferentiated state to the use of at first one, then two, and lastly three dimensions; or are three-dimensional concepts used from the very beginning, albeit in a primitive way?

If children have a basic notion of three dimensionality that they bring to clay and Play Dough, what does it consist of?

Are children more likely to represent the different sides of an object in clay than in drawing, or are they content with





the canonical orientation that represents the single view that best captures the essential characteristics of the object?

What awareness do children have of the nature of this medium to represent—under some conditions quite directly—the “inside” and the “outside,” the “front” and the “back” views of an object?

Are children more likely to “imitate” the volumetric properties of the object when working with clay?

Since modeling with clay or Play Dough can lend itself to the making of real objects and since a sculpture can function as a symbolic play object, do children think of their sculpture as a copy or as a stand-in for the real object, and if the latter, what requirements does the representation have to meet?

Unlike the apparent permanence or fixity of a drawn figure, the child who models a figure with clay, Plasticine, or Play Dough can make revisions quite easily. Given the revisability of these media, does the child avail himself of this opportunity to shape the material until it meets his expectations?

Finally, given the active exploration of the medium that involves not only vision but also such sensory modalities as touch and smell, and perhaps even taste in the case of the very young, does this bodily involvement lead to products that have a deeper emotional significance for the child, and that are more directly related to his sense of self than is the case for drawing?

To most of these questions—and they are central questions—we do not, as yet, have answers. But we have gained some understanding of young children’s early representational concepts from a study I con-

‘Published literature on the development of three-dimensional representation is a much neglected area.’



ducted, in which I focused on the modeling of the human figure.

My study of three hundred children, ranging in age from 2.4 to 7.4 years, identifies the evolution of three different models that children discover quite independently: 1) the upright standing column, 2) the ball or slab of dough with facial features, and 3) the array of separate parts that consists mainly of facial features but occasionally also includes limbs.

Until the age of five years, children appear to concentrate on the frontal plane of the figure, modeling facial features, bellybuttons, and occasionally hair. From five years on, a few subjects turn the figure over and model its back lightly. However, the children in this study were not used to modeling with Play Dough, and it is premature to conclude that we are faced with an intrinsic limitation. That the three-dimensional concept is not totally absent can be seen in the behavior of a three-year, ten-months-old preschooler who made a global figure with facial features, turned it over and said: "Now his back is on—that's all done."

Perhaps, with further practice, children will discover additional possibilities that are unique to the three-dimensional medium; for example, that a sculpture can be viewed from all sides, and that the artist does not have to be restricted to a single viewing position. Such a working through the possibilities of this medium of representation will have significant implications for the child of the nature of the object and of the symbolic activity of creating equivalencies.

In other words, I am suggesting that this working through may have a significant effect on the child's cognitive

and artistic development, and perhaps on his personal sense of self as well. To see oneself as a true maker in the basic sense of creating shapes involves the mind, the heart, and the body. Because of the revisability of the medium, it offers the child new opportunities not available in the two-dimensional medium of drawing.

The intimate contact with the material fosters a different mode of involvement in the making process than is the case in drawing. Modeling requires more persistence and a "rethinking" about the object to be represented that may well lead to a deeper understanding of the object and of the self. In a culture that provides much visual information in the passive mode of watching television or viewing comic strips, modeling in clay encourages an active and constructive approach to the world.

In summary, even very young children, namely, preschoolers, have a rudimentary conception of three dimensionality that they bring to their work with Play Dough, that can best be seen in the upright standing figures and the tendency to use the global mass of the Play Dough rather than flattening it. Further studies, no doubt, will reveal additional spatial concepts that are unique to the three-dimensional medium of clay, Plasticine, and Play Dough.

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Illusion and

by George Kokis

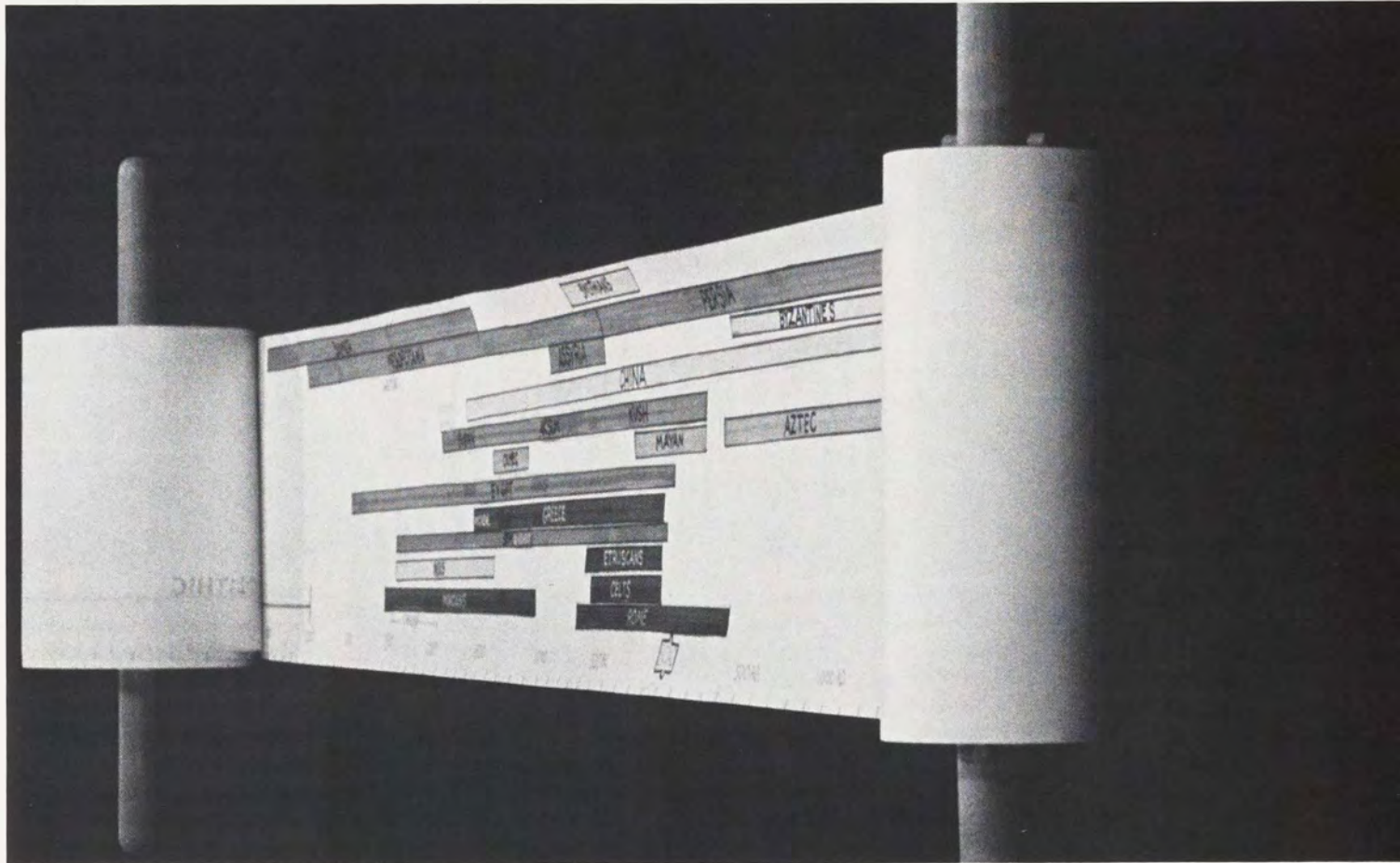
Problem: For a graduate seminar I teach called The Spiritual Ancestors of the Artist, I needed a visual device that would show the range of artistic activity from our own day back through history to our prehistoric origins. The time frame involved is staggering, taking up more than the beginnings of our modern view of artistic production born in the Renaissance, starting well before the classical systems that came out of Egypt or Greece. For this seminar the emphasis would be on the role that prehistoric and primitive peoples played in developing our artistic heritage. The time frame of primal influence covers the entire chronology of the human race. It runs off all our charts. How could I accomplish a conversion of these bare facts to a knowing with weight to it?

Solution: I designed a timeline in the form of a scroll that could roll out as long as necessary. Most timelines are not—cannot be—to accurate scale. The limitations of space in conventional books require that we play tricks with scale, condensing it to fit the limited format of the book.

As always, our choice of context shapes what we think we know. Anything that can't be shown in a book is deformed to fit the book. Our media act as the proverbial Procrustean bed, cutting off or stretching the living form to fit the technological convention. To give

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the Clay Conversion



what I thought would be a more accurate idea of the relationship of time to artistic development, I had to return to an earlier form of the book—the scroll.

I took a roll of paper from a copy machine and joined it with another to make the scroll. I determined to chart one million years using a measure of one inch to one hundred years. This would show the early slow pace of development in contrast to the rapid acceleration of the past few thousand years.

Surprisingly, the task, which I thought would take a couple of hours, spread over an entire morning and into the after-

noon. By the time my inch marks had hit thirty thousand years, I had abandoned my hundred-year marks for one-thousand-year notations, and still had a terrifically long way to go.

Then it hit me: I did not really know what a million was! I only knew it in the abstract. One hundred thousand is not a million; it is only a tenth of a million. You already knew that? I'm not so sure. I thought I knew it too. I knew it in my mind but did not know it in my muscles. I lacked a kinetic knowing, and assumed the abstraction to be sufficient.

Doing—not thinking of—but *doing* a million of anything is a considerable task. It can be so

easy for us to consider reflection the same as action and forget the test of our knowing is in the acting out of the notion. Projecting how enormous my growing scroll was apt to become by the million mark, I stopped it at one half million years.

When I rolled the scroll out through the school corridors, its length was almost one and a half football fields. Unrolling it and pacing off its lessons with my students proved more effective than I had ever imagined. That's the point—doing the thing was different than I had imagined it would be. As always, some things—like this project—can be more than

imagined, others can be less.

The scroll project is an example of a particular way of learning and experiencing, a way complementary with our more convenient but too often abstract and therefore illusory forms that provide one with an illusion of knowing. The issue of illusion is becoming more critical. The prevailing values of economic affluence deliver to us an oversupply of technologically advanced products, but also cause us to suffer a lack of time in which to use them.

Within the framework of this scarcity of time, skills of skimming material are widely promoted, exposing the tip of an iceberg that is a fraction of all experience, keeping ourselves

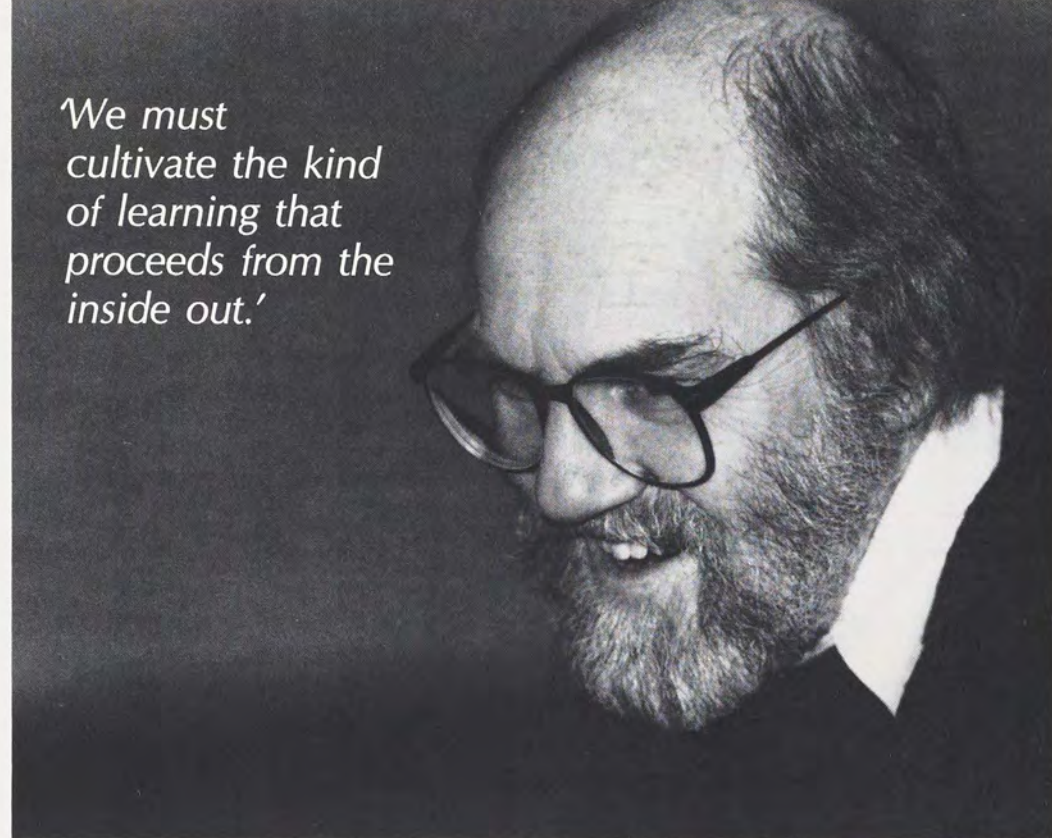
light and unencumbered by commitments. As we become more adept “quick readers,” we hazard developing a dubious ability to avoid opportunities to explore beneath the surface into those areas of life that are not easily penetrated. In our pursuit of gathering in quickly the most information, we will find it increasingly difficult to stop and look closely at what we find. To put it in other terms, we come to accept that a taste is equivalent to a meal, and our weakened digestion concurs.

My scroll timeline reminded me of the part that one’s medium can play in the quality and accuracy of an experience of knowing. Now we are well within the computer revolution, where our fascination with this technology is causing a compression of all experience into byte-sized units that can be cleanly and quietly internalized through the optic nerve. We can create the illusion of knowing just about everything there is, and then some. One wonders if this miniaturization of knowledge unaccompanied by a complementary physical experience will result in the miniaturization of knowing itself.

Knowing is not just what we *think* it is. It is also what we corporeally experience through our bodies. Ever since the middle Ages, our bodies have been considered inconvenient at best, dangerous and corruptible at worst. Only a society uncomfortable with its own physical nature could be so hung up with such illusory forms of passion as our newsstands reveal. We have long suffered the painful separation of our diverse but compensatory qualities into value-ridden dualities.

If we want to add weight and dimension to our knowing, then we must add to our

‘We must cultivate the kind of learning that proceeds from the inside out.’



flights of act and fancy the gravity of material. If we are to consider what materials would yield significance to our experience, then we must consider the advantages of clay.

I believe this most common of materials offers us the special opportunity of converting the illusion of knowing into a density of knowing. Clay helps us turn a capacity to shape the imaginative notion into the ability to do so in time and space. I’ve always loved the story of Albert Einstein, reported to have been seen standing in the hallways of Princeton, tightening and relaxing his muscles, seeking and experiencing his theorem through the kinetic energy of his body.

History shows that ceramics moved from simpler to more complex levels. Clay processes still work that way, in contrast to the high-tech dynamics that attend our growing visual sophistication. With so much of

our learning happening from “outside in,” we must continue to cultivate that kind of learning that proceeds from “inside out.” We need a comprehensive awareness such as the clay conversion enhances—not merely visual but visual married to touch—so that we might shape and test our notions in the sensory world, in the cauldron of physical reality.

Telling you about this scroll and rolling it out on the floor are not the same thing. I choose to bear the inconvenience for the sake of a more accurate knowing. The difference is not just in the physical dimensions of the material. That is the least of it. The difference is in the knowing, in the kind and quality of the knowing. The difference is in the experience of what is revealed through the manipulation of the material. The difference is that you must involve yourself mentally *and* physically in that manipulation, mind and body acting in concert.

Musicians talk of jazz music requiring “grease” (what they call honest dirt)—that which adds soul to the form. That seems an apt metaphor of the role clay forming would play in a curriculum. Work with clay unites our mind and body with the fundamental material of all making—that from which we and all creation are formed.

The remarkable imaginative leap of mind that can encapsulate in an instant great and complex notions dances with the reality of a point of geologic time and space, bringing us literally back down to earth. What a knowing this slowing down brings us! Imagination and gravity together shape a reality that has served us throughout our earthly existence.

