Notes for a Dialogue on Art Education in Critical Times
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"I can't understand what is happening to the field of art education with all this stuff about adult politics, etc."

Notes for a Dialogue on Art Education

Thirty years ago, noted curriculum theorist James B. Macdonald (1977) wrote, "Any person concerned with curriculum must realize that he/she is engaged in a political activity" (p. 15). During Fall 2006, we witnessed a heated debate on the National Art Education Association's Higher Education listserv regarding the pros and cons of political engagement in art classrooms. The representative positions can be summarized via the following quotations—some, admittedly, not in their complete context:

> I can't understand what is happening to the field of art education with all this stuff about adult politics, etc. What does all that have to do with children creating art work? Nothing, as I see it. (John A. Michael, posted 09/28/06)

> Teachers advocating political agendas in the classroom are an assault on our professional responsibility to teach art. (Richard Ciganko, posted 09/27/06)

> [T]he extent to which a teacher of art functions as if walking on egg shells, fearing virtually any engagement with social/political issues, that teacher is, at the very least, lacking the professional autonomy and/or courage that the job requires. (Charles Wieder, posted 10/09/06)

> [O]ur 'professional responsibility to teach art' clearly includes creating visually literate students. And this inexorably includes exploring the complex interconnections between images and ideology, representation and bias, art(ists) and society. (David Darts, posted 09/28/06)

> The violence, dishonesty, immorality, irresponsibility, etc. that plagues our society comes from our society itself.... Why not make school a haven where these sorts of things don't invade their day? (Kathy Bell, posted 09/28/06)

BY DIPTI DESAI AND GRAEME CHALMERS

Schools have always been subject to an overwhelming variety of socio-political demands, which shift in response to the political climate—impacting art education in different ways. The current debate on social and political issues in art education is not new. Beginning with McFee (1966), and particularly since the 1970s, in addition to our previous work, there has been a growing body of literature relating art education to social issues (e.g., Atkinson & Dash, 2005; Bersson, 1986; Beyer, 2000; Blandy, 1987; Cahan & Kocur, 1996; Darts, 2006; Felshin, 1995; Freedman, 2000; Garber, 2004; Greene, 1995; Holloway & Krensky, 2001; Jeffers & Parth, 1996; Rose & Kincheloe, 2003; Stuhr, 1994, 2003; Yokley, 1999). However, its resurgence at this particular historical moment requires us to revisit the question: *What should the relationship be between art education in schools and society at large?* This question is not simply academic but also has real consequences in such perilous times for the future of art education in schools. The war on terrorism, the curtailing of civil liberties under the Patriot Act, the censorship of civil society, and the increased militarization of life have created a state of uncertainty. Adding more layers to these unsettling times are the forces of globalization that contribute to a world that is simultaneously connected, yet extremely fragmented; racism, often state sanctioned, has been implemented in different ways around the globe; and the world's economy, dominated by transnational corporations, has increased the gap between the rich and poor.

Reading the debate on the NAEA Higher Education listserv, we found ourselves thinking: What kind of critical times are these in which once again, we need to re-examine and explore possibilities for social justice art education? In order to keep the possible roles of art in a democratic society alive in our teaching, we focus on two beliefs that shape our understanding of social justice art education and also explore contemporary art practices that may assist and inspire us to engage critically with a variety of pressing issues.

What should the relationship be between art education in schools and society at large?

