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Xanos & [William Estrada](#)

# ALLCITY

a bookwork  
of Chicago  
art education  
stories

Edited by

Jorge Lucero & Paulina Camacho Valencia

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**GALLERY 400**

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Gallery 400







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# INTRODUCTION

On December 14, 2024—in conjunction with Gallery 400’s germinal exhibition *Learning Together: Art Education and Community*—Jorge Lucero and Paulina Camacho Valencia invited all of Chicago’s teachers, artists, teaching artists, community engagers, museum practitioners, professors, stakeholders, policymakers, administrators, art therapists, students, caregivers, socially engaged artists, and all other intersections throughout to gather at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to co-construct a bookwork of all of our Chicago art education stories—from start to finish—in just three hours (180 minutes).

The idea was an ambitious attempt to quickly—and with minimal demand on the participants—produce something like a time capsule (in the form of a bookwork), that archives a pile of entangled personal narratives, memories, and dreams about art education (broadly defined) in Chicago (also broadly defined). This was done as one response to the curatorial proposals of

the *Learning Together* exhibition, which in many ways are understandably limited since there is no way that an exhibition—even a collection of a hundred exhibitions—about Chicago’s art education could be wholly comprehensive. Even if it was possible, an attempt at bringing all of those histories, happenings, and humans together would be a cacophonous—albeit potentially glorious—mess!

Well, that’s what this book is.

It’s an invitation to produce the biggest, fullest, most glory-filled bookwork without too many gates limiting who can be in or out.





Chapter 1

# ALONGSIDE

Starting from a horizontalization of teaching and learning where reciprocity, care, and agency have been prioritized, and then thinking back to your personal Chicago art education memories, who and what have come alongside you to form you as a creative practitioner? **NOTE:** Here you can think of your creative practice as everything on the spectrum from being a member of your communities (like when you're a teacher or an activist) to your artistic endeavors (when you're taking up all the materiality of your world as a means to "say" things you want to express and ask questions that are important to you and yours).



## Amy Chen

I would like to think I am making an impact slowly on the lives of students. Most of my work has focused around my identity and everything that comes with it. I think attending UIC's art education program meant the most in my career/path as an art educator. I was already a teacher, but it was not enough for me. I felt like I could be doing more for my community or provide education for those that need it. UIC has really shaped my ideals on progressive art education. I know that there are art teachers out there teaching techniques, elements, principles, and blah blah blah, but I want my students to say, "Hey, I like what we're doing, I see myself in this", instead. Anyone can be a teacher and get the license but there is a difference in genuinely finding happiness in seeing students grow and learn and appreciate the arts and EVERYTHING that comes with it, not just techniques and being good, but being in tune with personal interests and what we love.



## Alice Costas

I am thinking of my family first, but then also the people and spaces that they opened me to. We've been talking about raising children a lot and how much that is influenced by cultural values and parental effects. I think a huge impact on my experience of Chicago and art education in general has been being taught to observe closely, to the degree that the mundane becomes a space for study, and being taught to be open to invitations for care and connection. In turn, I was invited to understand the visual landscape of Chicago, the icons at church, the menus of diners, etc. as places for discussion, study, respite, so on. I do think Chicago's visual culture and engagement with the arts is both exceptionally rich, but also much scrappier and more inviting than what you might find in say New York, and LA. I remember as a child staring at the hand painted signs leading on the long drive to my uncle's hot dog stand in Little Village that had cartoons on the sign. I don't remember feeling bored much as a child, which feels remarkable, and I think directly connected to how adults I encountered in my community in the city treated, cared for and spoke to us as beings of agency and insight. Special shout-outs

to my Uncle John Cotner who I did not even know was the art teacher at the Lab School until I was well into middle school who was a doorway to the ecstatic and lack of fear of the darkness that accompany the human experience, his partner Dale who helped me really listen to music, my parents, and my Yiayia who was a middle school History and English teacher at Abraham Lincoln Elementary in Lincoln Park. She did not create on her own but understood expressive capacities and works as a key to understanding history and language across cultures and always invited us into analytic capacities. Finally, my brother George taught me worlds full of engaging with the broader world around us by being my partner in the act of growing and my first artistic collaborator in earnest.

## Hailey Rodden

Reflecting on my creative journey through the lens of a horizontal approach to teaching and learning—where reciprocity, care, and agency are central—I realize that many of the influences shaping me have not come from a singular authority or a traditional educational model. Instead, my growth as a creative practitioner has been deeply influenced by the communities I’ve been part of, and by the ongoing exchanges with the people I’ve met along the way.

Although Chicago is often thought of as a bustling big city, to me, it feels like a small town. I grew up in the western suburbs, and I remember my freshman year at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago when a classmate shared, “The first time I felt at home in a big city was when I saw someone I knew on the street, just in passing.” Ever since then, I smile to myself whenever I happen to run into someone “by chance”—a moment that happens surprisingly often here.

I’ve been fortunate to encounter both formal mentors and peers who have not only been deeply invested in their own creative practices, but who’ve also shown a genuine interest in my growth. The visual artists, curators, and educators I’ve worked with have modeled the power of collaboration.

When I first began pursuing art, my focus was photography, with an interest in photojournalism. I thought what I

cared about was photography itself—capturing moments in time, telling stories through images. But once I started studying journalism, I realized that what I truly cared about wasn't the photography—it was people. I wanted to create relationships through my art. Photography began to feel intrusive, even exploitative, and journalism felt less like a way to support others and more like an industry that capitalized on people's trauma.

This realization led me to explore other creative avenues. I met a lot of people, immersed myself in different neighborhoods, and became involved in politics and activism, including work on Amara Enya's mayoral campaign. I organized diaper and Thanksgiving food drives, and began to see these actions as my creative practice. Through all of this, I encountered many individuals who encouraged my pursuits and taught me the importance of staying authentic to my own path. Sometimes that authenticity meant resting, creating nothing at all. Other times, it meant sleepless nights running to Dunkin' at 2 a.m., pushing myself to finish something I felt was worthy enough to share in critique with my classmates.

Ultimately, I learned how to integrate care and thoughtfulness into my work, making my practice not just about personal expression, but also about building connections within and across communities—something that remains at the heart of what I do. It's what continues to inspire me, and what led me to my current role as a PK-8 art teacher at a West Side CPS performing arts school, where I strive to nurture the creativity and agency of my students, just as I've been nurtured by those around me.

## Judith Susan Rocha - PhD LCSW

My mother, the Alzheimer's diagnosis she lived with for the last 16 years of her life, and her fierceness to ensure that others had what they needed to live their lives, are what brought me to intentionally develop spaces where elders of the Latine community can come together to not only create art but be the art of aging in all its splendor.





## Jose Martin Bautista

Mis experiencias acá en Chicago han sido varias y por mencionar algunas puedo contar cuando empecé a enseñar Teatro materia en la cual termine y me gradué en artes escénicas. Los retos que vi con los estudiantes han sido varios ya que las clases han sido bilingües y el puente de varios de los estudiantes que no dominan la lengua del inglés les es demasiado difícil adaptarse no solamente con el idioma sino con la cultura en general la cual no tiene casi nada que ver con su realidad. La cultura de sus padres está totalmente arraigada y formas de pensar muy mexicanas por ejemplo: el concepto de respeto hacia los adultos el cual debe de ser. Cabe aclarar que por desgracia acá ese respeto se a perdido y los nuevos estudiantes algunos de ellos se contagian de esa falta de respeto. Algunos de ellos son se vuelven introvertidos por no dominar el idioma o incluso medios rebeldes por la misma causa.



## Silvia Gonzalez

When I took my first teaching job, I sought out other educators and spaces that aligned their teaching with the pulse of the city and the stories that informed what students were experiencing in Chicago. A majority of the students I worked with were from Black and Brown working-class families on the Southside of Chicago. They often talked about family, gang activity, immigration, the police, and feeling unfairly treated by people in positions of authority. They also got excited about things like soccer, learning Arabic, getting to show culture through dance, food, and art. The art room became more than a space to make, it became a space where students felt safe enough to tell jokes, learn, and even cry. I wanted to know how I could best support students navigating more than just learning and schooling. I began learning from people like Mariame Kaba to formalize more of my pedagogy around restorative and transformative justice work because I became a direct observer of the grief around punitive systems and the toll that abuse of power had on young folks and their families. It made me curious about the following; what would it mean to bring restorative and transformative frameworks with me in my teaching? What if care was part of the learning experiences engaged in our daily practice? What does care look like in an art room? Often, I tried to tie in ideas of healing, transformation, and change-making into my lessons but I felt there was so much more I needed to learn. I felt like I needed to do more with the power and privileges I had as an educator. I started to explore these questions in my thesis during grad school at SAIC where I reconnected with my Marwen mentors Maria Gaspar and Paulina Camacho (who I had previously met at Marwen). Maria had just started community conversations around Cook County Jail in Little Village and the 96 Acres Project. I was invited to the education committee with other folks thinking through the impact of the jail on the community.

Together, we planned intergenerational and transdisciplinary learning to dialogue on topics related to power, incarceration, and liberation.

At that time, I was teaching at a social justice school where I could freely engage art and work related to community impact with young folks. The students I worked with were interested in how art could be used to bring attention to mental health and wellness in BIPOC communities often disproportionately targeted by the prison industrial complex. Students opened up about having family members incarcerated and often sidelined. While some of the stories students brought forward were personal, other conversations led us to discuss the investments needed to ensure safety, equity, and opportunity needed to transform systemic violence. We explored the question, “What would you do with 96 acres of land?”(the size of Cook County Jail) which was one of the questions the 96 Acres Project had been asking during our community workshops.

Students were excited to use art as an advocacy tool to reveal the issue and realities of divestment in mental health resources while advocating for spaces that empower holistic wellness in BIPOC communities. Many dreamed up using 96 acres of land for green park spaces to commune and play. Part of our project was using art to share what we were learning. Students turned to creating infographics and presented their posters as an advocacy campaign to the school community. They were proud to know data points and personal stories to support their work as artists.

Our school community decided to take our learning to the streets. Using banners, posters, and songs, youth led a march from our school throughout the neighborhood to the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. It felt like communal grieving, resistance, joy, and a statement of insistence that we wouldn't forget our sideline anyone. While we were in front of JTDC singing, chanting, and advocating, youth who were incarcerated

took soap and wrote on the windows, “Free us all.” They had heard us marching and we heard them back too. The level of deep listening and care was palpable. Through experiential learning, I realized the value of art education as a practical tool—one that bridged formalized classroom learning with the experiences of our city as a broader learning space. It asked us to excavate the histories embedded in the DNA of our city: 1. Chicago is a city that has witnessed injustices and will coalesce in various methods of resistance as well as ongoing organizing. 2. No one was ever “too young to understand” their own lived realities. Understanding was needed to make concerted efforts to make things better. 3. We have to work to free us all. In freeing us all, could we also use care, deep listening and art to make valuable connections on our relationships to one another, ourselves, and our city? Youth continuously remind me that we sure can. The 96 Acres project, intergenerational learning spaces, and marching with youth lit an important path forward. Not only can we imagine possibilities together, we can get creative about what we want and how we want to get there. We have it in us to re-imagine how we allocate resources, use spaces, and learn together. Not only can we restore our relationships with intention to form valuable connections, we have the responsibility to transform spaces into something extraordinary where we can safely commune and play.



## Kevin Dill

Being formed into a creative practitioner came in the form of watching cars being detailed and pinstriped as a child, toward navigating growing up in Chicago. My experiences in the Back of The Yards neighborhood and the Albany Park neighborhood have shaped me into a creative practitioner. I found a love for documenting with my camera moments with those that I love and care about.



## Therese Quinn

Since at least 1976, when at seventeen I marched in Sacramento's Bicentennial parade with Le Theatre Lesbien, dressed as the Statue of Liberty and singing, "Be kind to your lesbian friends, for that dyke may be somebody's moootherrrr," and then toured with the troupe playing an Amazon and Queen Catherine, I've loved combining art with political action and education.

## Georgia Kruse

When thinking back to my first roots in the creative world, my mind automatically goes to my elementary school art class. My teacher gave me the resources and encouragement I needed to keep going as an artist and believe in my own potential and progress. When I left the class, the other young artists I met there stuck with me; being around those people kept me actively engaged in the art around me rather than just my own.

## Isabella Kelly

Both my peers and my teachers have helped me to embrace my creativity and develop new skills in a variety of artistic mediums.

## Rachel Yanoff

As a creative practitioner, I am the result of every act of art education that I have experienced. As I move through the world, I actively engage with and learn from the art forms around me. I can't help but notice murals and mosaics under the train stations of Chicago, reminded of the drawing and painting class I took my sophomore year of high school and the lessons I took from the Chicago Mosaic School. Each time I engage with art, art engages with me, helping me grow in my creative practices. I am continuously inspired by the beautiful city around me.

## Ari Rendon

I am a creative person, I love looking at pretty things.



## Adelheid Mers

What converges when things go well?

As any game, an educational institution offers nested frames: tacit and agreed upon roles, resource distribution, rules determining the duration and location of engagements, and desired inputs and outcomes. When it is well-designed, well-calibrated and used well, such a system frees up energies for play.

Things go well in a classroom when moments of quiet presence take hold. Openness is at play. Things go well in crits when compassion loops form. Regard is at play. Things go well in meetings when solutions become readily apparent. Ingenuity is at play. Things go well in the studio when gifts appear. Awe is at play. Things go well in collaborations when it is evident that there are always the right people in the room. Polyphony is at play.

As Steven Nachmanovitch wrote, the ability to play is a prerequisite for peace.



## Keith Brown

I moved to Chicago on New Year's Day 2006, and I entered into graduate studies at the University of Chicago a few days later. I moved to Chicago because I wanted to live in a big city full of art, diversity, and culture. Growing up in the suburbs of Louisville, Kentucky and earning a studio art degree from the University of Kentucky in 2003, taught me that I needed to go towards cities and people. I had started going to New York City in my early twenties (2000-2004). It was there that I saw how urban living inspires an artful life, helps us make connections, and find opportunities for our passions. I dreamed about doing something with my art in a big city like New York. That is what I craved, and I just couldn't see it happening in Louisville. A visit to Chicago in 2005 showed me that I did not have to move to New York to get what I needed. Chicago had everything I was imagining for myself, and it was just a 5 hour drive up I-65. I imagined myself riding the subway, living in the shadows of skyscrapers, reading, writing, and going to art museums and art galleries. I also wanted to go to punk bars and see hip-hop shows and drink coffee in cafes and share cabs with friends. I wanted to sit in dark dive bars with Old Style and Schlitz signs hanging outside of them. I never wanted to drive a car again. I wanted to walk in and out of little shops and eat in 24-hour diners.

Thinking back, I really wanted to be an art historian. I was chasing down this question, How can I earn a full-time paycheck talking about art? I quickly realized that

I was not going to be an art historian. There were too many academic barriers in my way. I was not good at writing or research, and I had no foreign languages acquired. The University of Chicago masters and PhD in art history seemed so impossible. A student in one of my classes heard my frustration one day and suggested that I look at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago's art education program. After reading the SAIC art education home page I knew instantly that I had found my home. I realized that art educators also get to make a living talking about art and artists and they also have the bonus of showing people how to make art.

I applied to the school and was invited in for an interview where I met John Ploof. He and I looked through my art portfolio, which was filled with graphic design and figure drawing. In May of 2006 I was accepted to SAIC and prepared to start in the fall. I left the University of Chicago and found a job being a teacher's assistant that summer in the SAIC youth art program. I helped teaching artist Carmela Rago teach summer camps and I also stayed on with her that fall helping her teach painting Saturday mornings in the museum. I also started taking courses with Andres Hernandez, Craig Harshaw, and Levi Smith at SAIC. Andres taught me about Chicago. His class had us doing ethnographic research in communities and he had us looking at all of Chicago. As a curious art person, I had already spent time traveling the Red Line from my River North apartment to 55th Street. I had already explored

the city traveling every CTA line to its beginning and end. I had seen so much that I couldn't understand until I met Andres and his curriculum. He had us paying attention to communities in new ways. He had us noticing what no one else noticed. He had me thinking that an art educator was the thing to be. He made me look at my own positionality and identity from new perspectives. It was the first time that I had to think about my race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability. I had to understand my working class whiteness and my cis hetero identity. As a skateboarding hip-hop punk Southern boy, I had a lot to grapple with! Andres and the program made me want to work in communities and connect my talents as an art person to people who didn't look like me. Riding the train in Chicago showed me pieces of America that I had never seen before, and it made my heart hurt to think about the many ways in which our society has neglected and divested from human beings and our fellow Chicagoans. How could this be I thought. How can we allow people to live in such precarity? I was learning that art could play a role in social change. Art has the power to help people and help young people tell their stories through art. Andres gave me opportunities to tag along to after school art programs. I would jump in his Jeep and go help on a mural project over on the West Side. In the Jeep we would talk about life, Chicago, and art education. I was also preparing myself for entry into the white savior industrial complex. I had not yet explored exploitation. I had not yet considered helping people who never asked for it. I would soon learn about consultation, community buy-in, asset mapping, needs mapping, deficit thinking, and other tools that caution young white well-intentioned artists from entering communities to which they are not members.

At the time, art education projects were entering the art world alongside a thing called social practice. “Pedagogical projects” as they were called were part of the “Pedagogical Turn” in curatorial work (Rogoff, 2008). Everything about education was getting really hot in the art world. It seemed like every Chicago artist I talked with also wanted to teach, but without taking education courses. I took issue with this right away and burned some bridges in this old town. Art education was not a sexy field. I had fellow grad students at SAIC ask me why I was wasting my time in art education, why not get an MFA they said? My response was always about teaching. Being a teacher is one of the most noble professions on earth and I will never stop believing that. Who teaches the artists, the doctors, the business folks, and the law makers? Teachers do! Again, being an art educator is the thing to be. It is what I was put on this earth to do. I feel it in my bones, and it never goes away. My call to teach as we like to say came at the University of Chicago and it was realized in the Master of Arts in Art Education program The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## Miriam Dolnick

Nothing has formed me more than the prominence of the physical spaces. The people of course are inseparable from the spaces but it's the spaces that hold the culmination of it all the most visceral and powerful feelings of belonging, attachment, comfort, challenge, vision, identity shifts, etc., and for me, hold and represent the desire to be someone that is dedicated to creating and tending to spaces where these feelings can happen again and again and again. The treasured art education spaces from my past, present, and future are what loom large in my own brain. From high school the cardboard studio in the corner of the classroom built with the permission of the teacher, lusted after by the younger grades. Shadow puppet theaters made out of a sheet and butcher paper. Live performance of frying potatoes on the other side for our classmates to watch and smell. Making theater in a chicago backyard all summer long, sweating, building, working, stretching. Learning and believing that the beach, the diner, the thrift store, the parent living rooms were all containers for our creative practices to evolve, grow, and become ours in.

Taking the bus then the train to the hot sticky woodchip tents of block 37 where inside, we got to belong to the important and serious space of art as work and felt the bigness of the city, to experience a connecting space, to learn the permanence of our mark. Having meetings in the YCA apartment living room, ringing the buzzer downstairs knowing it would be answered for us, that

we were being waited for by the thrift store couches and chairs and bookshelves and the windows overlooking Division. As a student of an institution- To tour classrooms north, east, south, and west. Classrooms I had never visited before but felt familiar and known to me. Basement classrooms, classrooms with small, medium, and large chairs. Classrooms with couches made out of duct tape. Classrooms with drawers that have been pulled since 1913. Classrooms with cabinets filled with cut up magazines that had been tenderly, laboriously, steadfastly curated. Classrooms with jars for each color marker arranged on the windowsill so that the sun will shine through them. As a teacher in a space where I was once a student being the one to water the plants, put on the tea, buy the cookies, turn on and off the lights. To be one of the ones tending to spaces where generations have moved through where I can mark my own experience of age. Where I have sighed with tenderness as the spaces themselves bend, shift, change, and disappear. Where I now get to watch my students let out the same kind of sigh as they look at the walls and floors and ceilings with surprise and recognition and protectiveness.

## Albert Stabler

I have been substantially educated by making art with young people in Chicago, especially in working with beautiful kids from communities on the south and west sides of the city, and especially with regard to the social and economic functions of culture, education, and cultural education. I have also benefited immeasurably from the warmth, energy, and generosity of the artists making up the DIY gallery, music, and publishing worlds in Chicago, not to mention the ferocious exuberance of many adjoining activist projects. In retrospect, I got to be part of so many nourishing and revelatory places, events, and processes, that I try not to be overcome with regrets that I didn't (or couldn't) do more to sustain and strengthen these relationships and networks.



## Jean Parisi

Alongside me are so many – from family and community to teachers and fellow artists. Early influences included my time at Hull House Art and Music Camp where artists led the workshops/ classes/performances and offered us a full range of creative experiences – no one way to do something. Fast forward to my time with Pros Arts Studio – a collective of artists in the Pilsen community beginning in 1977.

Collaboration has been an integral part of my creative life



## Adriana Baltazar

After exploring nearly every department at SAIC as an undergraduate and pursuing experimental and sustainable methods and materials afterward, I seemed to hit a creative dead end. The traditional solo path of an artist was not cutting it. I was exhibiting but hustling to make a big break as a painter or sculptor, etc., was just not interesting to me and many other folks.

It was during the mid-2000s that numerous alternative/diy galleries popped up in apartments, studios, bedrooms, medicine cabinets, and beyond. A bit later in 2010, when my good friend Antonio Martinez and I opened half of our large studio space (Cobalt Studio) in Pilsen to exhibit underrepresented artists, my taste for the immaterial began. The fire was back. Curating and co-organizing events with awesome artists like Nicole Marroquin was the beginning of my journey with social practice. I was inspired to invite others to collaborate on bigger projects that expanded outside of the gallery space to hosting a block party, creating costumes, storytelling, performance, and video. It was an exciting time that shifted for me when I left for grad school. I don't regret leaving, but I have not had the same sense of community that Chicago gave me.

I attribute the opportunity to join and contribute to an artist network to volunteering and participating in the Pilsen Open Studios, a group of artists that connected hundreds of people over an annual two-day neighborhood-wide open studio event. It is community groups, programs, and spaces like this that create the connection I seek in an art practice/life. I see parallels now with progressive/contemporary approaches to teaching; playful inquiry, presentations, and projects, all student-led. A space to truly be. It's all there, everything I care most about what art can do; build community and representation, inspire creativity, critical thinking, and inquiry. To be seen and heard. Opportunities to invest and engage what we all have.

## Melanie Miller-Silver

Beginning as a child and discovering local stores that sold small art supplies and later going to the AIC, Chicago has a rich availability to the art scene. As a child in grade school, we had a lot of art classes that aren't available today to the children in CPS. I had a family who did crafting and artwork for hobbies but none who were professional. It was a pleasurable activity that catered to all skill sets and interests. I encountered many Indigenous bead workers and frequented the small shops that sold beading supplies in the area and was fortunate to be able to attend Pow Wows and see the wonderful, decorated regalia that would inspire me to learn more. The ethnic mix of my northside neighborhood was surprisingly diverse for the time I grew up, and as an adult I have ventured out on my own to meet people and learn about their art practices and it has made me a better person. This led me to attend college for art and receive two BA degrees for commercial art and my MFA using beadwork as my medium. It's been and continues to be a fascinating journey and I wouldn't trade it for anything.



## Susan Friel

I was fortunate to feel true reciprocity early in my career at Inner-City Arts in LA. Founder Bob Bates was driven by a deep passion for creativity and care that were palpable. Starting with a single trailer on a school parking lot, he built a gorgeous center that inspired awe and the home court advantage of having dedicated studios for visual art, music, ceramics, dance, and language. We visited each other's studios constantly, as we found ways that our work overlapped and built a sense of camaraderie that I've strived to re-create with varying success throughout my career in arts ed in Chicago. The groundwork laid during that time re-enters my work on a regular basis, as I consult with my collaborator Jan Kirsch from time to time. I often use this experience as an aspirational touchstone when creating programs.

When I returned to Chicago as Director of Education at A.R.T. I met some amazingly dedicated artists who everyday would head out to a new school and teach several classes. I observed them forging out the next day to another school to do it all over again. Like many teaching artists in Chicago there was no home court advantage, as they adeptly adapted to each new classroom every hour, oftentimes taking their materials with them. They worked in isolation and rarely had the opportunity to work with other artists or learn from one another.

One small way I began to build a community of care for us all was through a monthly W(h)ine and Cheese for artists to convene in our office, commiserate and pick up their checks (pre automatic deposit). Many artists shared that these informal gatherings helped to bridge the isolation as seasoned artists and newbies shared tricks of the trade, curricular ideas, materials, and nurtured friendships.

Throughout my career in arts education, I'm constantly searching for that sweet spot where artists and learners engage with one another on a collaborative basis. DCASE's Artists in Residence programs offer the kind of reciprocity for artists to make art in a public space and invite others to join them. For some artists this can be a very inspirational and engaging experience, that pulls back the curtain of the creative process.

## Valerie Xanos

Through most of my own art education, skill and artistic/conceptual achievement were prioritized. Infamous art school critiques that eviscerated each student as a right-of-passage is a good example of that methodology. This was motivational for me (as a perfectionist-type personality), but also difficult as a neurodivergent person who lived with chronic illness. I've never been interested in racing to the top or defining my success by being "better" than others, and therefore struggled in the institutions structured in this manner. In any educational setting and even art school, I often functioned as an outsider probably due to this culture. Competition and "success" seemed to define my artistic excellence or lack thereof.

There were certain teachers, however, who treated me with care and a deeply thoughtful guidance which shaped me both as an artist and an educator. Their care for my development was astonishing. I was very much taken under wing. They'd often reach out to give me books, advice, inspiration and direction that was outside of the course or projects that we were studying. I found that they were thinking of me and my learning pursuits outside of class, and then gifting me with what I particularly needed. They were more than a teacher as they offered themselves, their minds, and often their personal lives to me as a form of mentorship. This is perhaps the most profound experience that shaped me as a teacher. I find

myself thinking of my students and their work at all times, finding wonderful little nuggets that I can share that pertain specifically to their needs and development.