SESSION III: SCENARIOS IN THE SCHOOLS

The Many Faces of Clay: Devising Curricula in Response to Needs

Judith Schwartz, *Moderator*

Listening to the Clay: Artist in the Schools
Squidge Davis

How to Build a Comprehensive Clay Program for Grades 4-12

Leslie Eckmann

Using the Museum as a Resource
Mary Jane Moross

Building Careers: Commercial, Industrial, Studio
Jim Tabor

Viva Picasso: A Collaboration
Michael Prepsky

Breaking the Mold: Clay, Creativity, and the Criminal Mind

Dale Ruff

Breakout Sessions

Three-dimensional Perception: A Birthright

by Judith S. Schwartz

Transformation is a theme that must underlie any approach to curricula. Transformation can be defined as the act of altering irrevocably an individual's perception of his relation to the world through means of guided, tactile interactions.

We know from the literature of developmental psychology that even in utero, tactile interactions with the immediate environment form a large part of the sensory input data to the developing fetus. These interactions are direct, nonsymbolic representations of the environment. They stimulate those parts of our brain that are pre-verbal.

As human beings develop within a culture—particularly a Western, industrial culture—a number of symbols are learned



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symbols that are used to represent reality. Children learn, for example, a great deal about their world through television—a totally symbolic medium. Even in the “real” world, direct sensation cannot be left to stand on its own but is instead explained by words. Most people no longer experience the world directly. It is

mapped representationally by linguistic experience. Whatever art is, it is not what we say it is. In reality, the map is never the territory.

We live in a three-dimensional world. Our eyes, ears, and touch receptors, when coupled to our brains, perceive depth. Three-dimensional perception is our birthright. Working in clay is a nonverbal, three-di-

mensional, tactile way of representing our universe that more fully engages our faculties than any other means we have conveniently available to us. This is a major case for clay in the curriculum of the modern world.

Listening to the Clay

by Squidge Davis

For the past seventeen years I have worked as a studio potter, developing an openhearted relationship with clay. For the past ten years I have had the joy and good fortune of sharing what I have learned with schoolchildren, through the Maine Arts Commission's Touring Artists Program. As a visiting artist, I have worked with hundreds of children ranging in age from preschool through high school, as well as with children with special needs. Clay work is enormously rewarding and enriching for each precious child with whom I have worked.

I have attended workshops led by Pia Melody, a consultant from the Meadows Treatment Center in Wickenburg, Arizona. Her work with abused children and the dysfunctional family has greatly influenced me. Pia feels that the concept of the "precious child" is the key to nurturing and healing abused children. She also believes that any child who is not related to as precious is, to a degree, suffering abuse. When I walk into a classroom, therefore, I want more than anything to look at each child as a precious being.

The Maine Touring Artists Program makes grant money available to schools and institutions so they may have professional artists work with their students for periods ranging from a day to several weeks. Although I may be in a school for several days, it often happens that my time with a single class is limited to one or two visits. It is necessary, therefore, to work efficiently.

My primary goals are to give students a profound sense of contact with clay as an ancient and powerful material; to give them the experience of their own inner-directed creative process; and to leave them with an enhanced sense of their self-worth. If these goals are met, the secondary goal of teaching how to make good pots follows naturally and easily. Students leave class having mastered fundamental pottery skills, and knowing that clay is great and so are they.

Clay itself does the teaching if I can structure an environment of calm and quiet so students can hear what clay has to tell them. I try to schedule classes with a minimum of one-and-one-half hours, so students are relieved from hurried rush. This is enough time for children to gain focus, follow through with their work, and have time at the end to talk about what's been done.

I begin classes with body movement and breathing exercises. If I can teach them to breathe—slow, deep breaths, in through the nose, out through the mouth, eyes closed, relaxed, calm, centered breathing, hands on the clay—then they are guaranteed success.

I follow up breathing instruction with a guided meditation accompanied by the beautifully relaxing music of Stephen Halpern. In meditation, each child goes slowly back into time to the place

where human hands first reached out and touched clay. I want their first physical contact to have the power of that ancient connectedness. I want them to feel that what they make has the same importance of discovery as the first pot ever made, and to believe for the moment that the future of civilization depends on their creativity and inventiveness.

Younger children gratefully lose themselves in breathing and the silent, meditative work that follows. As children grow older, more self-conscious, and less trusting, it becomes harder. If a particular class is having difficulty getting centered, it is useful to blindfold them as a method of eliminating distractions.

This focusing time is essential in preparing students for the silence my classes work in. I have experimented with leaving out this focused time, permitting students to talk quietly while they work. But what they make is not nearly as good, nor are they as excited about what they've learned.

I tell them that the clay doesn't speak to them on the outside of their minds the way they talk with each other, but rather it speaks on the inside of their minds where ideas come from. It takes a little work in the beginning to get a group of children who are used to talking all the time to work in silence, but it is worth the effort. Soon the entire class settles in, their eyes closed, their hands reverently touching their pots, while they breathe and listen to the clay give them ideas about what they want to make.

As a teacher I feel it vital that students draw on inner creative resources rather than simply follow directions. I want an environment in which they feel connected to their clay-working ancestors. Masks, totem poles, kiln goddesses are especially successful in continuing the initial primal connectedness. Children have an innate sense of the sacred. Whenever possible, I conclude our time together with a ritualized firing of pots and sculpture in a primitive kiln we construct in the schoolyard. Since pots fired in this manner bear the direct markings of the fire in the same way pots of the ancients do, students are likely to feel the power of the clay more than if the pots were fired in an electric kiln.

Using such ancient methods in constructing their first clay vessel, students close their eyes and feel the thickness of the clay they pinch, and the sturdiness of the pot as they add coils. Periodically we stop to let the pots rest and harden in the air, and I give them added skills, such as making coils of different lengths to give their pots form, or coils of different shapes to give design, or using tools from nature to decorate slabs, or experimenting with how the slabs can be used in the pots they are working on.

Many children are insecure about their inner guidance. Their hands are constantly in the air to get my attention and ask for instruction at every stage. After I have presented the basic skills,

'Clay itself does the teaching if I can structure an environment of calm and quiet.'



I do not answer these individual questions. I tell them, "Take a deep breath, place your hands on your pot, and ask the clay and your pot to give you the answer." They always find an answer.

The result of such self-direction is enhanced self-esteem. Self-esteem is an absolute prerequisite for learning, as well as for following through on what has been learned. Children with low self-esteem give low value to what they have done. Previously I found it difficult to convince students by verbal means that what they did mattered very much. Now, one minute of sitting with a student and breathing together has more power in achieving focus and success than many words.

Before becoming a full-time potter in 1970, I worked with children in the social services and felt frustrated by the limited means to affirm successfully a child's sense of self-worth. I have found clay to be a powerful vehicle to channel self-esteem. Not only is it possible to structure a successful experience with clay, but also it leaves each child with a tangible "power" object in the form of a pot or sculpture as a reminder of his or her success.

I take every opportunity to praise the children and to find something at each stage of the process that is praiseworthy. In an extremely large class, I still find it possible to make individual connections. Two teachers are present: me, and the clay.

Often I ask students to write about their experience with clay. The clear emotions they feel about the pots they have made cre-

ate a useful bridge to writing. A junior high student who functioned at a low level of reading and writing wrote this poem.

My hands touched the clay, and it felt good.
I formed a pot
I feel good about my pot
I feel good about myself.

Clay helps to solve many problems society creates for young people. It relieves them of stress, reaffirms their self-worth, promotes the skill of inner listening that enables making difficult choices in later life, gives them tangible skills that require focus, increased attention span, and leaves them with a piece of work that serves to remind them of their skills and successes. Clay is also useful as a springboard for creating interest in other academic disciplines such as history, geology, archaeology, and writing.

One high school boy I worked with was so severely handicapped that it took three hours to painstakingly roll out balls of clay and place them in a press mold. After he had lovingly smoothed out the inside of his pot, I took it out of the mold and placed it on a pedestal so he could look at it. When he saw his pot, he smiled broadly and said, very slowly because he had as little control over his speech as he did his limbs, "I am an artist!"

How to Build a Comprehensive Clay Program For

by Leslie Eckmann

A clay experience has at its core a metamorphosis that is repeated with each new piece and is not unlike the creative cycle itself: the student experiences germination, assimilation, and finally realization.

In his book, *The Path of Least Resistance*, Robert Fritz describes three major steps of the creative process.¹ He identifies the first step of the cycle, germination, as the phase when conception takes place—what the composer, Roger Sessions, refers to as “the impulse which sets creation in movement.” The second stage, assimilation, involves work of the mind and the heart before the hand is engaged. Assimilation is a period of internal growth and expansion. The final step, completion, is the actual physical creation of the concept. This stage is frequently not achieved because of self-consciousness, insufficient development of skills, or fear on the part of the artist.

Clay is a fabulous teaching tool as well as an art medium. It is easy to bring clay into the classroom, and many interdisciplinary and multicultural topics can be experienced through clay. We all remember some hands-on educational experience from our early years that made history or another culture come alive for us. Clay can fill this need at all teaching levels. Clay can and should become an integral part of teaching both art and academic subjects.

Clay education is not only about process and products

but about self-expression, reaction to and interaction with the environment, and the search for answers to questions that always have multiple solutions. The possibilities are limitless: responses may be two- or three-dimensional, functional or nonfunctional, and may utilize a multiplicity of techniques and sizes.

It is recognized that students have different learning styles and absorb information in various ways. Our educational system is predominantly two-dimensional and concentrates on reading, writing, and mathematics. This causes difficulty for those many students whose learning strengths lie in three-dimensional reasoning and expression. For these students, success in the visual arts leads to increased success in academic work, even among weaker students—a fact with which many teachers are familiar.

In addition, work in clay is a group-oriented experience because of the necessity of shared studio responsibilities, kiln stacking, and the bond of communal firing.

The clay program can be designed in a sequence of difficulty for the entire student body, which gives it a range and depth of experiences appreciated by administrators, faculty, students, and parents.

One final benefit of visual art is the fact that it is one of a few noncompetitive areas of study. Students may even elect their pass/fail or grade status.

National Cathedral School is a private girls' school in Washington, D.C., with 525 students in grades 4 through 12. During

my twelve years at NCS, I have created a comprehensive ceramics program for the entire school. Art is part of the required curriculum for grades 4 through 8, and is an elective for grades 9 through 12. The high school courses are based on skill level, not age. Each year as student skills expand, the projects change and build upon the previous year's experiences. Each succeeding fourth grade follows a different program through the required years of art, with at least one

clay project per year in the art studio and usually at least one additional project either in a studio or classroom setting and with an emphasis on a link to academic material.

The clay curriculum varies to take advantage of local museum shows and to respond to the needs of academic teachers. Clay projects in the studio are usually preceded by an exploratory project. This is a less structured short-term project that allows students greater choice of subject matter and time to respond to the clay in a non-precious way.



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Grades 4-12

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, MULTICULTURAL CERAMICS PROGRAM, GRADES 4 THROUGH 12.

Fourth Grade Curriculum

Exploratory Project. "Musical Clay": a variation of musical chairs that moves students around a huge "serpent" of clay. They create, adapt, and add onto the piece. The class may determine a theme as a group or work independently. The resulting piece is photographed and put to rest at the end of the class.

Academic Project. Japanese tea bowls are formed as an ex-

tension of the social studies program for the year. Students learn pinching techniques.

Field Trip. Tea ceremony at the Japanese Embassy, Washington, D.C.

Studio Project. Stenciled plates. Students are introduced to the slab roller and form press-molded plates. Various themes for the stenciled designs have been chosen depending on other areas of art or academic concerns that year.

Fifth Grade Curriculum

Exploratory Project. Coiled expressive figures or faces.

Academic Project. Coiled constructed classical Greek pots. Students are introduced to painting with engobe and building with hand-rolled and extruded coils.

Field Trip. The Walters Museum, Baltimore, MD, to view Greek and Roman artifacts.

Studio Project. Terracotta figure sculptures.

Sixth Grade Curriculum

Exploratory Project. Hanging textured pocket pots. Students create textures on clay and build with the resulting slabs.

Academic Project. Cuneiform writing, Sumerian cylinder seals, cuneiform tablets, and beads strung with the seals to make jewelry. Exploration of structured textures (writing) in clay.

Field Trip. Dunbarton Oaks Museum, Washington, DC, to see ancient artifacts, or Walters Museum in Baltimore, MD.

Studio Project. Oil lamps with glass chimneys. Solid forms of

'The visual arts are one of the few non-competitive areas of study.'



clay are hollowed, and surfaces are carved or embossed. Students view ancient pot forms for storing and burning oil.

Seventh Grade Curriculum

Exploratory Project. Stenciled jewelry. Positive and negative spatial interaction.

Academic Project. Paper mosaics in Medieval history class. Medieval manuscript illumination and calligraphy is a joint art and religion project.

Field Trip. Dunbarton Oaks Museum in Washington, DC, to view ancient mosaics and illuminated manuscripts.

Studio Project. Grotesque sculptures.

Field Trip. Washington National Cathedral and Stonemasons' studio to view the gargoyles and grotesques of the cathedral, and to see the stonemasons at work on sculptural and architectural forms.

Eighth Grade Curriculum

Exploratory Project. Clay and mixed media jewelry. Show the use of clay and other materials in nontraditional ways.

Studio Project. Clay fish platters.

Field Trip. Aquarium in Baltimore, MD, or Commerce Department Aquarium in Washington, DC, in conjunction with a science class, or

Studio Project. Abstracted face platter.

Field Trip. Sculpture at the Museum of African Art, Washington, DC, or abstract painting at the National Gallery or the Phillips Collection, Washington, DC.

Ceramics is an elective in the ninth through twelfth grades. There are three levels of high school ceramics: Introduction to Ceramics, Intermediate Ceramics, and Advanced Ceramics.

Introduction to Ceramics. One semester course.

This introductory course builds upon the three-dimen-

sional and design principles already explored in the fourth through eighth grades. Students continue to develop a basic knowledge of the properties of clay, handbuilding methods, basic wheel skills, kiln stacking, firing methods, and glaze application. The course objectives include confidence in handbuilding and the ability to throw small basic forms. Students begin to have a sense of the vast and great history of ceramics through publications, films, videos, and a clay library and picture file. They learn to take risks, expand their perceptual awareness, and transform concepts into reality.

Intermediate Ceramics. Two semesters (need not be taken consecutively).

The structure of the class adapts to the students enrolled. Projects vary depending upon the clay history of individual pupils, current museum and gallery shows, student interest and skill level. Emphasis is on increasing mastery of both handbuilding and throwing skills, responsiveness of material, personal inquiry, reaction to the environment, and personality of the artist.

Advanced Ceramics. Up to five semesters.

The students help to define the course structure, objectives, and content. Personal expression is emphasized, and independent study programs are devised with the aid of the instructor.

Research, longer term projects, and portfolio development are encouraged.

Notes

1. Fritz, Robert. *The Path of Least Resistance*. Salem, Massachusetts: Stillpoint Publishing Co., 1984.

Modeling Ideas

by Mary Jane Moross

I have been an art teacher for twelve years and for the past five years have worked exclusively with children, ages five through eleven, at the Caedmon School, a private elementary school in New York City.

I assume a particular responsibility with my students: I want them to see beauty as it exists in New York City. I want them to develop aesthetic judgments about life around them as well as about life seen through art. I expose them to nature, good architecture, sculpture, and painting in this urban setting. Along with this, I aim to use clay as often as I can to give children the opportunity to participate physically with a natural material. Clay has tactile qualities that all children respond to immediately, and working in three dimensions enables children to visualize more vividly.

Because of these strong feelings, I decided to develop a program that took children to see three-dimensional art in museums and that afterward had them respond to those objects by working with clay, a material used in classical sculpture.

I chose to start with the Michael C. Rockefeller wing at the Metropolitan Museum. Here there are beautifully displayed, clearly lighted, totally sculptural exhibits of African, Pacific Island, pre-Columbian, and American art. There are masks, shields, vessels, jewelry, and much, much more to see.