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Unframing Art Education in Critical Times

In the face of competing radical, liberal, and conservative demands today, it may be tempting to view the role of art education in schooling as apolitical. However, the power of art to shape our understanding of the world in particular ways is certainly not lost on those in power. This was evident on February 5, 2003 when Colin Powell delivered his address on waging war against Iraq at the United Nations in New York. The U.N. had been told to cover the tapestry reproduction of Picasso's *Guernica* displayed at the entrance to the Security Council (Walker, 2003). The reason given was that the juxtaposition of Powell with the artwork would send mixed messages to the people in the United States watching on television. The censorship of art indicates that art is not neutral, despite the systematic representation of art as apolitical in art education. As Foucault (1977) reminds us, the discipline of art education through the discourse on self-expression and formalist aesthetics is controlled and structured, selected and redistributed, in lesson plans, curricula, art education magazines, and journals, etc. This discourse on self-expression and formalist aesthetics that dominates the field has created a commonsense understanding that art classrooms are among the few remaining domains that are neutral—and that should be preserved and guarded. But we believe, like Tom Anderson, another listserv participant: "If you insist that art is just about line and color and composition—that is, decoration—you are still engaging in a social/political position about the nature of art and what it does" (Posted 10/03/06).

Art is a contested terrain that offers different ways of considering, imagining, and representing our lived situation. Because it shapes our ideology, or as Stuart Hall explains our "mental framework—the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the system of representation—which different classes and groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out, and render intelligible the way society works" (Morley & Chen, 1996, p. 26-27), it is a "symbolic battleground" (Shohat & Sham, 1994, p. 183). In other words, "art" is about life; it educates, it provides pleasure, and it often seeks to make a difference by "unframing" (Rogoff, 2005) serious issues and imagining other ways of being and knowing.

In a recent preface to his spoken word performance texts, "El Mexorcist (A Performance)," Guillermo Gómez-Peña, an internationally renowned artist, reflected on his work, and asked artists and cultural workers to question why they do what they do. As he writes, one of the roles of a performance artist is to "ask questions in original ways" (Gómez-Peña, 2006, p. 5). The questions he asks as an artist are also those we need to be asking as art educators:

> Why do we continue doing what we are doing (in my case, writing and performing) against the backdrop of war, censorship, cultural paranoia and spiritual despair? What are the new roles that artists must undertake? Where are the new borders between the accepted and the forbidden? Is art still a pertinent form of inquiry and contestation? Is my audience really with me? Who are 'we' and who are 'they'? Can I collaborate with my audience in the making of the performance? From whence do we draw the energy to continue? (Gómez-Peña, 2006, p. 5)

Against the bleak backdrop outlined by Gómez-Peña, schools traditionally reinforce apathy and passivity without considering new roles for art education. Although the borders between the accepted and forbidden may sometimes appear blurred, nevertheless: What is accepted and what is excluded in art education? For, example, in the minds of some elementary school administrators, Friday afternoon "School Art" is expected to be appropriately decorative, about "safe" subjects, and discussed mostly in terms of the elements of art and principles of design. In secondary schools too, rather than require engagement with potent "visual culture," art is often equated with "recreation." Contestation and art that deals with real human issues is absent. Despite the image of the artist as a non-conformist, art programs reinforce conformity as much as any other curriculum area. The introduction of drawing into the public schools 135 years ago had more to do with children learning to be neat and to follow rules than with learning about art. Just look at any late 19th-century drawing manual to see how much *obedience* and *conformity* were reinforced. For example, drawing lessons invariably began with freehand drawing of both vertical and horizontal straight lines.

Although, art education has certainly changed from the 19th century, formalist notions of art that still emphasize conformity and obedience largely govern the kinds of art projects assigned in school today. A look at both national and state art standards, and any curricula designed by school districts, demonstrates that art is understood as a universal language that requires exploring a set of formalist skills, manipulating different materials and mediums, and expressing one's understanding of the world. Although viewing and talking about art is now part of art pedagogy, it is based on modernist notions of art that place importance on description and analysis of art objects. School art is more about illustrating or analyzing existing knowledge rather than a practice from which new forms of knowledge about our world are constructed that ask the critical questions Gómez-Peña (2006) proposed. School art is extremely different from contemporary art practices in form and content. Giving increased attention to contemporary art practices[1] opens new possibilities for art educational practices in schools. Borrowing from Irit Rogoff (2005), the contemporary relationship between art practice and critical theory that is important to underscore for art educators is that we can,