My approach goes beyond a one direction teacher-to-student highway. It is collegial because we are in a community and there is a sharing of interdependent knowledge and inspiration. As I developed my own way of working with students, this collegiality grew as my community provided me and each other with new directions, viewpoints, and ideas. While I have the responsibility, as the trained and experienced artist-teacher, to give to and guide my students, I recognize and admire all they offer as well. The classroom is not simply a space where students are activated through assignments, rather it is a space where students and teachers gather and create together. My relationship with them develops through the lens of my own artist practice. It is a space where we can invite other artists to join us, inspire us, create with us. It is a space where our art will challenge oppression and address issues of social justice. It is a space where we share a collective vision. It is a space of discovery and experimentation with contemporary concepts and processes. It is a space that is nurturing so that when one suffers or struggles, the others can support. It is this deep thoughtfulness, this gathering of people together in artistic inquiry that has led to not only reciprocity, but care and community. We care for each other in ways that go beyond academics or achievement. It breaks barriers put up by any sense of competition or achievement and instead creates not only an empowered personal agency but also an empowered community whose agency is strengthened by each member. This is how I work in my various roles of artist, teacher, mentor, student, activist and parent. This I owe to the legacy that shaped me.



## Meg Katherine Johnson

When I think of the people who have walked alongside me, those who've left the deepest marks on my journey, I think of badass humans dismantling the toxic grind we've inherited as a collective. I've met educators who tread softly, saying yes with a practiced grace, bowing to the fractured system's demands. And I've met others—the rule-breakers—who would tell you that equity demands defiance. In a world where education masquerades as a capitalist machine, they whisper that rest is resistance. My people are the non-traditional teachers, the ones who let their humanity bleed through the cracks of their so-called professionalism. They don't perform; they exist—raw, real, and resolute. I would like to personally thank those who have impacted me the most; my mentor Valerie Xanos, my cohort members Emma Taylor and Misael Loera, my previous art teachers Nathan Kukla and Brad Vredevoogd, and everyone else who has shown me exactly what kind of artist and art educator I never want to be.

## Niki Nolin

As an artist/teacher. Light, Motion, Collaboration and Poetry, Looking for the moments in between what is seen and said and what is made. Interpretation. Hope. Coming to terms, Navigating this world in a way that moves us all forward. How art education, learning to live the arts as an interpretation of our world makes us richer, deeper, better. Better stewards, better friends, better artists. Finding a place in the wide world of possibilities to share our work and with that truths and possibilities Able to take risks, fail and try again. To listen to our intuition to trust. How can we continue to teach that-how we can transform our world through ourselves

## Elvia Rodriguez Ochoa

A huge part of how I move through arts education comes from having worked at Pros Arts Studio very early in my career. The core idea we worked with was that we were artists, being artists everywhere. We were artists going into schools to work with classroom teachers and art instructors. We were artists going to afterschool programs organized by other non profits in the neighborhood where we provided a different experience for the children in those programs. We were artists going to the local library where we would host culturally connected arts programming for families. We saw ourselves as a natural part of the community.

## Cynthia Weiss

So many people and places in Chicago formed me as a creative practitioner. During the formative years of childhood I lived in Mexico City and walked past Diego Rivera's murals in the course of going to school. In Chicago, in the 1970's, I fell in love with Chicago murals, (inspired by the Mexican mural movement and initiated here by William Walker and John Weber). Muralist Caryl Yasko, and artists in the Chicago Public Art Group taught me how to build and climb a scaffold, find common ground with diverse groups of people, and translate the aspirations of a community into images of large and public scale. Anne Schultz at Urban Gateways, and Arnie Aprill at Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education nurtured my teaching artist beginnings. I directed the Arts Education Mentorship Project (AIM) at Columbia College Chicago where I grew and thrived in collaboration with Project AIM artists, Cecil McDonald Jr., Leah Mayers, Jamie Thome, Avery Young, Khanisha Foster, Jenn Morea, and Amanda Lichtenstein, to name just some of these stellar lights. Alongside them, I learned that radical hospitality and love is the surest way to create meaningful curriculum for teachers and students, and an elegant creative

practice for ourselves as artist/educators. Antonia Contro hired me as director of education at Marwen; the safe creative space that Antonia, and so many others, built at Marwen has reverberated out into the cultural fabric of our city. My own children were infinitely lucky to have had Jorge Lucero as their art teacher at Northside College Prep. Jorge's radical and generous teaching practice was a truly reciprocal process between teachers and students. I have had the honor recently to create mosaic murals with Mirtes Zwierzynski, Margaret Koreman, and brilliant middle school students at Decatur Classical School. The through line in our story is that collaboration, improvisation and collective meaning-making is part of our Chicago legacy.

## Jennifer Bergmark

My identity as an artist, an educator, and community arts advocate all started at home, with a family who loved music, theater, and making things. My great-grandmother started secretly painting in her retirement and finding her painting studio felt like an invitation to a whole new world. I grew up in a small suburb, but if I crossed the street, I was in Chicago city limits. My experiences at home were not reflected in my community which seemed to focus more on sports but there was music and art in my schools and community theater experiences. I heard about the Beverly Arts Center, but I always thought it was more focused on theater. My development as an artist and art educator took me away from home, but when I eventually returned, I learned the Beverly Art Center was moving into a new building. I started teaching one art class but it eventually grew into a position that involved coordinating the visual arts programming and curating the art galleries. This was a magical space for me because I was surrounded by music, theater, and dance. It felt like an extension of my home. My co-workers felt like family. We didn't always get along, but when help was needed, we came together to solve problems and make things happen. I loved the days when we were called to help out with programs and even look back fondly on the day we watched a glass window shatter and we all helped

clean up. I often brought my son to work with me and he inspired me to create an arts-based preschool. He was also there when artists installed their work in the galleries. Watching these interactions instilled a belief that young students should have access to contemporary artists. So many of my colleagues worked for low wages, sustained on a belief that a job to share what you love with your community is worth sacrificing for. I found a network of artists that were inspiring as creative practitioners and educators. We had an outreach program that allowed me to teach in many public and private schools within Chicago and the south suburbs. Seeing the differences in schools and what young people have access to, inspired my drive for social justice and advocacy, eventually leading me to graduate school and a university position.



## Madeleine Aguilar

Firstly, my father, who has been an artist & arts educator at various colleges throughout my childhood. It's funny because I feel like as the eldest of his 4 children, I've been in his class the longest of any of his students. I joke that I've been taking his class my whole life. For him, our exchange has always been mutual. He incorporated me into his practice from a young age, which inadvertently taught me how to be a maker and to engage with my surroundings with fresh eyes and an open heart; the idea that every situation was potential for an unexpected adventure or encounter and that the creative act could commemorate and catalog those experiences. He didn't push me into any specific field or even pressure art on me, but he did give me tools that I carry with me everywhere. My spirit of collaboration, my willingness to learn new things, my appreciation for life and the joy I wake up with in the morning for all of the potential of the day ahead, I attribute to him. It feels special, now that I'm an artist & educator in my own right, that at this point we have shared students & teachers (I've taught a student that then took his class the following semester, he's taught a student that had taken a class I taught, I've taken a class with an instructor who he had learned from 20 years before, I teach him, he teaches me). This reciprocity is made possible by the fact that we both grew up and now teach in Chicago.

Secondly, I have been formed by the arts programming that Chicago has provided for me since I was a kid. Marwen, a free after school art program for students from under-resourced communities was my first understanding of art school. I went to a public school that didn't have the budget for proper art instruction; my art teacher had to travel with a cart to different classrooms because the art room was turned into another classroom as my school grew overcrowded. At Marwen, I took classes across mediums, learning skills like stop-motion animation, puppetry, 3D modeling, figure-drawing, fashion, all of which grew my ability to transform my ideas into the physical. I loved working with my hands and learned I had a knack for it. Girls Rock! Chicago, an empowerment camp for girls & gender expansive youth, had an incredible impact on me as a child into my teenage years. Through this program you would form a band with a group of kids you didn't know, learn how to play an instrument of your choice, create an original song in 5 days, and perform at a venue in Chicago. You also would participate in workshops on various topics including screenprinting, zine-making, self



defense, DIY recording, history of women in rock, etc. I learned that things could be created quickly with very little knowledge or means and that I enjoyed working collaboratively with others. After becoming a Teaching Assistant at Marwen and a Counselor at Girls Rock, I quickly realized that regardless of how inadequate I felt or how unprepared I was, I actually had much to offer by knowing how much of an impact the programs had on me. It was an incentive to provide the kind of support that I would have wanted and to truly understand that sharing a new skill or providing encouragement or visibility to a young maker could go such a long way.



## bex ya yolk

Those of us that make it far enough through systematized conceptual art school, often end up on the other side. Going right back in. To teach. I've found most of my contemporaries that teach immediately after grad school don't actually intend to pursue a career as an educator. It's understood to be a reliable means to an end. The first 'real job' an artist can get, prompting a measly nod towards financial stability (though as an adjunct this is undisputedly laughable).

I was fortunate to be enrolled in a design department as an undergraduate student that fundamentally changed how I understood arts academia and the environment in which it could earnestly foster. This is where I saw up close, a life in the arts that spoke to my aspirations and interests as well as a community that finally made sense to me.

I owe so much to those professors, mentors, and designers-in-residence, for embodying resistance, protest, rebellion, and truth within institutionalized curricula they most certainly did not have—for me. I knew then that something had clicked in and not necessarily in the same way for my peers. I knew it was rare. I knew it to be the beginning of a reality I would go on to work towards. And for nearly 10 years and counting now, I find myself an arts professor picking up where they left off.

These professors were transgressing the sterilization of ‘school’ and bureaucracy to speak to the realities of humanity. That especially as burgeoning artists—students should be encouraged to incorporate those aspects unapologetically and with certainty. There is no true separation of the personal and the classroom. The entirety of the body, mind, and spirit come to class. Whether virtually or in the physical, we collect our whole self to share and learn amongst others. With the acquisition of knowledge comes an opportunity to be better agents of inclusion, to use education to unite, communicate, and reflect the needs of others. And in order to attempt that—the personal must be addressed in these spaces to some degree. Especially in art school.



In my pedagogical practice and daily life I operate within a set of principles I've come to collect as a care ethic. Defining my teaching ethos is to also understand my quiet responsibility to others that posits itself as a commitment to uphold collective care. I see pedagogy as not merely transference of information but sharing in the intellectual and philosophical growth of others. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the humanity of students as an essential effort in providing the necessary conditions where learning can be holistic and lasting. Having spent so many of my formative years in academia, I hold an acute appreciation for the art in learning and regard myself as a life-long student, committed to the practice of continually growing in understanding, empathy, and transgressive ways of teaching.



## Olivia Gude

Having completed several sections of the ALLCITY questions, something didn't feel quite right so I have looped back to the top to add in some background on my education before arriving in Chicago in 1975. I have come to understand my early education as learning a way of thinking (and not thinking) that prepared me to absorb, value, and participate in the artistic, intellectual, spiritual, political, cultural, and community life of Chicago. I know from working with hundreds and hundreds of teachers over the years, that the hardest thing is to not believe the established narratives of how we best serve our students and communities.

My formal teacher education began at a progressive Catholic college in St. Louis, Missouri. I was not taught to write lesson plans, do assessments or handle discipline. Readings included such works as *Summerhill* by A.S. Neill and *Deschooling Society* by Ivan Illich. The model of art education that I had experienced in high school and then in college was based on the teachings of Sister Corita Kent who designed graphic posters such as *War Is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living Things* and who wrote the still much reproduced *Ten Rules for Artists* (though the work is often erroneously attributed to John Cage). As a young teacher in inner city St. Louis, I was given a copy of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by a priest who had recently returned from South America. I've read, meditated on, and taught Freire's work for almost 50 years.

My first teaching job in the Chicago area was in the south suburbs, serving Chicago Heights, Sauk Village, and Ford Heights (then the poorest suburb in the US.) All the students' families had antecedents in different "souths"—white students from Appalachia, black students from Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia...Latinx students from Texas or Mexico. This began to situate my teaching in their related political and cultural histories.

Living in Hyde Park, I was impressed with the many underpass murals. After attending a Chicago Mural Group (CMG) how-to workshop, Jon Pounds and I started a mural program at our high school. CMG morphed into Chicago Public Art Group (CPAG). From CPAG artists I learned about community-based art making and made the connection to Freirean generative themes. I met elders like William Walker, Mitchel Caton, Caryl Yasko, and Carlos Cortez. I collaboratively made many murals and mosaics with other artists and communities. I came to understand Freire's statement that "No one can say a true word alone."

Attending the big anti-nuclear artist demonstration in 1982 in NYC, I connected with PADD (Political Art Documentation Distribution) and with Lucy Lippard. Through CPAG, I met NAPNOC (Neighborhood Arts Programs National Organizing Committee) folks—artists of various disciplines who conceived of using federal CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) monies for jobs training in the arts that was rooted in progressive community politics. NAPNOC became Alliance for Cultural Democracy (ACD). I became a board member of ACD and increasingly infused my work as a high school teacher and public artist with considering the many disciplines that could contribute to progressive arts practices.

Many ACD artists and organizations were rooted in oral history practices—At the Foot of the Mountain, a feminist theater in Minneapolis; Elders Share the Arts, a theater practice based on recollections of elders in NYC; and LAPD, Los Angeles Poverty Department were particularly influential. From knowing this work, I began to develop arts education projects rooted in stories of lives of students and their communities. A well-known Spiral Workshop project, *Down through Generations*, that has been taught in



many places around the US takes its name from a line in a high school student's project, after having to be rescued from a charging pig, his uncle advised "It's been passed down through generations....don't swing on the pig pen gate."

Other important times that expanded my understanding of local and international histories—the organizing for Haymarket Centennial celebration. Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America was a national project with strong representation in Chicago.

During these years I took a leave of absence from teaching and got an MFA from the University of Chicago. These were the years of continental theory being introduced into art schools. Feminist theory and the exhibition of Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Chicago made me acutely aware of how women were often marginalized in the histories of art and art education. I read *Orientalism* by Edward Said and I understood the emergence of multi-culturalism in education as often limited to inclusion within the given canon and history without challenging the structure of those narratives.

All of the above shifted my perspective on what was necessary and foundational in art education. I began to see the traditional structuring of art education with modernist elements and principles and European academic areas such as perspectival drawing and figurative drawing as insufficient for contemporary times.

In 1995, I became a professor of Art Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I founded Spiral Workshop. Spiral was a Saturday teen program taught by UIC pre-service art teachers. Spiral curriculum was created collaboratively with the UIC students. Often generative themes identified with a group of teens in one year, were carried over for fuller investigation in future Spirals.

As the curriculum work evolved over the 18-years of Spiral, each Spiral course was designed to introduce students to a related series of practices of seeing and making while investigating a theme. Spiral themes functioned as metaphors that help us to investigate how notions of self and society are generated and organized in languages. For example, the Drawing Dirty Pictures group explored cultivating creativity through messiness, personal narratives of “getting dirty,” and how the metaphor of dirt organizes our thoughts on what is considered to be familiar and acceptable and what is considered to be taboo and/or unwanted.

Spiral curriculum and a collaborative project called Contemporary Community Curriculum (with Chicago area art teachers) supported by the Great Cities Institute of UIC was the foundation research for *Postmodern Principles in Art Education: In Search of a 21st Century Curriculum*.

## Azul and ELa LUZADALE

Our practice, as a Mother/Daughter duo, started in 2023, as we took up volunteer positions as resident artists of Curie Metro High School. Marcela, also known as ELaDeSoL (ELa for short), loved exploring her creative side since childhood which led her into focusing on her passion; through having attended the School of Painting, Sculpture, and Crafts at UJED in Mexico, and having gotten a certificate in drawing at SAIC. ELa's work focuses on healing through art, emphasizing the softness and resilience of survival. Reiki Master and DV/SA advocate certifications influence her art. Azul, Marcela's daughter, started in the art world by doodling in middle school then went onto a more professional level of art making in 2016 when first joining (the pilot year of) the Museum of Contemporary Arts' SPACE program.

As ELa had been volunteering at Curie HS since Azul was a student, the duo has grown with the SPACE program and experienced its transition into the (stand alone) ARTivism Program. Although our art career feels like it is still in its infancy, we grow alongside the teens in the ARTivism program that we guide, inspire, and make art with.



## Kristina Sutterlin

At the core, I think my answer is the prioritization of intertwining my work as an educator and as an artist as much as possible, like a symbiotic relationship, where one influences and inspires the other to keep going.

Making my “personal” art (my paintings) is an easy way to inspire the “teaching”. For a while, I was finding it difficult to feel inspired to make my art from the act of teaching, and then a realization came up that I probably understood early on in my upbringing as an art teacher in college, but never quite understood how it would actually come into fruition until I was in it:

Teaching is so very much learning, and just like a student who is learning the in’s and out’s of a medium for the first time, stumbling, etc., it is a medium I am learning how to utilize and make my impact with. That is the horizontalization in my current role as a baby art teacher, that I am experiencing the most. It is the cheesy saying, “teaching is learning”. Teaching is a whole new medium for me to learn how to “express” myself through; in my mind, that means communicating my goals for students to them, and learning how to “listen”,

Taking this a step further, I have found that I follow the creative process when writing curriculum, lesson planning, even when creating my physical classroom environment, community-building activities, etc.

Both in Art and in Teaching, there is always a gathering of inspiration/manifestations stage, then coming up with an Idea/Concept, then coming up with a plan of what it would look like and how you would accomplish it, and finally, following through, putting in the time, and completing the project. I follow this exact process for both my teaching and my art, and knowing how intertwined those two things are for me now is really inspiring.

## Debra A. Hardy

For over a decade, I have been communicating with and constantly interpreting and re-interpreting my understandings of art education histories with the spirit of Dr. Margaret Victoria Taylor Goss Burroughs (1915-2010), a person who I never met in the physical world but who has transformed my career trajectory by her continuous spirit that lives on and continues to inhabit much of Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhoods.

I first encountered Margaret as a name in George Mavigliano and Richard Lawson's (1990) *The Federal Art Project in Illinois: 1935-1943*. The six short paragraphs that described the establishment of the South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC) at 3831 S. Michigan Avenue instantly piqued my interest, and I was immediately in need of finding more information on this place. From there, I found Margaret's personal recollection of the founding of the SSCAC in John Franklin White's (1987) *Art in Action: American Art Centers and the New Deal*. In her description of the events of the founding, she lists over 100 individuals that were involved in the establishment of the Art Center. This chance encounter with a few books in the Fall of 2013 drastically changed my research trajectory and my own understanding of who I was as an art educator.

I wrote my master's thesis on the first twenty years of the SSCAC, with a particular focus on its survival after federal funding was pulled. I traveled to Chicago and began doing archival work in a haphazard way, as most masters-level graduate students are wont to do. I found and became obsessed with a gap in the archival record. I took my first Black Studies course, knowing I wouldn't be able to tell this story right without it. I was able to write through the gap and finished in the spring of 2015.

However, the spirit of Dr. Burroughs lingered with me after I finished my master's thesis. The tales and snippets I heard about her continued to unfurl and I would hear more of her. I would come across her again and again, and I felt like I wasn't finished exploring her narrative.

By the time I began my doctoral studies, it was clear I couldn't leave her story alone. I felt like her narrative as an art teacher had not been explored enough, despite her ubiquity. And so I kept digging. I wrote my doctoral dissertation about her, about her teaching, and how fugitive pedagogies helped Margaret tell Black histories until it was time for her to branch out and establish what is now the DuSable Black History Museum. I dove even deeper into Black feminist theory to understand the dissemblance that explained how Margaret would be so open and forthcoming about certain narratives but quiet and private about others. I did more archival work through a pandemic. I stood in her spaces. I crafted a story that helped explain parts I have not seen covered elsewhere. I struggled against what Margaret had left me, and what she hadn't. And I was able to finish and thank her memory for being there.

Margaret is still with me. While my work evolves beyond just her narrative, I am still working within the orbit and networks that she helped to cultivate and maintain in and around Chicago. I received a fellowship through the Black Metropolis Research Consortium to begin expanding my data and my research in 2024 which has led me to seeking out the networks and connections between Black artists throughout Chicago's history. So far, I have 70 new spirits to follow, with their own connections and stories that run through Chicago's South Side over nearly 60 years and 3 generations of artists. But so many of them are still connected to and through Dr. Burroughs.

Alongside Margaret's spirit are the caretakers who continue to uphold legacies and histories of Black arts throughout Chicago: Arcilla Stahl, Clinton Nichols, Allison Sutton, Colin Lago, JT de la Torre, Heidi Marshall, Melanie Chambliss, and the librarians at the Vivian G. Harsh Collection for the last decade.



## William Estrada

### **Community Art Organizations**

Community art organizations in Chicago have had a huge impact on my practice. Pros Arts Studio, El Centro de la Causa, the Peace Museum, Mujeres Latinas en Accion, Yollocalli Youth Museum, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, and Marwen consistently encouraged me to collaborate with students. These developing curricula were dynamic and responsive to the students I was learning with. Pros Arts was the first organization that taught me how to do this in the later 1990s through community-based art projects that invited artists, teachers, students, and community members to collaboratively develop art projects together, inviting all of us to bring in our expertise and curiosity. Jean Parisi and the Pros Arts staff would model these approaches for me and many others. They reminded us that students, teachers, and community members were the experts and invited us to collaborate with them to form the initial art projects we had in mind.

## **Artists Collectives**

Artists Collectives helped me formalize the ideas I wanted to practice as an artist but wasn't sure how they could exist in education at the time. I was introduced to Justseeds Artists Cooperative in 1999, a loose artist cooperative formed by Josh MacPhee that was initially created to distribute artwork for people's movements; it showed me that political art existed in contemporary spaces and could be used as a teaching tool. Inviting others to organize against oppressive systems, celebrate untold and erased stories, and address relevant issues. El Collectivo was a group that existed in the late 90s in Pilsen comprised of about ten young artists, Christina Obregon, Marco Camacho, and various other local Chicago artists in their late teens and early twenties, formed to curate exhibitions and programming, inviting artists to make artwork relevant to their neighborhood. This grassroots artists collective taught me much about self-organizing in my late teens.

These two educational pedagogical spaces, which I saw as completely separate at the time and didn't fully merge until many years later, formed much of what I currently do in my practice as an artist and educator. Ideas form through a collaborative lens, becoming curriculum and public programming or art projects that invite others to make art in public spaces.

## Laura Sáenz

I am a Teaching Artist almost by destiny as I am the creation of my mother—a teacher, and my father—a singer and composer. Support and guidance for my creative curiosity as a human began at birth—led by the educational practices that my mother would instill in us as part of our school education, but also as a creative being at home through cooking, gardening, making, imagining and learning. My father, by practicing his art form and earning a living with it, demonstrated art as not separated from life or a side hobby—but life itself—and life’s work. As a Mexican I also see my birth country as a physical and abstract place that has culturally informed how moving through life and making meaning is part of human and cultural expression that we practice creative living through ritual, struggle, daily living, beauty and identity. Dance and Media Arts have become my primary artistic practice and as I age I learn how to use my body in other ways as well as choreograph for other bodies. Giving birth and motherhood has been my highest creative practice as I try to understand how to nurture a whole human being physically, mentally and spiritually. Chicago, the city and its people, push me to put my gifts into practice, holding me accountable as a teaching artist to the communities we serve and our larger purpose in sustaining the arts within school structures. I feel it is in this city that I truly came to be the creative practitioner I was meant to be valued for what I know and constantly learning more and more through its brilliant artists and arts educators.



## Karyn Sandlos

I moved to Chicago (from Toronto) in 2008 to take a full time position in the Art Education Department at SAIC. I knew next to nothing about teacher licensure in the U.S. context there was a lot to learn. Also, I didn't know anyone in Chicago, so I was literally starting from scratch: making new friends, getting to know colleagues, and finding community. People often compare Toronto with Chicago, and many people asked me if this created a sense of familiarity. After all, Chicago and Toronto are both cities with culturally distinct neighborhoods, and both cities are adjacent to large bodies of water. (Lake Michigan is on the east side of Chicago, Lake Ontario is on the south side of Toronto.) For the first few years of living in Chicago, I struggled to get my bearings. My brain understood that Lake Michigan was to the east, but my heart and mind took longer to internalize a new map of the city. Fast forward to the summer of 2020. I am head of the BFA in Art Education program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I am co-planning, with Lorelei Stewart and the staff at UIC's Gallery 400, a series of online panel discussions called, "Pandemic Lessons." The world has been on lockdown for many months, and a sense of loss is palpable. The panels are an attempt to showcase how artists and art educators are creatively pivoting in response to our present conditions. Miriam Dolnick

and Casey Murtaugh, both art teachers at Nicholas Senn H.S., are giving a presentation that centers Lake Michigan. They are talking about the lake as material, as creative inspiration, as a place of solitude, as an internal map, as unpredictable and unknowable. I have known Miriam and Casey for many years; once upon a time, they were my students at SAIC. I don't think we have ever talked about Lake Michigan, but their presentation felt like connective tissue. For me, this memory captures something distinctive about art education in Chicago, a city with a rich history of artists, educators, and activists making something creative from conditions that are less than ideal, out of whatever is available. This "something" can be a work of art, a community, a change, or a new direction in life.

## Jon Pounds

Art (and all) Teachers must be open to teaching and learning in unexpected moments. After 12 years as a high school art teacher, I took a leave of absence to consider the complexities of my unfolding life. During that year I worked in the woodshop of a Danish custom furniture maker. The location/trip to work was best traveled by elevated CTA train during which I saw a mural on a building on the southside of Chicago. It was astonishing to see. On a day off, I went to the site to see Another Times Voice My Heart's Passion Remembers and found it was painted by Mitchell Caton and Calvin Jones in 1979 on the side of youth support center through Chicago Mural Group (CMG).

When I returned to teaching, Oliva Gude and I began and extended a mural program in the high school addressing significant historic ideas, personal experiences, and humorous ideas with students in the murals. We joined CMG enjoying the complexity of conversations and visual ideas and new material explorations. CMG is now Chicago Public Art Group (CPAG). Olivia Gude became an amazing muralist and mosaicist, while continuing to lead the development in the field of art education through positions at the University of Illinois Chicago and the Art Institute of Chicago. I retired from teaching art after 22 years and then served as Executive Director of CPAG for 27 years.









## Chapter 2

# ART EDUCATION FUTURES

In a speculative realm, where resources and support are—if not abundant, at least adequate—what does Chicago’s art education look like in your area, amongst your communities/groups, and within the institutions that your work touches? See if you can speak to this prompt beyond generalities.

