

PERSPECTIVES



**Alabama Art
Education Association**

FALL 2026
NEWSLETTER



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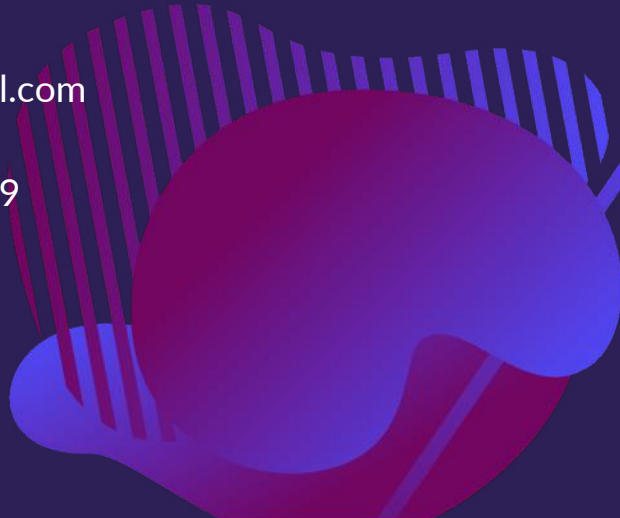
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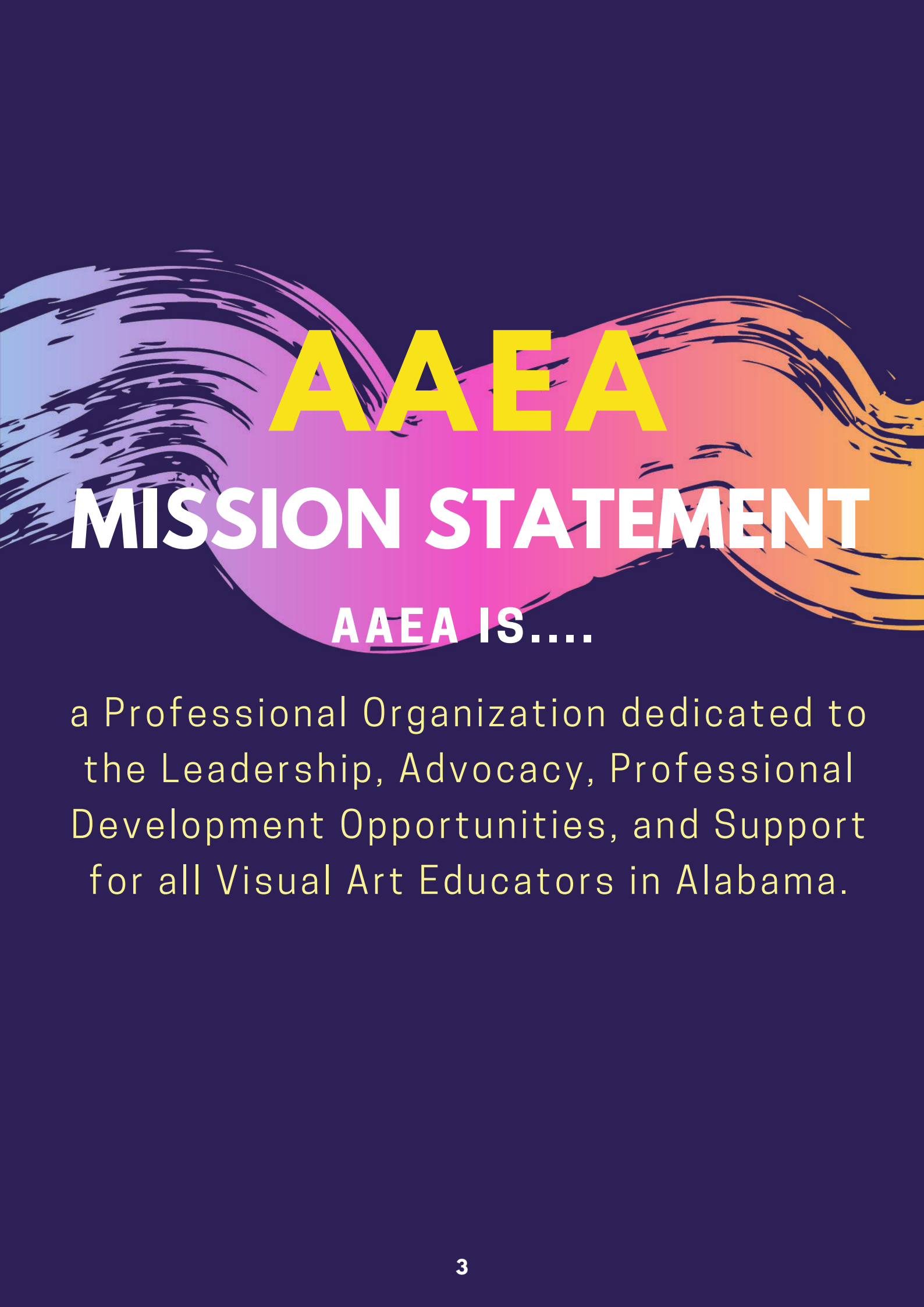
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AAEA

MISSION STATEMENT

AAEA IS....

a Professional Organization dedicated to the Leadership, Advocacy, Professional Development Opportunities, and Support for all Visual Art Educators in Alabama.



