



National Art Education Association Women's Caucus

LOBBY ACTIVISM 2014

The lobby session is open to all.



Beyond the Women's Caucus (WC) sessions, meetings, and events that reside within the formal institution of the NAEA, our **Lobby** session is an annual event held the first evening of the NAEA Convention in the lobby of the "headquarters" hotel for the NAEA Convention. Significance aspects of the Lobby session include self-introductions to someone you have never spoken to before, creative prompts for small group discussion about current issues, and human mic amplification as public performance in the hotel lobby. The "speak-out" affirmation of our beliefs and actions is recorded, transcribed, and posted with photographs online at naeawc.net.

Women's Caucus members have planned the 2014 Lobby Session with the theme "Speak truth to power." Bring friends or someone just met at the NAEA Convention to the Lobby session on **Saturday, March 29 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the LOBBY at the HEADQUARTER HOTEL: HILTON SAN DIEGO BAYFRONT.**

2014 SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER (SAN DIEGO)

"**Speak Truth to Power**" is a phrase attributed to the Quakers in the mid-1950s as a call for the United States to stand firm against fascism and other forms of totalitarianism. The phrase has been adopted by or applied to those who challenge dominant forces—namely, patriarchy and capitalism. Barbara Kruger's art *Speaks Truth to Power*. Kruger refashions idioms, as Judy Chicago does in her *Resolutions: A Stitch in Time*, 1994-2000 series. In Chicago's *Retrospective in a Box* series, 2009-2013, printed by Landfall Press, a work titled "Aging Women/Artist/Jew (2013), refers to a piece in her 1993-94 autobiography series. However, the 2013 lithograph reflects her current interest in aging. This compelling image is accompanied by a statement from the artist: "As always, I wanted to challenge stereotypical attitudes, particularly those that consign older women to an undesirable, nonsexual and declining existence, replacing this mean-spirited view with a fiery image of a woman whose body may be succumbing to the aging process, but whose spirit remains strong and her identity clearer than every before." In Chicago's self-portrait, her mouth is filled, where teeth would be, with capital letters: "TRUTH." For more than a half century, from *The Dinner Party* created in the 1970s to the 2013 self-portrait, Judy Chicago has been speaking truth to power. Her spirited work indeed speaks volumes to artists, educators, and scholars who seek feminist perspectives and practices.

Resources:

- Speak truth to power <http://www.pbs.org/speaktruthtopower/>
- Speak truth to power curriculum <http://blogs.nysut.org/sttp/curriculum/>
- How the Media Failed Women in 2013* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NswJ4kO9uHc> [3:39 min].
- Barbara Kruger's Artwork Speaks Truth to Power*. Smithsonian Magazine, July 2012. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/barbara-krugers-artwork-speaks-truth-to-power-137717540/>
- Judy Chicago Returns to London* (post by Helen Thompson, Oct 2, 2012 in Culture) <http://www.womensviewsonnews.org/2012/10/judy-chicago-returns-to-london/>
- Teaching with Feminist Contradictions: The Debate of Dress in Theory and Practice* (Hoffmann, Melody (2010, December) https://www.academia.edu/632987/Teaching_with_Feminist_Contradictions_The_Debate_of_Dress_in_Theory_and_Practice
- Kahn, Carrie (2011). *Battle cry: Occupy's messaging tactics catch on*. NPR. <http://www.npr.org/2011/12/06/142999617/battle-cry-occupys-messaging-tactics-catch-on>

LOBBY SESSION Schedule for 6:00-7:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 29, 2014:

1. Lobby session welcome by Karen Keifer-Boyd.
2. Self-introductions to someone at the Lobby session you have never spoken to before.
3. Write/draw on fabric strips—speaking truth to power.
4. Form small groups of 3 to 5 people. Share what you wrote and discuss.
5. By 6:40 pm pin the strips of fabric with quotes, questions, stories in speaking truth to power on either the artist's apron or academic gown.

The artist **apron** symbolizes feminist power. While aprons have been associated with housework, the artists' work apron symbolizes both the intellectual work and labor of artistic production. Aprons have enjoyed a recent resurgence in style and popularity, with both men and women wearing many different types of aprons as an intentional choice. "Our" art educator's apron supports and encourages art teachers as they confront an often highly feminized art education environment in strong and assertive ways.

The **academic gown** symbolizes patriarchal power, and the hierarchies within educational institutions that often run counter-productive to creating equitable and just teaching, learning, and working environments. Academic regalia worn by graduates at commencements—from kindergarten ceremonies to high school and university degrees—follow a tradition begun in the Middle Ages by men at European universities to denote educational status to men. Today, many women achieve advanced degrees and don the male garb at graduation ceremonies.

6. In the final 20 minutes of the Lobby hour, use the human mic practice to amplify what is said as each group speaks truth to power. As the group members speak, all nearby repeat what is said in unison. The speaker needs to say a few words and then stop so the group can repeat in unison. The process of the human mic makes soft voices audible, filling the Lobby.
7. We encourage Lobby participants to sign-in with your email, designate permission to be photographed, and to receive an invitation to a summer 2015 gathering at a Women's Caucus bonfire on Karen Keifer-Boyd's beach on Lake Erie on the eastside of Cleveland, Ohio. We will burn the gown and wear the apron in a symbolic action to speak truth to power.

Lobby Prompts from 2008 to 2014:

2014 SAN DIEGO: *Speak Truth to Power*

2013 FORT WORTH: *What are my personal responsibilities and our collective responsibility to end violence?*

2012 NEW YORK: *What do you believe is critical to lobby for in 2012?*

2011 SEATTLE: *A Time When ...*

2010 BALTIMORE: *What is the Image of a Feminist in the Field of Art Education Today?*

2009 MINNEAPOLIS: *Enacting Change: What We Can Learn From Each Other?*

2008 NEW ORLEANS: *Vote 2008: What Should an Art Educator Do?*

Participants collaborated in a response to the prompt for a strategic essay published in the *Journal of Art Education* (July 2008).

Congratulations to Lisa Kay and Alice Arnold for the forthcoming 2013 Lobby Session essay.

Kay, L. & Arnold, A. (in press). Order from chaos: An arts-based approach to counteract trauma and violence. *Art Education*.

For those who have participated in past sessions we invite you to consider developing visual essays or documenting activist work based on the Lobby prompts for a forthcoming anthology of NAEA WC LOBBY ACTIVISM.