## Karyn Sandlos

I'm fortunate to teach at a school that is dedicated to fine and performing arts, so I do have some extra support from my administration. They truly value the arts and are actively working towards integrating them into our core classrooms, as well as supporting the art experiences I provide for my students. However, in CPS, resources are often scarce. More often than not, you have to be resourceful and proactive to get what you need. This means I'm constantly writing grants, using online donation platforms like DonorsChoose, and sometimes even pleading with my administration for supplies. At times, it looks like raiding storage closets for any random items that might be useful—or, more honestly, reaching into my own pockets to make sure my students have what they need. There's a certain drive and dedication that's required to make things happen for your students, because if you don't push for it, it often doesn't get done. Supplies don't magically appear. Artwork doesn't get magically matted and hung up. And students' work doesn't get magically featured in shows. As an art teacher, I'm constantly juggling, problem-solving, and working hard behind the scenes.

Despite being at a fine and performing arts school, there are still significant gaps. We don't have a music teacher or music space, and although we have a beautifully revamped dance room, we lack the funding for a dance instructor, so the room sits unused. The students don't get to experience the benefits of a dance program. We also don't have a budget for arts field trips or immersive experiences, and there's no extra funding to replace supplies or tools when they break, get used up, or go missing. These constraints mean that as a dedicated teacher, I have to get creative and find ways to bring experiences and projects to life—often with very little.

For me, this means networking and forging relationships with local artists, organizations, and community members who are passionate about supporting young creatives. I make it a priority to attend shows, gallery openings, protests, and anything else that helps me stay connected to the real-time art world in our city. I introduce myself as both a teacher and an artist, building relationships with people who see the value in what I do and are willing to donate their time and resources to help my students thrive.

# ART EDUCATION FUTURES

This approach has led to some truly meaningful experiences. For example, I was able to organize a workshop with Nike designer James Whitner's nonprofit, The Whitaker GRP, where students participated in a sneaker design lab after an artist panel featuring local creatives from the West Side. I also worked with Joe Freshgoods' community organization, where a small group of my students took part in an afterschool workshop to design their own custom basketball hoop and backboard. Most recently, I organized a pop-up gallery show at a local coffee shop, where my 2nd-4th grade students had the chance to display their artwork in a real-world setting for the first time.

All of these opportunities happened because I actively sought them out, looked for connections, and worked to bridge the gap between community resources and student interest. It's this kind of hands-on effort that turns a lack of resources into an opportunity for creativity, connection, and transformation in the classroom.





## Alice Costas

My greatest hope for the future of art education in the city is that the city becomes desegregated and that there is an equitable redistribution of resources, but so too are relationships that speak to different experiences of the city, and the ability to build together. I feel most myself when working on large collaborative projects with students, the kind that require a lot of resources, suspensions of belief in what is possible, and contributions coming from many directions. For me, some of my most formative political experiences are actually working in school theater. It is a context in which a large amount of people agree to a great and interconnected degree of responsibility for something that is meant to bring pleasure and experience to others with truly no material reward. The gift the long hours generate is one of relationship and artistic accomplishment. Bringing something to fruition almost alchemically from nothing, and in a way that truly requires all the bodies and mind present. I think the Albany Park Theater Project is an excellent example of how art can function as catharsis, and efficacy for the stories of our communities. When I envision art education futures, I envision these kind of processes with both the resources they need, but also a lack of the barriers that separate our stories through geography, but also the structural ways in which the laws and infrastructure of the city lead to race and class based segregation.

## Judith Susan Rocha - PhD LCSW

Chicago art education for Latine elders is slowly growing but not quickly enough by any means. Currently there seems to be intentional programming available in spaces like the National Museum of Mexican Art, senior centers, and park districts. Time and time again, participants of our La BROCHA art workshops (for Latine elders age 60+, living with and without memory loss) have expressed a desire to have these art making opportunities on a more frequent basis than just monthly or quarterly. There is also a huge need to host these art making opportunities in specific neighborhoods consistently. The participants we often hear this from are those living in the neighborhoods of South Chicago, East Side, Gage Park, Chicago Lawn, McKinley Park, Brighton Park, Little Village, Pilsen, Humboldt Park, Hermosa, Logan Square, Avondale, Albany Park; and suburbs like Cicero, Berwyn, Elgin, Joliet, Aurora, Waukegan, and Niles to name a few.



## Jose Martin Bautista

El teatro en mi opinion es una herramienta para que cada uno de ellos pueda exteriorizar sus frustraciones, logros, sueños etc.... Cuando voy a crear una obra de teatro por lo regular la escribo con ellos, ejemplo: paso al Pizarro y les explico que esa sera su obra de teatro con sus ideas, y les digo ahora sobre las siguientes preguntas ustedes contestaran; yo les pregunto herase una ves un... y ustedes contestan un señor y en ese momento yo escribo sobre el Pizarro herase una ves un señor, que vivía,,, y cada respuesta sera sera aceptada por la mayoría y así consecutivamente. Una ves termina el esqueleto (nombre de las ideas que conformaran la base de la obra) de ahi en adelante a mi me toca escribir la historia con todas y cada una de sus ideas y tengo que escribir los diálogos que existirán en la trama.

## Amy Chen

I am in my first year of teaching and I am teaching at a school that has not had an art program in over five years. I see this as the start of planting my seeds in my students. I am so lucky to be able to teach the arts and connect to the students and the human side of learning rather than the systematic side. I want to see a stable future of art education within the community that I am in. I think that there is restorative progress to the arts that was lost during Covid-19. It is a slow recovery. I am worried about the future of art education. I am scared that the funding will be taken away. I have had students ask me if I will stay at the school for next year, and that hurt so much. It was a wake up call to the realities of the state of education in general. Having made genuine connections with students and for students to be drawing again after five years, it just really hurt to hear it. Yes, I will be an art teacher for as long as I can and I will work within the communities that need art the most.

# ART EDUCATION FUTURES

## Kevin Dill

The future of art education in the Albany Park neighborhood looks as if it is for the neighborhood with the community in mind. It sparks conversations with families, it is interactive, it brings people together, and creates a feeling of love. Through the institution level, we are building and expanding our relationships with each other and bringing those into the classroom. We learn through the community, interconnected as one and learning about artists that are actively working in our city and even in our neighborhoods. In a vision where art education is viewed as a priority and nurtured with love for generations to come. I believe that learning cannot be separated from the places and the people that we each learn in relationship with: your friends, your family, spaces of learning, your communities and groups, the school system and institutions that surround you.

## Ari Rendon

My art classes have been thankfully supplied well, allowing students to create without bounds. Encouraging the use of new materials can help strengthen the creative mind.

## **Georgia Kruse**

To speak on a relatively small scale, the art community and support within the community at my high school is intensely active. Both the visual and musical art programs here cater to students' interests and support growth in their artistic passions, which is very important seeing as my school is known more for its academics than its arts. I believe that fostering a safe creative community is essential, especially in spaces where getting an art education may be difficult.

## **Isabella Kelly**

Ideally, everyone would have equal access to the same resources and support that help fuel their artistic minds and develop their creative ideas. A variety of different media and messages would be presented across communities.

## **Rachel Yanoff**

Teaching Art in the Future: accessible, spirited, lively, creative, kind, reflective, self-generative.

# ART EDUCATION FUTURES

## Amanda Firestone

At my school, there are extensive visual art class choices. From ceramics to drawing/painting to fiber arts, there are so many outlets for creativity in a safe environment. I found my passion in Textile/Fiber arts class in junior year, and since then it has been one of my, if not my favorite classes I have taken in high school. I even took it a second year in a row because I wanted an excuse to keep creating. In this class, I have received immense support from my teacher and gained so much determination to keep expressing myself through this class.

## Adelheid Mers

If an institution resembles a game, a course within an educational institution is a small organization, a nested game governed by its syllabus, by which the class plays. This syllabus has—at least in part—emerged from the way an instructor prefers to play. Other small organizations in art schools are galleries, putting up new sub-games with each exhibition, perhaps following the play of each curator. By that logic, each artwork is a small organization, a game that emerges from how an artist plays. What I would like to speculate into existence is an environment that centers play. No, this is not about creativity and innovation, but about what it may take to contribute to living in peace.

## **Eliza Duenow**

I'd like to see the next era of shifts and developments come from within the institutions educating the next generation of our Artist Educators. Our higher education classrooms should be nurturing the next level creative thinkers and practitioners who hope to enter into our communities with an ambitious attunement to hold strong the Arts as a means to build and transform communities. Their training should inspire and embolden these young educators and leaders to imagine new landscapes and new sources of support.



## Keith Brown

I live on the far Northwest Side of Chicago out towards O'Hare airport and just past Jefferson Park. My CTA stop is the Harlem Blue Line, and my Metra stations are Edison Park and Norwood Park. The area I live in is called Norwood Park and everything about being here represents compromises that me and my partner made 10 years ago when we left East Lakeview. In 2016, I was able to get my first full-time art education position at a private high school in Wilmette.

Art education is not valued, thought about, or funded in the community in which I live. Out here the Catholic schools have art one day a week and it's treated like a "special". Taft High School is the CPS public school near me, and I assume they have more art offerings than the Catholic schools. Everyone seems to value art for their kids, but it's not treated like a real school subject or something that is long-term. I can't think of anyone I have met out here that wants their child to grow up to be an artist or pursue art in high school. No one I have talked with is looking at education from an arts perspective. There is no art center in this neighborhood. There are no art galleries in this neighborhood. There may be a few things at the Rodan Public Library and maybe a few things at the Chicago Park District, but they are not highly promoted around the community.

Art education is funded where I work. I feel very secure in my position there. All students must take one music, theater, or visual arts course to graduate. Visual art education is supported where I work, but I think our country and society thus our schools don't understand art or the courses. Even in a high school where the arts are funded and feel mostly supported, you can still detect a sense that everyone thinks our classes are easy and lacking rigor. My students think my class is easy because I don't give homework, tests, quizzes, and final exams. My students think my class is a break from school stress because all they have to do is come in and work on their art for an hour. Art education doesn't really fit into compulsory schooling. I would argue that it doesn't even belong in school and should never have letter grades attached to it, but I feel without being in schools our US art situation would be even worse. We would produce much fewer artists and have more art educators living in greater precarity.

## Miriam Dolnick

It is intergenerational and grounded in the larger web of that which came before and what exists now, and what will exist after us. It is monumental and permanent. It is treasured by all, especially by those in charge, and people want it to exist and to grow and is valued without having to explain what IT is. It draws people to it like a bug to a light. It is findable and you can enter with minimal hoops, no hoops. It is easy to get to. If you know it's for you, it is for you. If you don't know it's for you, you can hear the beck and call. It teaches you that you are part of something larger than you and larger than it. It helps you to understand what you want for yourself and your future. It's a place that you want to be in and never miss a moment.

## Jean Parisi

The future must acknowledge that artists are an integral and valuable part of the community. Artists will be supported in their work – integrating their work not only in the studio but sharing/showing it within schools, parks, community centers.

## Albert Stabler

All I've got is generalities. But I would love to see substantially more exchange between community members of all ages in Chicago neighborhoods and the art schools that power the city's DIY and independent cultural venues. Chicago city school and culture workers, working with colleagues in museums and higher education institutions, can intentionally plan shorter- and longer-term projects that draw visitors from wealthier parts of the city to experience art, performance, and discourse in settings and contexts that don't valorize the fetishistic drive of gentrification, but which instead highlight real problems and possibilities while insisting upon investments in community autonom



## Melanie Miller-Silver

I believe Chicago's art education varies widely depending on the neighborhood and the school level. From what I have seen, many grade and high schools in less-advantaged neighborhoods in Chicago tend to offer fewer opportunities for art education. In general, Chicago public schools have diminished their art class offerings over the years, mostly due to financial constraints placed upon them by a lack of teachers and materials for the students to create artwork. This tends to be the opposite in private and religious schools, where more access to art is available, and students take field trips to the Art Institute of Chicago. This is unfortunate because studies have shown in education, art classes, if offered, are readily accepted by students who need a creative outlet to express themselves in safe ways with peers and supportive adults. Art offers a well-rounded education along with the standard academics. There are so many different types of creative classes, including cooking and the usual painting and drawing classes. I teach classes in beadwork and various paper crafts, and I find children and adults who haven't had the same exposure through a school environment take to these classes with excitement and love to make things to beautify their surroundings.

## Amy Chen

My dream is that art is valued as a conduit of expression in which learners are encouraged to use images, sound, and movement as their language, in the same way that words and problem solving are the realm of communication in traditional educational settings. There is a vibrancy and agency of student voice evident in student artwork in and around the building and student curated exhibitions.

I see the students as a catalyst for their own learning and creativity. Students determine the curriculum through their curiosity, posing questions, projects and excursions. An annual participatory budget process includes students, parents and teachers in prioritizing transportation, opportunities, high quality materials, staff and a slop sink in the visual arts space.

Chicago's cultural institutions and neighborhoods are creative treasures. I envision every school with a cultural partner that facilitates monthly ventures to mine resources. These institutions would have spaces that welcome students not as casual annual field trip "guests", but rather as partners. Their work, their culture and their voices would shape the exhibitions and programs.

## Keith Brown

My future would have spaces where artists, teachers, and students are trusted. Micro-management from administration does not exist. Judgemental and alienating structures do not exist. Capitalism and colonialism do not govern our agency. Rather, trust and equality creates spaces where dynamic and boundless pursuits are catalyzed by inquiry, need, exploration, and experiential methods. Art education is not just something for the “talented” or “creative types”. Educators are not treated as though they must constantly prove their worth to administrators. Administrators are not at the top of a hierarchical ladder, gate-keeping who is allowed to climb. Rather, they are the people who generously provide the resources and structures needed for students and teachers to flourish. They would trust us and make sure that instead of a narrow ladder, there is a nurturing ecosystem of empowerment.

Navigating the current institution of education is limiting and exhausting. All of that time and energy spent clinging to the ladder will instead go into interdependent community dynamics. Art making, creative thinking, critical thinking, and artistic dialogue happens everywhere in the community. Everyone has access. Everyone



has agency. Barriers caused by economics, disability, parenting, crisis, responsibility, prejudice, data-crunching, etc. simply do not exist. We will have an interdependent community that cares for and lifts each other. We work together to make sure that nothing can stop any person from feeling empowered by their own creativity and voice. Community engaged art is the norm. Art actions are in all of the classrooms, community centers, our homes, our streets, conversations and our everyday lives.



## Meg Katherine Johnson

Chicago's art education, within the institutions my work has touched... oh, how I wish I could say I had the chance to do more. Oh, how I wish my school had taught me more than the sterile confines of theory—how I wish they had shown me how to embrace my humanity and passion in the classroom. Instead, the education of a BFAAE major feels like it's built on the brittle bones of Socratic seminars and lectures delivered by people who have rarely, if ever, set foot in public schools. I feel as if my generation has received the AI generated version of what it means to become an art educator, sterile, generic, aphonic in a time when they need it most. This is what I would change.

I say this as someone who just crossed the finish line—a graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education from a major institution in Chicago. My heart still aches for what was missing. What I wish I had? Mentors with their boots on the ground, actively doing the work: restorative, messy, human work. While I had some that fit into this category, they sadly, were far and few between. I longed for field days spent exploring after-school programs like Merwin, places like The WasteShed, or arts programs for those most often forgotten—people with disabilities, the homeless, the incarcerated. The ones who leave public schools battered by a system that never served them, but lacking the art of making which has the deep potential to help heal them.

What I crave most is something you can't bottle, something you can't learn from aimless lectures at 4 p.m. after a full day of teaching. I crave passion—a resource so precious and fleeting, yet so desperately needed. I crave it like oxygen, like fire, like something that refuses to be contained.

I crave professors and educators who believe in lifting up the children of inner-city schools, who speak kindly and highly of these developing students in one of the most creative cities in the world. Educators who understand the immense potential within these students, but also recognize the stark limitations they face. Depending on what area of Chicago you teach in (I've worked in both Bucktown and the Southwest Side), some students rarely have access to even the simplest drawing materials outside of school. How are we supposed to be the best we can be when our most passionate group—the new educators—are forced to supplement pointless college theory with meaningful, cultural, and restorative work? In a city overflowing with creative energy, how can we let these children go unnoticed, unsupported? I want mentors who see this disparity and burn with the same urgency I do to make it right. I crave the energy, fire, and passion of Chicago creatives. We owe it to the future of Chicago.

## Malachi Eschmann

To me, Chicago art education feels like a small white building on a quiet street I rarely visit, even though it's just around the corner from my home in Hyde Park. The building seems empty now, holding only the echoes of the summer of 2017. The first room is a reception area, where kids once said goodbye to their parents before heading upstairs for a day of creative discovery. The space is pristine and polished, yet a streak of paint trails down the stairwell—a glimpse of the magic unfolding above.

Climbing the stairs, the first impression is one of dull grey—until you notice that everything, from the tables and chairs to the walls themselves, has been transformed. Paint covers every surface, and the room is alive with artwork on display. Among them, a younger version of me once proudly hung a piece of “abstract art”: Where I swished a paintbrush against a canvas until I was satisfied.



## Niki Nolin

As an artist/teacher. Light, Motion, Collaboration and Poetry, Looking for the moments in between what is seen and said and what is made. Interpretation. Hope. Coming to terms, Navigating this world in a way that moves us all forward. How art education, learning to live the arts as an interpretation of our world makes us richer, deeper, better. Better stewards better friends better artists

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Finding place in the wide world of possibilities to share our work and with that truths and possibilities. Able to take risks fail and try again. To listen to our intuition to trust. How can we continue to teach that- how are transforms our world through ourselves.

I worry about my world now. More meetings, more rules, more forms and conformity. Teaching to make money, learning to make money and not to really learn, to be inspired by the past to make the future. Steps, mis-steps, trials. All accountable, quantifiable according to a rubric not shared. But somehow assumed. That we are all on board all team players. Exhausting. Exhausted. Both teachers and students. And a failure to address the huge spiritual, emotional and psychological trauma. And exhaustion.

How can we mend the institution? Return to the idea of the academy. Of loving to learn, of adding it all together. Hope. I still have hope.

## Elvia Rodriguez Ochoa

When we don't have to worry about funding, we can focus on joy, empathy and wonder. When we unhook from notions of productivity and switch to embracing creativity we bring ourselves back to being fully human. This idea that only things that make money are worth pursuing is what is driving us to extinction while highlighting some of the worst traits in humankind.



## Chang-Ching Su

In a world filled with colors and textures, students use their hands to explore and understand the world around them. Through the sensual act of touch, they grasp and create, feeling the textures of chalk on pavement and the smooth surface of capri sun. Their hands bring them closer to the immediate, tangible world, allowing them to engage deeply with their surroundings.

In the technological realm, these same hands guide them through the internet. Tablets and laptops become extensions of their curiosity, enabling them to navigate new landscapes of knowledge. From using their fingers to touch the tablet, they have progressed to using fine motor skills to play chess with their friends on laptops. Some have even started asking me to record them in vertical composition, just like they see on TikTok and YouTube. Each of my visits turns into their small studio for K-pop dance. Song after song, these platforms have become part of their school activities.



## Cynthia Weiss

In the future and present moment, the most abundant art education future will be built on a radical hospitality. Sites of learning, in schools and communities, will be generous spaces of welcome, acceptance, inspiration, and care. There will be an abundance of permission and opportunity to safely share and receive each other's work in community. The social/emotional resources between people will be the catalyst to create generous spaces. School principals and teachers, school boards and elected representatives will understand that creative practice in its most expansive expressions are central to healthy learning environments. And with the commitment to arts practice, teachers and leaders, students and artists will build spaces with lots of natural light, flexible work tables, minimal and/or maximal art supplies for students to learn printmaking, painting, ceramics, photography, digital design, interdisciplinary and performance practices. Schools will recognize that building community and safe space is the first prerequisite to abundance



## Jennifer Bergmark

I referred to my experiences at the art center as magical for me because it felt like an extension of my home. There were also many moments that were challenging because of people, funding, and conflict. The best thing about Chicago is the communities that create networks of support and understanding. The Beverly Art Center, other community art centers, and community arts programs have the potential to be hubs of support and creativity that provide spaces and experiences that allow for learning that leads to understanding and appreciating differences. I was contacted by someone who wanted to show Dereck Webster's work at the art center because he was from the southside. His work was up at DePaul and I went to see his show and we began to plan the exhibition at the Beverly Art Center. He was considered an outsider artist and he created work in a tiny room in his basement. His house was covered with his work, inside and out. We went to his house to pick up his work. He showed us his house and demonstrated how he made his work. We wanted to create an exhibition that reflected his environment, so it was in our gallery space that also had tables and seating. We had the work layered with wall pieces and sculptural pieces closely together in tight groupings. It looked amazing and so many people were able to sit among and experience his work, learning that he was from the neighborhood. A collector came in and asked to speak with me, accusing me of showing fakes, and not being a space of high enough caliber to show his

work. I said, “He is from this area and I went to his house to pick up his work. I think it belongs here.” At its worst, art becomes this contested space where value is assigned and access is limited through various barriers, both real and imagined. Community arts organizations and programming can open up access, create spaces where different worlds come together, and create opportunities to learn through art. Art creates opportunities to unpack, navigate, and understand experiences different than our own, including race, class, gender, and more. Community arts organizations can be safe places where students of all ages can find support, art, people, and experiences that reflect who they are, reflect their community, and provide safe places to express themselves freely. Community arts centers can provide support to arts education in public schools and create networks so students can have full access to quality arts programs that help them navigate their worlds and imagine their futures. Community arts centers can provide teachers with support to develop new skills, show their own work, show student work, and be alongside others who share their passions to dream together. Community arts centers can reflect a vibrant creative community back to the residents, politicians, and stakeholders to recognize the importance of the arts and to continue to inspire, teach, and support these experiences.

# ART EDUCATION FUTURES

## bex ya yolk

The arts community in which I've carefully chosen and cultivated throughout my time in Chicago is centered around continuing education post-access to institutionally monetized reserves. This looks like sharing ideas and personal anecdotes, spending time with one another's research and artists' practices, and asking questions of one another's experience and histories. This manifests in atypical, non-traditional, often experimental, and fluidly structured ways. I also think just our presence within these institutional settings signify rebellion, representation, and resistance in tandem with what and how we choose to teach.



## Olivia Gude

In the article: “Postmodern Principles: In Search of a 21st Century Art Education,” I identified contemporary principles on which making in art education might be based, such as appropriation, recontextualization, hybridity, gazing, and representing. The article ends with stating that these postmodern principles for art education are not timeless and static. It is my hope that teachers will be inspired by new developments in art and culture to identify new ways for students and teachers to make meaningful art relevant to their contemporary times.

Another article *Principles of Possibility* begins with a quote from Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*, “...to hold out even in times of deep pessimism for the possibility of surprise.” Sadly, this quote is even more relevant in the current climate. The article attempts to articulate significant areas for meaningful art education, such as forming self, investigating community themes, encountering difference, attentive living, deconstructing culture, reconstructing social spaces, and not knowing.

As various performative and social practice art evolves, I also see contemporary art education not just incorporating contemporary art, but that activities and methods arising in contemporary art education practices will influence and expand how art and culture are made and understood in other realms.

## Azul and ELa LUZADALE

When it comes to working in a school, the arts would be treated as important and impressive as any other area of expertise/department. We in CPS Arts programs would not feel forced to get crafty when we re-encounter our lack of resources, but would have the freedom to focus that creativity on pure expression. Art programs, from classes to clubs and workshops, would be highly accessible, accommodating programs, and lovingly, well advertised. This would lead to more students being able to freely express themselves and find themselves in the right programs for them. Everyone would enjoy and appreciate the arts from all perspectives.

## Jessica Mueller

Art education would be elevated to its rightful place in Chicago schools, in society as a whole, as a core subject matter, and unequivocally priceless. District officials, school principals, and even academic teachers would already see its value, our value, and we would start the work from that baseline.

## **William Estrada**

Art education should exist, be accessible, and be promoted as an invaluable resource for various groups of people of all ages in historically marginalized neighborhoods. I see art education existing and having plentiful funding in public schools, libraries, parks, art organizations, civic organizations, and community organizations, and by supporting artists living in these neighborhoods so there can be a variety of visual arts, dance, music, craft, textiles, ceramics, photography, literacy, sewing, and many other art education and art activities available for the public to participate in and weave into their daily experiences within their neighborhoods. These free art education experiences, funded by the city, the state, and the federal government, can happen in public spaces, cultural institutions, businesses, people's homes, and in the streets of neighborhoods so people can access them, know they exist, and can be invited to participate and shape what and where these art education experiences



## Kristina Sutterlin

As I tell my students often, dream the dream! That is how cool things actually happen and get done. We start with a “what if” mindset, and then find work-around ways to make it happen. Worst-case scenario, we get halfway there, “land among the stars”, and the result is usually better than not having dreamt the dream at all. This goes for interpreting project prompts, “day-dreaming” in a more literal sense, as well as thinking and “dreaming” about what their lives could look like and what type of impact they want to make. I do this, because as for many, the life we currently live does not always resemble what we want it to look like right now and in the future, there is work to be done, and we can approach that work in a creative and exciting way.

So, briefly, I’m going to allow myself to dream....

The thing that first comes to mind is unlimited space to really do whatever we want/need to do. Separate “studio” spaces for each medium, realm, etc. Ideally, over time, the spaces become the “selling point” for taking that class, and exploring that realm of art.

Actually, going off of that, ideally, I would have my advanced-course-level high school students all have studio spaces. I have found that so much inspiration comes from having a space to house my art and art making. It becomes this “dimension” that I enter into.

Natural, impromptu critique-like conversations amongst students, which may be ambitious with high school, but I think if I modeled that nature to them, explicitly stated that I want them to do it, and we made it a thing within my visual art department, we could get to that dream. For us as the Chicago-land art teachers, a collective focus on these ideas and how we can expand them to our respective schools would be essential. “Special topics” workshops/talks offered, almost like it would exist at the college level.

In terms of more big ideas that I think we should consider: Training on Lesson Planning being thought of as a Creative Pursuit that leads to more personalized-to-your-student learning and outcomes. Following the artistic process (and lets define it for ourselves, because it will look different for everyone) while we lesson plan/curriculum build. Follow traditional concept-building as we would for a body of artwork for a show for example, and apply that mental and brainstorming process to creating lessons that respond to the students at our specific schools’ needs.

## Debra A. Hardy

There has been a renewed interest in the histories of Black art education in Chicago. The South Side Community Art Center's staff, in 2014 just a skeleton crew, now has plans to expand and preserve even more. The DuSable's involvement with large-scale art fairs in the area feels like a good sign for the health of the organization that has faltered since Burroughs' departure in the early 1990s.

My hope is that these legacies can be merged with new and exciting existing artistic practices. The Art Center, for example, has not had classes in many years and now primarily functions as a historic site and as a gallery. I would love to see with their expansion a commitment back to teaching art classes and working on cultivating a new generation of Black artists. While the community in Douglas/Bronzeville has shifted dramatically, it would be great to see a legacy institution be able to continue supporting Black youth.