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> no longer think of art as applying existing knowledge through other means, no longer illustrating or analyzing or translating. Rather we think that it is both a research mode and a means of knowledge production in and of itself. Therefore, art and visual culture are able to produce both new knowledge as well as new modes of knowing which have the potential to unframe some serious issue. (http://mediageographies.blogspot.com)

This potential of art is what we focus on in the rest of this essay, as it has also increasingly drawn the attention of educators interested in re-conceptualizing public school education in these times of testing, standardization, and accountability (Crichlow, 2003: Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001; Ellsworth, 2005: Greene 1995). We join these educators in envisioning new models of pedagogy that will keep this contemporary understanding of art practice central to public education and not marginal to the core subjects as it has always been.

Towards a Pedagogy of Social Justice Art Education

While we believe that social action projects can reduce apathy and promote a sense of efficacy among youth, the challenge is whether or not such art and design projects can actually happen in schools as we know them? It is significant that, with a few exceptions, a number of outstanding art-related projects have taken place not in public schools, but in such places as shelters for street kids and community workshops (Atkinson & Dash, 2005). Although a challenge given our current state of affairs, a social justice art education can no longer be dismissed as unprofessional or irrelevant in schools. We might recall Vincent Lanier's (1969) proclamation nearly 40 years ago for socially relevant art education:

> What we need... are new conceptions of modes of artistic behavior, new ideas of what might constitute the curricula of the art class. These new curricula must be meaningful and relevant to pupils. These new ideas must engage the "guts and hopes" of the youngsters and through these excitements provoke intellectual effort and growth. These new ideas must give the art class a share in the process of exploring social relationships and developing alternative models of human behavior in a quickly changing and, at this point in time quickly worsening social environment. (p. 314)

Listening to this call for action, in what follows we highlight two beliefs that underscore social justice art education that are based on the pedagogy of possibility offered by contemporary art practice. These beliefs may require a rethinking of our understanding of artmaking, viewing, and aesthetics. The beliefs are: (1) understanding the politics of images—that is the way images circulate within and across societies and construct meanings about the world in particular ways; and (2) aesthetics needs to be understood as relational or dialogic.

How can students see that making art in school is and has been a political process in which they need to engage; to see, feel, experience, and commit to the politics of image making; to learn that artists make art to both sustain and challenge the status quo? Clearly one of the beliefs underscoring this question, also central to our understanding of social justice art education, is that images educate us in particular ways—and therein lay their power. As W. T. Michell (2005) states, the international war on terrorism spearheaded by the U.S is a war of images, and images are being used as weapons by different sides. For example, Greenpeace, the activist organization concerned with the environment, strategically uses images for its campaigns knowing that images influence public opinion. Although Greenpeace has not always been successful, they understand and know that image politics is the politics of the 21st century. As DeLuca (1999) writes, "Although media tactics are not new, Greenpeace is the first group, both to explore fully and trust in the progressive potential of television, reflecting their Canadian lineage and the influence of Marshall McLuhan on key original members." (p. 4) The strategic use of images by the state, various organizations with different political agendas such as Pro-life and Greenpeace, media moguls, and pop stars requires us to pay attention to the politics of image making in art education. As McLuhan (1964), describing the technological age stated, the medium *is* the message.

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Henry Giroux (2006) too has consistently argued that our students and the public are educated through what he calls "sites of public pedagogy"—that is television, newspaper photographs and advertisements, digital media, films that constantly bombard us with images. And, as a result "schools have to rethink what it means to educate young people to live in a world dominated by entirely new modes of information, communication, and cultural production" (p. 6). These new public pedagogical sites are almost entirely dominated by a few corporations who select and control the kinds of visual representation that play a vital role in shaping particular understandings of our culture, community, nation, and the world.