AAEA **WHY JOIN?**

“One of the greatest benefits of joining the Alabama Art Education Association is the powerful network of fellow art educators you gain. There is truly no better source of support. Through AAEA, you can share lesson plans, discover new classroom activities, exchange effective procedures, and gather practical ideas for everything you need in your art room and your profession. Membership in both AAEA and the National Art Education Association connects you to educators not only across Alabama but throughout the country. I have been a member since 1989, and I have never regretted a single minute. The friendships I’ve formed through conferences and collaboration have become lifelong connections that continue to enrich both my professional and personal life.

Even after retiring in 2015, I chose to remain a member because I value that connection so deeply. I want to continue mentoring new teachers, supporting their growth, and helping them become confident, successful educators. AAEA and NAEA have provided encouragement, inspiration, and professional growth opportunities that have shaped my entire career. Without this community, I would truly feel lost.

If you have not yet joined, I strongly encourage you to do so. We are here to support you, share with you, and grow alongside you—and we are always happy to help.”

Betsy Logan, Parliamentarian

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In Memoriam

Larry Gibson

We're very saddened to learn about the passing of the beloved Larry Gibson. Larry passed on July 4, 2026. If you ever were lucky enough to know Larry then he was your friend. Larry dedicated 39 years to teaching art at Pizitz Middle School before retiring in 2023. His contributions to education were widely recognized.

Larry was a lifetime member of AAEA and NAEA. He served on and off the board throughout the years and served as AAEA President elect and then President in 2012-2014. He chaired a state conference at the beach and taught a great many workshops at the state and national levels.

Twice named Art Educator of the Year by AAEA, he also received numerous accolades for his dedication to art education. His dedication to promoting arts in the community included student involvement in the Empty Bowls Project, Hooked on Art, and the Rising Star Fashion Week. Additionally, Larry coached tennis teams at both Pizitz and Montevallo.

I have known Larry Gibson for as long as I've been a teacher. We met through the AAEA and instantly became forever friends. At every state and national conference, our group was inseparable—spending days in workshops, hunting down fun local restaurants, touring new cities, and always finding time to just sit and talk about art, education, and our students.

Larry was an absolute legend. When I retired and became the art supervisor at UAB, he was the top request for our student interns. Everyone knew him, and everyone wanted to learn from him. He moved through the world with immense knowledge, compassion, humor, and a fierce, lifelong love for teaching.

Larry had a rare gift for making every single person feel special. I like to imagine him up in heaven right now, picking out his wings and saying, "I need the biggest wings you have, because I'm a big guy with a big personality!"

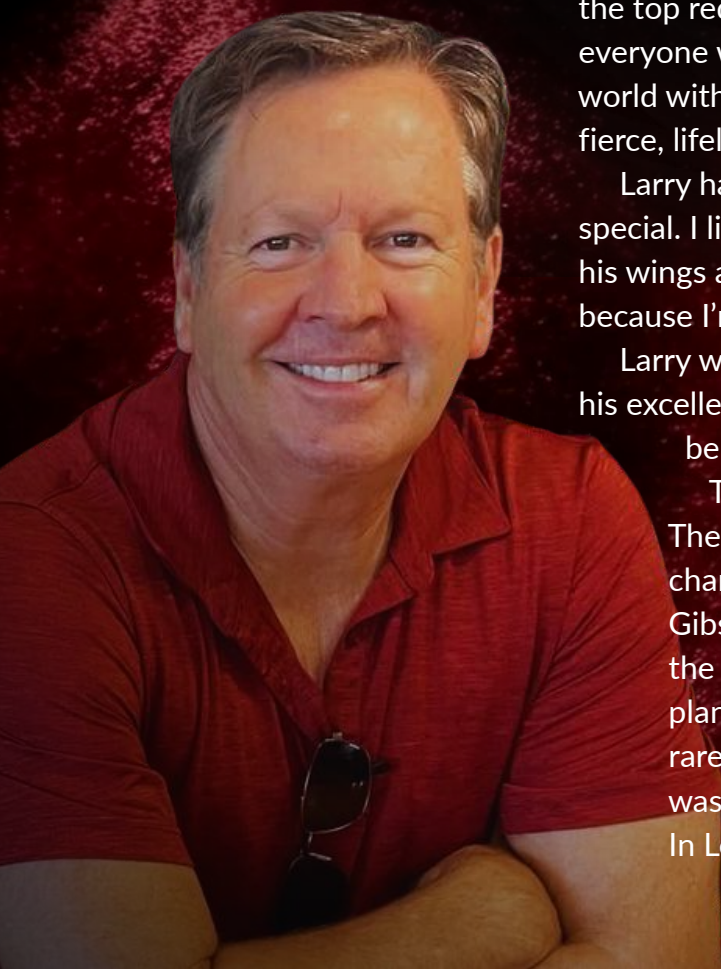
Larry was a remarkable person, loved for his sense of humor, his excellent teaching ability, and his profound kindness. He will be greatly missed and remembered as a true friend.