## Laura Sáenz

There is art in every school and in all forms (dance, music, visual, writing, media and performing arts) but not necessarily functioning as separate classes/electives or programs, but fully integrated into the way students learn everything and feeding their creative spirits continuously. The day is begun by attending to the body-dancing and moving and maybe a reflection on the day ahead with poetry or writing. Academic areas are infused by looking at them through a creative lens and through the communities we live and engage in, speaking also to our local environments and realities. Schools are not necessarily buildings, but rather the city is our campus and we move physically and intellectually through our communities, learning from elders, workspaces and experiences. There are many pauses and spaces to reflect and rest throughout our day where students can learn a musical instrument, play together, create a play, paint or draw. Students who want to further deepen their practice or pursue a career path in a specific Art form are supported and further trained in accessible arts practice schools or training spaces. The term Arts Education is perhaps non-existence as it is no longer separate from, but rather integrated into all education. Those who choose to become “artists” are revered as much as doctors, lawyers, tech CEOs, scientists and we turn to them for guidance to also heal our hearts, dance, sing and move through grief.

## S Valle

Chicago's art education would look expansive, it would lead to beautiful breakthroughs. Communities connect and often gather when resources are not even adequate so by making things work with what little there can be at times would be less art could be less timid. Communities still find each other, and still thrive regardless. Art is everywhere and will forever thrive and inspire when we water it. However with more resources, more support, that is where we can find passion, creativity in abundance. Those places exist if you know how to find them so I think by allowing children in this realm we can make art more accessible. Where people can say "woah that artist looks like me!" "I want to make art too!"

## Jon Pounds

In a speculative realm, where resources and support are—if not abundant, at least adequate—what does Chicago’s art education look like in your area, amongst your communities/groups, and within the institutions that your work touches? See if you can speak to this prompt beyond generalities.

Ideally, art education involves multiple tools and materials that the students can bring into use as they explore presented questions and unexpected questions raised in their own minds at other times. Art teaching organizations and artist/community centered organizations encourage multi-generational conversation about what might/must be expressed. In Chicago, which has a sadly significant history of segregated housing, the art teacher and the community artist can lead dialogues, create images about the complexity of race, history and the desired evolution to a better balanced future.

## Karyn Sandlos

Over the past 15 years or so, I have worked in an art education department in a private art school with abundant resources, and I have worked in an art education program in a public university where resources are scarce. In both contexts, justifying the value of art education is an ongoing struggle. In education today, we are asked to identify learning outcomes, codify our labor, and prove that we are doing what we say we are doing. Those of us who work in art education and teacher preparation know that this work matters a great deal, in ways that are not necessarily tangible or obvious on the surface. How do we codify that moment when a young person realizes their experience is important, and that they have something to contribute to the conversation? How do we capture the transformation(s) that occur for young people (personally, professionally) as they move through the process of becoming an artist and educator? My work in the BFA in Art Education program at UIC brings me into contact with young artists who want to become educators. Their aspiration is to return to the public schools and neighborhoods they grew up in as mentors and community leaders. There are many obstacles to navigate. I think, for example, of a former student and artist who came up through Chicago's graffiti communities. He completed student teaching in a CPS high school and applied for an art teaching position at the same school. The school was looking to hire a drawing teacher, and based on the traditional standards of art education in general—and drawing in particular—this student thought there was

something missing from his practice. Following a series of classroom observations and a rigorous interview process, he got the position. When I think about art education futures, I think about this student; specifically, how he learned to connect his formative art education experience with his approach to teaching high school drawing. In doing so, this student was able to acknowledge the history of art education as pliable—he made something new out of traditional approaches that have excluded many. This is not something that can be taught directly. Now, when I visit this high school to observe other up and coming student teachers, I see this former student in the midst of a busy classroom, working with students who are developing a sense of themselves as artists, his clothing covered in paint and charcoal.









## Chapter 3

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

Although it is never the same for any two people, how did you deal with the perennial identity crisis that many art educators experience, where they're constantly negotiating between how they think they should be as artists and how they think they should be as teachers? If you find the wording or inferences of this prompt problematic or flawed, please feel free to address that in your writing (of course you are invited to do that to any of the prompts in this activity).

## Hailey Rodden

My identity as both an artist and a teacher is deeply intertwined. I'm proud of both of these parts of who I am, as they shape the majority of my identity. I want my students to see me not just as their teacher, but as a human being—someone who is learning, growing, and navigating life alongside them. I know this might be a bit of a hot take, as many believe teachers should maintain a certain emotional distance to be a consistent pillar of support and stability—and that's true, we do play that role. But for me, I think it's equally important to show my students how I work through problems and frustrations in real time.

I'm open about struggling with ADHD and anxiety, and many of my students resonate with that. A lot of them face similar challenges, so sharing this part of myself helps open up another layer of understanding and connection. It's been a gateway to building deeper, more trusting relationships with my students, which I believe is essential to fostering a classroom environment where they feel seen, heard, and supported.

In addition to this emotional transparency, I bring my multidisciplinary approach and my many passions into the classroom. I believe in exploring different mediums and encouraging my students to embrace a variety of interests. One of my personal passions is gardening and growing things, which some might not initially consider

an art form. But I incorporate this love into my teaching in ways that feel natural and meaningful. We create planters, plant seeds, and study the way artists use flowers in their work. Gardening becomes not only a hands-on activity, but also a way to connect creativity with nature, observation, and patience.

When I'm involved in creative projects outside of school, I always share those experiences with my students. Last October, I had the opportunity to design for the Garfield Park Conservatory's annual Fleurotica, a flower fashion show. I missed a day of school to attend, and I made a presentation to explain why. I took them behind the scenes, sharing the process of designing the pieces, and later showed them photos of the final outcome. For me, it's essential that my students see me as both their teacher and as a practicing artist, living out the values I encourage them to embrace.

I hope by sharing these parts of myself, I show my students that it's possible to pursue all the things you love when you put in the work. Whether it's through art, gardening, or simply being honest about your struggles, I want them to see strength, variety, and the beauty of being a whole person who is constantly learning and evolving.

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Jose Martin Bautista

Considero que el reto al cual nos enfrentamos los artistas y maestros es que los artistas tenemos una forma muy libre y personal de pensar y crear y los maestros estamos mas restringidos por las reglas a seguir aunque claro es que tenemos la libertad de enseñar pero sin salirnos del tiempo requerido.

## Kevin Dill

Navigating the role of artist and teacher can feel like a never ending tightrope. Through conversation I'd like to marry the two and see them combined in an interdisciplinary form. Being a teacher IS an art form. Through compiling curriculum, material, building relationships, both in and outside institutions it can feel heavy to want to make your own art.. We as teachers should see ourselves as artists, the work that we do is an art form on its own.

## Amy Chen

I have always struggled seeing myself as an artist, and I still do not see myself as an artist. It is a tough relationship, my students tell me, “You’re the best artist in the world!”, I know its really sweet and loving that they say this to me, but something about me wants them to say, “You’re doing great as an art teacher”. I have not drawn for myself in a long time and I do not know how to find the balance for it either. I am constantly drawing for my students, from helping them or sketching their portraits when I have down time. I wonder if I can consider that drawing for myself. I think I would be much happier in my career if my students can be proud of their own rather than them praising my technique. It is a push and pull relationship of bettering my skills for my students rather than myself.

## Isabella Kelly

Art teachers should help students embrace creative ideas and themes, and do their best not to limit the artistic and innovative processes and outcomes of a student’s work.



# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Melita Morales

This prompt has me thinking about a question I often ask my students: How are you finding your artist self now. Over the almost 30 years I have had in this field my artist self has changed shape and sounded differently in the many contexts I find myself. For a long time I fluctuated between full time, classroom visual arts teaching, and part time art education work so that I could focus more intently on my painting and drawing practice. It seems an every shifting balance, muscular work of trying to not topple into one or the other. Yet over time my response to the question of where I am finding my artist self has shifted. I consider how we are shaped by the different conditions we find ourselves in, the way space and place nurture and pluck forward strings that make certain resonances possible. As I grew to understand the impact of our social and cultural worlds on who we are and are becoming, the separation between artist and teacher became increasingly porous and less anxiety ridden, more fluid. Like water and the vessel which holds it.

This brings me to a project I have been working on for some time around the sounding of water. I continue to meditate on range of ways I have come to hear and recognize water, how in my years on this planet, I have become attuned to the many shapes it takes in response to space, place and material, always recognizing it as an old friend.

multiple simultaneous  
waterfalls uneven and echoing  
on cold carved stairs





an explosive boom of ocean  
waves against the stone  
edging of the shoreline



the ceaseless harmony  
in the persistent move-  
ment of a winter brook



a wetted, sliding-off the  
smooth walls of an old  
mine and pooling in  
the reclaimed ground



a silence, tranquil  
almost no sound



a tapping and light  
touch of rain on a lake

This is how I am approaching my artist-teacher identities; I am learning to listen and lean into the opportunities to create as always present in some form, to notice the different soundings of encountering contexts which hold different possibilities for working with my hands, for taking time to play with language and image, to join in the trickle and flow of my students desires for spaces of beauty and imagining. Bringing the artist-teacher into all its fullness happens in oceanic booms, in moving currents carrying ideas from the past along to the present, in that slipped pitter patter of a soft rain.

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Rebecca Fox

When I was able to “quit my day job” as a teaching artist, I found I missed it. Auditioning full-time—which for me at the time meant roles as someone’s girlfriend or a person who really loved toothpaste—was much less fulfilling than teaching, so I quit being an actor and became a teacher! I made sure to integrate arts into my classroom practice, and my experiences in Chicago led me to seek out partnerships with artists and arts organizations.

I’ve since become a Speech Language Pathologist but find myself missing my creative life, so I intend to return to creative work soon. It’s a constant push-pull, I guess!

## Adelheid Mers

If how an artist plays culminates in a work of art as a small organization, a body of work becomes an institution, an oeuvre that may be appreciated and analyzed. The outcomes of analyses and classifications are published and taught in schools. But how does an artist know how to play? The question if art can be taught is a red herring, a nonsensical question posed by those who seem to think of it through mythologies of genius. On the other hand, there seems to be agreement that unlike artisans, who share technical skills, and designers, who answer to clients, artists choose to work in self-determined and idiosyncratic ways that are rooted in the specific circumstances of their lives. That observation indicates that the element that matters is choice as guided by the contingency of circumstance. While instances of choice and contingency patterns can be analyzed in retrospect when viewing an oeuvre, maybe along with surviving documentation, what an artist needs to make the work in the first place is a rule of thumb, a heuristic by which to proceed. As an artist and as a teacher, I focus on ways of evolving heuristics for artistic play.

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Eliza Duenow

I long resisted owning the identity of Artist. I worked in photography and did photography since I was a child. I always wrote. I always danced. I wasn't a compulsive maker but I was always playing with making.

I've long played with Art and children, but long had an aversion to the word educator.. In my preprofessional years I just did the kind of creative play with children that then took me twenty plus years to come back around to, after much too much effort to try to do and be a certain something for who knows who for some reason or another. In my first decade in the arts arena in Chicago I mostly played in the Arts admin level, although I had my hands all up inside curricula, and loved inventing and initiating new programs and trainings and ways to work with Teaching Artists.

It wasn't until I was full time back on the ground with kids back from 2011 and larger scale 2016 that I had to give pause to Wander Wonder into my own creative voice and ways as a tool or invitation for how I was encouraging others to see. The irony of how many years it took to pare back down to just more being, to just offer up a playing with materials and ideas instead of feeling I had to Teach something... This brought the soul fully into the work.

It welcomed the connection with the children and any teacher joining in. It assured the flow, the spark, the magic. It just left the challenge to explain the why and how to the adults on the periphery. The challenge pushed me to birth a contemplative play-based pedagogy that I call “Creative Consciousing.” I resolved my frustration about not really wanting to teach art but to play in that magic place that art takes us, by pursuing exactly that with children. On good days I feel I’ve turned my “teaching” into the actual play of art itself. On harder days the Art is still centered in the Being and seeing in new ways...

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Keith Brown

I am always first a working class straight cis white male from the South who grew up Catholic and is married with a daughter. Artist, art educator, skateboarder, hip-hop head, punk are all privileged identities and styles and sub-cultures that I determined that I belonged to a long time ago. That said, artist/teacher—I struggle with this identity off and on. There were entire years when I never thought this was a thing. I would sit through Illinois Art Education Association and National Art Education Association conference sessions about this very topic and think jeez these folks need to get a grip and just be whoever they want to be. Be an artist first and teacher second, be a teacher first and an artist second, or be both simultaneously and just deal with it. Stop trying to box yourself in. As time goes on, I feel a lot more sympathy for the art educator / artist identity paradigm. It raises another issue for me too. What about the art / life paradigm? It's really hard to live the art life I want. I find it very hard to balance being an artist, father, husband, homeowner, art educator, and now that I am back in grad school, a student. It's really hard to nurture all of these things. I also think what if I was of different sexuality or gender or race how complex would the intersectionality of all of these identities be? I'm just a regular old working class cis het white guy and I feel the strain and stress of various identities and responsibilities.

What makes my artist and art educator identity crisis hard is that I no longer make art in the traditional sense. I stopped making what we would consider art in my twenties. If we know art to be the visual communication of one's thoughts and feelings, then I no longer do that. I still communicate, but I do not make pictures or art images to fulfill that. I started reading and writing more after undergrad and that started fulfilling what art did for me all those

years. I still draw and I don't think I will ever stop drawing, but I don't do it to communicate. I may not draw for months, but I always pick it back up. I've been drawing since age four. I was a drawing and graphic design major in college. I teach drawing and graphic design as an art educator. I make so many drawings with my students, but it's for the purposes of teaching. I love it! I just have no desire to make a drawing that means something and then gets exhibited for the purposes of communication. I draw for me and that's how it has always been. I only exhibited once in college because we had to. So sometimes I have to ask myself am I a visual artist or am I an artist in the sense that writers are artists? I still think like an artist. I don't think that I think like a writer. I'm horrible at grammar, spelling, and punctuation. I mess up my tenses all of the time and I just write the way thoughts develop in my head. If I am writing something to be published for a journal or magazine, I edit it for weeks because I'm not that great of a structural writer. This also brings up another point. For many years I thought of my art as being art education. I still toy with this conceptual framework. My art practice is my art education practice. Showing other people how to make art is my art. This is definitely more conceptual and more of a contemporary mode of art theory. We live in a time where community gardens are art projects, seed banking, paper making, research, quilting, food politics, and teaching can be an artistic practice if artists say it is. The issue with this idea that my teaching is my art is that most folks outside of the art world think you are making that up. I think it's true. I think that being an art teacher has a lot of cross-over with art making. I see myself making art with my students all of the time. We make art together in our classroom community and we talk about it. We talk about the ideas and the best ways for them to visually communicate their thoughts and feelings. Some artists feel that their studio practice is the art. That thinking is certainly present in viewing an art classroom as an art studio. It's a space of collaboration, connection, culture, communication, and careful production.



## Miriam Dolnick

For me, it's always been easier to not be lonely about it, to think through with others who are torn in the exact same way. I have been lucky to have had Casey Murtaugh as a teacher and artist partner to work through and grapple with this question. The negotiation ebbs and flows and I get so much pleasure from watching and learning from others also negotiating it. Lately, I have wondered about and lusted after what privacy might look like in my practice. What new things might be possible? What could it look like to be an artist in secret? What could it look like to be a teacher in secret? As someone routinely energized by community, I've begun to notice a part of myself that is interested in an inward process and have been wondering what that looks like in my current life as a teacher whose practice is rooted in coming together, learning together, being together, and what it looks like in my future? Is there space for my inward process in my connected one? Is an inward process in this moment in history counter to what is needed? Is this still the right practice for me in the way I'm negotiating it now? How could it change to accommodate different desires? Is it even possible to separate myself from either identity? Could I do it if I tried? What would I lose and what would I regret? What would I gain from keeping something for myself?

## **Jean Parisi**

No crisis for me – I have always identified as an artist. From the early days (1977 onward) of Pros Arts Studio there were no ‘teaching artists’ – this title didn’t exist. We were artists there to interact with the students and partner with teachers and staff. When working in schools, parks, or community centers, I always presented myself as an artist, there to share my skills and creativity. I always approach the classroom with the same creative process as in the studio.

## **Adriana Baltazar**

Approach is everything. Before I had a handle on how to teach or facilitate lessons, there were two identities. When I approached lessons with the play and investigation that drives my creative practice it transformed from a job I had to do to an opportunity for a shared experience and discovery

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Albert Stabler

I had the extraordinary good fortune to come to Chicago in the 1990s, when community-based projects were blossoming as an art form. Before this I had never seen a connection between making art and performing gestures of solidarity and service, and now I will never see them as separable, as challenging as it often is to square the politics of nonprofits and cultural institutions with grassroots activists promoting forms of mutual aid. I don't think of myself as having any remotely stable identity outside of the roles I occupy for other people, but the possibilities offered by the worlds of Chicago art and education allowed me to be a teacher, critic, curator, and artist without even a trace of cognitive dissonance. This was a profound gift.

## Melanie Miller-Silver

I don't feel an identity crisis because my practice involves teaching much of the time, which I enjoy. My specialty involves an atypical medium, beadwork, with which I received my MFA from Columbia College Chicago. I am the first and so far only artist to have gotten my MFA using this medium. I like the history of beadwork and use it as a tool to teach students that it is a medium practiced by people all over the world. I like to show that we, as human beings, are more alike than different. We use the same motifs and colors to create ideas in our ways, but they are the same ideas.

## Susan Friel

Much in the same way that I'm bi-lingual and live in a bi-cultural family, I embrace my dual roles as an artist and teacher as two sides of the same coin. These are facets of my being that I bring to every situation. I am frustrated by the ebbs and flows in my creative studio practice as the teacher side pays the bills. When I view my role as a pollinator—harvesting questions, ideas, and inspirations and sharing them with others or to bring into my own work—the line between teacher and artist blurs.

This notion was the basis for a program that I created at A.R.T., entitled Building Arts Capacity. Teachers were constantly saying “I’m not an artist.” And artists were saying “I’m not a teacher.” Teachers and artists were invited to work together as co-mentors in a 12 week program. They leaned into their strengths and differences providing feedback from their unique perspectives. Artists learned a bit more about writing curriculum that was more targeted to their students. Teachers learned how to embrace creative chaos. Walking in each other’s shoes engendered a bit more respect and empathy and allowed them to embrace their role as Teaching Artist.

## Valerie Xanos

In the early stages of my teaching career, I fell into the trap of feeling like I had to choose between my artist practice and teaching practice. Parenting and caring for family added to this burden and made it hard for me to prioritize my own art practice. Living with chronic illness has added to those obstacles. I often chose others' needs over my own. My own art practice, while maintained, did not flourish enough.

Frankly, those obstacles still exist. As there is only so much time and energy in a given day. However, about 12 years ago, I worked hard to change how I defined my artist/teacher selves. When I made the choice to reframe my perspective and melt my teaching and artist practices together, something beautiful occurred. I found that each was a facet of the other. They are really one practice. Each facet informs the other and is so intertwined that I cannot separate them. Now that I approach my teaching and art making through this lens, I find that I am always acting as an artist regardless if it is in the classroom or my studio. What I do with my students has profound effects on my personal artwork and vice versa. There is a constant exchange and conversation taking place between the two spheres. Furthermore, there are spaces where those spheres do not exist at all and I/We create within a wonderfully amorphous area. My students and I are collaborative artists, a collective. The rest of the world is not always supportive of this mindset and I

must constantly battle with the restrictive labels of being viewed as “teacher,” “mother,” “woman,” “worker,” and “disabled” before I am viewed as an artist. Those labels lessen my value and agency as an artist in this world. This means that my creative pursuits develop much slower than I need. Opportunities are sometimes not available to me or my students as we have been put into certain boxes by these labels. I am just a teacher and they are just students, for example. But knowing the truth and empowering myself and my students with a redefined and expansive identity frees us from the labels and gives what is needed to create and collaborate in the ways I believe work best.

My greatest struggle now is finding the energy and time for those art projects that do not involve my students. These are deeply personal and I value a private creative experience in their making. I have to be honest in admitting that after a long day of teaching and caring for family, my energy is limited. Therefore, my space and time for these personal works are limited. It is difficult to acknowledge that the private part of my studio practice is painfully slow and sometimes still neglected in favor of the collaborative work that I do. Despite this, I work to accept the pace as it is, and I have several projects in progress that are desperately and beautifully important to me.

## Margaret Koreman

Teaching is in itself an art. Creating work, engaging with new ideas, encouraging expression, exchanging dialogue over meaning, promoting other voices and questioning purpose are all hallmarks of a dynamic and successful art room. When I asked my students if I should make art alone in a studio or create art with them in the classroom, they all shouted out “here, with us!” Their response validates my belief that the best art requires camaraderie, interaction and feedback. Building a studio in the classroom helps everyone look at the world from multiple perspectives. Having recently retired, I appreciate even more the art I was making with students. When we listened to each other, our mutual support changed the community we experienced. We learned to bring others into our imagined visual play space through exhibitions and performances. How is the practice of teaching different from being an artist? When we share our creative practice, we become more grateful, more empathic, more open to perspective and people. And one day, when we meet our former students on their own journeys to teaching and making, we will realize that educators are always artists first.





## Meg Katherine Johnson

I fear not being professional enough. I fear falling short of parents' expectations for the kind of teacher their child should have. After all, I am young, covered in tattoos and piercings, and would teach art activism content all day if the curriculum allowed it. I fear that I pour too much of myself into my teaching and not enough into my personal body of work. And yet, I refuse to carve myself into tiny little pieces—one for school, one for the studio, one for home.

All of my experiences have brought me here, to this exact point in my life. Every moment, every choice, every struggle has led me to center my existence around art and education. My art and my teaching are not separate. They are two outlets, two voices, for the same activist heart. One finds me managing the chaotic energy of 6th-8th graders; the other asks me to manage my own.

On my wrist is the handwriting of my old art teacher. It simply says Art, but it holds so much more. It's short for a Rupi Kaur poem that carried me through my baby artist days:

“your art  
is not about how many people  
like your work  
your art  
is about  
if your heart likes your work  
if your soul likes your work  
it’s about how honest  
you are with yourself  
and you  
must never  
trade honesty  
for relatability.”

That reminder is etched into my skin and my soul. To segment myself—to fracture my identity for the sake of a job or for the sake of other people’s expectations—would leave my craft and my well-being in ruins. My students wouldn’t have Ms. Meg, and I wouldn’t have Meg Johnson without that.

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Niki Nolin

In the best scenario I hope that my work as an artist and teaching art becomes fully integrated. That the topics are ideas that fascinate us all that the process flows smoothly, (rare always but often sometimes fabulous - repetition helps us all), and that as the students find their way through the work that I may also learn from their work that it becomes a conversation. Sometimes a direction. Always, their curiosity, trials and results help me. Their research and the forks they follow are so fascinating and illuminating. Broadening my ideas about the art and the art of teaching.

I think you have to tell students who you are as an artist. And who you are as a teacher. First day. And show them, run an assignment that exemplifies your practice. Then, as they leave. Tell them. I am not everyone's cup of tea. If you need more structure I can suggest other artist/ teachers. I expect that all students are there because they want to be. That they have ideas. And, that communication is the key.

Number one: I always have to be passionate about the ideas and process. It shows. I have to open up- share- and then bring it back to my studio and ponder.



## Elvia Rodriguez Ochoa

I am very fortunate that the places I worked with never had me feeling this way when I'm involved in arts education. I tend to present myself as an artist even when I am in roles where people think the arts don't come into play like when I was working in the environmental field. Quite honestly, I don't care what other people think of me or what their expectations are. The work I do in schools is created in partnership with classroom teachers so that my presence enhances the experiences of their students.

## Chang-Ching Su

Starting with the question about the skin-tone crayons, I embarked on a journey in 2022 to explore Haines Elementary School in Chinatown as part of my effort to reconstitute and embrace my new identity in Chicago. I sought to understand the contexts in which these crayons were used, reflecting on the significance of cultural representation in everyday objects.

For two years, I engaged with and followed the same group of bilingual learners. We attended classes together, shared desserts and snacks, and built a strong rapport. Now, as they are about to become third graders, I've witnessed their remarkable growth. They have become more fluent and comfortable in their new language, sharing their feelings on gaming tips, and whispering English voiceovers while we watched Chinese cartoons together. Their journey mirrors my own as I navigate the challenges of a new environment and cultural integration.

These conversations and questions lingered in my mind until I encountered objects caught between the lockers. The unique array of colors and lengths of straps seeping out as I roamed the hallway in the students' absence. Some stood tall and unwavering, while others cascaded like newly grown vines draping awkwardly. Inspired by these discoveries, I harvested these straps and empowered them with mobility. By transforming these temporary hallway scenes into 3D objects, I connected the concept of private space from the students' lockers to personal belongings. These small straps, now part of their daily accessories, would follow their owners anywhere, carrying their striving vitality.



## Jennifer Bergmark

I fell in love with art at a young age and I was inspired to go to college to become a painter and an art teacher after hearing my high school art teacher talk about how she became a teacher. I wanted to be a teacher because I loved art. My artist identity came first, I wanted to paint. I even dropped out of art education and finished my BFA in painting. I struggled to maintain my painting practice outside of school, but I continued to engage with art in museums and galleries, still making work from time to time. I eventually returned to art education, again painting and studying art education during my masters degree. I think I loved teaching in an art center because it allowed me to move from teaching, to looking, to making within the same space. My creative practice expanded within that space because there were no hard lines that had to be crossed. I could be teaching and walk down the hall to help with an art installation and then have a conversation with an artist about their creative practice which would then inspire my own. I was able to bring my son to work with me, so I was often a mother, a teacher, an artist, and a curator within the same space and time. I began to see developing programming and curriculum as creative practices. I was working within a creative community that included administration, designers, dancers, musicians, and thespians that loved their work and wanted to connect to the community. This broader identity has continued to develop in my teaching and research at the university and I embrace blurred lines and uncertainty about my artist identity. I move through this world as an artist and an educator, always curious, and always wanting more.