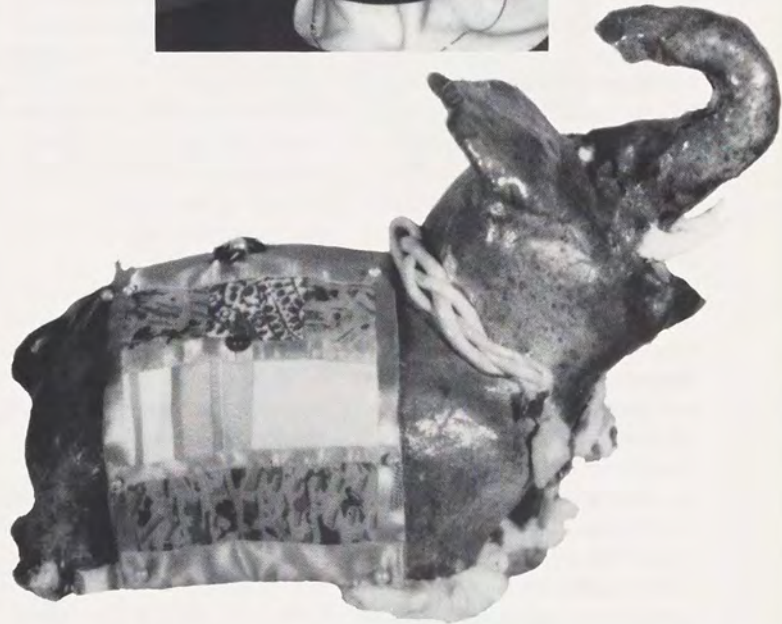
I chose to focus on the mask for developing the program and selected twelve spe-

cific objects to look at. The children viewed them for a thirty- to forty-minute period, usually long enough. I told stories relating to tribal myths and to the historical backgrounds of the pieces as well as pointed out unique design features. The sheer aura of the assembled African works was enough to start the children thinking and talking. They enthusiastically participated in the experience. This confrontation and verbalization not only helped the children realize art concepts—such as volume, shape, and texture—but had relevance to other areas of their school curriculum, through geography, history, and science.

After the selected works were seen, the students sketched their favorite piece for five or ten minutes. When we returned to school, we discussed the visit and then our drawings. Then I demonstrated any clay technique that might be needed, such as “welding” pieces together, modeling, and texturing the surfaces. I encouraged exploration and individual resolutions to problems, or following personal fantasies. I suggested they pretend to be the tribe’s master sculptor whose duty it was to create a special mask for use in celebration or symbolizing power or calling up spiritual forces.

Other exhibits in the New York City area I have found inspiring for projects in clay are:

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'I want them to see beauty as it exists in New York City.'

Museum/Gallery
Brooklyn Museum

Metropolitan Museum

Metropolitan Museum

Metropolitan Museum

Metropolitan Museum - Cloisters

Metropolitan Museum

American Craft Museum

Staten Island Children's Museum

American Museum of Natural History

Clay Pit Pond Reserve

Marborough Gallery

Merrin Gallery

Empire State building

The Caedmon School

Exhibit
4000 Years of Indian Earth

Period rooms

Egyptian wing

Degas sculptures

Medieval art

Mimbres pots

Robots

Building buildings

Eskimos

Nature walk

Red Grooms drawings and small environments

Ancient heads and masks, 1500 B.C. to A.D. 1400.

Architecture

Architecture

Technique or Problem
Modeling ceremonial horses and elephants

Slab construction and modeling stagelike rooms and furniture

Stamped tiles and carved reliefs

Modeling dancers

Modeling fantasy vessels

Pinch bowls and line drawings for design

Modeling fantasy machinery

Slab construction of roofed houses and grounds

Figure modeling and kayak construction

Modeling Indians and canoes

Modeling a fantasy playground

Modeling heads and relief portraits

Modeling skyscrapers in three dimensions

Creating a facade in full relief

The Public Pottery At Arts Magnet High School

by Jim Tabor

Arts Magnet High School (AMHS) at Booker T. Washington in Dallas, Texas, is a comprehensive school, grades 9 to 12, that emphasizes career development in the arts. AMHS was created in 1976 as one of nine specialized schools in a desegregation plan for the Dallas Independent School District. Students apply, audition, and are accepted from any school in the DISD. In addition, about ten percent of our student population pay tuition to attend AMHS from school districts outside DISD.

AMHS is an alternative school located on the edge of downtown and is based on racial quotas of interested—if not gifted—children. In our school of six hundred-plus children, we have academics as well as cluster programs for visual arts, music, theater, and dance.

The visual arts department has approximately 160 students and a faculty of nine full-time and three part-time instructors and offers ceramics, jewelry, painting, fibers, sculpture, printmaking, and photography as electives in addition to the required courses in drawing, art history, portfolio presentation, and design. AMHS had about 130 graduates last year, with 79 percent continuing higher education.

Our school's career orientation has influenced the type of information that I present to students. Ceramics throughout history has evolved from inge-

nuity and creativity, with advanced technical and aesthetic developments, into a field of immense diversity. Students with an aptitude for math, chemistry, or physics can find relevance in ceramics, sometimes called "high-temperature chemistry." Although technique is important, my primary concern is with each student's development into a responsive and responsible person who also understands ways in which ceramics contribute to the betterment of life.

In high school, a broad perspective on ceramics is needed if students are to comprehend the divergent interests served by the field of ceramics. I want students to distinguish between three branches of ceramics—industrial, commercial, and studio—and to recognize the requirements peculiar to each branch.

Industrial ceramics is making new advances in technology for industrial markets. Commercial ceramics generally con-

sists of machine-made ware for mass, commercial, and public markets. Studio ceramics is predominantly hand production reflecting the vitality of the maker and is marketed through a small network of galleries, shops, art fairs, and/or studio sales.

Students are introduced to industrial and commercial ceramics as a contrast and complement to studio ceramics and seen within an academic emphasis. In studio ceramics, students are encouraged to explore and develop abilities that contribute to their psychological, physiological, and sociological awareness.

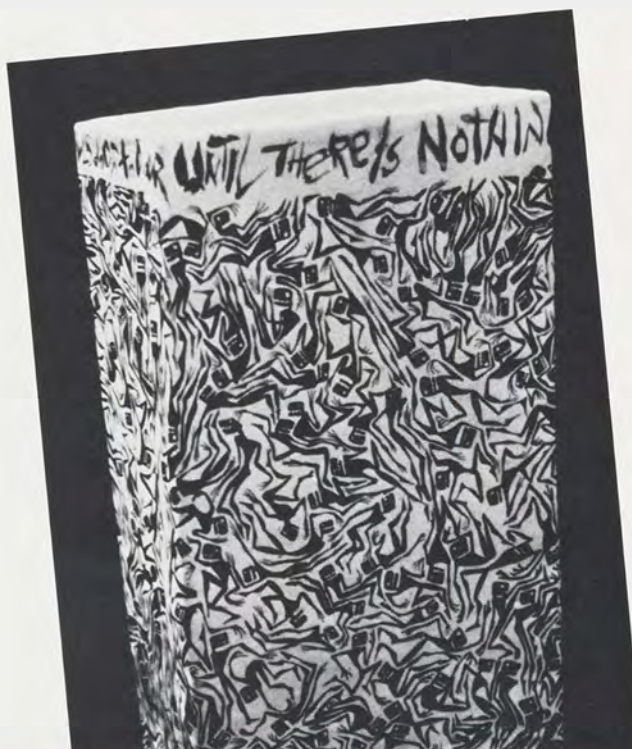
The AMHS ceramics program is divided into four course levels, each affected by the students currently in the course. These are not sequential levels but are affected by scheduling and time constraints that require a flexible approach. At each level, students are given information

through examples, samples, demonstrations, and explanations applicable to their immediate concerns. These presentations guide the students in their choices of materials, methods, and, ultimately, meaning in their work.

Students entering Level One (five days per week for one hour each day for six weeks) are introduced to ceramics and are led through handbuilding (modeling, pinch, slab, and coil), glazing, and evaluation activities. In Level Two (two days per week for three hours each day for eighteen weeks), students continue handbuilding, use the extruder and slab roller, use molds and make molds, and develop and test clay bodies and glazes to understand more of the technical concerns in ceramics. At Level Three (three hours per day for three days per week for eighteen weeks), students have time to develop skills on the potter's wheel but may continue handbuilding if they are not interested in throwing. Students also explore surface, glaze, and decorating techniques. Level Four, that meets with Level Three, enables students to refine existing skills or explore new areas of interest.

Student activities emphasize discovery, experimentation, and process, to promote self-expression, independence, and critical thinking. Assignments are generally left open enough for creative responses, and advanced students are given greater freedom to initiate ideas relevant to their influences or concerns.

Students are involved in research, development, testing,

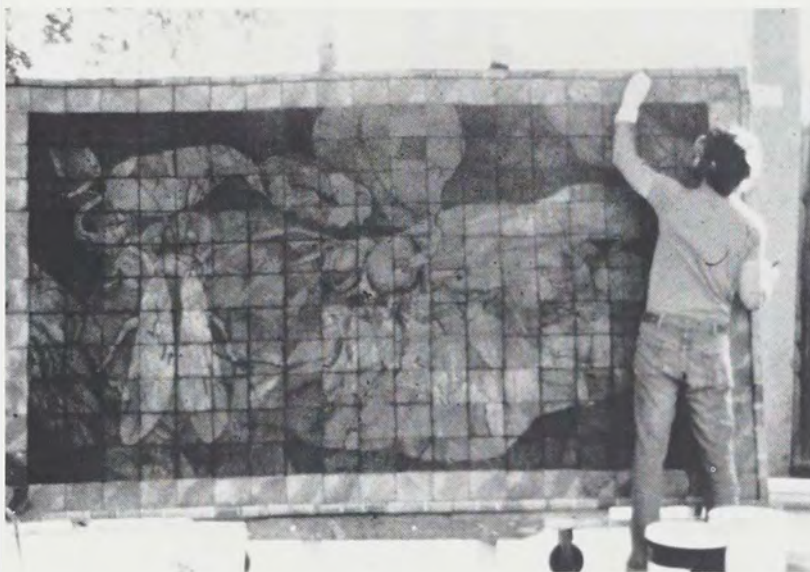


Jim Tabor is a teacher of Ceramics I-IV, Design I, Arts Magnet High School, Booker T. Washington School, Dallas, Texas. He is also proprietor of Tabor Art Tile, Inc. that manufactures custom-printed tiles and decals.

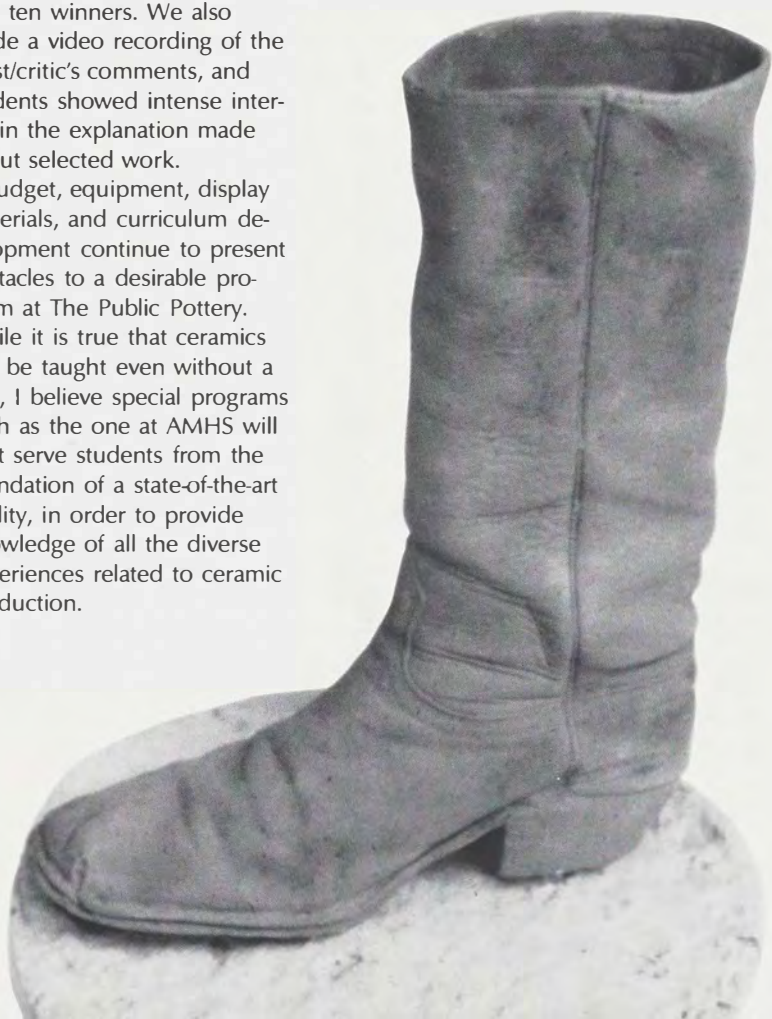
application of processes and techniques, displays, public demonstrations, and demonstrations at other schools. For added inspiration, we are fortunate to be able to have artists conduct workshops and to attend shows at galleries and museums in the Dallas and Fort Worth area.

The annual Pottery Show is an important activity. A guest ceramic artist juries students' work and picks the best examples. A number of students receive recognition and awards each year, depending on the money available in our Kiln Fund. Each winner is given an AMHS Public Potter T-shirt and a one-year subscription to *Ceramics Monthly*. Last year we had ten winners. We also made a video recording of the artist/critic's comments, and students showed intense interest in the explanation made about selected work.

Budget, equipment, display materials, and curriculum development continue to present obstacles to a desirable program at The Public Pottery. While it is true that ceramics can be taught even without a kiln, I believe special programs such as the one at AMHS will best serve students from the foundation of a state-of-the-art facility, in order to provide knowledge of all the diverse experiences related to ceramic production.



'Distinguishing between three branches of ceramics: industrial, commercial, and studio.'



Viva Picasso: A Collaboration

by Michael Prepsky

I teach ceramics at South Mountain High School/South Mountain Center for the Arts in Phoenix, Arizona.

Four years ago, South Mountain High School was part of a reorganization conceived by the Phoenix Union High School District to establish desegregation in the schools by developing "magnet" programs at each comprehensive high school. The goal was to group student enrollment by their interests. Magnet programs in law, computer, foreign language, sports medicine, and international baccalaureate were implemented on various campuses. At South Mountain, advanced courses in the visual and performing arts (including media, radio, and television) are offered.

South Mountain High School is an inner-city school with an ethnic population made up of forty-seven-percent Mexican-American, forty-one-percent Black, and twelve-percent Anglo. In this school, the magnet concept, although still in an embryo stage, is showing signs of development and strength. Only two of ten schools have achieved compliance with the Office of Civil Rights; South Mountain is one.

My teaching philosophy is simple. I ask each student to stretch for excellence: ideas plus energy equals success. To excel requires a special effort by the student, an effort that must be conscious and part of each aspect of the process. Most important, excellence

must be the standard from which all points of discussion, criticism, analysis, procedures, or history emanate. The hope is that the quest to excel will carry over to and permeate the daily human condition.

The processes of working with clay are relatively easy to grasp for most students. So the focus of my program is to provide experiences that stimulate the imagination. Students are taken on field trips to professional ceramic studios, colleges and universities, brickyards, and galleries and museums to supplement the school offerings and give an in-depth background to the world of ceramic art. Recently my Advanced Art Studio class attended a three day workshop/symposium at Arizona State University, offered in conjunction with the "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical" exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum. The students had the opportunity to hear in lecture or see in demonstration such luminaries in the craft field as Eleanor Moty, Wendy Mariyama, Andrea Gill, Marvin Lipofsky, Wendell Castle, Susan Peterson, Peter Voulkos, Rose Slivka, and Paul Smith.