Thank you for everything, Larry.

The executive Board of AAEA voted to approve the name change of NAEA Convention Scholarship to The Larry Gibson Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship pays for the registration of one member who has submitted and plans to present at the National Conference. Since Larry rarely missed a State or National Conference we felt this was a fitting tribute.

In Loving memory, Gone but never forgotten,

Sharon Christman







LETTER FROM THE

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Summer break has come to an end, and we're officially back in the wonderful world of teaching! I hope each of you enjoyed a restful, rewarding summer, but not too productive. Maybe you attended an inspiring workshop, spent time creating your own art, or, if you're anything like me, took advantage of the opportunity to travel and recharge.

As we settle back into our routines, it's easy to become overwhelmed by everything we think we should be doing, on top of everything we actually need to do. One piece of wisdom from my principal has always stuck with me: our most important job is to make sure our students are safe, fed, loved, and, most importantly, on the right bus home at the end of the day. I love that reminder because it brings us back to what matters most. We don't have to be perfect, and we certainly don't have to carry unrealistic expectations on our shoulders. Give yourself grace, celebrate the small victories, and remember to take care of yourself along the way.

Speaking of exciting things ahead, our Fall Conference is just around the corner! Conference Chair Angie May at the BMA has put together an incredible lineup; you won't want to miss it. If you haven't registered yet, now is the time! And while you're at it, start planning your fabulous "MET Gala"-inspired look for the awards dinner. It's sure to be a memorable evening.

Speaking of conference, if you're a new member, new teacher, or still in school, don't forget to apply for a scholarship to help cover registration costs. We want as many art educators as possible to take advantage of this amazing professional learning opportunity.

And speaking of scholarships, if you're planning to attend and present at the NAEA National Convention in New York City in Spring 2027, be sure to apply for the Larry Gibson Memorial Scholarship. It can help cover the cost of your convention registration, making it even easier to share your expertise on the national stage.

Speaking of opportunities, elementary art teachers, it's finally your turn! NAEA has launched the National Elementary Art Honor Society, giving younger students their own special way to be recognized for their artistic achievement and creativity. If you're interested in starting a chapter at your school, visit the NAEA website to learn more.

And speaking of new initiatives, our outstanding Supervision & Administration Chair, Natalie Roig McKnight, has launched a Book Talk series this fall.

Participants will read *The Mother Artist* and meet virtually for four discussion sessions. As if that weren't enough, you'll also earn professional learning credit toward your certification. That's a win-win! Don't wait too long to join.

Speaking of waiting too long, I think this president's message has reached its finale. As we begin another school year, I wish each of you your best year yet, filled with creativity, connection, and joy. Thank you for all you do for your students, your schools, and our profession.

Here's to a fantastic year ahead!

With deep appreciation and respect,
Rebecca Wall





Alabama Art
Education
Association

Region 2
Members

Clay Workshop

HOW TO CREATE
**CERAMIC
TIC TAC TOE
BOARDS**

*for students
of all ages!*



OCTOBER 16TH



1:00 – 3:00 PM



AUBURN, AL

Free for
Members!
\$15 Non-Members

MRS. KNIGHT Goes To Washington

along with Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Roig-McKnight

By Amanda Knight



The Alabama Art Education Association (AAEA) was proudly represented at the 2026 National Art Education Association (NAEA) National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., by President Rebecca Wall, President-Elect Amanda Knight and Supervision and Administration Chair Natalie Roig-McKnight. The biennial conference brought together state and national leaders from across the country to strengthen advocacy efforts, share innovative practices and collaborate on the future of visual arts education.

A highlight of the conference was Natalie's presentation, "Cultivating Emerging Leaders in Arts Education Through Standards-Based Practice and Teacher Empowerment." Her session focused on practical strategies for developing teacher leadership while strengthening standards-based instruction within arts programs. Drawing from the work of Montgomery Public Schools, Natalie demonstrated how fine arts teachers are empowered to become confident leaders in curriculum and instructional decision-making. Through real-world examples and collaborative activities, participants explored ways to create supportive professional structures that encourage teacher growth, shared ownership and sustainable leadership pipelines. Attendees left with actionable ideas for cultivating emerging leaders and elevating instructional quality across arts disciplines.