## Cynthia Weiss

I have always loved the overlapping identities of artist and teacher. These identities have not been in conflict for me, but rather, each identity has illuminated the other. The tools of my educational practice: developing essential questions and big ideas, using text as inspiration, and creating representations across mediums, have been the same tools that have inspired and guided my studio practice. My work as program director and teaching artist at Marwen, Columbia College Chicago and CAPE, HABLA, have given me the opportunity to work in new contexts with remarkable teachers and artists. The biggest conflicts have been less about competing identities, and more about competing issues of time and mental space. I have felt the tension between the need to earn a living as a program director and administration, and the desire to create artwork with open-ended time and space. In my heart of hearts I am always both. Artist and educator, intertwined, co-defined, using the form to teach the form. Being formed for being both.



## Madeleine Aguilar

I think as a teacher, I worry too much about trying to give someone the fullest understanding of the thing as I can and forget how much is actually learned through the act of making and failing. I feel inadequate when I'm not fully able to provide the clearest instruction or a concise response to a question. As a maker, I like to put myself in situations of unknowing, I love to be an amateur because I think that's when the best things happen. But it's almost like I don't have enough trust in students that they will be able to handle the unknowing. But, I'm constantly proven wrong by the work that they create as a result of unknowing. It tests the boundaries of what's possible because they don't know fully what's possible yet. I hope to become more comfortable in my own inadequacies in order to accept that what I can't teach or describe fully, they can discover on their own. My identity as a maker I think makes me that much more excited about the things that are created after a simple demo or a poorly worded lecture.

## bex ya yolk

This is kind of a revolving door for me, in that it never stays fully closed. Being raised in a binaried system where everything is over-simplified into a choice between ‘the one’ or ‘the other’—and how this is still largely enforced—unproductively affects the way we think, the way we communicate. The mythos would purport that people are not multiplicitous, that rigid categorization is beneficial for clarity’s sake and the individual. However, I understand my pedagogical practice to be interconnected to my artist practice. They feed each other. I know they are both better off because the other exists. And because I know maintaining fluidity around separate vocations is difficult, I emphatically address this to my students. I offer celebration as an alternative to frustration when it comes to negotiating our complexities. This same idea comes across when students are debating the difference between art and design. Does this question actually still matter? Or are we wasting time with an inquiry that’s already been answered, perpetuates binaried dictates, and is really taking away time from far more pressing—and frankly more interesting—questions.

# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Olivia Gude

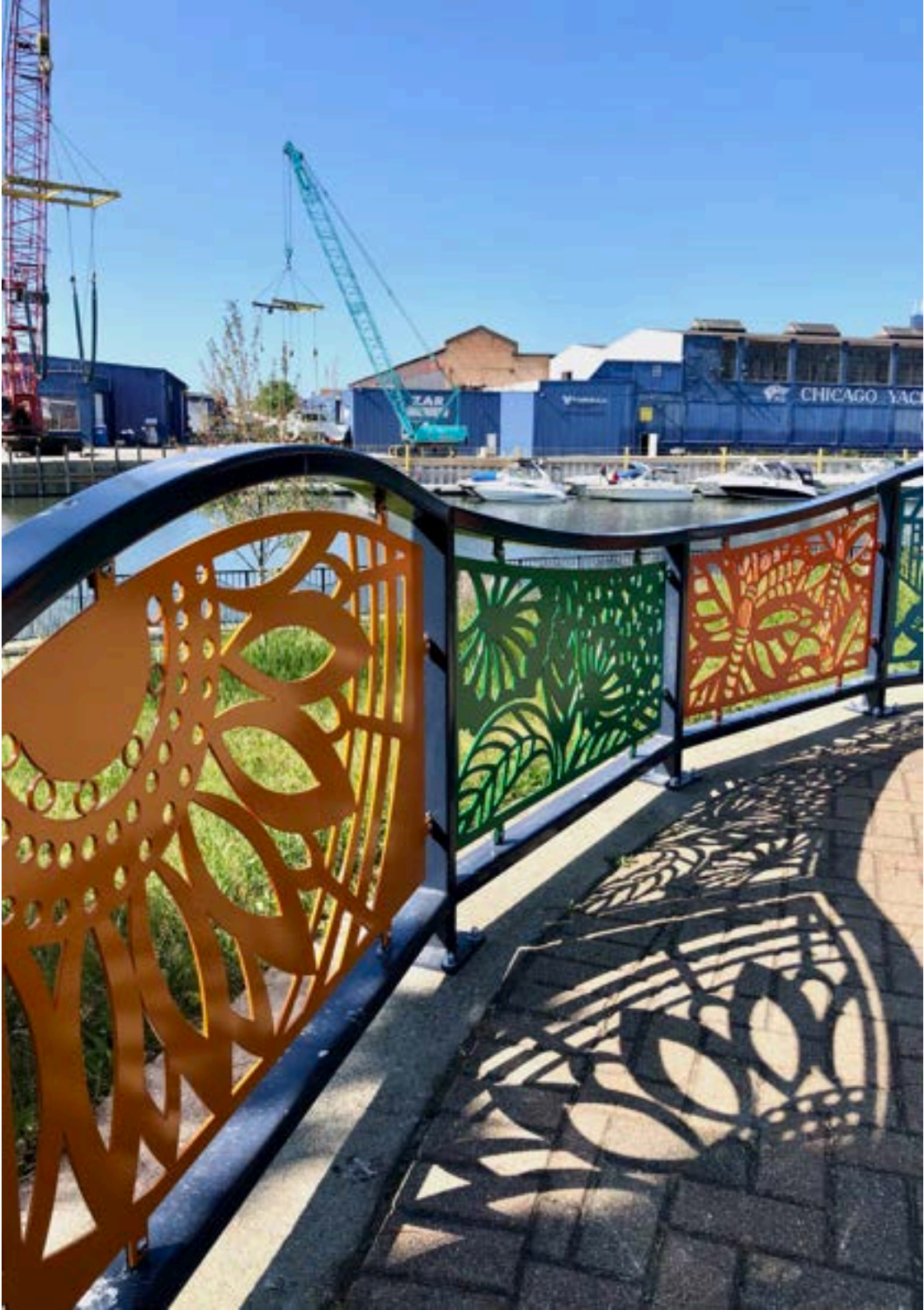
Though I understand the significance of this question for many artists and teachers, this was not a central question or conflict for me over the years. Perhaps this is because as I developed and deepened my practices as artist and teacher in the 70s and 80s, I viewed myself as a “cultural worker,” investigating and shaping the aesthetics and politics of people and communities. I wanted to be vitally engaged in the work of shaping the world, rather than recognized as a member of an artistic elite.

## Azul and ELa LUZADALE

For us, as teaching artists, we think that teaching is not separate from being an artist, but rather being an artist and lived/shared experience feeds how we teach. We are also constantly navigating guiding and working alongside our students, rather than directing them and taking on more than we should.

## Kristina Sutterlin

It is so overwhelming, I simply must choose not to think about it.



## Alice Costas

I think I feel both a lot of anger about this, but also pride in the work I'm able to create with students. I took a class with William Estrada two summers ago making prints, and it was like coming up from the bottom of a swimming pool gasping for air after years of being underwater... or also, the reverse. All of the things I thought I had worked through about art school that I try to remedy for my students in how I conduct my teaching practice—the perfectionism, the trying to predict areas of conflict or deficit and compensate for them in my work, the tying of my finished objects to my self worth—came flowing up to the surface again. Oof - it turns out you cannot “fix” this for other people, nor can you offset your own necessary internal work this way. But, the other thing that came back was the part of me that feels most myself and at peace in flow state when I am making work I feel connected to. And then, also, came a lot of grief for how little time that version of myself has been afforded (this is partially on me, but also partially on a system that demands massive class sizes, volumes of paperwork, etc.), and wonderings about what she could have done with ample dedicated studio time that so many of my peers from art school bravely pursued knowing they wouldn't have the structural and financial safety nets my job as a unionized teacher

affords me. I think this is predominantly a problem with the structures of capitalism - art is inherently valuable to everyone's experience of the world (every TV show you've ever watched, every book you've ever read, every room you've ever been in, I could go on...) but you really do have to fight to make it in a sustainable way. This puts not just teachers, but all people who are driven by their creative capacity in a really tenuous position – what will you sacrifice to do what you love? What will you convert into capital and what will be for an audience guided by your heart? For me, I haven't been able to meld my work as a teacher into a conceptual art practice fluidly in a way that I find easy to document, and I don't know if I need to. I love to show and talk about my student's work mostly because I have a rare glimpse into the art of the process. I love to make art and write about teaching from a place of reflection—but again, it always comes back to the time.

## Debra A. Hardy

I have yet to get over my own identity crisis when it comes to telling and re-telling the stories of individuals whose histories are not my own. I am an interloper in this story; an excavator of history that does not belong to me. I am not from Chicago; I have just learned from Chicago.

A friend asked how we as historians can avoid becoming kudzu, the invasive plant that chokes out native plants. Some days I'm not sure it's possible.

What has helped me has been my sustained investment in these narratives—or, one might say, my dwelling in these historical locations. I am not here to pluck and run away, excavating for my own academic interest and no one else's. I am here to continuously cultivate and understand. I bring visitors into these spaces and I want them to find their own narratives within. I do not think I am the be-all or end-all of these stories, and instead, I hope to position myself as one jumping off point for others.

I do not want to become too comfortable in my own position, as I worry that being comfortable will lead to poor results. Rather, I want to feel the ability to accurately tell one side of these narratives, while validating those with more embodied knowledge to come forward and disrupt my own narratives.

## William Estrada

My identity as an educator and artist was fraught for many years. I had been told early on in my undergraduate experience by many of my peers and some art professors that artmaking shouldn't be political; otherwise, galleries, curators, and collectors wouldn't be interested in purchasing or supporting my work. My artwork wasn't deemed Mexican enough, and I was consistently told I focused too much on Black Aesthetics. These consistent critiques by peers and professors were discouraging, and as someone still learning to construct my artistic identity, I didn't see a place in art for the work I wanted to generate. I didn't produce much artwork for many years. Education is a place that I felt more comfortable in, and it allowed me to explore the intricacy and intersectionality of the ideas and experiences I wanted to deconstruct through artmaking. Art education is where I concentrated all my energy for over a decade. All the art I wanted to create was transformed into curricula that I collaborated on with students of various ages through puppets, murals, prints, street theater, drawings, painting, graphics, etc. It wasn't until I went back to grad school in 2013 that I began to merge my arts and teaching practice to be more intentional in how it existed and what it looks like now.



# ARTIST TEACHER IDENTITY

## Laura Sáenz

I went into arts education by accident, not necessarily being a trained teacher nor a teaching artist (a term that was not used at the time). I was a trained dancer and wanted to share my skills with children as I had done in other settings like a ballet school and a summer camp. I was under the impression that my work was going to be on a volunteer basis as I wasn't used to being paid to do something "artistic" or "just play and dance" with kids. Through an acquaintance who let me know that a school was looking for someone with experience in Theater and Dance, I showed up to the front steps of a Chicago public school and then was interviewed for an actual job as an artist in residence. Since then I grew into my teaching and my arts practice which became one and the same. I often struggled with doubt or impostor syndrome as to how I was to grow in my arts practice especially as an aging dancer whose professional career mostly ends in their 30's. I did continue to train and learn more and more about the body and blend my dance training with theater improvisation and video production. Looking back I can clearly see how my teaching was my arts practice all along, although I wish there had been training or guidance to get me there earlier to confidently move forward without so much self-doubt. Perhaps the journey of arts education is more in the doing than in the knowing. Even now as a seasoned teaching artist I go back and forth between thinking I have to be organized, structured, stern and serious as teacher (to allude that I know what I'm doing and am in control), versus free, laid-back and flowing as an artist (who delves into the unknown and lets go of control). I have learned that both ways of being meld into each other in the classroom and more so in classrooms trapped within systems that we are constantly trying to dismantle and change.

## Jon Pounds

Perhaps we should alternate use of the term artist/teacher with the term teacher/artist. We are each and both at the same time.

## S Valle

This delicate balance is a tightrope for me. I feel as an educator I am still very much connected to my artists identity and that is helpful. However it is a balance of how does this connection impact my work as a teacher- this tightrope became more apparent teaching high school. How do we teach students to think like artists? It gets even more complicated when you work with students who do not feel very inspired to be in the class to begin with. I hope I am answering this question to the fullest, I think I am grappling with the duality of being an artist and also being an educator and how the two collide at times.

## Karyn Sandlos

I don't identify as an artist, but I am committed to the idea that pedagogy is its own form of artistry. For me, artful teaching is dynamic and relational; it extends beyond traditional, linear approaches to information provision. Pedagogy becomes artful when it invites us to grapple with the complexities of encountering others. Art gives us models for this, because it asks us to think and feel without telling us what to think and feel. Rather than approaching art from a position of knowing, we have to work towards knowing by way of questions, emergent thoughts, and uncertainty. It's not an easy space to inhabit - we tend to be much more comfortable when we stay close to what we know. Artists have a unique ability to immerse themselves in a process, without knowing the outcome in advance. As an educator, this is a touchstone for me.

## Jessica Mueller

This is a question I answer as an artist, educator, and mother.... These identities and spaces: mental, physical, and 3rd, are all interconnected, even transdisciplinary. The boundaries between are porous and fluid. For me, the key has been to stop fighting to keep things separate and embrace the relationship between studio, classroom, and home.

## Jon Pounds

Perhaps we should alternate use of the term artist/teacher with the term teacher/artist. We are each and both at the same time.





Chapter 4

# FLOWERS

Give someone from your past their due flowers. This is a chance for you to gush, testify, memorialize, cast a spotlight, or show your appreciation. If you could, try to keep this tied to Chicago, even if just tangentially. This/these person or people do not need to be folks you personally know, but also, they do not need to be people anyone but you knows. Feel free to praise your elementary school art teacher that **ONLY** you might have memories of! **SPECIAL INSTRUCTION:** Keep this response short, maybe no more than one paragraph. Still, do whatever you have to do to keep your writing tenderhearted and specific in this instance.



## Alice Costas

I love My Brilliant Friend Miriam Dolnick to the moon and back. Miriam is a brilliant pedagogue and thinker of relationship and the creative process. I am made so much better by sharing a profession and community and lake with her. Miriam's eye to the world is finely tuned and full of grit and delicacy hand in hand. She is one of my great partners in thinking through how to be a teacher and citizen in the broadest senses of the words.

My ceramics teacher Paul at Hull House's Jane Addams Center opened doors to me in the clay workshop in the basement where children's visions and non-objective creative paths were honored and celebrated. He surely was one of the warmest, patient and accepting iterations of being an adult with children that is possible. Mostly what I remember making were small hand-built animals and pinch pots. The glaze he used was primarily a brown stain that emphasized the depth of our clay objects. I remember staring over the edge of the kiln at our raw pieces in wonder, even though I didn't understand a word of what he was explaining to me about how it worked.

## Judith Susan Rocha - PhD LCSW

My first teacher, my mother, was the one who brought the beauty of art making to my existence as I saw her enter spaces like the community space on Cermak avenue, east of California in the mid 80s, to do bearded baskets and various arts and crafts. She managed to work more than one job all the time but still made time to attend these art workshops every so often, probably to keep her sanity. When I traveled to her hometown in Durango as a child, I was able to appreciate two huge mosaic pieces of hers that she did by breaking up soda bottles of different colors into jagged glass pieces. No one in the family knows where she was inspired to do these in young adulthood, in this rural town of Galeana. They are spectacular and a perfect reflection of how she operated with no actual models but always capable of bringing forth beauty for others to enjoy!

## Hailey Rodden

A lot of people have supported me along my journey as an artist, but if I had to dedicate my passion for creativity to one person, it would be my Grandma Donna. From as far back as I can remember, she was my biggest fan. She would sit for hours in a lawn chair on hot summer days, watching me put on impromptu shows for her with my siblings. She'd bring me lemonade while I spent hours drawing with chalk on the sidewalk, never once caring if I got dirty or made a mess. Instead, she would encourage me to keep going, to try new things, and to embrace the joy of creating. She was the one who pushed me to continue with music—she's the reason I stayed in band as the lone oboe player from 4th grade through my senior year of high school. She always believed in my talents, even when I doubted myself. When I decided to study at the Art Institute of Chicago, she opened her home to me, letting me live with her in her cozy Forest Park house to save money. She didn't mind my crazy outfits, hair color changes, or the melodrama that came with being a young artist finding my way.

As a primary school teacher herself, Grandma was thrilled when she found out I was going to become an art educator. She was my rock during my first year of teaching, always there to lend a listening ear and offer

sound advice—usually over a warm bowl of pork chops and mashed potatoes or spaghetti and sausage. Her love, wisdom, and support helped me through many challenges and continue to guide me in my work today.

One of the greatest gifts she gave me was a love for flowers. She taught me the names of plants from an early age, and I can't remember a time when I wasn't fascinated by the beauty of nature. Her influence is still with me, and I carry her lessons into my classroom, nurturing that same sense of wonder and appreciation for the world around us.

I truly don't think I would be the ambitious, passionate person I am today without all of her love and unwavering support. She will always be my greatest inspiration, and the foundation of my creative journey.

## Kevin Dill

Specifically to Chicago, my flowers are tied to all the ephemeral sculptures that are placed on our streets. These are my earliest forms of memorializing art education. In forms of institutions, a handful of teachers from my UIC BFAAE experience Lastly, I would also like to throw some flowers towards the Back of the Yards and Albany Park community. Each and everyone person that I grew up with and worked with alongside with in these communities have molded roots into what defines art education in my life and classroom.

## Isabella Kelly

The art teachers I've had during my time at CPS schools have all helped me to become not only a better artist but a better person. They have fueled my creativity and ambitions all while guiding me towards an artistic outcome I am happy with.



## Therese Quinn

The photograph I just submitted was taken by either Cherie Gordon or Matty One Person, the two directors of Le Theatre Lesbien. Both of these powerhouse lesbians, artists, teachers and activists led me into drama as direct action, and for that art and queer education I am grateful. While the touring theater group and parade were located in California, the spirit of art used for the purposes of rebellion is strong in Chicago—just look at the in-the-streets flash and disruptions of Act Up Chicago and Queer to the Left, two groups I also participated in, legions of queers and anarchists, and every union walking a picket line. This is a union town and a city that is beautiful in all its quests for justice.

## Melita Morales

He told us stories of being an art student, and the ways he found to survive. His moustache twitched, the peripheral edges bouncing when he talked, an energy his whole body carried as a demonstration of living into something exciting. My first Latine professor/educator, he embodied a spirit of *buen vivir* in meals at his family's home, in stories, and in the inseparability of who he was and the materials and methods he engaged with. He brought us into the world and the world into the classroom, inviting upside down looking, for example, by holding class in a café to witness people being and living, or an improvisational puppet show with characters like the worm in a tequila bottle. His laughter checked our cynicism, melting resistance and critique into creation-shaping. Now, I invite Sam Hernandez, after his long life in California, to journey with me in Chicago. He is present in the laughter I share with my students, the vulnerability and humanness to be real with them, and the room I make for my students to hold a vibrating gentleness in how they see themselves and their own students' being and living.

## Jose Martin Bautista

La persona la cual influyo en mi aquí en Chicago en la enseñanza en la Señora y Artista Jean Parisi cofundadora del grupo de artes Pros Arts el cual fue fundado desde en año 1977 en Pilsen Illinois. La forma firme pero calida de enseñar me dio una clara vision de la enseñasa la cual hasta el día de hoy sigo aplicando con mis alumnos. Recuerdo en una ocasión en al cual reprende a un estudiante por cometer un error ella después de la clase me aclaro que no debemos de olvidar que son niños y debemos explicar el porque de los errores y no humillarlos en publico. En mi defensa dire que esa nunca fue mi forma de actuar aunque si lo llegue a hacer.

## Amy Chen

William Estrada. Karyn Sandlos. Sabrina Raaf. Robert Anderson. There have been so many times where I wanted to walk out of student teaching and return to my old educational setting, but these are the people that kept me going. Pushing me to be a better art educator, a better human. I would not be who I am without these people in my life. I think around them I learned how to grow as an educator and allow myself to be vulnerable in the field of education.



## Kevin Dill

I would like to shout out to my elementary school art teacher. Even with limited funds for the arts, she made sure we had a fulfilling experience in her class. For example, we got to experience block printing and carving and engaged in countless clay-building projects. Sometimes she had to pay out of her own pocket. She always encouraged her students' love for the arts, and it was a class many of us looked forward to every week.

## Adelheid Mers

I've long liked the metaphor of an electric circuit. Flowers go to the source of voltage and the resistors.

## Eliza Duenow

Ah. Too many inspiring gifted ones in my path. Family, staff, friends and little ones. All the Meaning Making makers out there deserve praise. They hold the light and spark the magic. And to all the generous, kind, curious, cool peoples who have come to work and play with me, I am forever grateful. It's hard to believe without connecting with others~



## Keith Brown

I love our field, and I would not be the art educator I am today without: Carmela Rago, John Ploof, Andres Hernandez, Nick Hostert, Craig Harshaw, Tania Brown-Merriman, Adelheid Mers, Jim Duignan, Mel Potter, Lavie Raven, and most importantly Jerry Hausman. Jerome Hausman was an artist, art educator, and writer who was born in Brooklyn, grew up in the Bronx, and spent his retired life in Evanston. He had a BA from Cornell University (1946) and an MA / PhD from New York University (1953). Between his graduate programs, Hausman studied at the Pratt Institute and the Art Students League of New York in 1947. In his incredible career he served as Director of the School of Art at Ohio State University (1953-1968); Associate Professor, New York University (1968-1975) with Chuck Close and Robert Kaupelus; President of Minneapolis College of Art and Design (1975-1982); Vice President of Massachusetts College of Art and Design (1982-1983). In the mid-1980s to the 2000s he was visiting professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Northern Illinois University, and University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Jerry continued to review books, write papers, present at conferences, receive awards, and research the field of art education up until the pandemic of 2020. He passed away on October

28, 2021. My relationship was very personal. I could write a book on our friendship and what he meant to me. I could tell you how much he loved talking about his life in art and art education, but I just need you to see his accomplishments. I need you to know who he was. I've never met anyone like him. He was smart, funny, and deeply caring. He had an insatiable appetite for life, and he loved living his life through art. He read about it, wrote about it, looked at it, taught it, and talked about with people all of the time.



## Amanda Firestone

I would like to shout out to my elementary school art teacher. Even with limited funds for the arts, she made sure we had a fulfilling experience in her class. For example, we got to experience block printing and carving and engaged in countless clay-building projects. Sometimes she had to pay out of her own pocket. She always encouraged her students' love for the arts, and it was a class many of us looked forward to every week.



## Miriam Dolnick

To Miriam Socoloff and Mirtes Zwierzynski, my teachers who taught me to be a teacher. Who are the living proof that a lifetime of being an art teacher to teenagers is the most joyful life on the planet even though the institutions will inevitably make you cry. It's worth it. It's addicting. And you taught me that it is the secret to a long, happy, and joy centered existence.

The DECADES of connection that you have made with students are treasured and your openness and insistence in sharing it with me has been an ineffable gift. You have both built your lives around the most generous way of being and it has shifted the lives of so many different people. You are both connectors, advocates, visionaries, and the tenders of sacred spaces and it is because of you that I have known and know that there is a future for me in the tender, vibrant, and puzzle-like space of the classroom.

## Jean Parisi

I owe the deepest gratitude to Ruth Bauman. I should also thank Lionel Bottari artist, clown, worker extraordinaire (and my husband) who introduced me to Ruth back in 1976 when I moved to Pilsen. Ruth was an artist – a painter and printmaker. She lived on the same block in Pilsen as St. Procopius Church and came up with the idea of doing an arts residency at the school. She initiated the arts program at Latino Youth Alternative High School creating a studio space for classes in the old Benedictine Press building on Allport St. She brought together a diverse group of artists, and eventually we formed the non-profit Pros Arts Studio. She didn't give up when we were dismissed for being 'just community' artists. Ruth was so very passionate about the power of the arts. We produced all kinds of multi-media inter-generational performances and exhibitions – there was no limit. She joined us on school stages, doing a live painting of the performance. She painted murals on 16th street, I performed on top of them, and Salima Rivera and Los Otros Poetry Collective read poetry in the street. She was a founding member of the NAB Gallery, one of Chicago's alternative Galleries in the 70's and 80's. She shared her studio and her large printing press to many artists including her good friend and fellow worker Carlos Cortez. She was fearless, having survived



the holocaust; an inspiration for me to be who I am – an artist, and that as an artist I should be proud of that role in the community. After Ruth moved on I have been fortunate to have spent many years in partnership with others including Elvia Rodriguez, Diana Solis, Douglas Grew, Rosalie Mancera, Kaja Overstreet, Lionel Bottari, Susana Aguilar, Martin Bautista, Liz Fruzyrna Sturm, Teresa Medina, Linda Kelly Garza, Maria Fraga, Jackie Kirley, so many more – fellow artists and community members with Pros Arts Studio who have brought out the best in me. Then there's Myrna Alvarez who welcomed me to Casa Aztlán, and Dr. Clayton who invited 'Uncle Toad and Aunt Phibian' to Walsh School, and Cynthia Chico who made sure we were an integral and unique part of Galileo Scholastic Academy and then there is... too many to list here.



## Adriana Baltazar

I forget all of their names but the teaching artists I met as a student/art apprentice through the city-wide program Gallery 37 held in downtown Chicago changed my life. It was the summers of 1994 and 1995. I remember Loretta Bourque, a boisterous painter, and Wendy Clinard a flamenco dancer. Specifically, a moment with Wendy while on a field trip, our group stood waiting to get in somewhere. She used the moment to demonstrate a lesson on good posture using visceral metaphors of hooks lifting our chests, supporting bricks on our shoulders, and balancing books on our heads. I was transformed. I felt seen, loved, and powerful. My eyes tear up knowing that I stand with confidence to this day because of that moment.

## Albert Stabler

I learned to love and appreciate contemporary art in the first instance because of my professor at SAIC, Ingrid Bachmann, who is now at Concordia. I was able to imagine connections between contemporary art and community practices because of Jorge Lucero, but also Dan Peterman. I got to see and take part in cultural production at the community level because of knowing many, many people, but I will shout out Mike Bancroft, Esther Grimm, Laura Shaeffer, Ray Yang, Jim Duignan, and Ed Marszewski. Laura Molzahn and Jason Foumberg gave me opportunities and supportive feedback to write about art, and Laura Weathered, Rob Ray, and Eric May gave me access to amazing spaces to curate art events. Last but absolutely not least, I have bottomless gratitude for the many supportive principals I worked with at Bowen High School, but I will highlight my greatest support during my teaching career, my now-retired custodian colleague Travis Yarborough.