My Advanced Art Studio Ceramics course meets for two hours daily and is the only class of this type in the Phoe-

nix Union District. This class has a prerequisite: one year of beginning ceramics or the approval of the teacher. Because of the intimate size of the class (ten students), there is an emphasis on team-work, cooperation, and a sense of community.

In addition to teaching, I serve on a committee of educational advisors to the Phoenix Art Museum. When a "Picasso Sketchbook" show was discussed by the curator of education, Rosanne Stringer, I mentioned that I had seen it at the Los Angeles County Art Museum, and that I planned to write a curriculum on Picasso's ceramics that summer. My intention was to take advanced students to the museum to see the show and then to produce Picassoesque ceramics based on that experience.

Immediately Rosanne asked if I would be interested in exhibiting the work in the new Junior Gallery. I enthusiastically said yes. The students were ecstatic when they heard the news. "What an opportunity!" "A show of our own at the Museum!" "Picasso!"

Then reality set in. "How can we produce enough quality work to fill a 1,200 square foot space before school is out for summer vacation in three weeks?"

It was immediately clear we would need more participants. I discussed the project with my two beginning classes. Some were disappointed we weren't going to do raku as originally planned, but most embraced the idea with enthusiasm.

Next I filled the bulletin boards with every Picasso image I could find. I went to the Hayden Library at Arizona State University and checked out twenty-five books on Picasso. Finally I put together ninety slides that traced Picasso's development from age fourteen to ninety. Although the emphasis was on his sculpture and ceramic work, we looked at his drawings, paintings, and his work in theater.

The initial reaction from the students was amazement. How could one artist produce so much work in so many diverse styles? They were impressed by his energy and passion and, most of all, by his imagination. I emphasized that Picasso was a great draftsman and that his skill in drawing was his greatest asset.

It was significant that each student understood that Picasso's inspiration and hand were behind each work but that he often relied on assistance and collaboration to accomplish the work. In ceramics, for example, he worked at George Raime's pottery studio with two assistants. Forms were thrown or molded for him to alter or decorate. Assistants prepared the engobes and fired the kilns. This collaborative approach was similar for Picasso's printmaking, sculpture, and his work in theater.

Thus focusing on learning and producing in a cooperative rather than a competitive process seemed logical for this project. It was suggested that teams of two or three students could work together to research, then produce Picasso-like projects. The students were informed, furthermore,



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'Sharing new discoveries in the work and life of a great master.'

that they would only produce the work and others would decorate it. Our focus for the next two-and-a-half weeks was on production.

By this time a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of volunteer students interested in working through the summer to complete the project was being compiled. I was satisfied with the works in progress. Particularly, I was struck by the broad range of approaches to interpreting the master. Picasso was the perfect subject. He had worked most of his life at seeing, feeling, and expressing, using the same kind of freedom and joy as that of a child. The students really identified with Picasso. As a young man he had been poor, and he had struggled and suffered; he had become rich and famous; women had influenced his life and art; and, most important, he was Spanish.

David Duncan Douglas' books *Viva Picasso!* and *Good-bye, Picasso* became favorite resource books. The photographs represented a collabora-

tion between the two artists that lasted more than twenty years. They gave personal exposures to the daily life and work style of Picasso.

It was suggested that maybe it would be fun to do an installation at the museum as if it were a room in Picasso's house and studio. We could use Douglas' book *Viva Picasso!* as a blueprint. The concept was presented to all participants and was accepted. The details would be worked out as we went along.

The idea of simulating Picasso's open studio environment—layered with sculptures, drawings, paintings, books, objects, furniture, art supplies, works in progress—seemed a natural educational tool. Young and old could come in and make themselves at home. They could touch things, pick up books or magazines, photographs, or sketchbooks. They could feel the presence of the artist.

The semester ended with a body of work having been pro-

duced, but not nearly enough to fill the exhibition space. So a letter was mailed to selected students inviting them to participate in a summer-long ceramics workshop. The letter stressed that this extraordinary opportunity would benefit the school, the community, and the student artists. It was essential for the success of the project, however, that the student commit his time, artistic skills, and energy. Twenty-five letters were sent out to the top, most talented and committed students, and were followed up by a telephone call. Most seniors had jobs and couldn't participate full-time, but they were invited to come whenever possible. If students had a younger brother or sister to care for, they were told to bring along their siblings so they could also participate.

Eighteen students arrived for the Picasso workshop, one as young as seven years old. A review of what had been accomplished and what needed to be done was the first point of business. The film *The Mystery of Picasso* was shown.

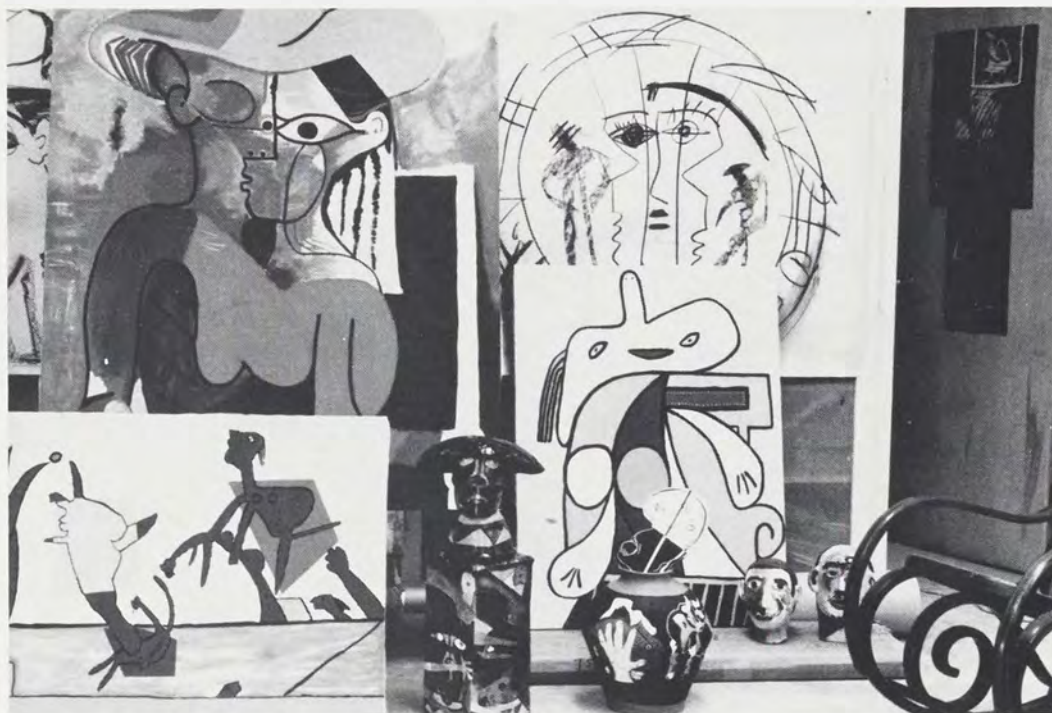
To get everyone started, they were asked to select a biscuit piece to decorate and reminded they would not necessarily decorate the piece they had constructed. This led to a collaboration with the decorator interpreting the intent of the producer. Should the object be glazed? Should it be painted? What would Picasso have done?

The magic of what was to evolve over the next two months can only be exemplified by the product itself. Suffice it to say that the bonding through interaction brought about tremendous growth for each student, a growth within their own talent. I saw increased competencies in many areas. Students took books home and brought back and shared new discoveries in the work or life of the great master, or, for that matter, in themselves.

In this way, we worked together until the fourth of September. At the end of this collaborative effort, over one hundred and fifty drawings, paintings, and ceramics had been created by fifty-three students. The students received no high school credit for their summer's work, nor did they sign the work they had produced.

In preparing for the installation it was necessary to comply with all regulations and timelines established by the museum. We photographed each work, measured it, and gave it a number for the registrar. Boxes and packaging materials were gathered. Together we carefully packed each piece, transported it to the museum, and unpacked it.

Then we built Picasso's studio! We felt it was a tribute to the great master of the twentieth century.



Breaking the Mold: Clay, Creativity, and the Criminal Mind

by Dale Ruff

It is a subversive suggestion of modernist thought (with roots in Plato's banishment of the poets from the Republic) that there is an inherent link between criminal behavior, madness, and creativity.

Is this true? Does it provide a useful insight that will help us both to understand the function of art in modern society and to heal the sick mind and break the self-destructive cycle of criminal behavior?

Related to this is the question: Does ceramics—because of its nature and unique history—have a special role to play in teaching the transformative power of creativity?

Any approach to this subject must be from the viewpoint of how we deal with the reality of death, separation, and loss. Criminal behavior, mental illness, and artistic practice all participate, with different results, in the effort to resolve the grieving process. The magical mode of thinking, in which art has its roots, is the typical response of unresolved grief. Like the tongue restlessly exploring the place where the tooth has come out, the mind searches and waits and searches again for what has been lost, for a different ending, expressing a retrieval drive that, when frustrated, becomes the basis of strong feelings such as sadness and anger, guilt and shame.

The disorganization and despair that these feelings—masked, unrecognized, and unvalidated—lead to generate a state of helplessness and hopelessness. It is this state of powerlessness and the conflict bred by the need to give up what has been lost and the wish to hold onto it, that lays the basis for aggressive action and criminal behavior. Unless the underlying causes and feelings are understood, acknowledged, and validated, the function of the behavior will not be revealed and the repetitive cycle of destructive conduct will continue. For the psychologist, this behavior is labeled compulsive. For the criminologist, it becomes the basis of recidivism.

For the educator, and especially the art educator, such behavior suggests the opportunity to utilize art—the creative manipulation of material—for its capacity to express and reveal both the emotions as they occur and the feelings that act as a substitute for other feelings.

If the criminal mind, the sick mind, and the creative mind all share the function of relieving the conflict of unresolved loss (or stress), their action is different. For the criminal mind, aggressive action transfers the cry of pain from the subject to the victim.

Dale Ruff is a ceramic artist and teacher of ceramics at the Colston Youth Center, Ventura, California, an innovative interagency program dealing with emotionally disturbed juvenile offenders.



This relief, however, only masks the true conflict and leads to the further loss of freedom and power in imprisonment. The mentally ill may be viewed as minds imprisoned by their inability to devise strategies to act out their conflict and so become self-destructive. The creative mind, which represents the reorganization of the grieving soul, sees that the buried conflict can never be resolved, and in this perception liberates the pain and repressed emotions, and transforms them into the ironic joy of self-expression. But this is only the beginning: the goal of art, as of all communication, is only partly relief and release; the ultimate goal is to elicit an adequate response, the sympathy and support of which enables us to bear the reality of death, separation, and loss.

When the why of anger and reproach moves to the why of wonder, the aggressive or self-destructive mind is transformed. The role of art and of the art educator is to provide for his students the example of the creative process as an alternative behavior, thus breaking the mold of repression and the wasteful energies of guilt, shame, rebellion, and aggression, and shaping them in such a way as to face reality by change and growth.

Art helps to engage and complete the work of grieving through its capacity to heal and delight, to touch and move. But until we understand what art has in common with crime and craziness, with roots in the universal shock of loss, we cannot understand where it connects and departs.

The question remains: Is there in ceramics any special quality that connects the process of acceptance and growth through loss to healing and nurturing of the creative spirit?

I am convinced there are several aspects of the ceramic tradition that lend a special utility.

The first quality is clay's primal energy. Clay is the original mythical material of creation. God created man out of mud. Aboriginal man emerged out of the mud. Indeed, one of the early

meanings of clay is the flesh. This primitive connection between man and the earth is elevated in the Greek myth in which Prometheus brings a clay tablet inscribed with the alphabet to man. Through this act, Prometheus reveals the roots in common of crime (disobedience) and creativity. Clay likewise quickly becomes a vehicle of procreative expression in the hands of the student given permission to experiment. If we interpret sexual repression as the prototype of repression in general, it becomes clear that clay is primally efficacious as an expressive, revealing medium.

The second quality of clay is its fluency in shaping, erasing, correcting, and inventing. Mistakes are cheap in clay's plastic stage. Not only does clay encourage creativity, but it is forgiving and promotes risk taking.

This is especially important for children who, having failed to resolve a major loss, continue to be provoked into similar stress by subsequent trivial losses. Ceramics teaches that early losses can be redeemed, and that accidents and failures can lead to greater success (defined as creative change). In an environment committed to rehabilitation through change, the ceramic process becomes an exemplary educational tool.

I am convinced that the practice of art in a supportive environment can move youngsters who are trapped in static, repetitive molds of criminal behavior and mental disorder from despair to hope and from compulsive destruction to eager creativity. What it takes is a willingness to release our definitions of conformist behavior as the model of rehabilitation. The art educator will provide in his own behavior the model of creative change, knowing that creativity is not only our birthright but also the key to healing. The teacher who is blessed with an understanding of history and the power of ceramics has at his disposal a medium for redemption and for the growth of the young spirits entrusted to his care.

I teach ceramics to the residents of Colston Youth Center, Ventura, California. This is a court school (a high school within the host correctional facility) that is part of a pilot interagency juvenile detention/treatment center for emotionally-disturbed youths aged thirteen to eighteen. The center has a state grant to run an integrated treatment program, including traditional correctional staff, social workers, a psychologist, and our little school of four teachers.

Our students are usually high school dropouts, disaffected youth with serious family, mental, drug, and legal problems. Commitment runs from three to six months, with extensions for bad behavior. The goal is to provide education, therapy, and support to reduce recidivism. So far, statistics are encouraging.

The ceramics program provides two weeks (8-10 hours) for each of three groups every six weeks. The curriculum I inherited consisted entirely of commercial molds, taught as a vocational class with little emphasis on creativity and no free-form sculpture or pottery.

My goal is to create a curriculum, by trial and error, that stresses the creative, transformational aspect of clay, with an em-

phasis on experimentation, originality, and individual expression.

The fact is that most students resist these features, preferring the quick success of molds. My approach, therefore, has been to encourage modification of mold products by adding or changing features, and encouraging a looser approach to glazing. The greatest obstacle to this approach is the student's fear of failure, inherent in the fear of change.

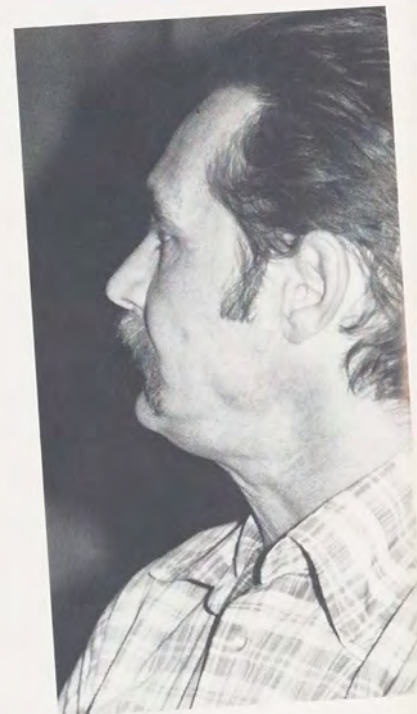
The most recent and popular innovation has been mask making. First we make plaster masks of students, then drape clay over these, modifying, decorating, and firing the final product. This project is coordinated with a lifeskills class in "Stages" (based on the process of grieving) that emphasizes the use of behavioral masks to reveal or conceal feelings.

I show students how to deal with failure creatively by taking their rejected, wrecked pieces and utilizing them creatively—making a broken bulldog into a toothbrush holder, glazing a broken, discarded mask in motley patterns, reforming a smashed head, etc.

One new project that has excited students is working with clay and Plastilina to produce characters for a claymation video. Wonderful freaks, homeboys, mutants, and monsters have been created in this project, and we plan to build environments and video scenes.

The new curriculum struggles with the correctional institution's premise of behavior modification through conformity. Yet the institution is also committed to changing behavior and to salvaging wayward youth. I feel that the lessons learned in this journey are precisely those lessons needed to be learned to emerge from under the prison of sterile and destructive behavior. It is my dream that insights gained will produce interesting art as well as the discovery of creative and valuable souls.

'Criminal behavior, mental illness, and artistic practice all participate in the effort to resolve the grieving process.'



