Pearl and Murray Greenberg Award Lectures

“...we must approach each other as people, not as ages and stages.”

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**KEY WORDS**

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The Pearl and Murray Greenberg Awards were established through a generous gift from Ken Greenberg and his wife, Clara Gerdes, to the National Art Education Association’s Committee on Lifelong Learning. The recipients of these awards focus on their contributions to the field of art education for post-secondary learners across the lifespan, including creative aging, community-based art education, and/or intergenerational arts learning. The Murray Greenberg Award specifically supports an emerging scholar (zero to four years beyond the completion of their graduate degree program thesis or dissertation) with $1000. The Pearl Greenberg Award for Teaching and Research recognizes an artist/educator/researcher at the national level who has made distinguished contributions with $2,500. This article includes excerpts from the 2022 acceptance speeches given during the Committee on Lifelong Learning Awards’ Ceremony at the New York City National Art Education Association Convention.

**Murray Greenberg Emerging Scholar**

As the first recipient of this award, I want to acknowledge my spouse Earl Bates, who has been my partner for the last 20 years of this adventure. In doing so, I also acknowledge Murray Greenberg, the namesake of this award, who supported Pearl

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and her work. This guaranteed the opportunity to travel to NYC to carry out my
duties and continue professional development. I have gotten to know a little more
about Pearl Greenberg through my three years as chairperson of this group,
particularly through the development of these two “Greenberg awards” and in
conversations with Pam Lawton, Angela La Porte, and Ken Greenberg. Learning the
history of our group through the by-laws set in the 1990s, I am amazed at how
precisent they are today. I am now enabled to pursue and enact many of these same
goals through the privilege of teaching in higher education, following my other lives
as an art educator in various configurations: artist/parent/teacher in high school,
museum, and volunteer settings. As I look ahead, I see how advocating for art
programs in all age settings is growing in importance.

It was through the gift of a fellowship offer from the University of North Texas that I
took the huge leap to a doctoral program. Professor Emeritus, Jack Davis, lured me
to North Texas through the Priddy Leadership Program for Art Educators. It was
there I learned the importance of politics and advocacy in support of art education
programs and it was a lesson recently brought to life for me.

My students and colleagues at University of Kansas had been fighting our Art
Education program’s closure. I am able to say today, after almost two years, that the
provost has agreed to an art education program redesign rather than elimination.

The faculty senate held hearings and prior to the vote against program
discontinuance, I heard faculty members repeat what I had told them of the value
that our program offered to all ages of people in all walks of community life.

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My research connecting the local community to classrooms began in North Texas. There I helped prepare pre-service art educators through course work and supervision and connected with older artists in Wichita Falls as I was researching early Texas artists (defined as working 40 years prior). I found some amazing artists who were still working, as I developed place-based curriculum to contribute to Documenting Life, Land and Culture: A Unit of Instruction Based on the Work of Early Wichita Falls Area Artists (NTIEVA, 2011). For my dissertation I decided to research the intersection of place and age in understanding local older artists, and what art educators might learn from them.

This became the focus of a curriculum development program, working with in-service K-12 art educators in action research inquiries of learning with local older artists. We wrote Pride of Place: Investigating the Cultural Roots of Texoma Artists, (INTIEVA, 2013) a curriculum guide for the Wichita Falls Museum of Art, highlighting Texas artists in the museum collection and older local artist participants who were identified, engaged with and in some cases befriended by the art educators.

I thank my dissertation advisors, Dr. Nadine Kalen, for introducing me to the curriculum of place and action research, Dr. Jack Davis for introducing me to Intergenerational (IG) learning and Dr. Adetty Perez Miles for challenging me to

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understand and use a theoretical perspective to focus my dissertation, completed in 2017, *Place-based and Intergenerational Art Education*. The best part of methodology using an action research approach was direct involvement with participants. Action research is a collaborative study of learning as

Figure 5. Carol Rose, Pam Day, Jeanette Heiberger, Nancy Walkup, Audra Miller, Liz Langdon, and Claire Walker (l-r).

it takes place day by day in the context of participants’ own practices (Valencia, para 1). The art educators in this group studied the infusion of place-based learning in their teaching practice through identifying and learning from local older artists and developing curriculum used in their classrooms. The illustration shows how action research encourages a continuous cycle of action and reflection.