Rebecca and Amanda participated in the Southeastern Region Leader-to-Leader meetings, where state leaders engaged in discussions surrounding advocacy, leadership and the future of arts education. One session focused on the National Art Education Association's Platforms and Position Statements, exploring their purpose, impact and practical application in state associations. Leaders also gained insight into the process of developing new position statements and reviewing existing ones.

Another regional meeting provided an opportunity for leaders to share celebrations, discuss common challenges and collaborate on solutions affecting arts education across the Southeast. These conversations highlighted the importance of building strong professional networks and learning from one another's experiences. From advocacy initiatives to membership engagement and leadership development, participants exchanged ideas that will help strengthen state associations and support arts educators throughout the region.

Conference attendees also had the opportunity to hear from artist, illustrator and art director Katty Huertas, whose keynote explored the many phases of a creative career. Huertas shared her journey from exhibiting original paintings in galleries to creating commercial artwork for major brands such as Disney+ and HBO Max. She also discussed her role as an art director at The Washington Post, where she commissions artists and helps shape visual storytelling. Her presentation encouraged educators to embrace the evolving nature of creative careers while inspiring students to see the many possibilities available within the arts. Attendees had a moment to take an existing article and create 3 sketches based on the article.

The National Leadership Conference provided valuable opportunities for professional learning, collaboration, and advocacy. AAEA's participation ensured that Alabama's voice was represented in national conversations while bringing home new ideas and resources to support art educators across the state. The conference reinforced the importance of strong leadership, teacher empowerment and continued collaboration as we work together to advance high quality visual arts education for all students.



COMPOSITION BOOK

2026 AAEA Fall Conference

NOV. 5-7, 2026

Birmingham Museum of Art



FEATURING

AAEA Member Art Exhibition

The BMA Gala

Keynote Speaker

Guest Artists

Workshops

Presentations

Museum tours & experiences

Silent Auction



Masterpiece MEMBER



PHYLLIS HORNE
MEMBER SINCE 1979

From a single art teacher pioneering a program to a cornerstone of the local arts community, Phyllis Parker Horne's career spans over five decades of passion, mentorship, and creative dedication.

After graduating from Troy in 1968, Horne began an expansive career in art education, teaching everything from kindergarten students to AP High School courses, alongside decades of private classes and lessons. In 1975, she joined Bayside Academy in Daphne, where she initially served as the school's entire art department. At the time, she was the only art teacher in lower Baldwin County. Recognizing the need for connection, she reached out to the Alabama Art Education Association (AAEA) in Mobile and helped found the Baldwin County Group, championing the power of networking among educators. Horne's dedication to the AAEA ran deep—she served the organization in nearly every capacity over the years, including roles as President, Past President, Treasurer, and Awards Chair. Her outstanding service earned her many awards, including AAEA Art Educator of the Year, but most recently Retired/Emeritus Award in 2016, followed by the honor again in 2021.

Over her 39-year tenure at Bayside Academy, Horne watched her one-woman department flourish into a robust fine arts faculty of 13 across visual arts, dance, drama, and music. Although she officially retired in 2015, her passion for teaching kept her conducting private lessons until 2020, marking a remarkable 50-year milestone in education. Today, Horne continues to paint for fun, hosting an annual art sale at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Fairhope, Alabama. True to her spirit of community, she still actively supports the AAEA, partnering with fellow retirees to donate door prizes and spread love to the next generation of educators.

Around the State

Southern Region 1

Southern Region, we are hot, hot, hot! To stay cool in June, we held a get-to-"gather" at Fairhope Brewing Company to mix, mingle, and work on personal projects before dashing out in the middle of a notorious Mobile afternoon thunderstorm. Our July event at Knot Just Beads was postponed — we were all out and about enjoying the last few weeks of summer. But don't worry, you'll be able to make your very own beaded statement piece this fall, so keep your eye out for an email with the new date. Also this fall, expect a fun workshop where you will make a pinhole camera, take a photo, and then develop the photograph using a natural, homemade solution. Speaking of fall and dates...

SAVE THE DATE for the AAEA Southern Region Fall Show! The show will begin October 29 at the Ben May Library, located in downtown Mobile, and will culminate with a reception on December 3. Registration for the show, as well as specific details and drop-off dates will be shared via email in September.

