

The Importance of Art Education

With participants Dipti Desai, Joy Episalla,
Carmen Fulford, Doug Israel, Robert Sember
and Chrysanne Stathacos

Forum

Thursday, February 5, 7:30pm

Artists Space Books & Talks
55 Walker Street

Coinciding with the exhibition *Welcome To My World* at Artists Space Books & Talks, this forum will address the state of art education in New York Public Schools, particularly considering the middle school level, at which point students are called to make decisions about their future studies. The program brings together artists, educators and policy makers to publically discuss the role and value of the arts in schools, and to address the position of practicing artists within existing and future educational structures.

The lead participants in this discussion bring specific experiences as artists working in schools, educators charged with school governance, researchers into educational policy and activists working around notions of radical pedagogy. The event will be chaired by Dipti Desai, Associate Professor of Art and Art Education at NYU Steinhardt. Audience members are also invited to contribute to the forum, in the hope that a broader debate will be generated between artists, art institutions with educational programs, and the NYC schools system.

The forum will seek to address key questions, including: How have the education policies of recent city administrations impacted access to the arts for public school students? Who has access to art education in New York City, and who does not? Has the provision of arts education in New York schools become dependent on its ability to prove economic value and perform to quantitative criteria? What responsibilities do artists and arts organizations have in relation to the arts activities accounted for in schools? How might art education in schools provide the means of creating new convergences between artists, students and teachers, in order to reflect on the contexts around them?

Dipti Desai is an Associate Professor and Director of the Graduate Art + Education Programs. As a scholar and artist-educator she is committed to addressing the formative role of visual representation and its politics in order to affect social change. She is the co-editor of *Social Justice and the Arts* (2014) and her co-authored book *History as Art, Art as History: Contemporary Art and Social Studies Education* (2010) received an Honorable mention for Curriculum Practice Category by Division B of American Education and Research Association (AERA). She received the 2012 Ziegfield Service Award in Art Education and Specialist Fulbright Award in 2014.

Joy Episalla is a multidisciplinary New York-based artist. Episalla has exhibited widely in the United States and in Europe since the 80s. She is a founding member of the lesbian art collective fierce pussy. As an art educator Episalla has taught in BFA and MFA programs, as well as the Artists Space program for the past 9 years. A solo exhibition of her work is slated for March 2015 at Participant Inc. in New York.

Carmen "Millie" Fulford has been an educator with the DOE for the past 33 years. She began her career as a 2nd grade teacher for 12 years then taught 5th/6th grade for 3 years. Millie was the Director of a small school within a school in the late 1990's which launched her administrative career. She served as an administrative assistant to a Principal in District 3 and then came to District 1 as a Dean for the middle school. Millie is currently an Assistant Principal at Nathan Straus PS140, a Pre-K – 8th grade public school on the Lower East Side. As part of her work at PS140, Ms. Fulford supervises the 21st Century grant which provides the school with access to services from community based organizations as well as a variety of after school programs. She has been fortunate to have a twelve year relationship with both Artists Space and Smartworks (Gustavo Asto).

Doug Israel is the Director of Research and Policy for The Center for Arts Education. In that role, he directs the organization's government affairs, public policy, research, and advocacy work. As part of CAE's campaign to ensure that all of New York City's 1.1 million public school students receive a quality arts education, Mr. Israel focuses on educating policymakers and the public about the need for arts education as an essential part of a well-rounded education and an essential contributor to children's health and well-being.

Robert Sember is a member of the international sound art collective Ultra-red, which collaborates with constituencies involved in migrant rights, fair housing and anti-racist struggles, and efforts to combat the AIDS crisis. Recent projects include: *SCHOOL OF ECHOES*, a multi-year exploration of militant sound investigations initiated during a three month residency at Raven Row, London, in early 2009; and *SILENT | LISTEN*, an investigation of the conditions of the AIDS crisis in the U.S. and Canada presented in partnership with, among others, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Andy Warhol Museum, and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. He has taught in programs including the Medical Anthropology Program in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences, the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA, and the Center for HIV/AIDS Networking at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

Artist Chrysanthe Stathacos is the Director of Education of Artists Space's Expanded Art Ideas program. Her art work aims to make new connections between cultures, historical periods, technologies, and environmental issues, which mirror the human processes of change, hope, healing, and mortality. Stathacos has presented over 25 installations and art works in museums, galleries, and public venues in Canada, U.S.A., Europe, and Asia, and has received awards from Art Matters, the Japan Foundation, the Canada Council, and the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation. Most recently, she initiated *MOMMY*, a collaborative art blog with artist Susan Silas, and is Founding Director of Dongyu Gatsal Ling Initiatives, an organization that helps Tibetan Buddhist women practitioners in Tibet and India. This March she has been invited to participate in Law and the Curated Body conference at York University, Toronto.