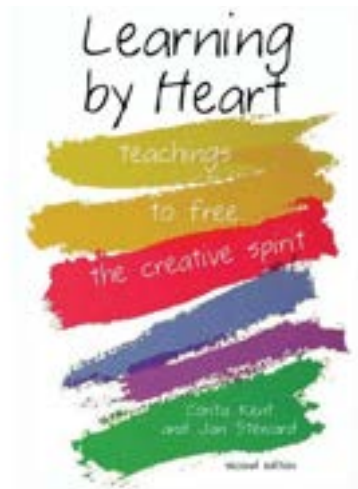
## Melanie Miller-Silver

I have so many flowers to spread around. My mom and grandma got me started on this journey. Many art classes in grade and high school. In college, people like Melissa Potter, Shannon Downey, Niki Nolin, Paul Catanese, Onur Ozturk, PhD and so many other great professors from Columbia College Chicago encouraged me and made me think about my approach to my work. Also, many great beadwork artists, such as Nastasiya Marusyk from the Ukrainian Museum of Modern Art in Chicago, Nick Cave, Professor at SAIC, Elias Jade Not Afraid, and many other beadwork artists in Chicago and beyond. Last but certainly not least, my family without their support, it would have been difficult, my artist friend, Young Kim, a Chicago-based artist from South Korea, with whom I graduated in 2023, and the members of the Northwest Suburban Beadwork Guild, which I have had the honor and pleasure of being Guild Master since 2005.

## Susan Friel

Jan Steward, you are so much more than my mentor, an artist, photographer and designer for artists like George Harrison and Ravi Shankir, who also appreciated your vision and called you “friend.” You are an unpretentious sower of joy in little moments of looking and seeing the ordinary in a way that makes it extraordinary. I miss our times hanging out in your tropical garden, overlooking LA, exploring little shops and restaurants, marveling at a bright label, a crack in the sidewalk, and your impish sense of humor. When our friend, Kathy introduced us and brought you to my studio you spotted a well loved, coffee stained copy of your book on my desk - Learning by Heart, Teachings to Free the Creative Spirit [by Corita Kent]. Not realizing you were the author, you patiently listened to my glowing review of how this book enriches

the way I see the world everyday and even offered to lend it to you. This book and you, continue to be at the core of my teaching and art making ever since. I was beyond thrilled that you asked me to contribute to the second edition, and proud that this second edition is equally dog-eared and loved. Whenever I miss you, I simply flip through the pages and encounter your creative spirit, dear friend.



## Valerie Xanos

I have many flowers to give, and all of it here in Chicago. My earliest memory is of my own father, Spero Xanos, who taught Science and Math in Pilsen CPS schools. His talent as an empowering teacher and staunch unionist was a ruler to measure myself against. Tina Xanos, my mother, gave me a love of philosophy, mysticism, and art. She taught me to never give up or pay any heed to anyone who tried to hold me back.

I had amazing teachers, like Dr. Sharon Meltzer who taught me philosophy and literature in high school. She gave me the gift of deep discussion and critical analysis that guides me still. Paul Hincliffe was my painting mentor at SAIC, who taught me that art was more than just a visual thing that my hand created. He gave me books, lectures, conversations (usually with a pint of beer in his hand), and field trips where we discovered concepts and experiences that fed my work and led me down paths I'd never otherwise see. Colleen Conley was one of my first art teachers at the tender age of 13. She was my photography mentor who challenged and fed my mind with new ideas at every turn. She gave me strange little gifts and sent me to the museum with demands that I return with something profound to share. She made me a teaching assistant and demanded that I think about the

minds of her students in the same way, showing me how to give them resources to find their own voice. Part of the package were Collen's friends, Jackie Seiden and Don Seiden, who took me by the hand in those tender teen years and showed me that I was not only an artist, but an educator with a calling. There were many others from my early years at SAIC like Jerry Stefl, Olivia Petrides, Angela Paterakis, and Michelle Stone.

In my later years, I've been lucky to encounter friendships with artist colleagues who inspire me daily; flowers for Andres L. Hernandez, Yanira Castro, Sonja Blum, Lee Blalock, Amanda Williams, Jessica Mueller, Claudia Hart, James Jankowiak, Damon Locks, Galina Shevchenko, Kate Thomas, William Estrada, Jeeyeun Lee, and Allen Turner to name a "few."

Lastly there are the many students over the decades of my career. A giant field of flowers for them. Especially Azul Nunez, a former student at Curie HS. She is an artist who partners with her mother, EladeSol, to form the dynamic artist duo, Luzadale. They have become my partners in a way I could never have imagined. Together we have grown our art collective to achieve the creative community I dreamed about. I'm so lucky! All of these people helped me define my artistic-educator identity, giving me what I needed to be my best self and be able to pass that same gift on to my students.

## Niki Nolin

At SAIC, George Lewis opened me up to many possibilities, sound and space, BUT, predominantly to the idea that I am not the first to think this, to do this, and to take a dive/look at what has come before. He also had the Best laugh.

Susan Collins got me my first college teaching job in Chicago.

And Joan Truckenbrod, also SAIC, gave me great advice about teaching and developing assignments. She told me that I had many ideas. Take the ones you are not sure of, the ones that spin or are interesting but not you, your work and try them out in class - be inspired by the results.

Suzanne Cohan-Lange, dear friend and mentor, inspired, teased, coddled, sometimes kicked my ass. Always believed in me. It was a great honor to collaborate with her and to be her friend.

I love her, I miss her.

There are so many more to credit. Thank you all. And thank you for asking!



## Margaret Koreman

Angela Paterakis was a wonderful, generous human who never forgot anyone's name. As a professor of arts education, she worked fiercely through the 1980s to secure a visual arts and a musical arts position at every Chicago Public School. Starting in the 1990s, she travelled incessantly to Springfield to lobby on behalf of school children, demanding appropriate funding and securing the opportunity for self-expression in art classrooms across our state. Angela founded the Illinois Alliance for Art Education and worked behind the scenes to recognize arts educators and students across Illinois. Angela's determination shifted the tectonic plates in Illinois, and our children continue to benefit from her deep love of learning and the arts.



## Elvia Rodriguez Ochoa

The first person I have to mention is Francisco G. Mendoza. I met him during a summer program that felt like glorified babysitting but he brought his art supplies and let us have at it. He was the first person that made me think I could have a career doing something fun and creative. I don't know that I would have tried this path without his encouragement. I worked with him on the murals at El Zocalo in Pilsen as one of the lead interns while in undergrad. We kept in touch over the years and up until he passed away, he was always encouraging me to keep going, to try new things and how proud he was of the work I was doing in the community. He is greatly missed.

I feel really fortunate that I have gotten to know and work with so many amazing people especially during my time at Pros Arts Studio. The entire roster was amazing and we had folks that were involved in so many different art practices.

Nicole Marroquin is definitely someone that has impacted my work that I think should get some flowers for the way they helped guide and train the next cohort of educators. Hector Hernandez, retired Head Librarian of the Lozano Branch CPL, also deserves recognition for being welcoming of the arts at the library.

## Chang-Ching Su

Thanks to Haines Elementary and CPSLives for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout my journey. Their openness and assistance have been invaluable. Deeply appreciate all the students who were willing to share their stories with me. Your insights and perspectives have profoundly enriched my understanding and inspired my work. Thank you for being a part of this journey with me.

## Debra A. Hardy

To Susan Cayton Woodson, William McBride, and Fern Gayden

Thank you for your foresight. Thank you for your collections, your knowledge, and your desire to share that with the world. Your archives were some of the first ones I accessed, and helped me understand the world I was getting into much more than a simple book or historical narrative. You kept the mailers, the receipts, the stories. We are sometimes not the artists or the visionaries. But we see their talents and want to help them continue to shine.

## Cynthia Weiss

I am going to repeat my answer to the question of Alongside. Each of these mentors deserve all the flowers!

In Chicago, in the 1970's, I fell in love with Chicago murals, (inspired by the Mexican mural movement and initiated here by William Walker and John Weber). Muralist Caryl Yasko, and artists in the Chicago Public Art Group taught me how to build and climb a scaffold, find common ground with diverse groups of people, and translate the aspirations of a community into images of large and public scale. Anne Schultz at Urban Gateways, and Arnie Aprill at Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education nurtured my teaching artist beginnings. I directed the Arts Education Mentorship Project (AIM) at Columbia College Chicago where I grew and thrived in collaboration with Project AIM artists, Cecil McDonald Jr., Leah Mayers, Jamie Thome, avery r. young, Khanisha Foster, Jenn Morea, and Amanda Lichtenstein, to name just some of these stellar lights. Alongside them, I learned that radical hospitality and love is the surest way to create meaningful curriculum for teachers and students, and an elegant creative practice for ourselves as artist/educators. Antonia Contro hired me as director of education at Marwen; the safe creative space that Antonia, and so many others, built at Marwen has reverberated out into the cultural fabric of our city. My own children were infinitely lucky to have had Jorge Lucero as their art teacher at Northside College Prep. Jorge's radical and generous teaching practice was a truly reciprocal process between teachers and students. I have had the honor recently to create mosaic murals with Mirtes Zwierzynski, Margaret Koreman, and brilliant middle school students at Decatur Classical School. The through line in our story is that collaboration, improvisation and collective meaning-making is part of our Chicago legacy.

## Jennifer Bergmark

There are so many people who have dropped nuggets of wisdom through casual conversations, interactions, and experiences together. I carry them all with me and access them over and over again when they are needed. Judith Blackburn was the backbone of the Beverly Arts Center in the time that I worked there and she was a feminist wisdom keeper that guided the development of my leadership skills. I admired the way she connected to people, her endless energy, and the way she seemed to approach life with a fearlessness. She was the president of the board, she was the creator and director of the Chicago Irish Film Festival, and she was always bringing in new ideas, programs, and connections to the community. Whenever I encountered a situation I didn't know how to handle, she talked me through it, always encouraging me, and helping me to see the bigger picture. I refer to her as a feminist wisdom keeper because she explained experiences of women a generation or two before me that created understandings that continues to guide me with relationships and interactions with women of all ages. Her presence in my life definitely gave me the courage to go back to graduate school and I feel lucky to have worked alongside her.

## Madeleine Aguilar

Mrs. Falbo played the banjo at what felt like the end of everyday of the 2nd grade. She would sit us down on the carpet and balance her banjo on her knee and would sing us songs that she invented to help memorize the 50 states, the days of the week, and other important information. We would all sing along. She had each of us give a presentation on ourselves to the class using photographs and drawings to illustrate the story of our life so far (my first artist lecture). She had us memorize poems from Shel Silverstein's "Where the Sidewalk Ends" and perform it with props in front of the entire school. I'm thankful to her for her gentle spirit, her joy and inventiveness, and her deep understanding that there are so many different ways that kids absorb knowledge. Her songs have stuck with me to this day.

## Olivia Gude

My flowers for Carlos Cortez are cempasúchils, flor de muertos, flower of the dead. We made Dia de los Muertos altars together for the Quincentennial of Christopher Columbus' invasion of the Americas. I met the great printmaker Carlos Cortez through Chicago Public Art Group. Carlos didn't actually paint murals, but he believed that it was important to stay connected to collectives of artists and organizers. Carlos developed his printmaking practice making print blocks to drop into the Wobbly IWW (International Workers of the World) newspaper. When I hired Carlos to do a printmaking workshop at my high school, I needed a resume to give to my principal. I will always recall that his resume began "My father met my mother when she was selling Daily Workers at the factory gates...." The resume also included Carlos' serving time as a "conscientious objector" in WW2. I was just finishing my MFA and considering my artistic future. I remember holding his resume and asking myself what story I wanted to tell with my art and career.

## Azul and ELa LUZADALE

We would like to give some flowers to artists Andres L. Hernandez, and Yanira Castro.

Andres was our resident artist predecessor and has given us an idea of what the role could look like. He was also the resident artist while Azul was a student, having a little more of a direct influence from Hernandez.

Yanira has been a very recent influence and we are proud to have also collaborated with her. Having worked pretty closely with Castro, even if mostly through the ARTivism program, has been greatly appreciated and awe inspiring.

A large chunk of our bouquet goes to our mentor and close friend, Valerie Xanos as she has a huge role in the opportunities we have taken to get to where we are and continue to receive. Valerie has brought us into her home, and we treat each other like family. We are truly thankful for her nearly beyond words.





## Kristina Sutterlin

I must give flowers to the following artist-forward educator, idea-generator, facilitator, Mrs. Macatangay (Mrs. Mac) (April Macatangay) (my colleague, worked in the same school, shared an office/art-educator thinking and debating space, January-May 2024).

April Mac has made an immense impact on me, even though we only worked closely for a semester together as colleagues at Glenbard North High School (Carol Stream, IL). In a single semester, we were constantly battling, debating, going back and forth about art and teaching, always talking about it all in a creative realm. I had just graduated two weeks before starting the temporary art teaching position there, so these big ideas, goals, dreams of mine were very fresh. My hope was (and still is) that I could eventually feel like an artist in the walls of a classroom, with teaching truly being my art. It was SO VALUABLE to have a colleague that would keep me in check with thinking about teaching in creative and exciting ways, actively fighting against getting “lost in the sauce” with the bureaucracy, etc. that really bogs you down, often minimizing your view of yourself as “just a teacher”.

Because I have a feeling she will not write about this, she told me a really great metaphor about her teaching philosophy that really stuck with me, and gave me clarity on what I am trying to do as an educator. “They (the students) have to love the bees first.” Of course, April does bee-keeping in the summers, because why wouldn’t she. She told me the reason why she started doing it was so that her kids would grow up with it, and they would learn to “love the bees” before learning about the environmental issues that we so desperately need to care about. This LOVE for the bees and raising them is the foundation necessary for them to care at all about the things that are harming them and what can be done about it. She explained it in such a beautiful, poetic way. Basically, this translates over to prioritizing fostering our student’s love for making art before anything else. Once they are invested, that’s it- now they can take all the critique, technical advice, etc. because they are invested and dedicated to this thing that they have a foundational love for. Very valuable perspective to keep in mind, in my opinion.

## Hilesh Patel

Scott Sikkema was the director of education at CAPE, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education for many years, helping guide the organization's and the sector's work in arts education. I could write abundantly and expansively about Scott and the impact he had on arts education in Chicago but I want to speak of his impact in this space with more anchored narratives. He could be sharp, biting, and did not suffer fools. He would also give you the world in the palm of your hand and would listen to you with authentic curiosity. Margaret Koreman, a former art teacher in CPS and an amazing art educator consistently practicing and working independently and a friend, attended a CAPE teacher workshop and identified the influence on each participant, noting the resonating echoes of pedagogical practice. We likened it to the story of the Velvet Underground's first album. Only a hundred people bought the album when it first came out but each of those people started a band of their own. Perhaps mythological but definitely pedagogical and rooted in arts education. When I left CAPE, Scott gifted me a hand-made tea bowl from Okinawa. Made as a food bowl, it made its way to the larger islands of Japan up north, where it became a tea bowl. He explained that it was an example of *mitate*, a concept in Japanese tea aesthetics with a translation meaning "to



see an object, not in the form it was originally intended for, but as another thing.” He was always a learner, and recognized that horizontalization, as referenced by Jorge Lucero and Paulina Camacho Valencia in their opening question to this writing exercise, is a practice not a flattening. This became a core practice of mine, and continues to become another thing.

## Laura Sáenz

I give flowers to a place - Telpochcalli school and the students, teachers and staff who were and are still there. This school was my graduate school, my training ground, my sanctuary and my place of deep learning. I will forever be indebted to this school that welcomed me, showed me a way but also supported me in creating my own way, connected me to the homeland I had left behind and let me see a glimpse of what is truly possible in arts-integrated education.

## Jessica Mueller

Everyone deserves flowers! We stand on the shoulders of so many. Here are a few... My mentor and friend, Scott Sikkema. Rashida Phillips, Joseph Spilberg, Mark Diaz, Hilesh Patel, Jerry Stefl, Marcia Kauss, Claudia Lara, Colette Rinn, Misha Goro, Rich Kryczka, Emily Culbert, William Estrada, Juan Carlos Perez, Giovanni Aloï, and Mara Flores.



## William Estrada

### **Star Padilla**

Star Padilla was the first person who introduced me to community art-making. She invited me to co-teach a mural course she led at the True Value Boys and Girls Club in Little Village in 1996. Although it was a disaster because I had no idea how to teach young people how to paint a collaborative mural at the time, I was enthralled with the idea of teaching others how to make art that invited all of us to think about what art could look like in our neighborhood. Star continued to guide and invite me to participate in projects she was involved in throughout the years she was in Chicago.

### **Jesus Macarena-Avila: The Peace Museum & El Centro de La Causa**

Jesus Macarena-Avila is a multidisciplinary artist and educator involved in various art collectives and organizations throughout Chicago. Jesus introduced me to Pros Art Studio, the Peace Museum, and El Centro de Las Causa, where I began developing a teaching philosophy and praxis. From early 1998 to 1999, I worked as a teaching artist at the Peace Museum, implementing their Drive-By Peace curriculum and modifying it using contemporary practices. From early 1999 to 2001, I worked at El Centro de la Causa in various capacities

as an educator, implementing art programming for young people and their families who were deaf and hard of hearing and developing after-school programs for community members.

### **Insight Arts**

Insight Arts was an arts organization I learned from between 1998 to 1999. Founded by Craig Harshaw, it was the first organization that introduced me to radical theoretical frameworks and how to implement them in art projects. It was a space where we were consistently learning, reading, discussing, and imagining how to reimagine the types of art projects we wanted to implement with the community we were working with. We were asked to question how the art projects we were implementing helped, whose ideas were being represented, and how our ideas could cause harm. It was the first time I had thought of these concepts and where I first read the works of Paolo Freire, Jamaica Kincaid, Richard Wright, and Karl Marx.

### **Video Machete**

Video Machete was an artist's organization run by Demetrio Maguidad, Cesar Chavez, Maria Benfield, and others focusing on video documentation. Artists would meet to discuss how to ask questions, who the audience would be for the projects they were initiating, how the video would be framed, and who would be the interviewer. All these pieces of information on how to frame stories and think about storytelling through video were exemplary in community video programming.



...

## **Pros Art Studio: Jean Parisi, Kaja Overstreet, Elvia Rodriguez**

I was introduced to Pros Arts Studio in 1997 through Jesus Macarena-Avila and Elvia Rodriguez, who worked with Pros Art. Pros Art was a radical and loving learning space where many artists and administrators first learned how to develop community-centered art projects with care, patience, transparency, and intentionality. Jean Parisi, Kaja Overstreet, and Elvia Rodriguez were instrumental in teaching and guiding my educational practice in the community. By looking at their work, I began to model my community arts practice into what it is now.



## **Yollocalli Youth Museum**

In 1999 I met Mark Ernst through Christina Obregon, who introduced me to Milton Rodriguez, Maricarmen Morenos, and Brenda Cardenas, who ran youth programs at Yollocalli. I worked at Yollocalli from 2000 to 2005 and began implementing all the radical organizing I had been taught into the programming we were charged to implement. Working alongside Anthony Rea, Maria Gaspar, Ricardo Compean, and many other artists, Yollocalli became a laboratory where we developed some of the most radical and community-centered programming I could have ever imagined. From intergenerational visual and music classes to painting classes in local businesses, to street theater modeled after Theater of the Oppressed, mural painting, printmaking, drawing, puppet making, installation, storytelling, and a graphic and bookmaking course focused on researching and distributing a booklet focusing on youth services in the Chicagoland area. All these courses were explorations of what we could collectively imagine together, for each other, and with the intention to invite as many people to participate as possible.

## Silvia Gonzalez

These flowers are for Ms. Hallenberg--for understanding my language as a young person still grappling with English and a new school. Art was where I found a different kind of translation in this world; as a result, it became my favorite language.

These flowers are for Marwen and the people at Marwen who had a life-long impact on me including Gina Anselmo, Maria Gaspar, Paulina Camacho and many more. Thank you for being my safe space.

These flowers are for Mrs. Margaret Koreman, who taught me about bringing joy and experimentation into the classroom. Bringing in a “science party” with primary color balloons to learn color theory with primary students was not a far-out idea with Margaret. I could bring in my “wildest” ideas and be encouraged by someone who also believed in “go big or go home.”

These flowers are for the Chicago ACT (Artists Creating Transformation) Collective for pitching tents and rooting me in care with plenty of laughter under the stars. Thank you for helping the load get lighter as we find ways to show up for community in care, in love, and with art.

## Jon Pounds

Mr. Ronald Nicely, who was my art teacher in junior high school, was instrumental. We were given the responsibility of creating a “graduation” project to represent our lives and our growth. I sought to balance contrasts - form and function, art and craft, play and work, amusement and representation. My project was (still is) a wooden serving tray for treats and snacks, the center is a checker/chess board field, and on each side of the chess grid is an inverted mosaic face (creating beauty and meaning out of fragmentation) – one reading happy, one reading sad from whichever side you sat on. It was an opportunity for me to blend design, craft, multiple functions, and contradictory humor in a single construction.





## Chapter 5

# LEGACY

How would you describe Chicago's art education legacy in the world? Don't be shy, say what you think or know it has done!  
How have you seen it ripple out?  
How far has it reached?



## Adelheid Mers

Instead of such a legacy, I see parallel and opposite currents. Outside of Chicago and the US I work with government-funded institutions of higher education. Having wrested the arts away from “pure aesthetics” by aligning them with the natural and human sciences, these institutions are now involved in methodically defining artistic research, particularly in relation to innovation. Part of a push-back by artists against this expediency is a growing (professional) interest in “pure” arts pedagogy. In Chicago and other parts of the US, arts pedagogy has wrested the arts away from “pure aesthetics.” Now, public policy has embraced methodologies of arts pedagogy as expedient means of social amelioration. Part of a push back may be a growing (popular) regret about a lack of “pure aesthetics.”

## Eliza Duenow

It was an honor to serve creative community building at the Hyde Park Art Center, an institution that helped nurture a hub of support for local artists that put Chicago on the map in America back in the days of The Hairy Who and the Non-Plussed Sum and other Chicago Imagists. The ethos of supporting local artists was infused into HPAC exhibitions and educational outreach. It's a community-based value that extends across the city's Art Education arena, a pride in its own. And community-based community-building Art is also at the core of so much of the work supported by the arts organizations leading programs.

## Alice Costas

Scrappy, earnest, sweet, engaging, honest. Nelson Algren described Chicago as “Like loving a woman with a broken nose, you may well find lovelier lovelies. But never a lovely so real.” and I think that sentiment lives in our schools and educational settings, too. Stiff backed and strong shouldered. Grin split open like a melon. Experimental. Inviting. Broad.

## Judith Susan Rocha - PhD LCSW

Chicago’s art education legacy is unknown to me to be honest. I’d love to know more about it in the context of community (not just Pilsen), outside of galleries, museums and art schools.

## Ari Rendon

I’d describe Chicago’s art education legacy as being the most innovative and diverse in the country, growing up with imagery of chicano art that is able to be supported by the extensive Latine community was able to help define me in the evolutionary context of immigrant life in America.

## **Jose Martin Bautista**

En mi opinión personal considero que la influencia y legado en las Artes es contundente. Sobre todo en las Artes plástica. En cuanto al teatro es indiscutible que se hace muy buen teatro aquí.

## **Amy Chen**

I think it is underappreciated. I need art education to be unapologetically obnoxious and in the face of our future generations.

## **Kevin Dill**

Chicago's art education legacy is powerful. It is constructed in challenging larger structures and socially engaged. It fosters creativity, it is complex, it is multidisciplinary, it is Chicago.

## **Isabella Kelly**

Chicago is an incredibly diverse and beautiful city, and I think its art education and art as a whole reflects that part of it.

## Keith Brown

Since arriving in Chicago and learning about it, I have always deeply felt that we are an art education city. I do not know if I have any evidence to support this, maybe it just exists in my skewed perception of Chicago. Maybe we are an education city because we have so many schools in a small radius. If you think about it, we have a massive school district in Chicago Public Schools and a list of notable institutions. Starting in the north we have Northwestern University, Loyola University Chicago, DePaul University, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbia College, University of Illinois Chicago, Illinois Institute of Technology, and the University of Chicago. That's a lot of students moving around the city at any given time doing projects, research, student teaching, getting observation hours, and connecting in neighborhoods like the Loop, Lakeview, Lincoln Park, Wicker Park, Rogers Park, Lincoln Park, Hyde Park, and Evanston. One could say this is where artists come to get educated. I think about the number of people who have left since I moved here and that seems true. We also have a lot of art institutions with education programs. The Museum of Contemporary Art and the Art Institute of Chicago have education programs and most of these colleges and universities have art galleries on their campuses with community outreach and engagement programs. DePaul University Art Museum comes to mind as does the SMART Museum and Block Museum. There is an art and education ecosystem in Chicago that constantly changes as people move in and out.

## Eliza Duenow

Long shadows have been cast by teachers and organizers like Jorge Lucero, Jim Duignan, Jon Ploof, and Cecil McDonald, but also in the vastly eclectic practices of many artists and curators, including Mary Jane Jacob, Theaster Gates, Laurie Jo Reynolds, and Marc Fischer.

## Amy Chen

Chicago has been known for its art almost from its founding. The beautiful architecture, amazing food, theatre, and world-class museums such as MCA and AIC have shown the world Chicago is where art is appreciated and nurtured. The various public art exhibitions that have taken place over the years attract artists and visitors from all over the world to participate in many ways. In Chicago, we are not afraid to experiment and try new things. We honor the legacy of the many artists who have come before and all of the great exhibitions that take place everywhere from small storefront galleries to schools and major museums. Chicago is home to several world-class art universities whose graduates have gone on to exhibit in many museums around the world. Our midwestern ideals and sensibilities have shown the world we are not afraid to be different and embrace those who, if they are willing to work hard for a seat at the table. I am proud to have been born and raised in Chicago and worked on my ideas in the place that has given so much art to the rest of the world.

## Melanie Miller-Silver

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## Susan Friel

Ingenuity, Inc. has been instrumental in moving the needle to bring access to arts education to every student, in every grade, in every school for over a decade. Ingenuity was founded in response to Chicago Arts Learning Initiative (CALI) cry for coordinating resources for Chicago's students. Shortly thereafter [Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events] (DCASE) and the Mayor's office embarked upon the first city-wide Cultural Plan in 25 years. DCASE conducted dozens of Town Hall sessions to gather input from collaborators and stakeholders that not surprisingly called for more art in CPS schools. What Ingenuity has successfully done is bring together stakeholders, funders, and government agencies on a united mission. Key to their success has been data-mapping which can present a powerful case for where resources are spent and where they are needed. In fact this data tool has proven so valuable, that artlook map is now a national model utilized in 8 cities, nationwide.