And last but not least, let's show off our region! Send pictures of student artwork, classroom events, or any classroom-related successes you're proud of to aaea.vaca1@gmail.com. Enjoy these two first-week pictures taken at St. Paul's Episcopal School: a turmeric anthotype from the high school photography I class and a blind drawing exercise from the middle school 2D design class. - Amanda White

Southern Region2

Region 2 get your creative juices going because we are going to have our 2nd AAEA Region 2 Art Exhibit at the Jan Dempsey Community Art Center 'A Gathering of Talent' November 5-19, 2026! Details will follow soon. We would LOVE to have art from each of our counties in the region for this show. What do you think? Let's DO IT!!! If you would like to enter 2-3 works of art please reach out to aaea.region2@gmail.com we would enjoy chatting with you about your work.

The Tic Tac Toe Clay workshop is Oct. 16 from 1:00-3:00 at Richland Elementary with Rebecca Wall! To attend please email aaea_region2@gmail.com to secure your spot! See flyer on page 9.

Speaking of plans, we hope you are getting ready for an outstanding Fall Conference in Birmingham at the MOA November 6-7. At the meeting there will be time to gather as a region so that we can put names and faces together in order to better meet your art teacher needs. Can't wait to see you at the conference!

-Alicia and Sarah

Western Region3

Happy Back-to-School Wishes for our Region 3 Art Teachers! I hope summer gave you time to rest and refuel. I want us to get together and exchange grows, glows, ideas and questions from our first few weeks of school. Stay tuned for information about that later in September! This can include anything you want to chat about-fabulous first projects, questions about projects with inherited/donated art supplies, best projects to teach students about ____, classroom management, arts advocacy, addressing your administration, student art shows and so much more. Anything is up for discussion. Stay tuned for more information about that later in September! Have you signed up for our 2026 Conference at the Birmingham Museum of Art yet? If not, you better do it quick to get that early bird price! I wish you the best this year and I'll see you in Birmingham! - Molly Brooke Threadgill aaea.vaca33@gmail.com

Around the State can't

Central Region 4

Happy New School Year to everyone in District 4!

One of my favorite ways to start out a new school year is with some kind of collaborative project with all of my classes. Everyone makes a small piece and then we combine them together for the first display of the year. I typically do something that gives a quick overview of materials, so students remember where everything is in the classroom and have reminders of proper care and safe use of those materials. Ideally I come up with a way to connect the smaller artworks so that they can be taken apart and returned to the student in their May portfolio as well. Whatever way you choose to begin I hope you are off and running with great things in your classroom! I look forward to connecting with you

at the Fall Conference, during that meeting I will share our plans for some district workshops and meet ups for the year. If you have anything you'd like us to try as a District group please let me know by emailing aaevaca4a@gmail.com. Remember you can also email me (or use the google form) with any special happenings at your school or in your professional artist life! - Mollie Everitte

Northern Region 5

Super Summer Workshop Recap!

Art educators gathered at the Alabama Center for the Arts in Decatur for a full day of hands-on professional learning, collaboration, and creativity. This year's sessions included:

- Derek Cracco (UAB): Color Theory and Optical Illusions
- Pat Snow (UA): Draw BIG (large-format drawing techniques)
- Ahmad Austin: Expressive Palette Knife Painting
- Beth Bachuss: Classroom-friendly Beading Techniques
- Kerrie Pirkle (Region 5 Rep): Layered Quilt-Style Textiles inspired by Bisa Butler

Future Workshop Plans

Following a successful turnout, Region 5 is exploring expanding the event into a two-day workshop. Proposed plans include dedicating Day 1 to short breakout sessions with university professors, museum educators, and veteran teachers, followed by Day 2 focused on extended, hands-on "Make and Take" projects. Member feedback is welcome.

Upcoming Events & Announcements

- AAEA Fall Conference & Art Relay: Educators are encouraged to attend the fall conference and participate in the Art Relay, transporting North Alabama teacher artwork for exhibition at the Birmingham Museum of Art.
- Update Your Contact Info: To avoid lost communication from deactivated school accounts, please update your AAEA contact details to a personal email address. Members are also invited to submit classroom successes and student achievements for upcoming features.

As another school year begins, we wish each of you a fantastic start and hope you take time to celebrate the creativity, inspiration, and new opportunities that come with a fresh year in the classroom. We look forward to sharing more exciting news and updates from North Alabama Region 5 as the year gets underway. Watch for our September newsletter as we highlight the amazing accomplishments, events, and innovations happening throughout our region. Have a wonderful school year—we can't wait to see what you'll create!

- Kerrie Pirkle aaea.vaca5@gmail.com



What's the **WORD** from Grade Level Chairs?



Elementary Level Division:

I hope your year is off to a great start with your artists. Our second hybrid-mini conference was a success this summer. Look forward to highlights and lesson ideas that were presented in your email. If you haven't already, be sure to sign up for the Fall Conference in Birmingham. There are going to be so many amazing local artists and presentations. Our next lesson swap will be October, so be honing in on a tried and true lesson you can share with fellow elementary art teachers, the more the merrier. If you need anything please feel free to reach out to Brooklyn Scoggins @ aaeaelem@gmail.com

Middle Level Division:

I hope this message finds you inspired!

