

Editorial Introduction

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Is the Tower of Babel to be understood as a curse upon humankind or as a wealth of diversity? In art and visual culture education, were we to discuss it, the latter interpretation would prevail, for we have a long and deep engagement with valuing diverse cultures and differences among individuals, and working for social and educational change that will promote social justice. This issue of *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education (jCRAE)* continues this rich heritage, with articles ranging from empowering youth experiencing disability to a self-examination of teaching multicultural art education to experiences of immigrant women, and from bases in the US, Syria, China, and Taiwan. Each of the authors works for social justice through education, envisioning another step towards social transformation. The authors use field-based methodologies, bringing readers teaching and learning experiences from classrooms, a field school, a gallery, and interviews.

Valerie Karr and Courtney Weida ask what happens when educators bring youth from Syria and the US together to advocate for disability rights as a human rights issue. Through the creation of comic books, the youth promote their own empowerment as well as awareness in readers of disability rights. Mary Stokrocki and Jin-Shiow Chen examine how digital stories based on artworks can be developed as personal narratives in *Second Life*. Working with Taiwanese college students, they note teaching strategies used and themes that emerged from assignments involving this virtual world. Doug Blandy and John Fenn explore strategies to deeply engage western learners in cultural understanding while at a field school in Beijing. They do so across disciplines, geographies, cultures, and technologies. Looking at her own teaching, Joni Acuff weaves multicultural principles across the content of an art methods course for pre-service teachers. Through this exploration, she develops a critical platform for classroom engagement of the ideals of diversity in social justice. Fair Trade in a globalized world is under scrutiny in the contribution of authors

Amanda Alexander, Connie DeJong, Jen Miller, and Jim Sanders. Using a dialogical approach, they engage undergraduates in learning about social and environmental justice through a local gallery that promotes Fair Trade. Kyeungeun Lim explores the experience of Asian immigrant women accompanying their spouses for study in the US. Through showing the women a series of western and home country artworks, she reflects on the women's empathetic responses to the artworks, noting various connections her participants make between their lives and the images.

We launch the 2012/2013 edition of the journal as an online, open source publication. The move supports wide access to the research and ideas brought forth by the authors, as well as a more environmentally friendly approach to journal publication. Both these objectives are in keeping with the spirit of *jCRAE*.

Thanks go out to many people for bringing this issue together. Thanks to authors for submitting your work to the journal, to the *jCRAE* Review Board for working insightfully and diligently to review articles and respond to various queries, to the USSEA Board for their support of the journal and its switch to online publication, and to the past editorial team of Dipti Desai and Kate Brideau for help in the transition between editors. Agradecimientos y gratitud to Ryan Shin for designing the online platform for the journal and launching the *jcræ.org* interface, to Jorge Lucero for designing the *jCRAE* logo, to Kelly Leslie for designing the layout of this issue, and to Erica Richard who has kept editor, reviewers, and authors in communication as well as followed through with the template that Kelly laid out. Finally, thank you to our patient readers who have waited across the many changes the journal has undergone since volume 29, and to all readers who join our community through their commitment to social justice in the arts and education. Junto/as (pero no revuelto/as), lo hicimos realidad.