An example of a recent form of public pedagogy is the photographs taken at the Abu Ghraib prison and circulated widely in the media. These photographs, "initiate different forms of address, mobilize different cultural meanings, and offer different sites of learning" as they moved across various television networks, internet sites, newspapers, magazines and alternative media (Giroux, 2006, p. 55). As Giroux rightly argues, what is missing from the debates on Abu Ghraib are "questions that foreground the kinds of education (not ignorance) that enable one to participate in acts of torture, killing, and sexual humiliation against the kinds of education that prevent such inhumanity or enable one to bear moral witness when degrading acts of abuse occur" (p. 55). Asking such pedagogical questions requires us to envision a different form of art educational practice in schools and other educational sites, one that encourages critical examination of such images, including what they might mean and how

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they become icons, and a discussion about the kind of education that can allow for such racist, sexist, misogynistic images to be produced. An image that has become an icon of our times circulated around the globe and used for various purposes (protest posters, artworks, and as a recruiting tool for insurgent groups), is the hooded Iraqi prisoner standing on a small box with electrical wires attached to his hands. As W. T. Mitchell (2004) argues, this "Christ figure" evokes a "long history of images that unite figures of torture and sacredness or divinity." This iconic photograph, as Mitchell (2004) so accurately states, "is more than a weapon to be mustered for one side or another in the ideological battles of the moment. *It is also a powerful teaching device*, a devotional image worthy of prolonged attention for what it tells us about this war, and its relation to morality, religion and sacrifice" (our emphasis). How do we read the contemporary art works about Abu Ghraib and the war in Iraq? Are they alternative images that speak to this lineage of art historical images that reference torture and religion? What do contemporary images, such as Hans Haacke's installation *State of the Union* at Paula Cooper Gallery, 2005; Fernando Botero, Abu Ghraib paintings, 2006; Daniel Heyman, *Abu Ghraib Detainee Interview Project*; Forkscrew Graphics, series titled *iRAQ* tell us about this war?[2]

The ease with which people have access to means of representation—camera phones, video cameras, computers, etc., means that we have a responsibility in art education to teach our students the tools to read images such as those from Abu Ghraib critically, and also to produce alternative images that force us to ask different kinds of questions. Given our understanding of the politics of images, this requires that our students as image-makers think about the kind of images they produce in art classes. As Gomez Peña (2006) reminds us, as young artists, students need to continually think about their role in society as producers of knowledge. We are not advocating that all art projects focus on social issues and that art created for personal exploration is not important. But in their studio practice, students need to not only think about the kinds of meaning they are shaping through their artwork but also why they choose to create certain images.

Art educators have traditionally rewarded technically talented individuals. But instead, art and visual culture education should be perceived more as social and aesthetic studies, intended for all, and as socio-cultural necessities. A world without art needs to be unimaginable—not just because art enhances and decorates—but because we need art for cultural survival and cultural change. And sometimes the art that we need most may be the art that is the most critical.

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Socially engaged works of art require us to ask critical questions about our current political, social, economic and cultural situation. And, through this questioning, we arrive at different ways of looking at our situation and, hopefully, creating some change. This kind of work has moved beyond a representation of politics that characterized much of the political art in the 1980s to works that use particular "tactics of intervention" (Thompson, 2004, p. 3), often borrowed from the media. The tactics employed by these artists range from staging performances of orchestrated dialogues, offering testimonies in public arenas, interactive websites, to newspaper inserts and other visually based guerrilla tactics used in public spaces. Responding to our current situation, the tactics of socially engaged contemporary art of the 1990s foster artistic engagement as educational. In this sense, we suggest, these art forms provide alternative models of educational practice. Socially engaged art may not directly foster social change, but it does seek to generate dialogue about social and political issues. This kind of art requires an interrogation of not only how we make art, but our long held aesthetic beliefs and ways of looking at art.