Important Announcements

- New online community: If you use social media, please consider joining the "AAEA Middle School Teachers" Facebook group. This will be a space where middle school art teachers across Alabama can support each other, offer advice and wisdom, and share classroom lessons and project ideas.
 - Search for "AAEA Middle School Teachers" on Facebook and request to join. I will also post an invitation link in a follow-up email.
- Communication update: I know it can be hard to keep up with emails during a busy week. I will share important updates both by email and on the Facebook group so you can choose the channel that works best for you.
- Teacher survey: I will be sending a short survey by email soon to learn what would most benefit you as a middle school art teacher. Your feedback will directly shape the supports, resources, and group activities we provide.
 - Please look for the survey in your inbox and take a few minutes to complete it when it arrives.

How I Can Support You? I want to be as helpful as possible to you in the middle school art classroom. To guide planning and support, I welcome your thoughts on:

- Which resources would help most? (lesson plans, supply lists, project rubrics, step-by-step demos)
- Preferred professional learning formats? (short video tutorials, live virtual chats, downloadable resource packs, in-person meetups)
- Specific challenges you'd like help with? (managing materials, differentiating projects, assessment strategies, classroom displays) Please share your answers in the upcoming survey or reply to this email directly. Your input will shape upcoming resources, workshops, and group discussions.

I look forward to continuing our collaboration and to the many ways we'll support each other this year!

Warmly, -Laura Wilkerson

Secondary Level Division:

Well, we have hit the road running, haven't we? By now your calendar is already filling up with events! I am one of those people who still LOVES to fill in an old school paper calendar by hand. There is something exciting about putting down future dates, birthdays and of course marking vacation days as well. The process gives me a sense of purpose and fills me with anticipation about all the wonderful things to look forward to.

What are you looking forward to this year? Is it a new lesson plan, process or new course altogether? Advanced Placement Classes, Fall Conference? Starting an Art Club or NAHS Chapter? Retirement?

Whatever it is that is getting you excited about this year, I would love to hear about it!

Let's Share what is working for us and what is not working for us as well.

Please join our Facebook group...AAEA Secondary Teachers.

It is an easy platform to share secondary concerns all year long.

We are better TOGETHER!- Felicia Olds, Secondary Chair





What's the **WORD** from the other Chairs?

Museum Division:

Fall is always an exhilarating time for museum educators. School starts back, tours ramp up, and we get to fill our calendars with fun activities for schools and beyond. Speaking of engaging museum opportunities, below are some programs and events being offered by the WMA and the BMA this Autumn .

The **Wiregrass Museum of Art** in Dothan has some really exciting news! They have officially launched their brand new interactive space, **ArtVentures**. This is a space made for exploration, imagination, and joy. It is filled with coloring activities, books, sensory objects, and activities connecting to the galleries. Be sure to check out the space the next time you visit the WMA. But on top of that, the WMA is offering their *Bus On Us* tours again this year. Click on [this link](#) to see if your school qualifies for this transportation reimbursement program. And if you are interested in glassblowing, they are offering a glass blowing workshop with the Hot Glass Academy October 8-11th. Check their website for registration updates. Big thank you to Janin Wise and Alexandria Turner for the thoughtful programs they develop.



And over here at the **Birmingham Museum of Art** we are still riding the high from our successful Educator Summer Camp we held in July. But, we are equally super pumped about what we have in store this Fall. We have a big exhibition coming up that matches Alabama standards in several ways. *Roll Call: Two Hundred Years of Black American Art* opens September 26.

And yes, we are offering tours of the exhibition, so be sure to check the website for information regarding exhibition packages. But above all, we are thrilled to welcome AAEA members through our doors for the **2026 AAEA Fall Conference**. We have been getting the galleries, studios, and meeting spaces ready for you guys. We cannot wait to see you!

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me about museum programs and partnership opportunities. And I hope to see you at the BMA for the conference!

-Angie May, Museum Division, aaea2museum@gmail.com



What's the **WORD?**

National Art Honor Society:

Getting Started with NAHS, NJAHS & NEAHS

Have you been thinking about starting a National Art Honor Society chapter but aren't sure where to begin? The National Art Honor Society (NAHS), National Junior Art Honor Society (NJAHS), and National Elementary Art Honor Society (NEAHS) are more than "art clubs." Since 1978, these programs have supported students in achieving the highest standards in art scholarship, character, and service.

Why Start a Chapter?

Membership provides students with opportunities for national recognition, scholarships, leadership experience, and connection with more than 50,000 outstanding art students worldwide. Students may also participate in national juried exhibitions, awards programs, virtual learning opportunities, and opportunities to have their artwork published in NAHS News.