SESSION IV: SPECIAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Introduction

Judith Burton, *Moderator*

Close Encounters with a Third Dimension: Making College Resources Available

Regis Brodie

The Craft Experience and the Adolescent

Jo-Anna J. Moore

Kids' Clay: The Exhibition, Recommendations for Instruction, and Scenarios for the Future

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An Alternative Art Program

Jane Sinauer

The Detroit Public School Program at Pewabic Pottery

Mary Roehm

Close Encounters with the Third Dimension: Making College Resources Available

by Regis C. Brodie

Colleges and universities play a vital role in the larger context of ceramics education. Just as theater, symphonic music, or dance cannot survive for long without audiences who appreciate the expressive form and are willing to pay for it, so ceramic art needs a clientele, a supportive cadre of advocates. These people could be the mothers, the fathers, the lobbyists, principals, budget officers, grant reviewers, and media people who affect decisions about art education, curricula, and funding. The more people we expose to art—or, better yet, involve in hands-on experiences—the more support we will gather.

Skidmore College is a private, coed, liberal arts institution of 2,200 students, located in Saratoga Springs in upstate New York. It is an area populated with artists and is the summer home of the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Regis C. Brodie is a ceramic artist and professor of art, and director of the SIX Summer Art Program, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York. He is the author of *The Energy-Efficient Potter*.

Despite this strong cultural heritage, area schools have not developed a high reputation in the arts. The new Regents Action Plan has ironically threatened curricula requirements while at the same time attempting to strengthen them. In light of limited faculty and tight budgets, it is tempting to meet the mandated requirement of one year of art by expanding painting and drawing. It takes concerted effort to address that imbalance within the high school.

Skidmore College has recently rewritten its curriculum to require every student to take three credits of a performing or hands-on art experience. Clay has become so popular a medium for non-art majors and students eager to complement their academic classroom work with three-dimensional studio experience that my beginning ceramics courses are oversubscribed, semester after semester.

The popularity of clay is also evidenced in the success of three other programs in which I am involved: Continuing Education Program, High School

Art Teachers Fellowship Program, and the Acceleration Program in Art for high school students (AP/Art). Although these programs deal with more than ceramic art, clay is an integral part of their success.

Skidmore has always had to think creatively in order to remain viable. The Office of Special Programs thus offers nontraditional programs to a variety of clientele in Continuing Education. Under its aegis, I have offered beginning through independent evening courses in ceramics for over twelve years, and in the last two years I have added life drawing and clay modeling from the figure. Students range from high school students to elementary and high school teachers as well as to interested community members. Clay artists who are more established also share and assist in the operation of the studio, and, because of their giving, add energy to the studio.

In 1984 the High School Art Teachers Fellowship Program was begun as a response to dwindling enrollment in art as a major and to the Carnegie Foundation report, which had just been published. The thrust

of the report was that colleges should team up with high schools to improve the quality of public education. I quote: "If higher education leaders wish to be a part of the solution—rather than the problem—they must speak with conviction about the significance and dignity of teaching and become actively involved at the local level in support of public schools."

Although the implicit emphasis was on academic support in public schools, we felt we could do something for the arts in all secondary schools by establishing a fellowship program. We already had a summer school in the arts in place known as Summer SIX, and we simply piggybacked the Art Fellows onto it. The program is now in its fifth year.

Any high school art teacher may apply, and up to eighteen are selected for three- to six-week residencies on campus. Over the past four years, ninety-three art fellowships have been awarded. The Fellows are provided with free room and board, instruction,

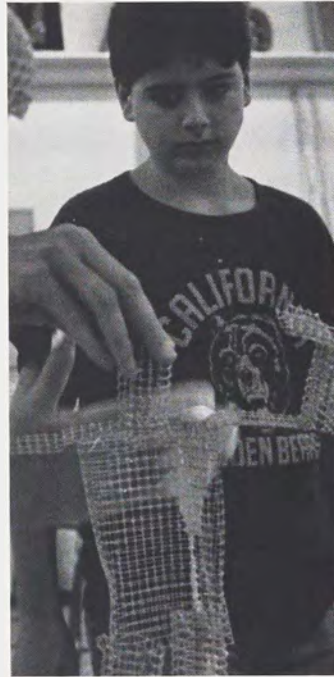
studio space, and access to all campus activities.

After painting and drawing, the most sought after studio is ceramics. Each summer a half-dozen teachers learn up-to-date technology, work with an abundance of clay and glazes, and learn how to fire electric, salt, raku, and gas kilns. The teachers are in a position to learn new ways and approaches to ceramic art education that can be directly applied to their own teaching situations. Armed with new work of their own, new knowledge, and the joy of working unfettered in a top studio with similarly minded people, teachers will return to infuse students with the satisfaction of working in this medium and, I hope, argue more forcefully for its priority in the curriculum. With this firsthand exposure to our program, returning teachers will also be able to advise students seeking a first-rate studio art experi-

ence in a liberal arts context.

The cost of operating this program is more than offset by its great value to our college, to the art teachers themselves, and to the teachers' students. It is a symbiotic relationship and establishes or continues to build a bridge between secondary schools and higher education.

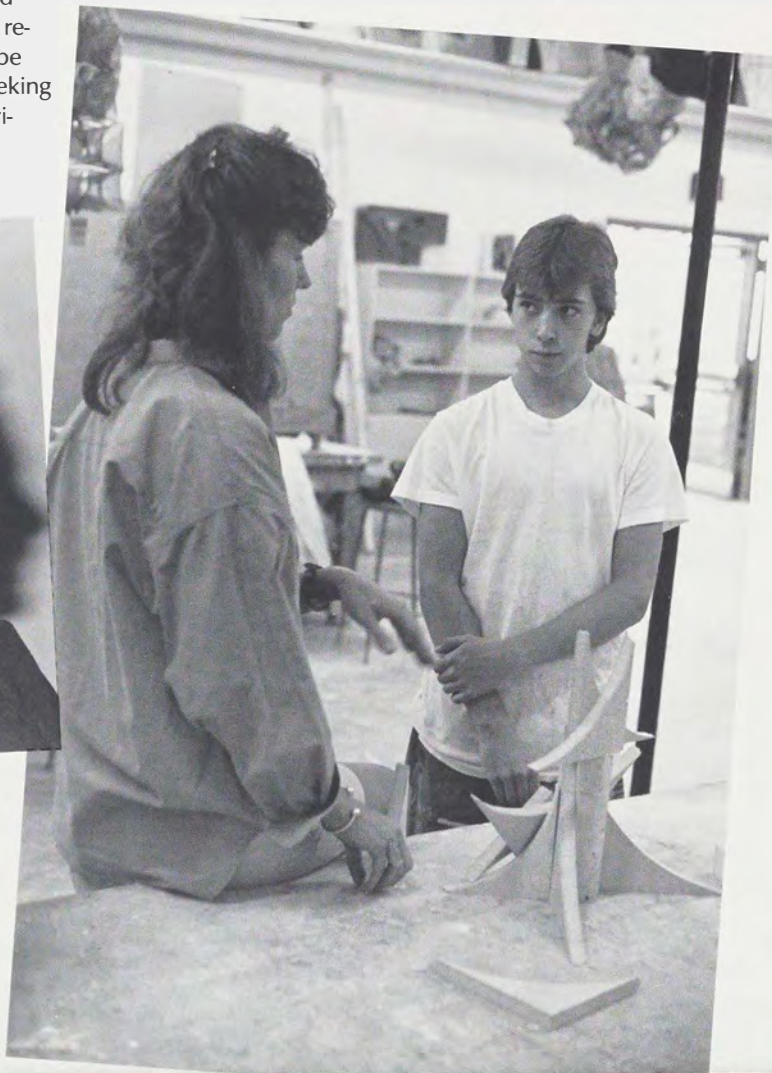
The AP/Art Program for high school students was established in 1984, again under sponsorship of Summer SIX. There is a need for art classes for all our young people, but we felt we were best equipped to serve the high school level. Students in this program may take beginning college level courses or non-credit courses that have been specifically designed for this age group. A fair number sign up for college



ceramics. One of the more popular and important courses is our noncredit "Elements of Three-Dimensional Design and Sculpture." This course is a counterbalance to the heavy dose of two-dimensional art offered in the schools. The students are enthusiastic about their three-dimensional projects, and the best is when they get to clay. In the course they move through a series of projects of ascending permanence: paper, cardboard, wood, plaster, and, finally, to clay and metal. Clay dominates the last half of the semester, as every free moment they have is spent bent over a piece of work.

Students and teachers work side by side in the studio, sharing their enthusiasm and commitment to their art in a mutually supportive atmosphere. My own studio facilities also have been made available through lectures and demonstrations to senior seminar students and Judaic studies participants. Some senior students have conducted school in-house workshops with children.

Colleges and universities with strong programs in art and ceramics have a responsibility to reach out to the community and schools, to break down inhibiting barriers, and to make available their rich resources. We have more than a passing interest in being part of the solution to the problem. Colleges and universities are the direct beneficiaries of strong secondary programs in art, and, ultimately, we will all be stronger and richer.



The Craft Experience and the Adolescent

by Jo-Anna J. Moore



Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, located in Deer Isle, Maine, is a cultural institution that has committed itself to important issues in craft education. For over thirty years, Haystack has been an internationally renowned facility, a forum for workshops and classes directed and attended by leading craftspeople from throughout the world. Originally under the leadership of Fran Merritt and continuing under Howard Evans, Haystack has been a central force supporting crafts education in the state of Maine. At least two-thirds of the practicing art teachers in Maine have worked at Haystack at some point in their professional development.

For the past five years, Howard Evans and I have co-directed the Haystack Student/Craft Institute, a project that has had an impact on craft education for adolescents

Jo-Anna J. Moore is assistant professor of art education, University of Southern Maine, and codirector of the Haystack Student/Craft Institute. She is a member of the Maine Arts Commission, past chairperson of the Maine Alliance for Arts Education, and past president of the Maine Art Education Association.

throughout Maine. Memorial Day weekend before Haystack's regular summer session begins, the school hosts a program for sixty-five outstanding high school students, who have been recommended by their art teachers. The students come to the Haystack campus and study in one craft studio for three intensive days. Leading craftspeople from Maine design first-rate studio experiences for the high school juniors. Thus far, over three hundred Maine students have attended the Haystack Student/Craft Institute.

This can be an important experience for a student interested in art who, in a rural Maine school, may be one of only a few students serious about art. At Haystack, the students see a unique architectural facility dedicated entirely to the practice of art and craft, located near a breathtakingly beautiful ocean. Students are amazed to find that there is a place in Maine where art is not relegated to only forty-five

minutes a day. Here there are rows of potter's wheels, fully equipped jewelry facilities, weaving looms and countless colored yarns, all waiting for the students to put in fifteen hours of work a day.

Students thrive in the Haystack environment. Coaxed onward by fine teachers, they work day and night with amazing energy and tenacity to produce craftworks of impressive skill and imagination. Side by side with them are some of their own art teachers, who attend to assist the craftspeople leading the studios. The students also meet working artists whose livelihood comes from the artifacts they create. The students learn that there are people and places dedicated to the study and practice of craft, and that they too have a place in that tradition.

Many students go back to their schools to tell about the program and what they learned in the craft studio, and even lead craft workshops in

their schools. Thus the future generation has a glimpse of the way a world centered on art can be.

The crafts are universal in all cultures. The multicultural history of craft obliges secondary students who study it to learn about the diversity of human experience and thereby avoid the tacit bias of exclusivity that Western art all too frequently exudes. The study of crafts can include Oriental vases, Native American baskets, Mexican molas, English furniture—a veritable treasure of good craft examples. In order to learn craft, we must see what it is like to do it well. To do it well ourselves, we must struggle through the sequential study and practice of skills and process.

Good craft education stresses both the public standards necessary for merit and the importance of the personal statement of the maker. Both elements are essential for the adolescent to experience pride and accomplishment.



The Kids' Clay Exhibition

by Ted De Muro

The idea of curating an exhibition of children's ceramics on a national level began inauspiciously in 1983. I had been involved for a number of years with student claywork in a middle-school industrial arts curriculum. My instructional concerns covered three-dimensional activities and were engaged with learning how to interface them with mainstream subjects through industrial arts. I believed that the three-dimensional media could be used to motivate students to understand the comprehensive nature of all subjects.

It so happened that the ceramic work of my middle school students caught the attention of Dr. David Baker, then professor of art education at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. Baker's interest motivated me to investigate what other teachers and students were doing with clay instruction on a national level.

From the National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts, I received authorization through their regional program coordinators to assemble a small exhibition on the ceramic work of children and to give a presentation at the 1984 NCECA conference in Boston, Massachusetts. I placed an ad in *Ceramics Monthly* calling for slides and relevant information. The response in the number of entries and quality of work submitted startled me.

This exhibition, I knew, was only a sampling of what might be viewed in a larger picture. And I was not the only art educator impressed by the vitality of the exhibition. Others who saw the show or who participated in some way urged me to expand on the idea by mounting a children's ceramic exhibition that could reach many more people.

Observers were also struck by NCECA's recognition of the need for evaluating children's work through the exhibition, and of the fact that schoolteachers were a significant contributing part of the organization. I was informed by NCECA members that this was the first time in recent memory a dialogue had begun to take place regarding children's use of clay. Secondary art teachers, for the most part, came to NCECA's conferences—as I did—for personal professional enrichment.

I reviewed the positive feedback and concluded the time was right to put together a national touring exhibition of children's ceramics. Dr. Baker and I discussed logistical contingency plans and coalitions necessary to mount an exhibition of this dimension.

The planning for the exhibition took place throughout 1985. I obtained endorsement for the show from Lenny Dowie, president of NCECA. Under the auspices of NCECA as an auspice for the Kids' Clay Exhibition seed money was provided for jurors

Ted E. De Muro is a potter, high school teacher, and doctoral candidate in art education at Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, New York. He is the originator of Kids' Clay exhibitions.

A National Tour

and other administrative costs. The NCECA exhibitions chairperson secured space for the show at the 1986 conference in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Baker, also editor of *School Arts* magazine, printed a call for entries. The rest of the necessary capital for posters, invitations, and initial transportation for the show was put up by me, personally.

The first annual Kids' Clay '86 Exhibition was a success. It provided the visual evidence needed to continue the dialogue on the educational value of working with clay in children's art. Through participation in Kids' Clay, art teachers became recognized as valuable agents in contributing to the ceramic community as well as gaining visibility and support for their programs. Art teachers were able more fully to attend and participate in professional conferences, where they were able to compare experiences. And finally, a consortium of commercial ceramic suppliers recognized the educational implications of Kids' Clay and agreed to contribute to the support of future exhibitions.

Since then, Kids' Clay has been exhibited at three NCECA conferences: 1986 in San Antonio, Texas; 1987 in Syracuse, New York; and 1988 in Portland, Oregon. It has also been exhibited at the Lill Street Gallery, Chicago; the Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center, Auburn, New York; and Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York. Future sites include the Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona; Arvada Arts Center, Arvada, Colorado; the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Framingham State College, Framingham, Massachusetts.

A total of 145 pieces are currently in the show, from 38 states and 62 different school programs. Participating children range in age from 3 years to 18 years. Works are also included from students, ages 16 to 18, attending the Ceramic Academy of Fine Art, Faenza, Italy.

