

Foreword

*Are you besieged with the buzz of all things innovative?
Are you befuddled by Alt-facts, Thinklets, Instagrams?
Are you feasting on Tweets, Snippy-snappy chats, and oodles of apps?
Are you fascinated with Twitches, Tingles, Tumblrs, Flickrs, Vibers,
Quick Bytes? Are you a Foodie, Wordie, Kadult?
Are you Eventive? Do you have Elationships?
Are you fluent in Emojiology?*

Take a deep breath and enter Eldon Katter's thoughtful and jargon-free world of art education. The uncommon wisdom in *Art Teaching & Learning* will keep your attention, engage your mind, and help you appreciate the joys and perplexities in choosing to be an art educator.

Although technology is engulfing almost every aspect of life, the insights in this book are beyond the reach of artificial intelligence machines and screen-based avatars for teaching and teacher education. Eldon wants this generation to be savvy about technology, but this book also asserts that digital and screen-based technologies are no substitute for minds-on, hands-on, heartfelt teaching and learning in art.

Unlike many art education texts, Eldon communicates through stories drawn from his experience and connected with his own and others' scholarship. These stories touch on almost every aspect of art education, all with a timely focus on the need to comprehend the values we honor and communicate to students.

Eldon's thinking and writing have been shaped by more than half a century of work on behalf of art education. We are contemporaries. Both of us completed undergraduate studies in 1957. We have taken different paths, but we have common professional interests. Today we share concerns about the future of art education in a rapidly changing world. Eldon's message is one of hope, moderated by caution, with a call for more ample understanding of cultural differences within and beyond the United States.

Eldon's rich and nuanced accounts of teaching art in the United States and in Africa contrast with many facile declarations about art education, circulated as if undisputed truths. Among my favorite bromides are: "Art speaks for itself." "If you have to explain it, it isn't art." "Art is a universal language everyone can understand." "You don't have to know anything about art to know what you like." "Anyone can create art and art can be anything." "Art is anything you can get away with." "Don't teach art, let art teach."

These one-liners capture the idea that art experience is distinctive, in part, because sensations, feelings, and ideas are merged in ways that transcend the need for words. Taken together, these statements also imply that art experience is so subjective, and perhaps so radically democratic, that everyone can claim some level of expertise, even if reasons cannot be expressed in words. Eldon offers ample proofs that educators need to be articulate about their work. This book will help you think again about why and how artistry matters in personal, social, and communal life, past and present.

Readers who have an interest in recent policies for schools are sure to appreciate Eldon's "fabulous fable" about the consequences of top-down administrative structures, enchantments with testing, data-driven everything, and accountability gone wild. His fable is a wonderful example of how to advocate for reasonable policies in art education, enlighten your audience, and make a "sticky" memory—intelligible and hard to get rid of.

Whatever your role in art education, this book is an extended master class in reflective thinking. The mindscapes in this book are shaped by Eldon's journal keeping and the wisdom distilled from his exceptionally varied professional life as an art maker, a teacher, a scholar, an advocate, a writer, an editor, and astute observer of the human condition, including his own.

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