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Foreword

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Foreword

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Authors appearing in *Visual Arts Research* (VAR) exemplify current issues of concern to the many theories and practices that now inform visual arts and aesthetic education worldwide. “Identity and the Visual Arts Curriculum in Colonial and Postcolonial Hong Kong” opens the Summer 2010 issue of the journal. Here, Ma So Mui provides an historical and critical analysis of how governing authorities in Hong Kong, both colonial and now postcolonial, have used art education in an attempt to shape notions of local cultural identity both during and after the British colonial years. Against the backdrop of globalization, Western, and now mainland Chinese pressures, Mui examines curricular choices and omissions of artworks, aesthetic orientations, and studio practices in K–12 art frameworks published in Hong Kong over the past 50 years. Following, in “Examining Explanations for Differences in Two-Dimensional Graphic Spatial Representation of Cubes Among Totally Blind Subjects,” Bin I and Chuen-Jiang Shiu examine varying conditions underlying the two-dimensional spatial representation strategies of individuals with congenital blindness, and refute prior research and commonly held beliefs that tactile perception may replace visual perception. Their findings also reveal the paucity of attention to representational strategies, emotional qualities, perceptions, and aesthetic qualities of the art of blind individuals, particularly within the realm of three-dimensional creative expression. Next, in “Promoting Artistic and Cultural Development Through Service Learning and Critical Pedagogy in a Low-Income Community Art Program,” Christopher Adejumo describes a minority youth community art program located in a low-income housing neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio. Focus-

ing on programming activities informed by service learning and critical pedagogy, Adejumo both presents this program as a model for community arts-based youth empowerment and hopes that their approach will find resonance in schools with K–12 art teachers.

The next five essays focus on philosophical beliefs, pedagogical approaches, and curricular work of visual arts educators. The 2009 National Art Education Association Seminar for Research in Art Education Elliot Eisner Dissertation of the Year recipient Patti Pente uses the emerging research methodology of *a/r/tography*. Her essay, “*Soil: Threshold Spaces of Subjectivity, Pedagogy, and Place in Landscape Art*,” conveys her insights about how these intersections bring forth emergent understandings of *being with*, *becoming*, and *belonging*. Next, in a multisite case study of beginning art teachers, Deborah Kuster, Christina Bain, Connie Newton, and Melody Milbrandt describe the challenges and successes of art teachers as they navigate and make sense of their first years of teaching: “Novice Art Teachers: Navigating Through the First Year” fills a gap in knowledge about how our students fare once they graduate and take their place as professionals, and provides substantive information about K–12 art teachers’ current workplace conditions. The following essay, “‘So What.’ ‘Who Cares?’ ‘Whatever.’ Changing Adolescents’ Attitudes in the Art Classroom,” reveals deeply felt concerns of an experienced, compassionate high school art teacher. In her study of a visual culture–oriented high school art course designed and implemented by the author in a Midwest U.S. high school, Karen Cummings discovers that it was the nature and quality of the teacher-student interactions and relationships that were of most significance in influencing students’ classroom attitudes and behaviors. The theme of caring relationships also resonates in “Bridging: Feminist Pedagogy and Art Education.” Here, the 2009 National Art Education Association Women’s Caucus Carrie Nordlund Pre-K–12 Award recipient Caryl Rae Church describes her experiences in shaping the art education program in a small, Midwest U.S. rural elementary school. Engaging the metaphor of a bridge to symbolize the place *in between*, a place of connection, reflection, and transformation in the classroom, Church also explains how her feminist pedagogical approach both informs her art-teaching practice and reveals her aspirations for her young students. The following essay, “Teacher Art Talk: What We Say Matters,” further examines the nature and quality of teacher talk in the public school art room. Here, Teresa Cotner analyzes the art-classroom discourse of four different kinds of individuals teaching art in California elementary schools: a student teacher, an artist in residence, a volunteer parent, and a credentialed art specialist. Cotner’s study illuminates strengths and weaknesses in specific kinds of art teacher talk and offers suggestions for art teacher preparation programs.

The workplace conditions of art education postsecondary faculty members,

although important for obvious reasons, is rarely studied systematically or written about in art education journals. In the final essay, Melody Milbrandt and Sheri Klein fill another gap in our knowledge about the enterprise of visual arts education, sharing findings from their survey of art education faculty members working in post-secondary institutions: “A Survey of Postsecondary Art Educators’ Workplace Concerns” spotlights workplace issues articulated by respondents in their study—faculty salaries, workloads, promotion and tenure policies, and collective bargaining practices in higher education. Art educators are indebted to Milbrandt and Klein for bringing forward these concerns and conditions.

Widely varied in their methods of investigation and sites for inquiry, the essays in this issue of *VAR* reveal current interests in and insights about visual arts education. Open issues on varied topics determined by writers and reviewers are typically published once a year, and *VAR* invites manuscripts informing all facets of visual arts theory, inquiry, education, and practice. Themed issues forthcoming within the next 3 years include future *special issues* devoted to the work of Jacques Lacan (2010), Girl Power! (2011), A/r/tography (2012), and a special issue to be designed and written entirely in graphic novel/comic book style (2012). Inquiries from readers and potential writers are welcome at any time.