Discovering and using a new philosophy was most difficult, but the analysis enabled me to sit and think and write, something that none of my previous roles required. Starting with Dewey (1997/1916) I discovered connections with Gilles Deleuze. Using Deleuzian theory as a way to analyze the disjunctions in my data, gave me the tools to rethink the intersections of place and age through the lens of sense, event and duration.

Translations of the French philosopher’s work was not available until 1990 so there was not a lot of scholarship. Briefly, my understanding of Deleuze follows. Sense comes before words and even knowing. There is a logic to it, and in the *Logic of Sense* (1990) Deleuze argues that it is important to pay attention first to the sense of an event, to pay attention when things do not fit logically and then use that

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disjunctive synthesis to analyze events from different perspectives. Events are more valuable by revisiting and reflecting upon them. The passing of time and likewise aging should not be considered as a linear construct, rather duration sees time differently. Different ages intersecting on the common plane of place, illustrated in the duration diagram is equivalent to IG learning where people come together and inhabit a plane of being in the moment, sharing experiences which can erase barriers of age.

Figure 6. Action Research involves action and reflection.

Figure 7. Duration diagram.
Each art educator selected an artist from Wichita Falls. This grounded my analysis of five older artists (ranging 59-92 years) and five art educators in Wichita Falls and is the foci of my continuing research into the intersectionality of ageism and feminism/ mentoring and feminism, and IG and place-based learning. Each has provided a focus for publication of peer reviewed articles, a book chapter and articles in NAEA News, as well as presentations and workshops. I will summarize the findings of three publications.

IG learning has the potential to reinforce ageist ideas, through the culturally produced binary of old and young, and accompanying stereotypes. In my research with older artists, I discovered that my age-based perspective clouded how I perceived and valued older artists and their work. In Older Artists and Acknowledging Ageism (2018) I reveal implicit age bias associated with modernist tradition in art education, which minimized the value of art production viewed as feminine. Language associated with ageism shares the descriptors of the feminine and seep into our perceptions. These images of Claire Walker engaging with Wanda Ewalt and her artwork show the same sculpture displayed at home and upside down in the subsequent museum exhibition. I questioned why this oversight was not challenged, whether the oversight was due to the artists’ age or gender? This research facilitated personal growth and through critical reflection, my implicit ageism revealed itself.

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Figure 8. Creative presentations.

In the article *Artists as Mentors: A Mid-Career Art Educator Rekindles Her Artist Self* (2019) Carol Rose, the art educator, Mary Stephens, artist, demonstrated artist mentoring is professional development for art educators and is an effective way to build knowledge and confidence. This IG relationship promoted deep learning through mentorship. It is an invaluable form of professional development for art educators because it offers affective learning. This IG mentorship between educator and artist extended adult education by inspiring creative presentations of self-reflection, and theory development. For female art educators, co-equal IG

Figure 9. Stephens’ and Rose’s mentorship.

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mentorship is important because it builds an appreciation of the needs and assets of each participant. It encourages relationships which are important to psychosocial health and development. I advocate for art educators and late-stage artists to work together in sharing stories and time together for valuable professional development.

Not all IG relationships between educator and artist are reciprocal. A third analysis from this action research found a disjointed dialog between the young art educator Audra Miller and Ralph Stearns, a self-proclaimed “older artist”. In Disjointed Dialog Intergenerational Learning and Place-based Art Education (in press), I describe Stearns’ status in the community as a mature, self-referential character widely recognized for his murals around town, but not every IG relationship benefits all participants equally.

Place-based learning for Audra and her students was enhanced, but reciprocal IG learning was complicated by gender in the research relationship between the younger female and older male artist. IG relationships add depth to learning about community and local place, with social benefits for elementary students and teacher, but can be challenged by bias in adult IG learning. Because females dominate the field of education, considering the gender of older artists is an important consideration. The perceived social needs of an older male artist may not encourage co-equal learning.

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As I continue to study these issues, my research goals have evolved. These are the major understandings I have established:

- Complementary needs and assets of age difference factor into IG learning success. Facilitators of IG and place-based learning put relationship building in the fore, with shared experiences a primary goal to create situations where participants can function on a co-equal basis.
- Cooperative action research ensures reciprocal learning for participants, a key component to IG learning. Participants should look to discover at least three commonalities of experience within IG learning.
- Shared relationship to local place or common culture is significant and discovering a personal connection to someone else’s life experience may create empathy, which can impact both participants and reverberate beyond the initial shared experience.