How Do You Get Started?

Starting a chapter is easier than you might think:

1. Get approval from your administration to establish a chapter.
2. Review the national requirements and create your chapter's constitution and bylaws.
3. Identify eligible students. Students must meet the membership criteria established by the national program and your chapter's constitution and bylaws.
4. Register your chapter and students through the National Art Honor Societies program.
5. Build your chapter around art, service, leadership, and community.

Your chapter can adapt its rules and timeline to fit your school. For example, at Auburn High School, we close our membership applications after Club Week at the end of September and make sure our students are enrolled by the national deadline of January 31. Your chapter may choose a different timeline or establish additional requirements that work best for your students and school.

Chapter membership expires on June 30 each year. Chapters can register at any time, but registration by January 31 is recommended in order to participate in all available chapter opportunities.

What Can Your Chapter Do?

Service is an important part of an Art Honor Society chapter, and it can look different at every school. Students can use their artistic skills to serve their school and community through exhibitions, community art projects, working with local arts organizations, creating artwork for nonprofits, or leading art activities for younger students.

At Auburn High School, our NAHS students have had opportunities to connect with the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center, providing meaningful ways for students to participate in and support the arts in our community.

NEAHS Is New!

The National Elementary Art Honor Society (NEAHS) is launching for the 2026–27 school year, providing elementary art educators with a new opportunity to recognize and engage young artists through art, service, leadership, and community.

If you teach elementary art, middle school, or high school, now is a great time to consider starting a chapter! Ready to Get Started?

[National Art Honor Societies – Start a New Chapter](#)

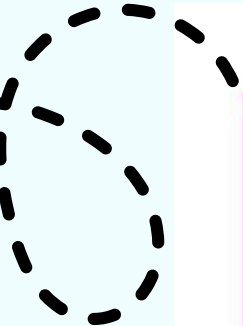
[National Art Honor Societies – Requirements & Resources](#)

As the Alabama Chair for NAHS, NJAHS, and NEAHS, I am always happy to help! If you have questions about starting a chapter, developing service opportunities, or navigating the process, please reach out. I'd love to help you get started and connect you with other art educators across Alabama.

- Randalyn Henry, NAHS Chair



What's the **WORD**?



Alabama State Department of Education

Upcoming Arts Education Professional Development and Grant Opportunities

As we begin an exciting new school year, the Instructional Services Division of the Alabama State Department of Education is pleased to share several opportunities to support and strengthen arts education across the state. This fall, educators will have the opportunity to engage in professional learning focused on the Alabama Arts Education Course of Study and learn more about funding opportunities through the Alabama Arts Education Initiative (AAEI) Grant Program. Sessions will be offered in Auburn, Mobile, Fairhope, Phenix City, and virtually.

In addition, we are excited to announce that the FY 2027 Alabama Arts Education Initiative (AAEI) Grant Program is now open for applications. Schools and districts interested in applying are encouraged to review the grant guidelines carefully, as important updates have been made to the application process for this funding cycle. You may contact **Dr. Euri Townsy Carr, Arts Education Specialist**, at euri.carr@alsde.edu or click here: [ALSDE Arts Education 2026-2027](#) to learn more.

We wish all Alabama arts educators a successful and inspiring school year.

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring every student has access to a high-quality arts learning experience!

Sparks, Soldering, and Seclusion: MY TIME AT ARROWMONT

By Amanda Youngblood

While summertime activities for educators vary, I've made it my personal mission to attend arts related workshops during summer break. In order to practice what I teach, I too need to continue to learn and add new skills to my own artistic endeavors. Last summer I took advantage of the low-cost Educator Forum at SCAD and this summer thanks to the Art Educator Fellowship from ASCA, I was able to attend the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts.

ARROWMONT

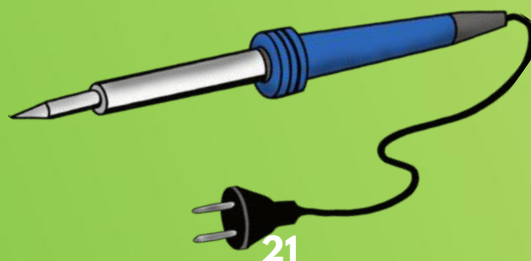


Arrowmont is a magical space for creatives and artists, although tucked between the bustling tourist trap of Gatlinburg and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it felt quite remote, especially when burning the almost midnight oil in the studio. Due to my side hustle of creating jewelry, I attended the “Thinking Outside the Gemstone: Unlocking Possibilities with Non-Traditional Materials” a jewelry workshop led by Carin Jones. In this weeklong workshop we learned how to incorporate unique materials such as tin and found objects in our pieces. Since Gatlinburg is what I would consider driving distance from home, I brought a large Hulken bag full of found object materials to incorporate into potential pieces. Did I “need” or use the majority of my stash....of course not, but I enjoyed deliberating on which items to add into my pieces, and it pushed my creative boundaries. But don’t fear if you ‘forgot’ an item, there is an on campus store and gallery, in which residents are encouraged to purchase art supplies and hand-made items, plus tons of Arrowmont swag as well as snacks, toiletries, and other items.