Integral to the project of several socially engaged art practices is the facilitation of dialogue among diverse communities. In these performative art practices the artist does not create a physical object, rather the process approach enables the audience to become key players in this collaborative process. Given the various tactics of intervention that they deploy, the forms of art criticism based on addressing formal qualities of the physical object fall short of being able to address this dialogic art practice. It is no surprise that the evaluative frameworks used by these critics tend to label these works as didactic or simply bad art. Grant Kester (2005) argues that these dialogic art practices (and we can extend it to some other forms of socially engaged art) need to be viewed through what he calls dialogic aesthetics as opposed to traditional modernist aesthetic models. "A dialogic aesthetic suggests a very different image of the artist; one defined in terms of openness, of listening, and a willingness to accept dependence and intersubjective vulnerability. The semantic productivity of these works occurs in the interstices between the artist and the collaborator" (Kester 2005, p. 81). Dialogic aesthetics are about empathetic engagement, about bringing our local knowledge and generating provisional knowledge based on consensus at a particular time and place. It does not provide a universal foundation that can be applied to all artworks. For example, along with Gómez-Peña our students need to ask: "Can I collaborate with those for whom I most care, and with those with whom I most identify, in the making of my art?" The experiences we bring to an artwork constitute an engagement (a dialogue), one that is polyphonic, where voices from the margins are as affirmed as any other. Typically art criticism in schools has been reluctant to move away from both "expert" judgment and disengaged engagement with form rather than content.

One criticism that has been made of critical theorists is: "They are typically more interested in displaying the shortcomings of schooling than providing models toward which the schools should aspire" (Eisner, 1994, p. 75). In an effort to influence practice, we have taken Eisner's caution to heart, and in Table 1 we identify and suggest artists who strive to make a difference. To find students dealing with controversial or difficult subject matter in art, we have moved outside our own

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Table 1. POSSIBLE RESOURCES

The following is an admittedly selective list of artists whose work addresses issues of social justice that could be discussed with high school students, or that could form a starting point for their own visual expression that ask questions and imagine other ways of being. We created these categories for convenience but they are not separate issues and it is useful to discuss the intersection between the issues. Artists continually and deliberately work across these categories, challenging us to ask different kinds of questions and envision different ways of teaching. More information about each artist and their work can easily be found in both on-line and traditional print resources. (These web pages were current November 2006):

■ How does colonization and imperialism connect to our lives today?

Consider the work of curator **Fred Wilson**, who displayed African masks blindfolded with the flag of the European colonizer http://www.ucsf.edu/artucsf/port/slide2.html or Nigerian/British artist **Yinka Shonibare** who portrayed the homes of British philanthropists decorated in West African textiles http://www.universes-in-universe.de/specials/africa-remix/shonibare/english.htm or consider the large-scale watercolors of **Walton Ford** who uses the Audobon style to comment on colonization in a humorous way.http ://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/ford/clip1.html

■ What is our identity? How does migration, displacement, and marginalization affect it?

Ojibwa artist **David Bradley** comments on the confiscation of Native American traditional territory: http://www.artnet.com/magazine_pre2000/news/wrobinson/wrobinson5-5-32.asp

Elizabeth Catlett is famous for her series of linocuts from the '40s and '50s that celebrate the resilience, resistance, and achievements of African-American women. See, for example: http://yalepress.yale.edu/YupBooks/images/full/0300116128.jpg

Gaye Chan http://www2.hawaii.edu/~gchan/
Wong Hoy Cheong http://www.visualarts.qld.gov.au/linesofdescent/works/wong.html

Flo Oy Wong http://www.cla.purdue.edu/WAAW/AsianAmerican/Images/wongbiosm-m.jpg
and **Carrie Mae Weems** http://artscenecal.com/ArtistsFiles/WeemsC/WeemsCFile/CWeemsPortfolio1.html all deal with issues of marginalized identity.

Les Griggs comments on the deaths of aboriginal Australians while incarcerated: http://abc.net.au/missionvoices/layout/set/popup/media/rules_regulations/deaths_in_custody_/default.htm

Krzysztof Wodiczko's recent work attempts to give voice to the voiceless: http://newsgrist.typepad.com/photos/watch_what_we_say/krzysztof_wodiczko.jpg

■ Why is everyone talking about environmental issues?