## Jean Parisi

Chicago's Art Education legacy started out strong with the belief in the positive impact the arts instill in a child's future. But now? Chicago's Art Education Legacy started out auspiciously with the help of settlement houses like Hull House. Known world-wide Hull House was co-founded in 1889 by Jane Adams and Ellen Gates Starr who opened their doors to diverse communities offering a range of social services including the arts. Children and families learned how to throw pots or mix paints or put on a play as well as have thought-provoking discussions. Settlement houses across the city did the same – including arts in their offerings. In Pilsen what started as the Howell House in 1894 serving eastern European immigrants by 1970 became Casa Aztlan serving the Mexican community. Covered in murals by area artists including Ray Patlan the building was a cultural icon – and educated all the youth who passed through the painted doors with their rich cultural heritage. In 2015, due to lack of funding to fix the numerous building code violations a developer quickly bought the property turning it into high end housing. After community outrage the murals on the façade were repainted. But what of the valuable arts programs that enriched the lives of so many? Part of Chicago's Art Education Legacy should include the role these settlement houses played in recognizing the importance of arts in a child's education

and in building vibrant communities. They spurred the rise of the non-profit arts organization movement of the 1960's and 70's.

But now? Chicago has cut the funding substantially for such community-based free programs and continues to reduce arts programs in CPS schools as well as in Chicago parks. The valuable role the arts play in a student's growth is readily forgotten if taxes need to be raised to include the arts in the budget. At one time most Chicago schools had a piano in the classroom. There was a music teacher who went from class to class, as well as an art teacher. A school might even have an art room with a kiln for firing clay projects (in the 50's we made ash trays). This was before Art Teachers became 'Specialists' and now are rarely a member of the full-time teaching staff. In 1993 CAPE was started by a group of area Foundations interested in the idea of integrating the arts in the curriculum. Each of the funded 'Partnerships' included an arts organization, schools, and community center or park. This privately funded program offered Chicago a way to exclude paying for the arts in the schools and parks. Yes, artists in schools are great – but not as a replacement for CPS art and music teachers. The most successful arts partnerships were those that were partnerships – among art teachers, classroom teachers, and artists. Another successful program was the Arts in Education Residency program of the Illinois Arts Council. This state funded grant program supported an artist who moved into the school initially for a full school year (eventually it was cut back for shorter periods of time). The artists would work on their own art in a space in the school set aside as their “studio,” and they would also teach and create projects with the students. The artist, as an artist, became a part of the school community, and was paid as well! Perhaps the legacy will be that to save money, invite hungry young artists as contractual workers (or contract the arts organizations who find private funding) in the schools to replace actual art teachers who are well-paid with benefits. And what of this title “teaching artist?” When the best and most successful programs were presented by artists – acknowledging the artist. No need to attach a title to prove value to the importance of being an artist in a community.

## Valerie Xanos

Chicago is amazing at community engaged art for the public. I am constantly inspired by other artists, artist-educators, curators, and activists who create art and actions that are truly for the people and by the people. Chicago has incredible art and community programs that address the inequities experienced in a capitalist, oligarchical, patriarchal society and work to smash that dynamic. We have art education programs that are free, therapeutic, holistic, healing, and empowering for people whose identities are marginalized and oppressed. These programs have developed to not only offer art classes, but also offer opportunities that give young people agency to create their own change and put them in the driver's seat as community engaged artists. Even in neighborhoods with little investment and resources, we have art we can see just by walking down the street. I refer to murals, sticker art, window art and public installation art. These opportunities come from art schools, museums, galleries, community centers, city programs, and individuals spread throughout the city. I see the ripple when I visit other cities, towns, or countries who do not have such a culture and seek to replicate and create these spaces for themselves. They look to Chicago for guidance and inspiration to expand their own resources despite a societal infrastructure that devalues art.

## Margaret Koreman

Chicago's legacy of art education is best typified by the story of Charles White and Kerry James Marshall. As a young artist, White earned a scholarship at the School of the Art Institute but soon left our city to teach in Los Angeles. There, White became a mentor to the young Marshall. Marshall in turn launched his own career and moved to Chicago as a professor at The University of Illinois Chicago. His iconic paintings use Washington Park and 47th street to create an empowering new story for the African American community that White had left behind. This tale proves to me how significant education and promise are to our community. By making our magnificent city's world-class resources available to young talent, art educators open doors to the construction of alternate realities. Empowering students with the tools of self-expression, art teachers in Chicago pave the way towards a more supportive, a more inclusive, and a more equitable world for every child in our communities.

## Cynthia Weiss

Legacy: “something transmitted by, or received from, an ancestor or predecessor from the past.” In Chicago we have the legacy and gifts of migration and immigration, of the music and art forms that grew from African American culture, and immigrant culture from around the world. We have been gifted with the Blues and Jazz, and improvisation of all kinds. Chicago’s art education legacy is a legacy of improvisation, collaboration, community and place. Jane Addam’s Hull House, which welcomed and served immigrants, was also the birthplace of Second City and Theatre Improvisation games, arts and culture, bread and roses, activism and inclusivity. There was a rich international exchange of Mexican and Chicagoan photographers, printmakers and muralists who taught at Hull House, formed printmaking collectives in Mexico, and exchanged ideas and practices across borders. Our legacy is built on the exchange of ideas and educators inside school buildings and outside in the community and larger world. Urban Gateways and CAPE were foundational organizations that trained and hired teaching artists to work in classrooms across the city. Many other organizations followed. My most formative work took place at Columbia College Chicago. Chicago has been the recipient of many US Department of Education Arts in Education long-term grants that have given so many organizations the chance to experiment, craft philosophies of teaching and learning, and enrich our schools through sophisticated arts education practice. Chicago’s mural movement, inspired by the Mexican Mural Movement, and initiated by William Walker, invited artists to beautifully express their ideas and visions on building walls. Our legacy as Chicago arts educators is the magic formed from the processes of collaboration, improvisation, inquiry and exchange.

## Olivia Gude

Yikes! I do think that there has been a shift to considering the significance of contemporary art and theory in k-12 art education. The call for visual culture theory in k-12 art education (to replace or supplement traditional aesthetics, criticism, and art historical narratives) came out of academics at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Northern Illinois University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana. My articles, especially *Postmodern Principles*, were widely known challenges to conventional forms of art education. The collaborative murals, mosaics, and playsculptures by Chicago Public Art Group and others raised awareness of placemaking as an area of arts education. Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education raised awareness of arts integration and of the interdisciplinary nature of quality arts education practices. Activist and engaged cultural practices, rather than simply including “others” in the curriculum, often have extended and reshaped understanding of respectful and engaged “multi-cultural curriculum.”

And to the current project—Jorge Lucero’s work as art and education challenges rigid definitions of arts education by encouraging us to play, asking whether many structures of education and art education hold us in place in a way that prevents re-envisioning contemporary life.

## Alice Costas

There are buildings named after Jane Addams all over the world. In college, my jaw dropped open when I spun yarn for the first time, because whereas I struggled mightily in physics classes, I suddenly intimately knew the physics of tension and torque. A few years later, my jaw dropped when I read John Dewey and realized he was positing that this is precisely how we should teach physics (but also, all things). When I was worried about what was real and what wasn't, my high school art teacher brought me a copy of Jean Baudrillard's writing on the Simulacra, and then told me to make drawings of rabbits. Incidentally, that teacher is one of the editors of this publication. When I had moved back to Chicago to study education, one of my friends from High School who was studying education at Harvard texted me a photo of a print I had made in the screen exposure room of a small after school art studio in Providence Rhode Island. She had met up with a group of folks we had met at Young Chicago Authors to go on a research trip with mutual friends and former YCA people who now worked at the studio. My grandmother taught at Abraham Lincoln Elementary school in Lincoln Park, and while she taught History and English, every year she took the students on a field trip to the art institute because she believed you could understand all cultures through their art, and I am staring at a small block print of a cat staring up at a bird that I was given from her condominium in Florida after she passed while I write this. A wonderful former student, Alex Barnes, once wrote to me "Go to the lake with your problems, because it is older and wiser than all of us combined and has survived more problems than we will ever know of."

## **Niki Nolin**

We are the center of Americas art world. The Midwest in all direction. Passive aggressive and kind. We build great communities. We are always opening, open-ish to new ideas. We have very conservative spaces and audiences. We have a lot to overcome in terms of administrative demands and parents' expectations and students' earlier access to art. We also have produced/ contributed to many of the art world's icons. And the way we all see the world.

## **Azul and ELa LUZADALE**

We have also had a couple of artists from outside Chicago come visit our classroom to inspire students; thanks to connections made in and to this city.

As we slowly work our way into the broader art community, we have heard several times that Chicago is known as a haven for community engaged arts.

Healing happens in community.



## Kristina Sutterlin

Preface: I come from a background where I had art in my K-12 experience (Geneva, IL), post-secondary education (Urbana, IL), and now teach visual art (2-D and Digital) at Glenbard East High School (Lombard, IL). A Chicago(land)-raised student and educator.

Initial thoughts: To be the artist in a school is a powerful position to be in. We have the power of influencing people and helping them (both students and colleagues) think like artists, creatively, thinking about constantly pushing the boundaries, etc.

From the students' perspective: In the short time that I have been the educator in my classroom, I have found that students think it is kind of weird but cool that Art Teachers of Chicago/Chicagoland are so connected and "into it" that we will spend a Saturday together writing a book. They find it so fascinating that you can be so dedicated to something so niche, and it is completely okay. And that we didn't turn out to be 'starving artists' in fact, we are thriving, and we have created a community that raises really great artists and art teachers. At least within my community of the city/suburbs, all art teachers were greatly impacted by one that came before them, and that

one is always the reason why they are here.

Other thoughts: Chicagoland art educators heavily consider ourselves facilitators (of the exploratory art experience, etc), before anything else. I think we take a lot of pride in the fact that art education is generally funded well here, compared to other places in the country and in the world. That plays a huge part in us being able to raise excellent students, artists, people, who take away so many different things from what we are doing with them, and get to experience inspiring facilitation of a creative space and what being in one can do for you.

Lastly: being in this “community” of art educators in Illinois and in the Chicagoland area alone even for a short time so far has been so fruitful. I have so much to learn, and man, so many people I can go to for specific morsels of advice. Like, just name a super niche category or issue in art education and I could probably hit up at least 1 person that I could go to for advice and guidance on it. As a baby educator in Chicago, I feel very “taken care of,” as I continue being raised.

## Debra A. Hardy

The legacy of Chicago's Black art educators is vast, and its story has not yet been fully revealed. The establishment of the South Side Community Art Center by so many artists who would become some of the most important Black artists in the country, the ripple towards the Black Arts Movement in the 1960s and 1970s with AfriCOBRA, and into today. And not to mention the legacy Dr. Burroughs had on the establishment of Black museums throughout the US and other BIPOC cultural museums in Chicago. We so often talk about legacies as an individual instead of the reverberations that these individuals and institutions made. My work right now is to establish the linkages and lineages between so many artists and educators that were a part of this scene and how these relationships helped sustain their careers. Doing this work demonstrates how widespread some of these connections are. The most notable and famous one is Charles White's mentorship of Kerry James Marshall at Otis College in California, but White starting in Chicago and Kerry later coming to Chicago to teach. The more that these connections are explored and discussed, the more it is revealed how deeply important the Black art and art education community of Chicago has been to the US.



## Jennifer Bergmark

There is always something incredible just around the corner. Chicago has so much happening within the schools and the communities that at times I felt like I was always learning about something new that was happening, meeting incredible art practitioners, or finding out about a new organization or program. I would describe my time at the Beverly Art Center as a time of being with and learning from the communities that became part of our network. It wasn't one organization, it was a network of organizations, artists, schools, and people that learned, created, and grew from these creative experiences. I was contacted by an organization called Arts of Life, which works with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to support and develop creative pursuits as artists and musicians. We collaborated on an exhibition and the opening reception was so much fun because their band played and I was not spared when they called out people to dance (I am not a dancer). Through my student teachers, I have seen more schools and learned about more programs. In addition to all of the schools, both public and private, the number of arts organizations and programs as well as the teaching artists who wanted to engage with communities seemed endless. I know that the Beverly Art Center continues to develop and

change to reflect and serve their community. I wish all these artists, programs, and spaces were more visible, but I am so inspired by and grateful for the work they do within their communities. There are also so many spaces in and around Chicago that I didn't have personal experiences with but I found along the way. Programs like Marwen, Snow City Arts, Arts of Life, CAPE, and places like LillStreet Art Center, The Franklin, The Suburban, and Compound Yellow have inspired me to think about art and art education in new ways. As a community arts educator, knowing the history of the Jane Adams Hull House informed the importance of art education as community care. The work of Mary Jane Jacob highlighting the socially engaged art practices in Chicago, helped me to make connections between community-based art education and socially engaged art. I see the ripples of Chicago's art and art education scene bring students, artists, and educators down to the University of Illinois. While many return to Chicago, some of our students end up in other states in k-12 schools, museums, universities, and community arts programs. Students aren't the only ones who travel. Artists and educators travel and share their work. Some of the people who have inspired me the most, Jorge Lucero, Olivia Gude, and William Estrada have shared their work around the country and around the world.

## William Estrada

Chicago's Legacy in Art Education is deep. It is enthralled in the organizing of Saul Alinsky, the interviews by Louis "Studs" Terkel, and community programming by Jane Adams and Ellen Star; art education is embedded into the fabric of Chicago and has been exported into various corners of the nation and world. Chicago continues to influence how art education is practiced and reimagined, pushing where and how art education exists. The exhibition *Learning Together* captures a small portion of the rich history of art education in community spaces. There is so much more housed in people's memories, art organizations, and lost to history, but it is still present in our collective story. We are walking Legacies, and our work is a reminder of everyone who has influenced us to do our work. Chicago's Art Education Legacy is present in our current work, and the Legacy is being remembered and cared for, built, reimagined, shepherded through critical frameworks, and consistently reminding ourselves that art education belongs and needs to nourish and center historically marginalized communities.



## Jessica Mueller

Chicago's art education legacy is complex and deep. It is in our bones as a city of artists, activists and educators. When we hurt... we mobilize...

## S Valle

I feel like art education in Chicago is our best kept gem. I think I have been at schools who know art education is important and I have seen schools that have art yet do not outwardly support creativity. (What a weird place to be!!) When you find the place, you know you're there and it's beautiful.



## Laura Sáenz

I would say that Chicago's art education ripples through all the artists and arts educators who are connected to other cities and countries and spaces. I myself took it with me when I moved to Istanbul, Turkey for a decade where I connected with Turkish artists, teachers and schools who began dialogues with me despite language and cultural differences. I also have carried it into my life and parenting and into how I interact with other people's ideas and ways of being different than mine - including my own children! A full circle, it has rippled out too, is with my own mother - my first arts educator, where I have been invited into her classrooms to share my work in Chicago with students in Tlaxcala, Mexico.

## Karyn Sandlos

Over time, I've come to realize that Chicago's art education communities and practices are unique and extraordinary. What happens in Chicago isn't as well known as it ought to be. Whenever I go home to Canada, I look for opportunities to talk about Chicago artists and art education projects. Recently, I gave a presentation in Toronto about Chicago artist Nick Cave. As soon as I mentioned his name, the audience burst into applause. They knew about Nick Cave's Soundsuit project, and they wanted to learn more about his work.

## Jon Pounds

The community-engaged public in Chicago really extended responsibility for a creative process to more people who did not necessarily consider themselves to be artists. Planners, social organizers, history fans, future imaginers, caregivers and many others have seen the mural movement create dialogue, resolve disagreement, consider budgets and timelines, expand resources to create memorable, meaningful, lasting public art projects. This is the Chicago art education that expanded beyond single desks and easels, beyond individual drawings, paintings, and sculpture to consider the history, present time, and desired future - requiring collective action.





## Chapter 6

# PLACE

Where are ideas co-created and exchanged to grow and sustain art education's interrelational webs? Consider the places, spaces, feelings, conduits, containers, and sparks that have, do, and could continue to shape your art education journey as it is crafted in community and geographically situated with those who you think and work with.

## Silvia Gonzalez

Ideas are co-created with students, families, community folks, activists, writers, poets, artists, and organizers. I like to think specifically as a Chicagoan. Our city is one of deep love for working-class people--in many ways a union town, a policy shifter, a groundbreaker.

Chicago has had many valuable contributions from people of color who simply believe that justice, accessibility, and safety are not just a right but something worth restructuring together. It takes the form of protests, marches, organizing, building, rapid-response art-making sessions, co-authoring, and reclaiming. I see this in the many community garden efforts, in the stories preserved in our public art and murals. I see it when grassroots groups and organizations unite for a free Palestine, nurses, and social workers in every school, environmental justice efforts, and dignified labor wages. Art, education, and civic work have grown me through popular and political education on the ground.

I have expanded a lot of my thinking in non-traditional learning spaces and by sharing the oral history found in our communities and in who we are together--and how we envision ourselves practicing the care and just living we want for ourselves that works for more people.

In other words, what are the futures we want to move into together that work for us? What would it look like to structure places that care for our well-being and are rooted in abundance? Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Kelly Hayes had a conversation on Truthout that has stuck with me over the years, Gilmore argues that place is more than a geographical location, “What I find the most exciting about being a geographer is thinking about how we make the world, and make the world, and make the world.” What excites me about being an artist, educator, and cultural worker in Chicago today is the persistent possibility of asking, rehearsing, and creating how we make the world together. In weaving a Chicago that works for more people, I see art education as an opportunity to learn about the many processes that can be engaged in and out of the formal classroom and how we choose to live and create futures.



## Hailey Rodden

In one of the most, if not the most, segregated cities in America, place has never felt more crucial when it comes to education and resources. Chicago is a city rich in creativity, an artist's town in many ways, but it is also marked by deep inequities. I work in a neighborhood that many describe using words like "violence" and "despair," often labeling it a "bad neighborhood." While some of these descriptions hold truth, and my students face challenges that many of us couldn't imagine at such young ages, working in this space has also introduced me to some of the most kind-hearted, resilient, and loving people I've ever met. My students have the same dreams and ambitions as children in any other community, and my dream for them is simple: that they have the same opportunities to thrive, succeed, and feel empowered as children in wealthier, more privileged neighborhoods. I believe deeply that education is a powerful tool for non-violence and that it should be used to help my students—and my community—overcome the systemic barriers they face. This conviction drives me to connect my students' education to the broader community. I'm eager to develop adult and community programming that fosters collaboration between schools, community organizations, and local leaders.

My goal is to create spaces where the school and community work together to create lasting, impactful change—change that sustains itself over time. For me, the most powerful moments of creativity and connection occur in spaces where I work alongside my students and community members—places that may not always be viewed as traditionally “artistic,” but are filled with immense potential for growth and inspiration. These spaces often exist in the everyday interactions—like conversations in the lunchroom before school when my students are eating breakfast, or the text messages I exchange with parents, sharing pictures of their child’s artwork. I believe the exchange of ideas happens where art meets life—whether it’s in the neighborhood, local businesses, or informal community events. It’s in the small, meaningful conversations at parent-teacher nights or during after-school programming, where people share stories that open up new pathways for art and creativity to flourish. These spaces, filled with hope, shared experiences, and, at times, struggle, act as containers that hold the creativity of my students and the community, sparking new ideas and connections. In this process, my role is to create opportunities for those ideas to grow—to serve as a conduit between the resources I have and the creativity I witness in my students. It’s in these moments, when students see themselves not just as passive participants, but as co-creators of their education, that true magic happens.

...

The connections I make with local artists, organizations, and activists become bridges through which new ideas and opportunities are introduced to my students. These opportunities expand their worldviews and create lasting change through representation. Providing my students with experiences such as workshops, artist talks, and field trips that are Chicago-centric and created by people who look like them and come from similar backgrounds is essential to both engagement and development. For example, I incorporate many Black and Brown artists into my curriculum, and several of our units are connected to Chicago and its rich artistic landscape. My classroom is intentionally print-rich, with posters and photos of Chicago artists, such as Hebru Brantley, Chelsea B, Kehinde Wiley, Joe Freshgoods, Tonika Lewis Johnson, and Ken Cook Jr. It was through an article in Block Club Chicago that another teacher at my school discovered Ken Cook Jr., a photographer from the Austin neighborhood, and reached out to him on Instagram about a possible collaboration. After meeting with him and agreeing he was a great fit for our students, Ken came to give an artist talk and took our 6th-8th grade students on a photo tour of the Austin neighborhood. Students used both their phones and

disposable cameras to document their community in a positive light, while also creating poetry in response to the prompt, “What is home?” The students visited neighborhood landmarks, including the Austin Branch Chicago Public Library, Michelle Clark High School, and the Gold Dome in Garfield Park. The work produced will be part of an exhibition where students’ photographs will be displayed alongside Ken’s work—an incredible opportunity for middle school students to see their art shared in the real world, alongside the work of a contemporary artist.

Looking ahead, I see even more ways for art and education to intersect with community action—through collaborative public art projects, after-school programs, and partnerships with local galleries and creative organizations. These are the sparks that will continue to shape my art education journey and my students’ journeys, as we work together to create a more just, supportive, and connected community for all.

## Judith Susan Rocha - PhD LCSW

Community settings such as porch stoops, community gardens, in faith-based spaces/meetings, laundromats, beauty and barber shops.

## Jose Martin Bautista

Considero que las ideas en cuanto a intercambiar y compartir con otras personas de culturas diferentes, orígenes diferentes etc.... Es una oportunidad para que la ciudad crezca y se acerquen unos a otros y se llegue a un mayor entendimiento entre si y tratar de acabar con los estereotipos que tenemos los unos con los otros.

## Amy Chen

This is tough, spaces aren't there unless they are created but that's a power that all art educators hold but not all art educators utilize. A created space is as good as nothing if it's not being used. So use it.

## **Kevin Dill**

Ideas are co created through shared experiences, lived experiences and conversations inside and outside of the classroom. Art education that is crafted in community involves knowing who your community is outside of the classroom. Learning is a lifelong journey, we are on the ride navigating it.

## **Rebecca Fox**

When I was teaching theater, my first lesson was the tools of theater: our bodies, our minds, our voices, the text, each other, and the SPACE. Traditionally, that space is a theater, but when teaching-artisting, it's sometimes a classroom, sometimes a corner in that classroom, maybe a hallway, maybe outside. We created a space between us, and I learned we can make creative space almost anywhere.

## **Ari Rendon**

On the internet there's lots of opportunity to create, yet also an increasing threat of immorality with creation in the use of AI systems.

## Isabella Kelly

Ideas are co-created and exchanged through a number of different ways, including communication, artistic expression, etc. The co-creation of ideas allows for deeper meanings and interpretations. Sharing ideas is how we share parts of ourselves with each other, allowing for people to be able to develop a deeper understanding about one another.

## Adelheid Mers

I am situated between two worlds. I look at artistic practices as idiosyncratic and contingent, seeing awareness of contingency as necessary to develop a heuristic for practice. Places where contingency is addressed are self-reflexive academic environments, including classrooms and conferences. I think that the relation of play and heuristics in the arts can be fruitful to replace simplistic thinking about innovation with attention to self-regard.



## Eliza Duenow

Friendships. Partnerships. Collaborations. Events.  
Conferences. Exhibitions. Social Media.

## Keith Brown

My answer in Legacy fits into this. I think the colleges and universities along with the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, Cultural Center, Hyde Park Art Center, Southside Community Art Center, etc. help keep art education flowing.



## Miriam Dolnick

What happens when you have been so embedded in the lightning sparks that you have forgotten to consider the inevitability that the spaces that have fed you, infused you, and shaped you, shift, change, and disappear? When the relationships are no longer grounded in the same spaces but are still crucial to who you are and who you know yourself to be as an artist and educator? As the pillars shift for me, I am mourning and building and questioning. Opening myself up and wondering what new things I am looking to learn and where to find them. I am thinking of each of my touch points as openings to new worlds and ways of being and learning. I am thinking about collaboration with students, parents, and community and what new can come out of that particular and specific space. I am thinking about my students who are now becoming teachers themselves and how we might think together in new ways as colleagues. I am thinking about other disciplines and what they might offer me in experiencing this practice in new ways. I am thinking about all my teachers, and how I have witnessed them grow, change, and explore new ideas and new ways of thinking and how I might push myself to grow and change with them as my examples.

## Jean Parisi

It's really people – gathering to engage in conversation and exchanges of ideas. Where? The places where some of the most important exchanges that spark my creative journey occur: around kitchen tables, sitting on gym floors, at tables in community centers or teacher's lounges, in library community rooms, café's or restaurants... The importance of these places are the gathering of fellow artists and workers.

## Albert Stabler

It's been such a long time since I've been in Chicago, but I particularly value and appreciate the Hyde Park Art Center, the Chicago Cultural Center, the Marwen Foundation, and Quimby's Bookstore—and so many more temporary and fleeting spaces and groups and projects in parks and schools and basements around the city.

## Melanie Miller-Silver

I see many places where ideas are exchanged, work created, and artists forged. Many places, from museums to galleries and even individual artists, offer classes in public and private. The internet has been a democratizing place where art and crafting classes are offered and this helps those who can't travel for one reason or another, and this developed so much more during COVID. I personally prefer in person classes and events because of the personal interaction you can't get online. So many venues continue to shape my artistic practice and journey, and I hope to do more in-person events in the future. Have my local community where we meet in person, and I want to see more of that as well. Art is such an integral part of Chicago and her life that it's hard to separate the art from the city, since you see it everywhere.