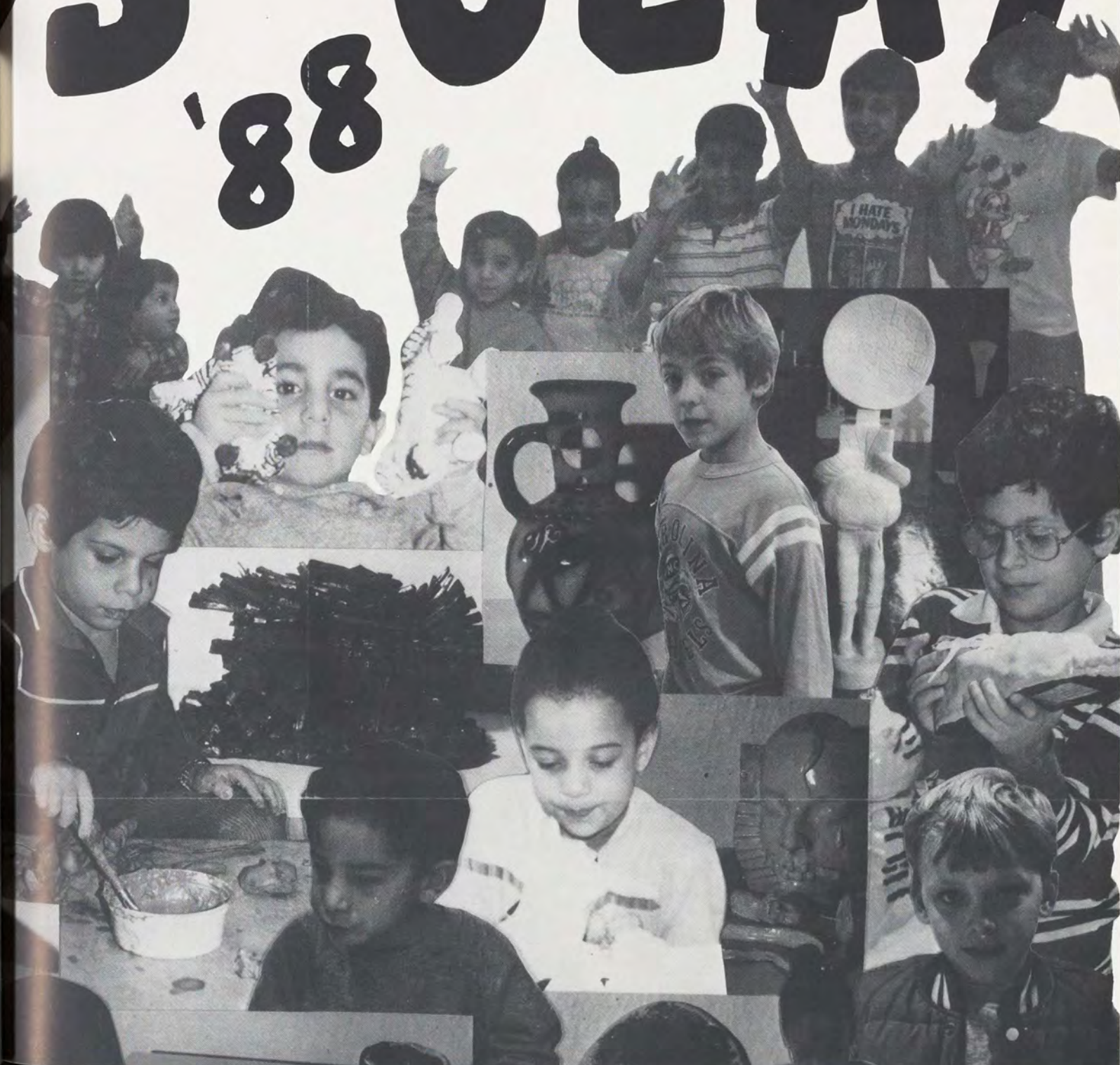
The exhibition can serve a number of purposes: 1. It can be the catalyst that promotes clay as an important part of the art and learning experience of children. 2. It can be instrumental in helping to develop a network for long- and short-range strategies for the implementation of ceramics programs in schools. 3. It can be an incentive for promoting scholarship. 4. It can identify outstanding teachers and programs. 5. It can provide the evidence for research in developmental abilities in three dimensions. And 6. It can provide teachers with an abundance of project ideas to assist them in instruction.

At present, there is a chronic shortage of funds and personnel for the exhibition. Heretofore, it has moved along on a shoe-string budget, but this cannot continue if the show and participants are to be given the recognition they deserve. It is my hope to engage a broad constituency of support as well as a comprehensive network of regional, national, and international agencies in order to ensure the continuation of Kids' Clay.

ng Exhibition of Children's Ceramic Work

OS CLAY

'88



Horizons: An Alternative Art Program

by Jane Sinauer

Six years ago I began Horizons: The New England Craft Program in Amherst, Massachusetts, with the idea of providing an atmosphere where kids at all levels of expertise—even beginners—could have an experience of artistic abandonment; could begin to think “what if,” could develop the confidence that comes when imagination is churning in happy productivity.

Horizon is a summer program, and the students range in age from fourteen to eighteen. We have found maturity, humor, beauty, and intelligence shining through the work of these young people. At a time when a young person's life is often marked by social competition and insecurity and by agonizing questions about identity and the future, this opportunity for self-motivated and introspective creative growth becomes a powerful tool to work out problems, questions, and desires and to develop a close feeling of community.

The Horizons summer program is a total involvement in a three- or six-week period, where students work closely with several instructors in a small group, where the emphasis is on process, not product. Each person discovers his or her own abilities and goals and develops them in a personal and meaningful way.

There are usually two staff members for each studio. Each participant enrolls in two stu-

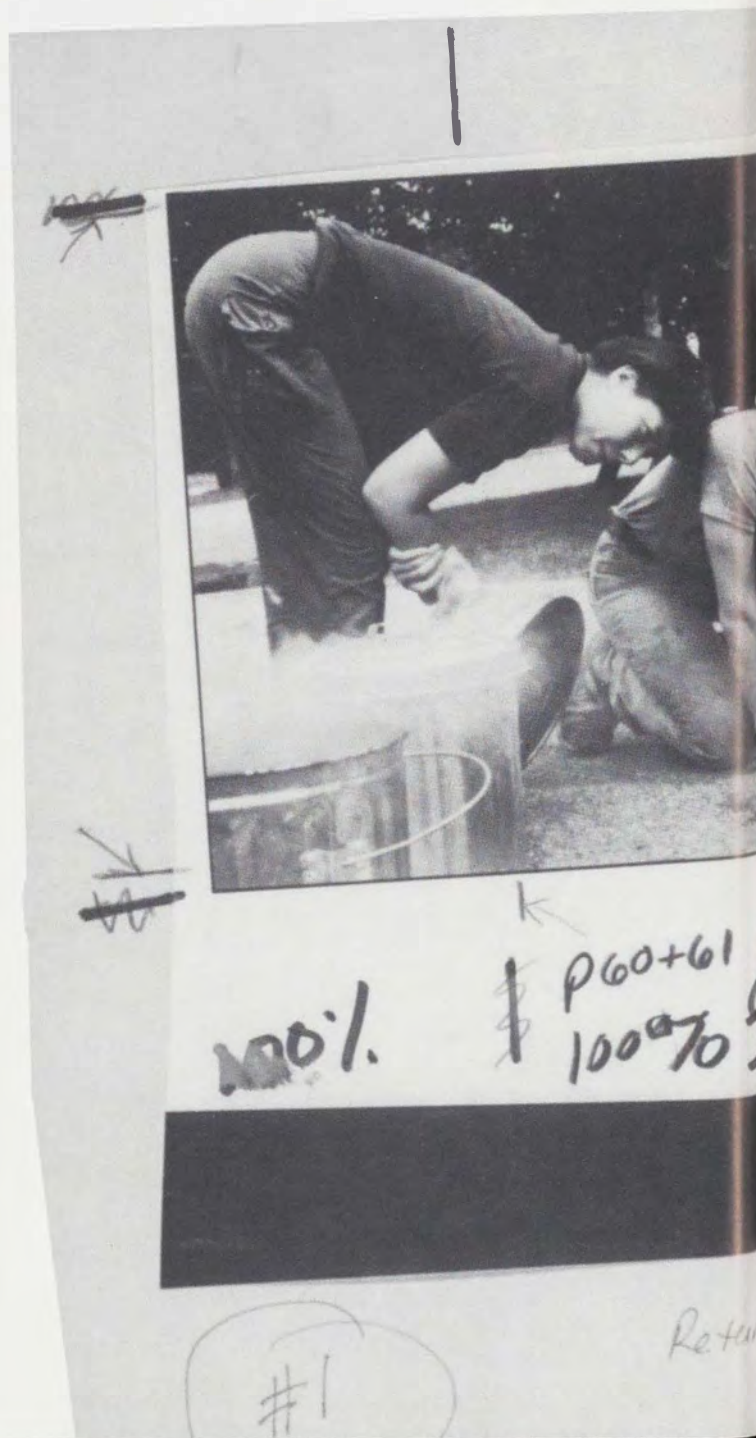
dios, one of which meets for three hours in the morning, and the other for the same amount of time in the afternoon. The balance of the day is devoted to open studio, a time when the young people can work on their own. Each person has considerable independence in managing time, and the studios are a hub of constant activity.

On weekends we have four guest artists. A giant slide show takes place on Friday night, and each artist gives a full Saturday workshop. These specialized workshops range from raku to feltmaking to indigo dyeing to marquetry. One such artist, Elizabeth MacDonald, constructed a large outdoor installation composed of an arch eighteen feet wide and ten feet tall, with hundreds of tiles, and it now graces our pasture.

At Horizon we live and work intimately with a group of fifty teenagers, free from constraints of time and curriculum. After participating in the program they almost invariably go back to their own schools and communities with a strong sense of initiative and a determination to pursue their interests. For many, the experience is a milestone. They have discovered their own capability and creativity.

Recently we received an Arts Lottery Grant from the neighboring town of Northampton to organize an enrichment day for forty students from the high school. The idea is to run four day-long workshops with ten students in each workshop. This is being planned in

Jane Sinauer is a studio potter and founder of Horizons, a hands-on summer craft program for high school students, based in Amherst, Massachusetts.





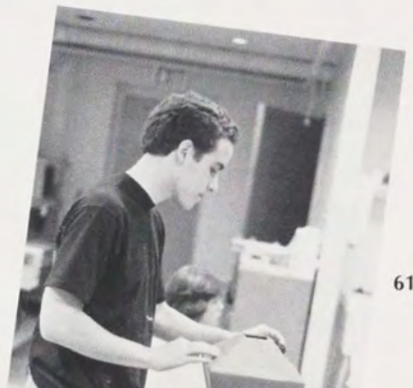
conjunction with Lynn Goldman, head of the art department at Northampton High School.

We have two goals: 1) that the topics we decide on should offer ideas and techniques with which Lynn and other members of the art department are relatively unfamiliar, but which they would be able to build upon, and 2) the subject chosen should be feasible, given the physical plant, budget, and curriculum. All involved share in an enthusiastic anticipation of the experience.

At Horizon we try to provide teenagers with a high-energy, high-contact creative experience shared by a close-knit group of people. Art is the message, but it is also the medium through which they can discover new ways of perceiving the world and their own capabilities.



'A high-energy, high-contact, creative experience shared by closely-knit people.'



Horizons
New England Craft Program
37A Old Montague Road
01002

An Inner-City Ceramics Program in Detroit

by Mary Roehm

Pewabic Pottery was founded in 1903 by Mary Chase Perry Stratton and is located east of the city center of Detroit. Pewabic was known historically for its ambitious architectural tile installations and brilliant palette of luster glazes.

In 1966, Pewabic was deeded to Michigan State University and was operated solely as an educational facility and gallery until 1981 when it transferred ownership to the Pewabic Society, Inc., a nonprofit organization. The mission of the society is the preservation and continuation of Pewabic Pottery as a nationally known historic and contemporary learning/resource center for the ceramic arts. Pewabic continues the tradition of the design and production of tile for architectural application and in the production of vessel and table ware. Great effort has been made to restore the facility with a serious focus on museum/archive concerns, excellence in gallery exhibitions, and in the renewal of the production facility that still incorporates original clay making and tile pressing equipment.

The education program is of paramount importance, allowing students to use the facility as a resource that complements their own hands-on clay experience. While serving the region's community, Pewabic is also committed to serving the ceramic field nationally as a resource offering support for ceramic artists through the craftsmen-in-residence program, visiting artist program, and workshop/lecture series.

Every Saturday afternoon throughout the school year, fifteen to eighteen high school students come to Pewabic Pottery to work with clay. They have been recommended to the program by their teachers as individuals with talent, and come on their own initiative from all parts of the City of Detroit. The class is funded by the Detroit Public Schools Gifted and Talented Program, through Michigan funds for educating the gifted and talented student. It was initiated in 1983 and also received support from the Michigan Council for the Arts and the Detroit Artist's Market. The success of this program is due in large part to the perseverance and commitment of several individuals within the Detroit Public School system and Pewabic Pottery who have nurtured the program's growth from a ten-week program to its current thirty-two-week class.

The philosophy of this program deals with the development of the whole person, and with the students' sense of who they are and what they can become. For many of the students, the program represents a way "up" in life, a means for personal expression, and an opportunity to develop self-confidence. Because of the nature of Pewabic, the students are able to observe a working, producing studio. The staff is made up of several artists and potters who encourage interaction, allowing for a kind of mentorship and role model to develop.

The curriculum deals with the history and vocabulary of ceramics, simple glaze and

clay theory, and various firing methods. Hands-on experience working with clay is the primary focus. Students are challenged to develop visual sensibilities for color, line, form, and proportion in both two and three dimensions. Students work on pieces individually as well as in groups, learning to cooperate and build on each other's ideas. The learning experience includes participation in visiting-artists' workshops and field trips to galleries.

Students also take advantage of Pewabic's open studio policy and come in to work after school. Several times during the year, the class exhibits its work in regional, state, and national exhibitions. Pewabic also holds an annual student exhibition in the main gallery, and the School District has created a number of exhibitions/competitions that tie into national shows, giving students recognition and support.

An important component of this program is the opportunity for teachers to come to Pewabic and attend workshops designed specifically for their needs. Many art programs are being cut back as their school districts face tighter budgets. It is vital for art teachers to be supported and instructed in creative program and curriculum development.

How and what is taught children will affect their attitudes for the rest of their lives. If children are encouraged through the arts to use their imagination, to explore visual ideas in two or three dimensions, chances are their early training will stay with them and they will continue to be

involved and supportive of the arts, whether they become artists themselves or not. If the teacher—who sees the child each day—is given the opportunity to grow, the results will be seen reflected in the child.

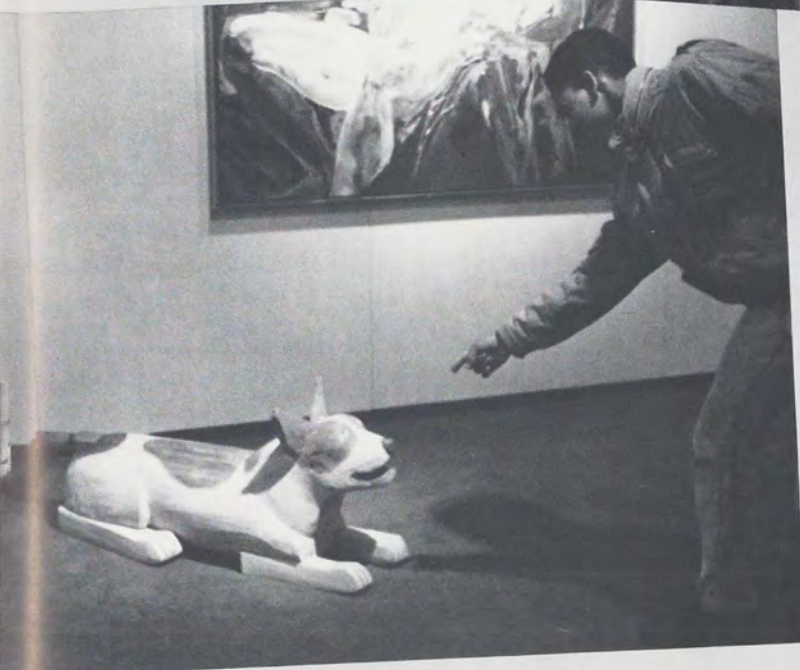
The Detroit Public School System has taken a leadership role in the United States in recognizing the value of arts in public school education. Its administration moves to expand clay programs, purchasing equipment and working with art faculty to develop stronger curricula. Pewabic acts in an advisory capacity to the school system, wherever possible, regarding three-dimensional programs in ceramics.