In these ways each participant, younger and older, is given the opportunity to share in an uncommon experience of intergenerational learning.

![Future Kansas Art Educators' Research](image)

Figure 11. Teaching and Loving Art in Kansas student generated website.

After landing a position at KU I felt closer to home, and ready to make new connections. To learn about local culture, I asked my students to research local artists to have the benefit of gaining a different perspective about local place and its history. I then created this website for an ongoing learning resource teachingandlovingartinkansas.weebly.com.

During this research I discovered iconic artist Elizabeth “Grandma” Layton who is a recognized local artist, having lived 20 miles away. I published an article in NAEA News (2018) stating “Art educators can challenge ageism by connecting with someone from a different generation, and like Layton, explore outside your comfort

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zone”, because Layton had stepped outside her zone to learn blind contour line drawing at the age of 68. Layton’s images challenge the idea of the sweet old lady, an ageist stereotype. Through her daily self-portrait drawings, Layton used the wrinkles of her face, drawn with expressive blind contour lines, to tell her stories and reveal both her public and inner lives. Layton’s drawings provided the springboard for student engagement with ideas of aging, ageism and mental health in the Cinderella project found in this Vol 5 publication of IJLLAE.

I will continue to build on the foundation of my dissertation research to bring different aged communities together through engagement with art and in recognition of art’s power to create community and knowledge.

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**Dr. Pearl Greenberg Award Recipient Angela LaPorte**

![Figure 1. Angela LaPorte.](image)

Before sharing my work, I would like to recognize and thank Clara Gerdes and Ken Greenberg, son of Dr. Pearl Greenberg, for their generous contribution to the Committee on Lifelong Learning to continue to honor Pearl’s vision for equitable access to meaningful art education “from womb to tomb.” I also want to thank the awards’ committee and those who wrote letters of support. It is an honor to receive this award in remembrance of Dr. Greenberg, who has been an inspiration for my work in lifelong learning for over 30 years. My first introduction to her research (Greenberg, 1987) began through conversations with my professor and mentor at Arizona State University, Dr. Mary Stokrocki, while pursuing my Master’s degree in art education. Soon after, I was privileged to meet Pearl at an NAEA convention in the early 1990s. Her work in the field inspired my thesis research, “A Microethnographic Study of an Art Class for the Institutionalized Elderly” (LaPorte, 1994), the site of an art class at a residential care facility for older adults that I co-taught with Dr. Bernard Young. One thing that I discovered at that point in time was the enthusiasm that the participants shared, always waiting at the door of the art room for our arrival. Outside of what I learned about approaches to teaching art to students with varying abilities, histories, and interests, it reaffirmed my passion for bringing meaningful art experiences to those who rarely had them.

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My dissertation at Penn State, “An Ethnographic Study of an Intergenerational Community Art Program in Harlem, NYC” (La Porte, 1998), moved into a new direction. I worked with an intergenerational arts program in NYC’s Lower East Harlem, funded by a number of different social service organizations in the city that involved seniors from within the Harlem neighborhood and teenagers from the same location and across the city.

One component of the program involved the sharing and collecting of oral histories. I walked with teams of teenagers to meet with seniors at their apartments in the Lower East Harlem area to socialize and gather and share life stories. As a way to engage both generations, I asked the teenagers to generate some questions to ask the seniors about different periods in their lives and often prompted them through artworks from historical periods of which the seniors might be familiar. A couple of

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artworks that I chose were Palmer Hayden’s “Midsummer Night in Harlem” and Horace Pippin’s “Saturday Night Bath.” There was also an art making experience at the local senior center as well as a social service component where the teens would call the seniors or assist with grocery shopping.

My participant observation study data in the form of conversations, observations, interviews, and journals collected over a period of seven months revealed that the program not only provided exchanges of personal history and culture, but that intergenerational relationships developed, age-related stereotypes diminished, and participants felt empowered through the process (La Porte, 2000, 2002, 2011).
I then moved into my first teaching position in higher education at the University of Arkansas in 1998 where I continued my work while reestablishing an art education program as a one-person faculty. In 2004, my intergenerational research led me to edit a book published by NAEA, “Community Connections. Intergenerational Links in Art Education” (La Porte, 2004). Last year’s awardee, Pamela Harris Lawton, contributed a chapter to this book (Lawton, 2004). Dr. Greenberg wrote the book’s preface (Greenberg, 2015).