In her SunMad raisin image **Ester Hernandez** has considered the impact of pesticides on migrant workers. http://library.shu.edu/gallery/Voces-HERNANDEZ.JPG Students might discuss the manufactured landscape photographs of **Edward Burtynsky**, such as the mountains of tires found at http://www.aeroplastics.net/dreamscapes/BURTYNSKY/Oxford_Tire_Pile_08_MR.jpg

Or the work of **Trevor Nickolls** who comments upon the rapid development of technology and contrasts this with the balance and harmony of the Australian aboriginal Dreamtime: http://www.netsvictoria.org/placesthatnameus/nickolls/art1.jpg Similarly **Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun** makes a similar statement related to the rape of the land previously held in trust by Canadian First Nations http://www.preview-art.com/previews/06-2005/bg/2Rivers-LawrencePaulGovbg.jpg **Dan Peterman's** installations are informed by his environmental concerns http://www.universes-in-universe.de/car/berlin/bien2/kw/e-kw-05.htm

■ Is gender the same across different racial and ethnic communities around the globe?

Discussion might begin with the work of the **Guerrilla Girls**, e.g. http://academic.hws.edu/art/exhibitions/laughter/images/gg37.gif or of **Yolanda Lopez's** image of herself as Our Lady of Guadalupe in running shoes: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~lats41/kerb/gallery/exhibitions/Lopez.jpg

Judy Chicago's more well-known *Dinner Party Project* is certainly worth including, but consider introducing students to the powerful work of indigenous artists such as Maori artists **June Northcroft Grant** http://www.evergreen.edu/imagine/travel_files/Grant.JPG and **Robyn Kahukiwa** http://www.prints.co.nz/Merchant2/graphics/00000001/7874_Taranga_Kahukiwa_Robyn.jpg

■ What is Globalization?

Students might discuss an image by British street artist **Banksy** of a well-known photograph from the war in Viet Nam, sometimes known as the "Napalm Girl," running hand in hand with Mickey Mouse and Ronald McDonald. We accessed the image at http://www.artofthestate.co.uk/banksy/Banksy_disney_and_mcdonalds.htm

Gilles Barbier's installation of disabled super heroes in a hospice should also stimulate rich discussion. http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/people/wrobinson/robinson6-17-16.asp

Brian Jungen is a young Canadian artist who explores the tension between consumer society and indigenous culture and lands by taking objects such as Air Jordans and morphing them into Native American masks. He also sculpts endangered species with plastic lawn chairs: http://curieux.typepad.com/curieux/images/jungen1.jpg

SubRosa a cyber feminist cell addresses various aspects of the intersection between technology, gender and difference in this global era: http://www.cyberfeminism.net/

■ HIV AIDS, the Body

An interesting beginning would be to consider the **"body maps"** created by South African HIV infected women, who were part of a project facilitated by the University of Capetown: http://scholars.asc.upenn.edu/images/content/BODYMAPS002.jpg Read about the Visual AIDS Day With(out) Art at http://scholars.asc.upenn.edu/images/content/BODYMAPS002.jpg

■ Who are the homeless?

Homelessness has interested photographers. Look, for example, at the photographs of **Oscar Lozoya**. Lozoya has photographed the homeless individually in front of a black canvas, thus enabling us to see each as an individual: http://www.lozoya.com/images/homeless/Paul.gif Students might also discuss the viability of Krzysztof Wodiczko's homes for the homeless project: http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/assets/img/data/2059/bild.jpg It is also important to explore community initiated projects such as Vancouver BC's "Out of the Rain" umbrella project: http://www.outoftherain.org/events.html

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backyard. One of us serves as an examiner for the International Baccalaureate High School Diploma Program for which students write up to a 4,000-word essay. This is an excellent opportunity to see examples of illustrated essays such as Australian student Laura Sanchez's comparison of the controversial work of South African William Kentridge and Australian George Gittoes, well-known for his 1995 painting *Rwanda* and other images of genocide and torture.

