

# Welcome to the inaugural edition of Artizein.

The foundational premise of *Artizein* is that the practice and pedagogy of the arts is relational and vital for restoring, sustaining and transforming life. The aim of *Artizein* is to enlarge the domain of the arts and teaching by creating a visually enticing journal dedicated to articulating multiple perspectives on the arts and what the arts are for. *Artizein* offers its readers original material from artists, teachers, and researchers, in the hopes of providing fresh insight into the creating and teaching of the arts for and by many populations, both contemporary and historical.

“There is no inherent difference between fullness of activity and artistic activity; the latter is one with being fully alive. Hence, it is not something possessed by a few persons and setting them apart from the rest of mankind, but is the normal or natural human heritage.” –John Dewey

The originating impulse for founding *Artizein* was the growing impression the editors had that the field of art teaching had, over the years, come to be defined as a profession primarily practiced by certified art teachers within public schools. We realize much work has been done to increase the scope of arts education to include more institutions and a broader range of students, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and distinctive portions of the general population relative to race, gender, income — in community, hybrid, public and private spaces designated (or not) for artistic activity. As editors we observe how artist-teachers are engaging a multitude of approaches to teaching and many other ways of nurturing artful inquiry processes in settings beyond the public school system. *Artizein* intends to serve as a venue for authors and readers whose interests as artists, teachers and researchers, not only address the child in public school but also reach further into artistic teaching and learning practices within the larger community.

We know the arts serve its practitioners and its witnesses in many ways:

- *As means of restoring balance between the cognitive and affective domains,*
- *As means by which an individual is distinguished from their group, and the individual is embedded within their group,*
- *As a significant element in the many rituals that enable communities and individuals to make transitions in their lives and community,*
- *As a spiritual practice; deepening ones sense of being in the many levels of a many level world,*
- *As embracing diversity,*
- *As signs of affection, affiliation, enthusiasm,*
- *As designation of significant spaces and times delineating the ordinary from the extra ordinary,*
- *As forms of thinking and feeling that can only be articulated via the art forms most congenial to those who think and feel most deeply via those art forms,*
- *As ways of investigating and representing features of the manifest world and ones inner world otherwise opaque and indistinct.*

We also know that the schools we have, and the arts curricula, the pedagogies, the standards, the teaching certification requirements and their teacher training programs struggle to incorporate these many, varied and powerful contributions of the arts. Yet all these ways in

which the arts serve people and communities emerge in abundance in the world we have right here and now. The ruled and the unruly dynamics of life creates broad and fertile arenas within which all these functions of the arts can and do emerge. Despite and sometimes because of our richly varied circumstances; our hybrid, free wheeling, multi-dimensional, uncertain, unbalanced, opportunistic, unfair, unjust, inequitable landscape of abundant freedoms and restraints produces a most fertile domain for the emergence of the new, often the more fitting, more often the revealing and certainly vigorous evolutionary forces.

This current issue with its focus on social engagement through the arts opens with an art teachers' prayer in the form of a poem by **Sally Gradle**. Gradle's poems are then intersperse themselves between and around the subsequent articles, offering the reader a place of thoughtful pause and consideration before and after each article. Following the silent prayer **Kristen Congdon** calls our attention to the largely racial disparity embedded in the label of "self-taught artist" and challenges us to question the power of labels that perpetuate the marginalization and devaluing of certain kinds of arts education and artists in our midst. **Peter London** then enticingly brings to our view the painter Seymour Segal, an artist who admits the viewer unabashedly into the "discomfort, the danger... of the protagonist or event

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taking place.” **Angela La Porte** leads us next into a pedagogical experience of “inverse inclusion” that involves an open-ended curriculum with a variety of roles for teaching and learning between differently and typically abled learners. A spiritual approach to art education is articulated by **Nico Roenpagel**, who reminds us how alternative world views require alternative visions of education, if we, as arts educators are committed to “creating a more compassionate and sustainable future.” Moving from a cosmos-centric vision of art education to a specific place-based form of education, **Jodi Kushins** invites us into art education in her backyard as a form of socially engaged art; where

the idea of art opens up our understanding of what the medium and experience of art can or should be. **Jodi Patterson** shares her insights regarding her socially mediated art practice as a “Land Ambassador.” Patterson utilizes landscape photography and her nomadic travel experiences as an opportunity to educate her “friends” on global climate change. **Barbara Bickel's** article and video offer a socially engaged art project as an example of dynamic lived curriculum. Through what the Gestare Art Collective call a *Nap-In* students, faculty and the community encounter and engage the unusual experience of communal napping, social dreaming and art making. The final submission returns the reader to a place of thoughtful pause and consideration as **Nicole Gnezda** shares the powerful integration of existential art therapy with art education through three varied and brave programs she developed; successfully demonstrating that personal struggles are often the inhibitor of learning rather than academic issues. A line in Gradle's closing poem reflects the message of the articles in this first issue of *Artizein*, which ultimately invites artists, teachers, researcher and learners into “*creating art of your life.*”

The Editors,  
*Peter London, Sally Gradle, Barbara Bickel and Jodi Patterson*

