

Interview Transcript with Ann Teed

1) How important are class discussions in the art room?

It's essential because the importance derives from the collaboration between the minds and viewpoints, where people come from, as far as their thoughts and beliefs. How conversations and discussions intermingle them, giving people new prospective. That is why art is so important. It is the one thing the arts can do, giving people a platform for sharing of ideas, thoughts, and beliefs.

2) What artist can you think of that displays an idea of emotional and cultural messages in their works of art?

There is a woman who is a sculptor, a black woman from Brooklyn. I saw her work at Storm King sculptural garden. She was one of the first women I saw building large pieces from her community. Instead of it having cultural messages, it was talking about the environment of the culture and living in the city. I really respected her view and artwork because she took us from being in the inner city and creating art from tires and all kinds of stuff you would consider as trash. I thought about what we would learn from the culture of families living in the inner cities, their surroundings, the buildings, trash, sidewalks, the networking of the environment. I was inspired by her work.

Artist: Chakaia Booker- <https://collections.stormking.org/Detail/archival/5004>



3) How much do you think artists base their artwork on their personal lives?

I would say that artists really use their personal lives as a springboard when creating because that is where they are pulling from. Their awareness of people, places, and things. Their experiences have a very strong narrative. It is the road they are walking on. Their personal life really helps dictate and narrate what they want to express. When you take that artist and put them in venues of commissioned work, it becomes a real problem for artists because what they get paid for creating may be in contradiction to their own experience. They are creating an artifact outside their own being. I think that is why most artists choose not to do commissioned work unless there is a real dangling carrot of money. I know for myself and most artists, my artwork reflects myself and my experiences in life.

4) Which do you think is more important when making art? Skills or emotional purpose?

I am doing my dissertation on this subject the role of the art teacher. What I am finding out from interviews is, emotional purpose is the goal for the teacher, but they strongly feel that if you do not give your students the toolbox of skills, and abilities, they cannot express fully that emotional narrative. I think it is twofold, one is the means to the other. I believe teachers feel that empowering their students to be able to make meaningful art for themselves, they need a good skill box, so they can communicate and emote, making sense of their life in this world.

5) In your opinion when teaching current events that may lead into political or controversial topics/discussions. How do you manage your class, making sure your students stay mindful and open to others' opinions, creating a safe environment and allowing for more of a mature conversation versus argument?

I feel very strongly about this. I believe after 42 years of teaching, when you are discussing controversial, political, even spiritual, religious, whatever come up in the classroom. You are talking to young people, even in high school, they are still formulating their opinions. They are basically parroting those forces who they feel safe to parrot. If their parents believe a certain way, they will parrot that belief system, attitude, or comment because it is familiar to them. There is a hierarchy of safety when we join the comradery of something. When you get to and passed college you get into people starting to formulate their own opinions. In K-12, schools that are still dealing with development and growing human beings, the students haven't really had the opportunity to hone their own beliefs. So, you must make sure you are creating an opportunity for them to be good listeners and to be aware that their opinion that they are bringing forth may not be the opinion of others. You're really ripening their sense of listening and that maybe their parents or community may be different, wrong, or right. You're cultivating an openness, a sense of equity and being able to listen to others. It is not a teacher's job to teach political anything because they will also influence. You should present that you're just cultivating an awareness while being cautious that your truth may not be the truth.

- 6) What is the balance of art theory, skill, and emotional response that you teach your students? Do you believe there is a ratio?

I think as art educators in the world of art we are always challenging art theory. I believe it is important but it's not the main emphasis. I think the pendulum is really swinging to be much more about emotional and developmental purpose of creating art, being authentic, developing identities, and opinions. The scales again are the facilitator to having that true engagement with the self. Emotion is the connection to our own being and what we believe. If you look at Kandinsky and all these artists that are about spirituality and art, what were they really saying? It wasn't even religious; they were saying we are this tiny cosmic thing in this much boarder thing and that art was a vehicle to interplay between this being and a greater energy. The changing of STEM to STEAM to now the therapeutic and developmental bonus of art is unmatched by any. We are the stem to learning. The idea of art has greatly shifted, its skill packed, emotional and shifted from the needs in the classroom. A group of second graders will be very different from high school, who are dealing so much more with their gender, jobs, sex, and drugs. The needs help switch the balance. As we progress in age we change from theory and skill to self-content and world content. Having the students use what we thought them earlier, the skills and theory to communicate.

Bio:

Dr. Ann Teed is a professor at Adelphi University, currently finishing up her dissertation at Columbia University in the Arts. Along with her many accomplishments she is a renowned teacher at Adelphi. Her many visual arts interests include, mixed media, clay, photography, printmaking, found object sculpture, computer integration of visual and audio media. For performance arts she is an award-winning songwriter, vocalist/singer, musician, interested in DJ, dance, short film and internet integration. As an educator she is nothing less than supportive and inspiring to everyone she comes incontact with. Her love for the arts is contagious.



Watercolor by Ann Teed