Another example, a dialogic art project initiated by Suzanne Lacy, *The Roof is on Fire*, directly engaged high school students of color to respond to the Media's continued misrepresentation of inner-city youth. Since 1991, Suzanne Lacy has been working with many collaborators to focus on directly involving youth in Oakland, California in determining public policy under the acronym TEAM (Teens+ Educators + Artists + Media Makers). In her artist statement, Suzanne Lacy says,

> The mission of TEAM is to produce socially oriented public performance and multimedia installation art that develops inner-city youth participation in public policy, has a direct and positive impact on mass media images of urban young people, and promotes theory and practice demonstrating how art affects social change (http://www.cla.purdue.edu/waaw/Cohn/Artists/Lacystat.html).

The Roof is on Fire was a public performance that involved 220 public high school students who sat in 100 parked cars on a rooftop garage in downtown Oakland and discussed issues that affect their lives. The audience, comprised of Oakland residents and the Media, could wander from one car to the next, eavesdropping on the unscripted and unedited conversations between youth about family, sexuality, drugs, race relations, schools, their neighborhoods. This youth performance was aired by the Bay Area local NBC affiliate, and was covered extensively by local news and national news stations such as CNN. This project challenged the criminalization of youth in the media by giving youth of color an opportunity to collectively represent themselves. The two issues that the youth self identified as most significant to them were sex and police-youth relations. Suzanne Lacy and TEAM later dealt with these issues in subsequent projects and one direct result is a video used for police training created by 15 youth and 10 police officers based on weekly meetings they had over a 2-month period.

In drawing attention to the importance of work such as Lacy's and TEAM's, and drawing art educator's attention to the work of those artists listed as possible resources (see Table 1), we stand with John Dewey (1957) who wrote that the purpose of democratic social institutions "is to set free and develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class, or economic status. And this is all one with saying that the test of their value is the extent to which they educate every individual into the full stature of [their] possibility" (p. 186). If we are to keep democracy alive in times such as these given the onslaught of public pedagogy, we in education have a responsibility to encourage dialogue and debate about the social, economic and political issues that affect our lives. We stand with all educators (hopefully a growing majority) who, through art and art education, seek to promote honesty, fairness, concern for the rights and welfare of others, empathy, and compassion; and who, as art educators, do not shy away from political engagement and dialogue.

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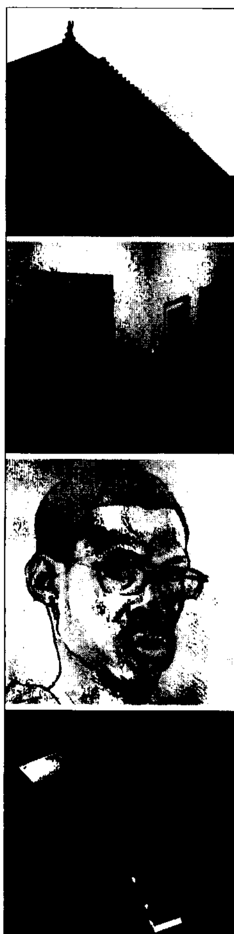
ENDNOTES

[1] We deliberately use the term "contemporary art practice" as it encompasses all the ways images are produced in our society. It includes visual culture, contemporary art as shaped by the art world, and community-based art practices.

[2] To see these contemporary artworks we provide the following websites: Fernando Botero series: http://www.marlboroughgallery.com/artists/botero/artwork.html; *iRAQ* series created by Forkscrew Graphics: http://www.forkscrew.com; Hans Haacke's installation titled *State of the Union*: http://www.nyartsmagazine.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4996&Itemid=203. All these websites were retrieved on May 1, 2007.



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