This is the fifth year of the DPS/Pewabic Clay Program, and it has clearly affected the quality of life by opening doors and showing new opportunities to young adults. Several students have gone on to find jobs in the arts or are continuing their education in ceramics at the college level. Pewabic currently employs two former students from this program.

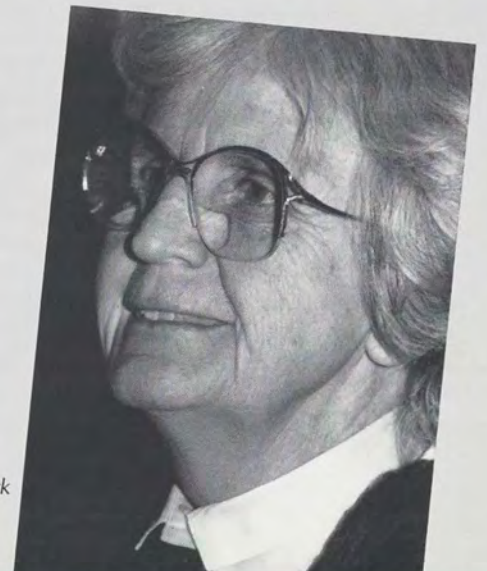
As the Detroit Public Schools Gifted and Talented Program continues to work with Pewabic, the future looks promising. The program continues to broaden support for learning through the arts and to provide opportunities for young adults to participate in and support the arts as they mature.

Mary Roehm is a ceramic artist and director of education, the Pewabic Pottery, Detroit, Michigan.

*The program represents a way
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Mary Jane Hock



SESSION V: ROADWAYS TO THE FUTURE

Clay in the Schools: Back Toward the Future

David W. Baker

Viewing the Launching Pad: The Arts, Clay, and Education

Wayne Higby

Toxicology and School Arts

Woodhall Stopford

A Glance Backward as We Move Ahead

E. Andrew Mills

A Roadway to a Future for Clay

Robert H. Gray

Acknowledgments and Closure

Judith Schwartz and Gerry Williams, *Codirectors*

Clay in the Schools: Back Toward the Future

by David W. Baker

Most positive histories of educational practices in America tell troubled tales of instructional motives and curricular forms. The common schools advocated in the 1850s by Horace Mann and his like—that would come to be called public schools by a democratically-oriented citizenry—were structured from their beginning to ensure that students attending them were prepared to serve future employers, a Christian god, and their country. Language arts, mathematics and science, and the social studies were stressed in curricula because of their usefulness. This utilitarian bias continues to dictate a student's school day.

This curricular tilt sought to train students for common ends, while educational aspirations that emphasized independent thought and aesthetic issues were regularly short-changed. Schooling in America began as a means to train good workers for the factories and moral and civic-minded citizens for the polls. A thoughtful reviewer of contemporary curricula will find that schools continue to train, rather than educate students for these ends.

By the end of the 1800s, far-sighted schoolmasters had introduced drawing and claywork into the public schools. However, the remarkable pedagogical insights of Frederick Froebel, Francis Wayland Parker, and J. Liberty Tadd were modified by others to accommodate utilitarian goals sought in the schools. While Froebel and his associates discovered and advocated the aesthetic values of art experiences in the growth and development of children and adolescents, their calls for curricular reform went unheeded until the end of World War I.

With the trauma of a world war freshly in mind, educationists began searching for ways to preclude the occurrence of another such tragedy. They found inspiration in the writings of John Dewey and other progressive educational reformers who gave special attention to the importance of experience in a child's education and also argued for a holistic curriculum, one that would place art instruction on a parity with other subject matter areas. Further, they promoted an integration of subject matter

that was, they maintained, best taught by people who had "real" experience with the subjects. Thus, a real politician was the model for a civics curriculum, real scientists informed science instruction, and, it then followed, real artists—not drawing masters—were the people best suited to teach art in the public schools. It was this logic that unwittingly forced art instruction in our schools into a state of curricular conflict that goes unrecognized and grossly misunderstood, even to this day.

Contemporary practices in public school art education reflect a shift from instruction designed by utilitarian educators to artist-teachers. Prior to World War II, teachers were trained to provide their students with knowledge and skills that had utilitarian applications. Aesthetic issues were compromised by instructional emphasis on lettering, commercial design, decorative pursuits, and utilitarian objects. Skills and design formulae overshadowed expressive interests and aesthetic inquiry. However, because of the emphasis of the prewar, progressive educators on "real" experiences, the way was cleared for the emergence of the artist-teacher as opposed to the tradition of the teacher of artlike activities.

Concurrently, the educational explosion following World War II provided an opportunity for change in higher education. As colleges and universities expanded to meet the needs of veterans and to prepare teachers for a baby-booming elementary school population, progressive-minded art educators turned to who they perceived to be natural colleagues in the quest for bet-



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ter art instruction in the public schools—that is, real artists.

The reasoning went that if legions of art teachers were to be prepared for the nation's schools, they would best be trained as artists who were informed about the developmental pedagogy of the progressive educationists. Thus, real artists would be teaching real art to students. Professionally competent and committed artists were then hired to support the efforts and to help realize the aspirations of art educators in higher education—at a ratio of up to twenty artists to one art educator, in some instances—and quickly outnumbered their art-education advocates.

This dramatic shift in both numbers and orientations of art faculties in higher education had an equally dramatic impact on the training of art teachers, and through them the shaping of public school art instruction. Prior to World War II, with the focus on the utilitarian aspects of art and artlike behaviors, the crafts enjoyed a primary role in curricula. Even as progressive notions teased at the edges of curricula in the 1930s, there was little change because of the social and economic conditions that put higher education—even secondary education—beyond the reach of most people. Thus, the time-tested and honored tradition of utility embraced the crafts, claywork in particular.

However, as postwar artist-teachers began emerging from colleges and universities to meet the needs of frenzied public school expansion, curricular emphasis changed. The utilitarian emphasis shifted to concerns for self-expression, creativity, and personal expression, where the “useful” crafts were superseded by the “creative” forms of painting, printmaking, and sculpture. As it was in higher education, the appearance of the artist-teacher on the public school scene was rapid and expansive.

The issue of numbers is significant with both the presence of artists and artist-teachers at all levels of schooling. They simply outnumbered the teachers of art-as-utility and quickly dominated curricular decisions. By the late 1950s, the artist-as-professors had set their priorities on the training of artists, and their young student artists who turned to teaching for a livelihood drove professional studio practices into all levels of public schooling. Unfortunately, both practitioners have generally come to view educational expertise as a nuisance at best and are inclined to be hostile to traditions that maintained public schools as training centers for American youth.

In sum, the ideological sides are drawn and the public schools are now a conceptual battleground fought over by artist-teachers and educational Philistines. The current condition of public school art education in general and the ceramic education specifically is in a state of conflict. Practices predicated on the behavior of artists are essentially nonverbal, self-serving, idiosyncratic, judgmental, and product-centered. Practices informed by pedagogical priorities are verbally dominated, focused on group behavior, and are egalitarian, attitudinally conservative, and process-oriented.

The truth at this time is that neither community—artists or educators—is student-centered. If teachers teach as they have been taught, then artist-professors in general, and ceramic artist-professors in particular, must accept responsibility for the bias that

students encounter in their college and university art programs. The attitude of “art first, last, and always—and the kids be damned!” may result in “art (and experiences with clay art forms) never!”

Given a far glance backward, it becomes easier to envision a future where children have guidance in their growth and development as aesthetically informed and responsive adults, a future where claywork has a primary role in helping one know himself and his world. To reach this future, a historical cast suggests several things.

First, the issues confronting an education that includes full and proper experiences with clay must be considered in the larger context of art instruction at all levels of schooling, from day care centers to graduate art programs in colleges and universities. Ceramic artists, educationists, and their advocates must recognize that claywork cannot—must not—be argued as *the* centerpiece of an art curriculum. Rather, they should insist on it being one of the *primary* art experiences offered to students on a regular basis at all levels of instruction.

Second, rationales supporting claywork as a primary, continuing need for students must be based upon hard and ready evidence that ceramic art forms are essential manifestations of human needs, values, and beliefs. In many ways, we must do better in illustrating this medium's impact on child growth and development, and on adults' conceptions of themselves and their world.

In support of this, empirical experiences and observations give evidence that craft/art bridges the utilitarian needs of communities *and* nourishes the aesthetic appetites inherent in the human condition. They can be, at the same time, both ordinary in purpose and exalted as a manifestation of the human spirit. This capacity to bridge the most basic needs of schooling and the essential requirements of an education can make the crafts—and specifically claywork—an ideal grounding for any art curriculum.

Third, higher education must accept the greater responsibility for the diminution of clay experiences in public schools and in their own professional programs. Exclusionary criteria for student acceptance into courses of study in the ceramic arts must be reversed to embrace any who seek such challenges. Ceramics professors and their college and university peers must recognize their moral obligation to serve all students where they find them, as well as attending exclusively to their responsibilities to advance professional students and their own personal work. They must originate research related to pedagogical issues within the arts and, whenever the opportunity presents itself, participate in curricular development initiated by educators.

And finally, educators, art educators, artists, ceramic artists, advocates—whoever cares—must share with children their wonder and passion about clay. The full potential of this medium will occur only if we understand it in terms of people, place, and time and then only if we share our understanding with others. This is the act of education.

Viewing the Launching Pad: The Arts, Clay, and

by Wayne Higby

Out of the Florida cape's Paleozoic-like swamps rise huge skeletal structures—skyscraper-tall, alone, awaiting some rocket to blast the body and mind of a human being into antigravitational space.

I stood, staring at the launching pad and at the concept of space flight and its scale. Deep in daydreaming, I caught glimpses of my children, matched against the fantastic man-made structures, against the sky and its obscured vision of infinity. It triggered meditative thoughts: mankind—splendid mind, frail body, but creative to the core, and eager to touch the unknown.

The arts will clearly become a fundamental and indispensable part of man's voyage into the future. Poetic vision is the only possible way to transcribe the experience and communicate the awesome, sublime emptiness of the unknown. Beyond gravity in a technological egg, it is the art of making thoughts and feelings real that will tie person to person and man to earth, his home, the origin of human life. It will be art that makes it all comprehensible.

Our move into space is inevitable. Of course we should prepare for it now. Education is our launching pad, and education without the arts is merely vocational. Vocational

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education does not include the grander themes—truth, beauty, freedom, equality, and the value of individual life. These themes are critical in the development of independently thinking, adequately informed human beings. Preparing to confront challenges requires imagination, moral consciousness, and craft (the principle of doing things well).

Mortimer Adler writes in his book *The Paideia Proposal*: "The best way to understand a play is to act in it, or at least to read it out loud. The best way to understand a piece of music is to sing or play it. The best way to understand a work of dance is to try to dance it. Participation in the creation of works of art is as important as viewing, listening to, and discussing them."

The best way to comprehend works of visual art is to become actively involved in making them. Creating works in three dimensions is of particular significance. Human beings experience the world in three dimensions. Men, women, and children establish scale in accordance with their own bodies. Each of us is three-dimensional in a three-dimensional world.

Recently Larry Thomas, art teacher and friend, along with his students working at Wayland High School in Wayland, New York, provided me with a survey on the subject of three-dimensional clay art. It included responses from approximately thirty-six teenagers, a majority of whom found working in three dimensions—and

especially with clay—to be important.

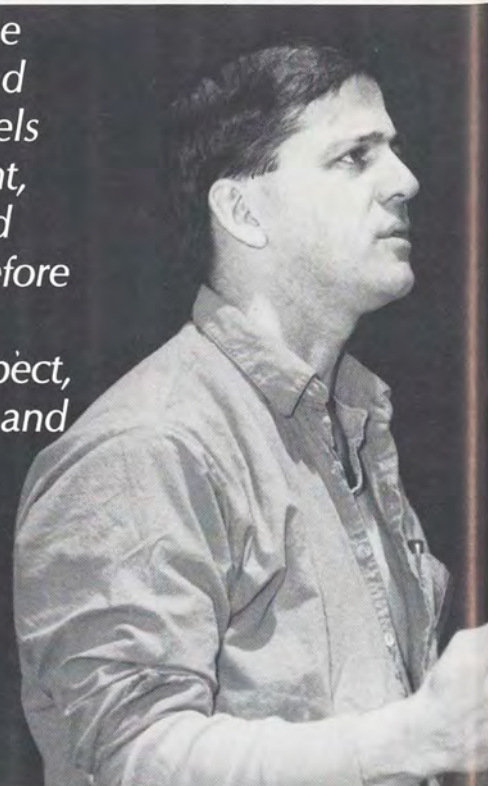
An interesting fact emerged from this survey in response to the statement, "If you had all the clay and materials you wanted, draw and describe what you would create." A significant number of students drew and described a human figure. It is safe to venture that this interest in the figure represents a response to the drive for self-actualization through the use of a direct connection with the intimate, intuited "feel" for body image and form. What better way to explore and explain self than to create a likeness—a likeness that resides in full three-dimensional space?

One of the undeniable qualities of clay is its relentless response to gravity. It always seeks a return to the enigmatic

lump. Clay's call to earth corresponds to man's. From birth, human beings compete with gravity and body weight in an effort to stand erect. On earth, men and women exist in a vertical and on a horizontal plane bound by inertia and gravity. Artists reflect this experience in poetic form. Ceramic artists have a medium at their fingertips that provides a uniquely dynamic synthesis of this fundamental condition.

Clay is an ageless medium with boundless possibilities for art education. What legislates against its use? In addition to obvious budgetary problems and factors concerning space and equipment, requisite information of the ceramic process

Teaching at the elementary and secondary levels requires insight, sensitivity, and skill and therefore demands maximum respect, endorsement, and advocacy.'



Education

is not necessarily part of the common knowledge of art teachers.

Time is also an important factor in art education, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels. Students do not have enough time to fail. No time to fail generates fear and lack of self-confidence, hampers imagination, and attacks the roots of creativity. Bravely and inventively reconsidering the scheduling structure of our basic public education system is a priority, especially in connection with the arts, for art education is not necessarily a subject as much as it is an unfolding and regenerating process, not easily imprisoned by time. School administrators, teachers, parents, and communities can play a



critical role, without radically altering the present structure, by enthusiastically supporting extracurricular activities in the arts that function to extend the time currently allocated for creative activity.

Artists, too, should take a more active interest in art education in their communities. Yes, it would be important for artists to become more involved with their local schools, even if they do not have children, but the picture is bigger

than that. Artists are among those most responsible for paying attention to what is going on around them. Artists must help lead the way toward a right course of action at all levels of society.

In general, artists need to become more open, more generous, more actively concerned. They are frequently too isolated from their communities and from those who are not artists. Artists must be ac-

cessible if they expect to have a truly influential role to play in our culture. By sharing in the day-to-day concerns of a community—by being vulnerable and interested—artists can obtain the necessary support for themselves as well as for arts programming in the public schools.

Elementary and secondary art education play a vital role in the state of arts education, but institutions of higher learning are equally responsible. University artists and administrators

need to function more supportively and cooperatively with their counterparts at all levels, in order to influence and enrich arts programming effectively.

A major step in this direction would be the recognition by higher education that teaching at lower levels is a different, difficult, and demanding profession. Teaching at the elementary and secondary levels requires insight, sensitivity, and skill and therefore demands maximum respect, endorsement, and advocacy. Universities must more effectively embrace the idea of teaching and learning. Faculty must become more concerned with finding answers, rather than always knowing them. Outreach programs that invite and welcome elementary and secondary teachers to tap the resources of the university, as well as discussions among university and nonuniversity teachers that promote mutual inspiration and individual contact, are important ways to bridge the gap that now exists among the various levels of education.

American universities and other institutions of higher learning are trying to fulfill the promise of a bright future for young people. In regard to the visual arts, art departments, art schools, and their faculties must seek out and develop a greater variety of career options. It is imperative that artist-teachers in higher education take time to recognize and encourage without bias each student's potential. Students of art must be empowered to fulfill their abilities in the most effective way. An entrepreneurial attitude should be fostered toward developing

possible avenues for young visual artists to move beyond the limits of the lonely studio, education, or commercial art options.

