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Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

Guest Editor's Introduction

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This Special Edition of the *Arts & Learning Research Journal*, graciously hosted by the *International Journal of Education in the Arts*, marks the first online-only presence of our journal. This is an exciting transition for *Arts & Learning*, which has been a scholarly print journal for over 25 years. As explained in our 2010 Call for Papers, we were interested in exploring how an online venue might expand creative presentations of research, and visually enhance scholarship in the arts.

As always, our journal requires that the authors submit accepted AERA presentations from the previous year on topics pertinent to learning in the arts. All AERA submissions are subject to blind review, and then the *Arts and Learning* review panel and editor read each submission to provide authors with additional feedback. This year's edition had an unprecedented 70% acceptance rate and boasts a wide range of topics in the arts.

As the Guest Editor for *Arts & Learning*'s online emergence, I was fascinated by the diversity in thinking that researchers are currently exploring in the arts. Jennifer Katz-Buonincontro examines the ways that aesthetic knowing influences leadership decisions by looking at several models in the field. She reminds us that there is artistry in leadership, which is seen through organizational beauty, the value of a greater good in leadership design, empathy, and somatic awareness—an embodied knowledge that shapes leadership's expression.

Gianna Di Reeze and Kathy Mantas likewise connect us to tacit understandings by making the embodied experience of teaching and learning a personal, social practice. They reclaim and reframe the many avenues that instructors might mindfully contribute to the growth of learners.

By exploring the social influences inherent in the creative process, Miriam Giguere adds new categories to our aesthetic understanding of what children intuitively feel about their efforts to create with their bodies, and through their bodies. The research shows that their collaboration opens voluntary connections developed through negotiation and trust, and a belief in the efficacy of their own ideas.

Matt Omasta, the *Arts & Learning* Dissertation Award Winner of 2010, illumines how emotions influence beliefs in a study that examines middle school students' reactions to theatrical performance. The embodied emotions that are caught appear to shape the cognitive processes and establish new meanings—about one's self and about others.

Through three case studies that involve arts-based projects, Joe Norris offers a glimpse of what it means to qualitatively embrace differences and develop assessment that might better navigate future instruction in the arts. What is our responsibility, for example, to those who wish to move toward poesis in their arts-based expressions? How can work be assessed differently when it shifts from a more pedagogically based exercise?

Readers have an opportunity to explore the strengths of a community-based art model through an intriguing look at a film school in the work of Ching-Chiu Lin, Juan Carlos Castro, and Kit Grauer. Set in the idyllic beauty of a remote island in British Columbia, their research shows how the film school encouraged students to leave school boundaries, take risks, explore tension as part of the process, and develop ideas that had both personal and collective significance.

In “Performing an Archive of Resistance,” authors Claire Robson, Dennis Sumara, and Rebecca Luce-Kapler explore through two different population studies how fictional identities created through reading and writing practices influence the formation of one's consciousness. They cite new perspectives that illustrate how participation in reading, writing and responding can create and transform conscious engagement, placing it once again within the body and not simply as a function of the mind/brain. The authors ask important questions for all research in education: “If we consider the embodied self a situation, how do we change it? And when?”

Melanie Burdick delves into the possibilities of found poetry as research methodology, describing her work with two teachers in converting transcriptions of interviews into poetic

forms that could be shared and compared as ways of reflecting upon experience in new ways. The revelations that can occur through this multiplication of languages and perspectives suggests the rich potential of this arts-based approach to research.

All of these research studies present readers of *Arts & Learning* with an opportunity to mull over the deeply embodied self that is so pervasive yet often unrecognized in diverse educational applications; from leadership aesthetics to teaching, to creative dance and film, to theatrical engagement and response, and literature, all of which examine educational climate change. Are we giving ample room to teachers and learners to be present in the moment, in their own bodies that tacitly feel more than they verbally articulate? Through the outstanding research in this edition, we have this opportunity to share the scholars' journeys into a less divisive realm of education, one in which the hallmark of excellence is surely the attention that is given to being aware and present in the moment.

I would like to extend gratitude to all the authors for enriching our journal experience and to the *Arts & Learning* Review Panel of scholars whose expertise was so valuable, particularly given the wide range of content in this edition. To the staff and scholars who took the individual papers and worked their magic to make them coalesce into a cohesive edition, you have my utmost thanks and admiration. Readers, I hope, will be encouraged by our online emergence, and consider that their AERA scholarship may also find a home next year in *Arts & Learning*.

Respectfully submitted,

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