## Susan Friel

A couple of years ago, I invited a handful of artists and educators to join an “Arts Ed Dream Team.” I wanted to hear from respected colleagues, artists, and educators who would give it to me straight - the good, the bad, and the ugly. We met a few times to get their take on what we were doing right but more importantly what we could do better. From these sessions, a couple of strong ideas emerged and are continuing to be developed - pilot programs for schools in residence and collaborative curriculum writing. To use a culinary metaphor, we flipped the standard notion of us baking a cake and inviting others to the table to eat it. Even though we fancied ourselves pretty darn good bakers, we started in the kitchen, elbow to elbow asking what else could be on the menu besides cake. How could we bake this together? What ingredients do we need? What do we do when we veer off course? It’s been a bit messy at times and takes way longer that we thought it would. But it has definitely shifted our paradigm of how we are currently viewing arts education. These days, I’m embracing the African proverb, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

## Valerie Xanos

The spaces where ideas are co-created and exchanged are probably most easily identified as ones where it is easiest to gather. In my situation, that is foremost, the schools where I teach. Curie High School has been very important in the development of my teaching practice. Especially for their support of my development of the ARTivism classes that includes the Guerrilla Art Collective program which has its own artist residency. But that is not all. It is also the museums, galleries, art schools, and community centers who share our concern for artistic agency and youthful voice. The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and Chicago Art Department have been particularly empowering places for me and my students. Of course the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and AIC, Marwen, Yollocalli, After School Matters, Spaces for Possibility, and the Hyde Park Arts Center are other spaces where my students find inspiration and care for their journeys. All of these institutions work to provide resources and support, especially for students who are often denied equal access in our flawed system of society. Yet, I must also consider spaces that are not just institutions of power. Creative spaces are more than the physical buildings we rely upon.

My greatest resources are the artists, activists, teachers, and students within a vast network in and outside of

Chicago. The development of our ideas and catalyst of creative sparks is expansively reliant upon the incredible conversations we have with each other. It is reliant upon the artworks that others create, and how we interact and learn from those works. Artists and activists visit and speak with my students, collaborate with my students, inspire and share with my students. Other teachers (including student teachers) enlighten me with their discoveries and share their wisdom so that we may grow and expand our own processes. Students demand, experiment, and discover their own paths and it is up to me to listen and journey with them. It is very important to the students of the Guerrilla Art Collective that we give back to the community through their artworks and work to uplift others. We desire to create reciprocity in our artistic and social inquiry so as to keep that flow moving around and rippling outward to create spaces safe for all. I hope to see this continue to develop and grow so that our networks are ever expanding, our resources are ever growing, and obstacles ever shrinking. I hope to see the institutions of power recognize the voices of art students and teachers, and reach out not only with support, but with respect, care, and trust. There is so much to be gained, when our journeys are interrelated and developed through a sense of empowerment rather than who is deemed deserving of achievement.

## Cynthia Weiss

Places: Community Based arts organizations; the Center Program at Hyde Park Art Center, Marwen, National Museum of Mexican Art, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Art Institute of Chicago, and most importantly the visionaries that have led programs in each of these places.

Chicago as a place: Our city, built on a grid, opens up to Lake Michigan. Our waters, through the canals, and connection of the Chicago River to other rivers, travel to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Our neighborhoods, mash-up of cultures and histories, and the built and natural environment-all are locations for exchange and growth.

Feelings: In every school where there are generative educators, and safe creative spaces, you can feel that sense of welcome the minute you walk into the building. The message of love between and among fellow artists, teachers, and students and parents is palpable and visible. Conduits: Ideas are conduits and containers for me: Interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, dual language, trans-language, text and image, improvisation, student-centered, studio-based practice. Shared studio buildings, universities that are home to the formation of artist collaboratives. Sparks: Public Art, community gardens, local bars, cafes, so many museums and galleries, and artist-run collectives, and opportunities like this All-City book project led by Jorge and Paulina.

Thank you. Thank you.

## Niki Nolin

Books, libraries, schools, (like this! This is fabulous), would be great if it were also galleries and museums.

## Chang-Ching Su

Haines Elementary School, Chicago, Chinatown

## Olivia Gude

Out of writing time... As I retire from 50+ years of teaching and grieve recent setbacks in movements for justice, I'm in a phase of deep reflection. Thinking of Antonio Gramsci's admonition to have "pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will." I reiterate the quote from Howard Zinn, from earlier in my answers, "...to hold out even in times of deep pessimism for the possibility of surprise."

In the meantime, I will be gardening.



## DiDi Grimm

The places where I've found ideas and inspiration have emerged through partnership with other educators has been in professional learning communities, through partnerships with community organizations, conversations at local art events and random encounters with people all across the city who believe we can use art to make our city better. I've always been drawn to uncovering a sense of place. Almost 20 years ago, I picked up an issue of a new magazine, AREA (Art, Research, Education, Activism) Chicago, and one of the articles was an invitation to map out my Chicago experience. I read the article to my students, and we agreed that it would be a cool way for us to document and share our communities with each other. At the time I was working at Big Picture High School, which was located in the Dearborn Homes housing projects. Students began closely observing the environments they passed through as they went about their daily lives. The maps that came back illuminated the invisible borders that students encountered daily on their way to work and learn. I brought our maps back to the AREA Chicago as promised, and we were invited to show the maps at Pilsen Gallery Polvo in an exhibition called "The Grass is Always Greener" about environmental racism. This was a very meaningful experience for my students, who weren't convinced that art making could be meaningful and help people see their experiences in the world. This journey of encounters that become art exchanges beyond the classroom has happened over and over again throughout my time teaching in Chicago.

## Alice Costas

Room 117, the apartment on Division Street with steep stairs that used to house Young Chicago Authors, Adrian's apartment where her mom had handpainted the wallpaper so it looked like little people were playing on it, the back of Brian's used hearse with astroturf taped to the ceiling, Francis' backyard, The Art Institute, the lake way up North past curfew, the band setup in our basement, the CTA, a field trip to Lou Mitchells and the Village Discount Outlet, UIC, The Oriental Institute, The Museum of Contemporary Art, giant parties the Poetry Foundation used to throw every year at which they would give out free books to teenagers, the messy studio at Lill Street when it was still on Lill Street, the landings of staircases, the Archer Ballroom, Yollocalli, the Bridgeport Art Center, the Hyde Park Art Center, The Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, Wally's World, Jane Addams Hull House Center, A Sporting Chance summer camp, Columbia College, fences in Logan Square and Little Village, The Hairpin Arts Center, The Otto-Mat, New Urban Arts, Amanda's apartment in Boston, Sarah's house in Providence and McHenry, our apartment and our work table.

## Debra A. Hardy

My places are archives.

They are the old buildings on South Michigan Ave where the parking is free and the speedbumps are high.

They are the quiet library space at the Harsh Collection that I've never seen more than 2 people in at a time and I am unsure of what it is used for.

They are places I cannot access but think about often.

Names and addresses have been listed alphabetically:

- Chicago History Museum Library and Archive, 1601 N Clark St
- Columbia College Chicago Library, 624 S Michigan Ave
- DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center, 740 E 56th Pl
- DuSable High School, 4939 S Wabash Ave
- Griffiths-Burroughs House, 3806 S Michigan Ave
- Harold Washington Library's 8th Floor, 400 S State St
- McKinley Park Branch Library, 1915 W 35th St
- Red Line 95th/Dan Ryan Stop, 15 W 95th St
- Ryerson Library at the Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S Michigan Ave
- South Side Community Art Center, 3831 S Michigan Ave
- The Airbnb I stayed in, 5422 S Ingleside Ave
- Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection at Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S Halsted St



## **Azul and ELa LUZADALE**

While our focus is art making, our brainstorming starts in cozier settings such as chatting at home, or in the studio, or after class in the ARTivism room; 619. The other big place of brainstorming and artmaking would be social media and working with digital media. With the internet being a big part of most peoples' lives, it is easily an accessible way to ignite, exchange, grow, and store ideas when it comes to art and/or education. Witnessing world events, local news, and peoples' commentary on subjects that impact ourselves and the people of this world fuels artists like us who work in activist spaces.

## Jennifer Bergmark

When I was working at the art center, I always felt like I was running from one moment to the next, planning, teaching, and responding to needs that I didn't have time to truly reflect on what we were doing. There are always those unexpected moments of conversation that lead to new ideas and new projects. Sometimes those conversations happened at art openings, sometimes they happened while eating lunch at the conference table, and sometimes they happened while sweeping or cleaning. Every person I interacted with became a possible conduit for a new connection, a new opportunity, or the development of a new program or exhibition. When people would travel, they would bring me brochures and other documents that might provide inspiration to what we could do at the art center. We provided workshops for teachers and hearing what they wanted or what they were experiencing in the schools developed other ideas and collaborations. Relationships and partnerships developed out of these brief encounters.

I now have the incredible privilege to work at a university and to have the space and time to reflect on art education through my own experiences and as a larger field. This space brings people from all over the state, the country, and the world together and we have time to think about art and art education together through classes, social gatherings, and field trips. It is a privilege to have the

time and space to talk, think, and dream together. It is a privilege to be in a space that has resources that can support turning dreams into something in reality. It is a privilege to constantly meet new collaborators as undergraduate and graduate students. But there are always lines back to Chicago, the collaborators and spaces that are still important as well as newly discovered. Those lines are important as they tie me to foundational relationships and provide opportunities to my students who return to Chicago.

I also find myself returning to home for inspiration and to reconnect with friends who are doing amazing work. My friend Susannah Papish has a gallery in her garage and she has an ongoing research project tied to environment and place with Melissa Potter through a book called *Invisible Labors* and through Cultivator Arts and anyone interested in art, the environment, feminist histories, and arts integration would love their work. They spoke at the Field Museum and I was able to listen to their talk online, which allows me to stay connected to the city and people that inspire me, but it also means that there are so many ripples that we can't see. I always feel the pull to go back to the city because of the people, but the museums, art centers, libraries, and organizations offer endless viewing opportunities and points of interest.

## William Estrada

### **Telpochcalli Elementary**

Telpochcalli Elementary is a small community fine arts elementary school dedicated to integrating the Mexican arts and culture into an innovative academic and social experience and development of fully bilingual/biliterate students in English and Spanish. The school is comprised of students, teachers, parents and artists who aspire to nurture an understanding and appreciation of the self, family, community and world. Dreamed up by teachers in the early 1990s in collaboration with Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, the National Museum of Mexican Fine Arts, and UIC's College of Education Small School Program, the dream was to create a neighborhood school where bilingualism and biculturalism were nourished alongside a strong self of mexican Identity, culture, the arts, and social responsibility to the communities students families resided in.

### **Hyde Park Art Center**

The Hyde Park Art Center offers a comprehensive roster of programs that work in concert to make contemporary art more approachable. It does so by involving the

community in dynamic engagement with art and artists through exhibitions, artist talks, studio art classes, an international residency program, free public events, and professional development opportunities for artists. Outside its walls, the Art Center's outreach programs in historically underserved neighborhoods bring the visual arts to Chicago youth, their teachers, and their families. By developing socially adept programming that finds new ways to engage diverse audiences in the work of Chicago's artists, the Art Center makes space for transparent interaction with art and the artistic process, inspiring creative exploration and encouraging exchange between audiences and artists.

### **Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education**

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education Arts Integration is at the heart of all CAPE programs. CAPE teaching artists and classroom teachers collaborate to integrate music, visual arts, dance, digital media, and drama into their academic lessons in order to improve academic and social-emotional outcomes such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration skills. CAPE has been a leader and innovator in developing culturally responsive programming.

The Chicago ACT Collective

The Chicago ACT Collective builds political artistic collaboration and dialogue across multiple communities.



...

We aim to generate work that both reflects and responds to current local needs identified by those most directly impacted. The collective enacts self and community care through art-making. The ACT Collective has been a critical space that is dynamic and constantly creating space for us to actively practice how to care for each other in order to reveal and respond to radical ways to exist in the world that prioritize self care, radical love, and critical ideas that invite each of us to build sustainable practices around mutual aid.

### **The Mobilize Creative Collaborative**

The Mobilize Creative Collaborative Formed in 2016, the Mobilize Creative Collaborative is a collective of four artists (Aquil Charlton, William Estrada, Andrés Lemus-Spont, Marya Spont-Lemus) who utilize bicycle-based makerspaces to provide free arts workshops for youth and adults in public places. Mobilize! Creative Blocks, Collective Dreams was a 2021 series of free weeklong community gatherings, happening outdoors in five neighborhoods on Chicago's South and Southwest Sides, co-designed with a team of partner artists and partner organizers who are also rooted in these places. These gatherings brought together local residents, artists, and organizers of all ages to engage in creative workshops, critical dialogues, and playful explorations focused around justice and the dreams of their communities. With participatory music, art, and theater activities,

live performances, skill-sharing, and more, we hoped to amplify and connect existing local efforts, as well as to cultivate spaces that center imagination, joy, and people-led solutions. By connecting people both within and across communities, we hoped to create time and space for facilitated discussions, imaginative play, and communal making, as well as to learn from each other and help build trust, shared visions, creative action, and collective power. The MCC has been instrumental in thinking through what radical artists' collaboratives can look like and its members are consistently reimagining how we work together, how we build structures, and implement art projects that decenter power.

### **Englewood Arts Collective (EAC)**

Englewood Arts Collective is a group of Artists with deep roots to the Chicago Englewood neighborhood, passionate about representing, amplifying and supporting artists and creative engagements that uplift the Greater Englewood area and other communities like where they grew up. EAC is an arts organization run by artists living in the community they want to create impact in. They have been such an amazing organization to learn from as they develop, implement, and enact artists center practices that protect and amplify the community they live in.

## Laura Sáenz

In everyday life - in my home, on my street, in the kitchen. With my neighbors - elders who quilt and sew. With my children and family breaking down generational shifts, challenges and idea-making that must change. Sitting at a table sharing conversations and/or meals. In work spaces or types of work that could use arts education as a way of seeing something differently - such as in my work in cultural research with organizations or on a film set that wants to produce, yet not process an experience. Sitting at a table with women who have gone through trauma and find release in a poem and in a drawing of their own creation. Lastly and especially, in my dreams.

## S Valle

I rely on my peers, my coworkers, my loved ones who nurture my compassion. I feel like I am still learning where to find places and maybe am still finding my art place in the world. I think bringing art into discussions with other people is how to get the web started. Weaving from one person to the next and even if someone is a “dead end” the web is not stopped!

## Jessica Mueller

The place is flexible and ambiguous. It is the pairings and the constellations of people. The place can be at a meeting / pd, in the classroom or backyard, a cafe, or camping in the woods, someone's home, or on the car drive over to a school, it is virtual Google Meets and Zoom rooms, text threads, over drinks, or in one's dining room. It's at mom and pop restaurants, in memories past, readings and art work... lecture halls and city street corners.

## Jon Pounds

A “problematic” space or monument in a school or community that signifies or names a problematic historic idea or presence is also an opportunity to reconsider the past and imagine the needed future - depict history without ignoring or erasing it while imagining what we might do to create a better future.





# APPENDIX

These contributions were outside  
of the parameters that the discrete  
sections of the book asked  
for, but we wanted to include  
them because we recognized our  
predetermined parameters have  
limitations



## Adriana Peña

I think that 3 hours is too little time to express how beautiful my life has been as an artist and as an arts instructor. Years have passed since I started experimenting with paintbrushes. But it was not until 2010 that my creativity began to flow and be prolific. With my desire to express feelings and thoughts, I began experimenting with artistic techniques... any type of expressive medium was a new world full of creativity and satisfaction. My hands were always covered in paint, ink, clay, etc.

3rd Annual Día de las Mujeres Fashion Show, 2018



that date there was no turning back; I became addicted to public art. Making art has a pure way of healing the wounds in the hearts and minds of migrants.

Being in contact with the community of artists in the Chicago area made me realize even more how far away I was from my cultural roots, but not only me, but also the people belonging to my Latino neighborhood; those people who do not belong to the arts circle, those who can afford a piece of art. People who, like me, migrated, and who left their dreams to provide a better future for their children who migrated with them and also for those born here. So then I felt the need to start sharing all those crafts and arts that I had learned since my childhood, back in my Mexico, back among family cuddles, warm festivities and childhood friends. When I saw the disconnection from our ancestors that many of us suffered when entering the largest and most suffocating capitalist system in the world, I felt the need to share our roots legacy through art.

Bordando Tradiciones. Back of the yards. 2016.



## APPENDIX

It was then that handmade embroidery became, and has been, for many years, one of my main tools to connect people of the neighborhood with our ancestral roots. Seeing how families come together to learn a tradition from our American countries, fills my heart with joy. Immigrant parents, first, second and third generations, sharing all together at a table full of colorful threads, smiles, and getting in touch with the culture of the generations who sacrificed everything for those smiles.

I have been able, through private organizations, to reach the people who drive my need for sharing. People from the neighborhoods come to our workshops with deep curiosity, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, grandmothers, grandfathers, granddaughters, grandsons, entire families attending workshops where art is their connection to their born countries.

Mural, Somos Multiculturales. South West Side Chicago - DCASE 2023



I have had to go to public institutions some other times to be able to bring these workshops to the community. Chicago is a very diverse city that has public programs where any artist can propose ideas and receive funds to materialize these projects. We have created murals, we have created fashion shows, we have created programs where we have provided all kinds of artistic techniques and all of this, in community; because no person can teach art, if there is no interest from others to learn. However, many of those grants are repeatedly distributed among organizations that rarely have the intention of bringing art to the homes of the Hispanic or African-American community. Although I would rather not demonize anyone, I would love for there to be, an equitable distribution, where the funds reach those who really need it; because although a luxurious mural looks beautiful in the city, it is useless if this experience is not also shared with the people who really live oppressed by the system.

Connection with Cacao. Toma del Sagrado Cacao. La Villita. 2024.



## APPENDIX

Throughout my public career, curiously, I have tried to surround myself with female painters, cool women, from whom I have learned a lot, all of them Latinas, with the impetus to create, share and give to the community. Chicago is identified as one of the cities where art flourishes and this, from my perspective, originates in our cultural plurality.

The artistic legacy is seen in the colors and shapes that artists and art teachers leave imprinted on the walls and in the minds of everyone who takes their classes. Art in the city of Chicago has beautiful origins, from the graffiti on 16th Street, 18th Street in Pilsen, to the art displayed in galleries downtown. But art education comes not only from institutions, but also from home,

from the teachings of our mothers and grandmothers, from the heritage that past generations left painted on Mayan walls, molded into monoliths, or sculpted by BIPOC ancestors.

Bordando Tradiciones. Pilsen 2022.





I know that art will be with us until the last day of the existence of civilizations. The only thing that matters is to be aware of the type of cultural-artistic legacy that will be left to the following generations. The word heal is a giant word; because... what we are healing, and how we're healing, is what is our interest when it comes to using creativity. Be curious, investigate, and unearth the origin of everything, listen to everything, do not believe everything, question everything, let your imagination always be free and manifest your ideas on every stone on the planet.

La Brocha Annual Holidays Celebration. Museo Nacional de Arte Mexicano en Pilsen. 2023.



## Adriana Peña

Primero, creo que 3 horas son muy poco tiempo para expresar lo hermosa que ha sido mi vida como artista y como instructora de artes. Los años han pasado desde la primera vez que empecé a experimentar con un pincel; pero no fue hasta el 2010 que mi creatividad comenzó a fluir y ser prolífera y, con este ímpetu de querer expresar, comencé a aprender de manera autodidacta, sobre técnicas artísticas de todo tipo... cualquier tipo de medio expresivo era un mundo nuevo y lleno de creatividad y satisfacción. Mis manos siempre estaban llenas de pintura, tinta, engrudo y todo lo que cayera a mis manos.

3rd Annual Día de las Mujeres Fashion Show, 2018



Mi experiencia en el mundo público del arte en Chicago comenzó en el año 2013, a partir de esa fecha no hubo retorno; me volví en una adicta al arte público. El hacer arte tiene una forma pura de sanar las heridas que a los migrantes, nos deja el acto de dejar el país donde nacimos.

El estar en contacto con la comunidad de artistas en el área de Chicago, me hizo darme cuenta aún más de lo lejos que yo me encontraba de mis raíces culturales, pero no solo yo, sino también la gente perteneciente a mi barrio latino; esa gente que no pertenece al medio de las artes, la gente que como yo, migró, y que dejó sus sueños por brindarle un futuro mejor a sus hijos que migraron con ellos y también a los nacidos aquí.

Entonces sentí la necesidad de comenzar a compartir todas aquellas artesanías y artes que yo había aprendido desde mi niñez, allá en mi México, allá entre arrumacos familiares, festividades cálidas y amigos de la niñez. Sentí la necesidad de compartir nuestras raíces a través del arte, cuando vi la desconexión de nuestros ancestros que muchos sufrimos al entrar al sistema capitalista más grande y asfixiante del mundo.

Bordando Tradiciones. Back of the yards. 2016.





Fue entonces donde el bordado artesanal se convirtió y ha sido por muchos años una de mis principales herramientas para conectar a la gente del barrio con nuestras raíces ancestrales. Ver cómo las familias se reúnen para aprender una tradición de nuestros países americanos, me llena el corazón de gozo. Madres inmigrantes, primeras, segundas y terceras generaciones, compartiendo todos juntos en una mesa llena de hilos de colores, sonrisas y acercamiento a la cultura de los padres que sacrificaron todo para estar en ese momento ahí.

A través de organizaciones privadas, he podido llegar a la gente que impulsa mi necesidad de compartir, la gente de los barrios acude a nuestros talleres con mucha curiosidad, madres, padres, hijos, hijas, abuelas, abuelos, nietas, nietos, familias enteras atendiendo talleres donde el arte es su conexión con sus países.

Mural, Somos Multiculturales. South West Side Chicago - DCASE 2023



Algunas veces he tenido que acudir a instituciones públicas para poder traer estos talleres a la comunidad. Chicago es una ciudad muy diversa y cuenta con programas públicos donde cualquier artista puede proponer ideas y recibir fondos para materializar estos proyectos. Hemos creado murales, hemos creado desfiles de moda, hemos creado programas donde hemos bridado todo tipo de técnicas artísticas y todo esto, en comunidad; porque ninguna persona puede enseñar arte, si no hay interés de otros por aprender. Sin embargo, muchas estas becas se distribuyen repetidamente entre organizaciones que pocas veces tienen intención de acercar el arte a los hogares de la comunidad hispana o afroamericana. Aunque no quiero demonizar a nadie, me encantaría que, por lo menos en esta área como lo es el arte, hubiera una distribución equitativa. Donde los fondos lleguen a quienes realmente lo necesitan; porque si bien un lujoso mural luce hermoso en la ciudad, de nada sirve si esta experiencia no la tiene también, la gente que realmente vive oprimida por el sistema.

Connection with Cacao. Toma del Sagrado Cacao. La Villita. 2024.



A lo largo de mi carrera pública, curiosamente, he procurado rodearme de mujeres pintoras, mujeres chingonas, de quienes he aprendido mucho, todas ellas latinas, con el ímpetu de crear, compartir y dar a la comunidad. Chicago se identifica como una de las ciudades donde el arte florece y esto, desde mi perspectiva, se origina en nuestra pluralidad cultural.

El legado artístico se ve de colores y formas que los artistas y los maestros de arte dejan impresos en las paredes y en las mentes de todo aquel que toma sus clases.

El arte en la ciudad de Chicago tiene orígenes hermosos, desde el grafiti en la calle 16, la calle 18 en Pilsen, hasta el arte que se exhibe en las galerías en el centro de la ciudad.

La educación artística no solo viene de instituciones, sino también del hogar, de nuestras madres y abuelas, de la herencia que las generaciones pasadas dejaron pintadas en las paredes mayas, moldeadas en monolitos, o esculpidas por los ancestros BIPOC.

Bordando Tradiciones. Pilsen 2022.



Sé que el arte nos acompañará hasta el último día de la existencia de cada civilización, lo único que importa es ser conscientes del tipo de legado cultural y artístico que se deja a las siguientes generaciones. La palabra sanar es una palabra gigante; pero, lo que sanamos y cómo lo sanamos, es lo interesante cuando de usar la creatividad se trata.

Sé curiosa (o) investiga, y desentierra el origen de todo, escucha todo, no creas todo, cuestiona todo, que tu imaginación siempre sea libre y plasma tus ideas en cada piedra del planeta.

La Brocha Annual Holidays Celebration. Museo Nacional de Arte Mexicano en Pilsen. 2023.





## Ava Maken Ali

The ~~White~~ Polar Bear

This is a <sup>very</sup> personal story of mine about how I got through COVID by using my shitty old studio apartment as a way to deal with something that broke my heart into thousand pieces. This piece is about a time in Chicago, when <sup>everything</sup> things felt overwhelming, and making, re-making and living with something helped <sup>me</sup> process it. My apartment was tiny, falling apart, and so old. I will remember the toilet barely flushing. It had one job, and even that was too much for it.

During that time, I was fighting two wars: (1) the one outside my body, trying not to get sick and die. And (2) the one inside my body, trying to keep my idiot heart from self-destructing. There was this boy I had a deep crush on him, or we had a crush on each other. I don't know, COVID was like this weird, messy storm. A time for unwanted truths, forced changes, and all the bullshit you had to convince yourself to believe just to go through it. And then, one day, his truth came out: he was gay.

I still remember that moment. I was sitting in the bathroom, crying. Or maybe it was the shower crying? Who knows. Everything was a mess. Processing all that in the middle of a pandemic, while stuck alone in that old, crappy apartment, was just brutal. But somehow, I got through it.

I also started questioning my own identity. The confusion, the changes, <sup>and</sup> ~~everything~~ everything was happening inside me. I kept asking myself, "Am I becoming more camel, or is a camel becoming more me?" The camel was my animal alter ego, which is why it felt so tied to my identity. This question stuck in my head like an annoying song. So, I started making camel body parts. Mostly heads and humps in all kinds of sizes. And I couldn't stop! I kept making them over and over, like Ariel in the Little Mermaid, plucking flowers, wondering if prince Eric loved her or not: He loves me  
He loves me not  
He loves me  
He loves me not



~~the piece I made with camel pastes~~  
 my sketch drawing of the piece I made with camel pastes and the  
 "white bear"  
 "white"

## APPENDIX

I also made a polar bear out of my notebook paper

Not the bear you should think of

But the one you are told not to think of

The "White Bear Phenomenon", or "Ironic Process Theory (IPT)" I'm talking about  
problem


The bear's pose was the boy in his yellow t-shirt  
their

While he was either fixing his belt

or

checking his pocket

He was looking down

So all you could see was the middle part in <sup>their</sup> hair 

It was him

The polar bear

with his hair

with his pose

And for reasons unknown

I put him on the camel body path.



Sketch drawing of Him - The Polar Bear



## APPENDIX

For at least a year, I lived with these pieces. They became my thesis project. And, they became like a physical sign of how I was feeling, and over time, making them and living with them helped tortured me and made me to accept <sup>with</sup> the ~~change~~ in my life. The process of building and being around the sculptures I made, well... I don't ~~like~~ like to say heal, but made me to the point where I could just say, "This is what it is."

— Linda Mason

## APPENDIX

Photo of the piece I made with camel parts and the polar white bear existing in my apartment.



Photo of him. The Polar Bear





Book design by Natalia Espinel and Tim Abel



**GALLERY 400**