Soon after publishing the book, I presented its content at the NAEA convention in Boston, where I was accompanied by my daughter, Maria, when she was 3-months-old (La Porte, 2005). Murray Greenberg graciously documented the event that ended up being featured in the next “NAEA News.” I soon took on more active roles within the Committee on Lifelong Learning, serving as chair from 2005 to 2009 and editor designer of the group’s conference proceedings from 2007 to 2009. Besides presenting with Dr. Greenberg at three NAEA Convention sessions: “Aging Monologues” in 2004 (Greenberg, et al., 2004) and 2006 (Greenberg, et al., 2006), and “What is Lifelong Learning” in 2008 (Barret, et al., 2008) to bring attention to the importance of art education for aging populations, I have remained an active member of LLL over the years and now serve as associate editor of our journal.

![Figure 6. Aging Monologues.](image)

While at the University of Arkansas, I’ve expanded my research focus to disability studies and intergenerational experiences for my preservice art teachers who claimed to lack knowledge and preparation to teach disabled students. I responded by developing a special topics course that I continue to teach “Inclusive Art Pedagogy,” an intergenerational community-based art program for disabled adults.

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The class begins with my students learning alongside the community participants as I teach or co-teach lessons. Then, my students develop their own art curriculum based on a big idea, rotate into teaching or teacher’s assistant positions, while at the same time, reading and reflecting on class experiences within each role. They also share the work of a contemporary disabled artist. At the end of the semester my students and the community participants collaboratively plan, curate, and hang their exhibition. I named this approach, inverse inclusion (La Porte, 2015, 2020), where university students rotate roles as student, teacher, and teacher’s assistant to experience multiple perspectives during a community-based service-learning inclusion class. Most of my students’ time is spent in the student role to allow for more reciprocal relationships to develop besides the hierarchical teacher positioning.

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I begin the class by introducing a lesson myself or with a co-facilitator. I once asked one of our Lifelong Learning member, Susan Whiteland, to join me in teaching “Fantastical Stories through Claymation” and published in the journal, *Art Education* (La Porte & Whiteland, 2017).

Another year, I collaborated with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art on a garden themed unit with inspirational conversations and experiences at the museum (La Porte, 2019). In the end, I try to involve all participants in planning the gallery exhibition. In the future, I would like to co-teach with one of the disabled adults from the community organization.

Over the years teaching this course, I was amazed by one of the community participants, Hope, that inspired me to write a chapter for an upcoming book to be published by NAEA, by editors who are members of our LLL Group, Melanie Davenport and Marjorie Manifold. This experience reaffirmed that teachers can stagnate growth based on their biases, or promote growth expanding upon student interests. The first time I met Hope, I was told to give her a box of crayons and paper to allow her to sit in the corner to repeatedly draw and color her dogs over and over again. Instead, I asked students to engage with her, and encourage her to expand upon the dog theme. When a student teacher asked small groups from the class to build a community model from recycled materials, Hope constructed a fenced-in area from popsicle sticks for her dogs and made them of cotton wrapped with pipe cleaners.

Figure 9. Hope.

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Her illustrated book was the most impressive, with pages of visual sequencing, in which she created a story with representations of ducks, a girl, mountains, houses, and trees. When asked to share with the class, Hope enthusiastically ran to the front of the room.

Whether it be a matter of disability, age, or race/ethnicity, I believe that teacher bias impacts art education experiences. The goal of my research is to study approaches to art education that can break down stereotypes and biases that people from diverse backgrounds, abilities, and/or ages have about each other through positive experiences in art education, coming together to appreciate unique differences and a shared humanity.

I would like to conclude with a quote that Pearl wrote from the preface of my book.

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We can talk together, we can draw together, we can sing together, and we can think and exchange ideas together as equals, but we must approach each other as people, not as ages and stages. Yet, we cannot discount that the age cohorts we experience as we grow have very strong, long-lasting, and valid meanings in our lives. (Greenberg, 2004, p. vii)

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