The National Council for Education in Ceramic Art is an organization specifically dedicated to ceramic art and its development. As the name implies, it has something to do with education. Unfortunately, recognition of the people who give their gifts and energy to elementary and secondary education in ceramics is overlooked by this organization. In fact, the issue of teaching is seldom given the spotlight. Arts education is not a high-profile, showbiz-styled arena. It reflects little flash, and, consequently, it may be seen as boring. Perhaps the Council for Education in Ceramic Art could serve the future by trying to add some glamor to the teaching profession and by assuming a more advocacy-centered role.

Clearly, teaching art with clay has an indispensable function within the framework of modern education. Clay is an archetypical material connecting human time and experience on earth back to its origins and forward to touch the launching pad of man's future. Thousands of years ago mankind discovered clay and fire. A bowl was made, and the idea of it—its form, function, and potential for metaphor—still vibrates as an elemental projection of human expression. Man's connection to such a fundamental concept as transforming shapeless clay into objects of use, physical pleasure, and psychic fulfillment speaks to the true, deep nature of human life.

A National Survey of Art(s) Education

by E. Andrew Mills

A National Survey of Art(s) Education was the second in a series conducted by the National Association of State Directors of Art Education (NASDAE) for the National Art Education Association (NAEA). As an affiliate of NAEA, NASDAE was selected as the appropriate channel through which to gather the information on behalf of NAEA's supervision and administration division. This report presents information for 1984-85 and also compares the current state of the arts with that of 1978-79.¹

The survey indicates that there are more elementary and secondary art teachers than recorded in the 1978-79 survey. The percentage of states now requiring elementary and junior high school art has increased significantly from the information listed in the earlier survey. All but three states now have state certification in art. Ninety percent of the states now include the arts in state education department goals.

The survey indicates that states and school districts are now placing a greater emphasis on the arts, including, but not limited to, increased requirements at all levels; in-

clusion of the arts in statewide goals; change in curricula direction; formation of special schools for the arts; and establishment of an arts graduation requirement.

Other specific gains listed in the survey are the following.

In 45 (90 percent) states, goals set by the state department of education include the arts.

In 47 (94 percent) states there is state certification in art.

In 39 (78 percent) states, art at the elementary level is required.

In 17.5 (35 percent) states, elementary art is taught by certified art teachers.

In 31 (62 percent) of the states, art is required in the junior high/middle school.

In 27 states a requirement for graduation that includes the arts has been passed. (Prior to 1978-79, only one state had such a requirement.)

In 20 states there are special high schools of the arts; 3 are year-round, others are summer schools.

For the twenty-plus years that I have been with the New York State Education Department, quality art programs for every grade level have been defined as programs with stated goals, objectives, and a written curriculum that includes a balance of two- and three-dimensional activities, art appreciation and history, as well as evaluation. It is common practice for high schools to include at least one three-dimensional area in their course

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offerings. Records indicate that this area is generally a course in ceramics.

The structure of ceramics courses in our high schools is changing. Teachers are being encouraged by their state departments of education and their professional art education associations to infuse the concepts set forth by the Getty Center for Education for the Arts into their teaching methods. Thus the teaching of ceramics will include not only the creating of objects in clay, but also studies in history, aesthetics, and criticism as they apply to this art form.

In my position with the New York State Education Department, it has been interesting to observe enrollment and staffing figures as they have changed during the past twenty years. Through our information center on education, educators are provided course

registrations and staff figures at every grade level each year.

As an example, in New York State, 500,000 fewer students are registered in public schools today than in 1970. There are 700 fewer art teachers in New York State today than in 1970.

Data indicate, however, that the situation for the arts has improved dramatically. In the past three years, the following examples have occurred.

Enrollment in one high school foundation level course alone has increased by 25,000 students.

Enrollment in seventeen advanced elective high school courses has increased in each of the last three years.

High school enrollment in fine arts ceramics has increased by nearly 20 percent.

The number of art teachers has increased by nearly 10 percent.

The number of students enrolled in art in New York State

has increased by more than 100,000 over the past three years.

Why these increases? There seem to be two primary factors involved. First is an increase in school enrollment in kindergarten through the third grade. Second might be attributed to the high school graduation requirement in the arts that was set in place for students entering the ninth grade in 1985 and thereafter. This required all students in both public and nonpublic schools to earn at least one unit of credit in art and/or music. It now appears that many students who are taking one course in art (to meet the graduation requirement) are electing additional advanced elective courses as well.

These figures for one state (New York) regarding high school course enrollments in ceramics, three-dimensional de-

sign, art teacher staffing, and student enrollment are encouraging but do not indicate a decline or recent cutback. The figures I reported from the national survey indicate that states have made great strides in support of art education programs at all levels, as well as in the specific areas of staffing, enrollment, art teacher certification, increased school arts requirements, programs for the talented, and the establishment of an arts graduation requirement. I see no indication that this trend is changing.

1. Information gathered by this survey is available through a monograph entitled "State of the Arts in the States," published by the National Art Education Association, 1916 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091.

The Roadway to a Future for Clay

by Robert H. Gray

There are two crucial reasons that we meet to discuss the value of working with clay for educational growth and development.

The first is that a counter-reformation is underway in American education and there is every reason to believe that in education, as in big business, "the strong will survive and get stronger, and the weak will disappear."¹ There is reason to fear that clay (the weak) will disappear as a legitimate part of the curriculum in secondary education. Indeed, we know that clay has already suffered a disproportionate decline in the ongoing cutbacks in art education, and we know also that it is not the other studio arts that will grow in strength.

Art education, as we know it, is threatened, and if we do not understand the issues and respond successfully to this threat, all studio arts might be eliminated or reduced to an extracurricular activity. Or—and this is probably the greatest threat—the arts might be significantly changed and become part of something the Getty Foundation has labeled "Discipline-Based Program in Art Education."

This may seem an unnecessarily alarming way to describe my concern. After all, while this symposium is the first meeting "of its kind," this isn't the first time art educators have rallied to respond to contentions about the value of the arts in education. In fact, over the past quarter of a century, art educators have learned to justify and legitimize the role of the arts in the curriculum in ways others in education would find intolerable.

The second reason why this symposium is so important is because today, as we prepare to offer the tried and true justifications that have been so successful in advancing clay in the curriculum in the past, we find that there are unexpected differences. The familiar environment has changed significantly, while our justifications have not changed accordingly. The old familiar context of circumstances and contentions that is as comfortable as a pair of old slippers has been replaced by the pressing new context of "crisis in American education"—a crisis in which an alarmed public is looking for solutions to the regrettable state of education in America.

Today, we find that our justifications must respond to a national audience that has been led to believe that American education has failed. In response to the inevitable search for the guilty, that audience has been informed that this closure of the American mind resulted, in part, from "the supplanting of reason by creativity."²

Many art education programs are fueled by an idea that emerged in the late 1960s based on the claim that our schools failed because too much discipline and rote learning resulted in

boredom. In response, educators said that more freedom, individuality, and creativity were needed. This proved to be the golden opportunity for advancing the arts in American education. Regardless of one's assessment of the value of the previous reform, the arts are indelibly associated with progressive, value-free creativity in education.

Secure in our past success, it is disarming, therefore, to learn that "we have become so accustomed to this word 'creativity' that it has no more effect on us than the most banal Fourth of July oratory. As a matter of fact, it has become Fourth of July oratory."³

Furthermore, it is disarming to know that we can no longer argue that the lack of support for art education is the result of public disinterest in the arts. On the contrary, the public has never before shown as much interest in the arts as it does today. There is greater attendance at art events than ever before in history, and the sales of Van Gogh paintings now rank as national public media events. Virtually every city across the nation has built, is building, or plans to build art museums and performing arts centers. Today, the arts are a matter of great civic pride, a means of demonstrating that each community is enlightened and is providing the artistic means for enriching the life of each member of the community.

Yet, at a time of the greatest public interest in the arts in American history, the legitimacy of the practice of the arts in education is being questioned. We are disarmed—if not stunned—by the kind of contention that has appeared within our own community.



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Today, art education is a house divided—and I do not refer to the traditional diversity and disagreement found in the studio arts. The division that concerns me most comes from those art educators, such as those employed by the Getty Foundation, who, speaking as friends and allies, contend “that a more substantive approach to teaching the arts is needed if arts education is to become basic education in the nation’s schools” and that “some variation on what is called discipline-based art education may be an appropriate response to the call for greater academic rigor.”⁴

No doubt there are other changes that characterize the new context we now confront. My point is simply this: Our time-tested justifications are still there, more now than ever—explicable doctrines, case studies, and exciting innovations—arguments that have always worked in the past, but the old contentions are no longer there. We are unprepared for the challenge we face, and this is serious. It isn’t our enemies who got us into our present predicament, and the Getty solution doesn’t represent help from a friend. It would be witless for us to keep our mouths shut at this time.

As I thought about making a case for clay in secondary education in this new context, it was difficult to imagine what more could be done to justify clay today beyond what has already been done over the past twenty-five years. And while remembering the extraordinary advances, I recalled the price we have paid—the Balkanizing arguments and disagreements; excessive justifications and excuses, imagination and vision fading into ex-

The value of studio arts are its counterbalance to education that emphasizes the distribution, accumulation, and creation of facts.’

hausting clerical preoccupations, and the new obsession for management in place of leadership that inevitably leads to manageable but weak programs.

I thought also about the widespread state of uncertainty and disillusionment among art teachers today, and tried to imagine what encouragement might be given to those teachers who have already lost their jobs in the first wave of change as art and music have been removed from some school systems by budget cuts and reorganized priorities. Frankly, I was discouraged.

In an effort to find something encouraging—anything that might indicate a positive roadway to the future for clay—I read what others were saying. In the course of one afternoon, I found an extravagant variety of opinions from sources that were different in time and intention. It was difficult to find anything useful. Everything I read seemed either to verify or take advantage of one of those early warnings written at the beginning of the 1980s: “. . . The signs of constriction are everywhere today—in the small ambitions of art, in its lack of any effort toward spirituality, in its sense of career rather than vocation, in its frequently bland occupation with semantics at the expense of the deeper passions of the creative self.”⁵

In the announcement for this symposium on clay in secondary art education, I noted again the passage: “. . . fear that clay as a teaching material has suffered a disproportionate decline during recent cut-backs.” Yet, in the recent publication of the proceedings of a national conference sponsored by the Getty Foundation for Education in the Arts, Dr. Elliot Eisner declares: “. . . times have changed. Our nation has almost completed its preoccupation with ‘back to basics.’ People are increasingly realizing that a decent education for their children requires more than simple skills of learning to read, write, and compute. As efforts at curriculum reform, circa 1987, have fallen into place, the arts are finally being given a legitimate place in our schools.”⁶

Now, I know as well as you do, what Dr. Eisner’s “new talk” is trying to get into place when he says that in 1987 everything has fallen into place, and that the arts are finally being given their legitimate place in our schools. And it isn’t very encouraging. But I was taken by the terrific gap the public might perceive between Dr. Eisner’s and this symposium’s statements. And it occurred to me that similar open spaces exist in much that we have said within the art education community.

It was at this point that I understood in a different way the charge made to me to create a Case for Clay, “. . . that we move beyond our current positions, to new ways of thinking,” and “while it is important to deal with what is known, it is vital to address what is not known.” And it was here that I recalled a critical comment about the work of Jasper Johns that was helpful to me: “What is truly familiar is not looked at; what is truly new is similarly meaningless.”⁷

Is it possible that “what is not known” might be the familiar, but the familiar truly looked at? Perhaps we should not seek to make a case for clay at this time with something new and similarly meaningless. Possibly, the roadway we seek exists in that space between all that we have said on all other critical occasions in the past, in what is not known or, better, in what has been forgotten about clay as a teaching material in art education.

In other words, too many for too long have taken the ongoing criticism of clay for granted. We have been reacting, and then reacting to the reaction to our reaction for so long we have lost sight of the basic and fundamental intentions in working with clay. In reacting to each provocation, we have learned to rush forward with new doctrines, different arguments, and innovations, often having more to do with the contention than with our real interests.

This is not to say that the threats were not real; they were. And in the past our reactions have been successful, often beneficial. Today, however, there seems to be little that connects the extravagant variety of doctrines and innovative programs, and this is what I am trying to get at when I talk about the gaps in all that we have said before.

I think our innovations and differences have taken on a life of their own. Anything can be said— and everything is being said— about the branches, but no one has described the tree. If this is the case, it might be that our goal, then, is not to shape yet another innovation or to state in a new way the conventional but conflicting doctrines of the past.

I have no desire to criticize the extraordinary diversity and quality of work being done today in the classroom and in the studio. On the contrary, clay must always mean many things. But the public, whose support we must have, has not been given the opportunity to understand what we really do. Most of what we say about clay simply has little real meaning to the outsider and to the general public.

I know the public is confused, and I suspect that there might even be confusion in our own ranks. In certain situations—and this is a specific example—we need the same criteria for expressing what is meant. Yet I realize the difficulty of this, especially if our task is compared to that of those independent contractors who are advancing their interests in art education. While Dr. Eisner has the support of a powerful foundation, we do not. He is trying to attract a constituency, while we clearly must represent ours (and as we all know, representing the clay constituency is an art in itself). To say the least, ours is a group with a special spirit and a tradition of determined individual independence. With such an openly democratic, often anarchistic constituency, it is difficult to fix on a statement or a plan and carry it through with determination.

Regardless of the difficulty, we must work within the context of the movement to reform education if we wish to be heard, understood, and supported. Our Case for Clay in Secondary Education must be as well-reasoned, articulate, and accessible to the public as that of Dr. Eisner and the other educators who

make statements about art education that are compelling and convincing to the public.

Furthermore, our case must be responsive. It is inexcusable that the art education community has not responded to such Getty-sponsored public statements as “a more substantive approach to teaching the arts is needed if arts education is to become basic education in the nation’s schools” and that “some variation on what is called discipline-based art education may be an appropriate response to the call for greater academic rigor.”⁸

The public has been told, and by a leading art educator, that art education, as practiced, lacks rigor. Is it true that the use of clay in education lacks rigor and substance? If it is not the case, why hasn’t anyone put it right? The answer seems obvious to me: we have chosen to talk about cosmic characteristics and the benefits of self-expression, while assuming that the rigor and discipline of working and learning with clay go without saying. I think we have it backwards.

I believe the weakness of a Case for Clay at this time would be an emphasis on the principle that art education is self-expression. And here I must quote Dr. Eisner once more, noting that it is odd to find his case for discipline-based art education based on his definition of the role of art in the curriculum:

... art is one of the very few subjects in the school’s curriculum that gives the child the opportunity to draw upon his emotions as a source of content that allows his emotions to take wing. It is art that provides the temporary escape from the rule-governed features of an overly verbal and numerical curriculum. And it is art where the child is encouraged to confer his personal vision and his signature upon his work.⁹

I think the value of art education lies in the fact that the studio arts are the counterbalance to education that values the distribution, accumulation, and creation of facts. As such, art education develops imagination, perception, the ability to make critical judgments, and forges unique links between rational analysis and intuitive insight.

1. From “Now Playing: The New Hollywood,” *New York Times*, Arts and Leisure section, Sunday, January 10, 1988. Mr. Davis is chairman of Gulf and Western, the parent company of Paramount Pictures.
2. *The Closing of the American Mind*, by Allan Bloom (1987).
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Proceedings of the January 1987 National Conference* sponsored by the Getty Foundation for Education in the Arts.
5. *The Shock of the New*, by Robert Hughes (1980).
6. Taken from the keynote synopsis of Dr. Elliot Eisner’s address as it appears in “Discipline-Based Art Education: What Forms Will It Take?,” in *Proceedings*, *op. cit.*
7. *Jasper Johns*, by Michael Crichton (1977).
8. *Proceedings*, *op. cit.*
9. *Proceedings*, *op. cit.*





*The purpose of art education
is to nurture that side of us
that is non-material,
non-physical,
a spiritual activity
embodied and embedded
in the human self,
separate from
but contained within it.*

Seonaid Robertson