In this workshop, I learned the basics of soldering, and I fear a can of worms has been opened as I yearn to take future workshops related to metalsmithing. Sparks have been ignited (physically and metaphorically) as I see new ways to incorporate soldering and more found object pieces into my own work. Not only did I learn new skills and new ideas for my art, but the people I met were incredible and truly made this experience extraordinary. Class hours were from 9 am – 5 pm with an hour and a half break for lunch in between. At night, after dinner there were artist talks given by the instructors, their assistants, and artists in residence. My favorite night was the open studio exploration, in which attendees visited the other studios to view student artwork and engage in conversation about their pieces. After nightly dinner and artist talks, many of us would return to the studios to work, fully taking advantage of open studio hours until midnight. My classmates were exceptionally kind and knowledgeable and were very forthcoming with tips and techniques. No gatekeepers in the room. In addition to late studio hours, there is a campus library that is also open till midnight in which residents can pilfer through every inspirational and how-to art book imaginable.

The campus at Arrowmont feels secluded, even though at night we could see the bright glow of the neon “Margaritaville” sign from our communal house porch. Many a night when we finished working in the studios, we spent time chatting on the porch until way too late into the evening. I met humans from all over the country who all have had unique life experiences, some who work in creative industries, some who make art for a living, and some who just simply attend workshops to learn skills just for themselves. As for housing, I opted for a single room in the “Teachers Cottage,” a shared house with a communal living room and kitchen space along with shared bathrooms. It was a delightful experience, and I was so fortunate to have wonderful housemates.

The cost of attending Arrowmont can be a bit steep, but they do offer a discount for educators, up to 50% off the price of the workshop. If that is still too pricey, the school offers scholarship and work-study opportunities available to all. There are a wide variety of housing options at varying price points with the cost of the meals included. The meals at Arrowmont were just phenomenal, Culinary Director Rachel and her team do an astonishing job of keeping residents fed with delicious healthy food. 10/10. No notes. Amazing. I am absolutely planning to attend again in the future and would 100% recommend that fellow art educators put it on their art travel bucket lists too.



NEW
NEW
NEW
NEW
NEW

Confessions of an art teacher



After 26 years teaching, how can I NOT have something to confess???
Fair warning, put down anything you're drinking and go ahead and go to the bathroom or put on a pair of Depends. You've been warned.

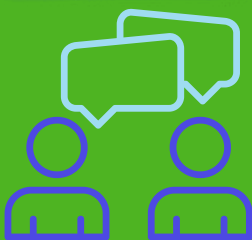
When the fire alarm goes off, even if you DON'T have a class, GO OUTSIDE!

Let me set the scene: I had sooo much to do and was right in the middle of something and I was in a portable. So I kept working, everyone would come back inside soon and no one would be the wiser, right? WRONG. I hear sirens. I see fire trucks pulling into the front of the schools. Oh poop. Now what? The portables are completely fenced in. The portables are in the front left side of the school. The hallway from outside is the MAIN hallway in the front of the school. Everyone else is outside. I decided to scale the fence behind my portable, so I slide out of my door, down my decking to the back and start to scale the fence WITH AN AUDIENCE. The students were waving and screaming my name. I had no choice but to climb over the fence, so up and over I went ...only to be greeted by the school secretary who was grinning from ear to ear. She got doughnuts the next day. The moral of the story: GO OUTSIDE no matter what!



-Submitted by Tammie Clark

Do you have a confession to share?
Email: aaeapres@gmail.com



Are you interested in writing and article for the Perspectives Newsletter? Submit your 300-500 word submission to Tricia Oliver, Newsletter Chair, at aaeanewsletter796@gmail.com by November 15th to be considered.

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Thanks for helping to make our conference

Amazing!

other NEWS

HELP

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AAEA NEEDS YOU

We have 2 board positions open:

- Youth Art Month Chair
- Treasurer Elect

Contact AAEA President Rebecca Wall
if intrested: aaeapres@gmail.com

**Raise your hand
if you've already secured your
Silent Auction and Door Prize items for
Fall Conference at the Birmingham
Museum of Fine Arts!**



There will be a few changes to how art work and donations will be accepted this year.

Angie May has a great system to help us conduct a smooth Silent Auction and deliver Door Prizes.

There will be a form filled out and attached to each artwork.

Watch for email updates from our conference chair Angie May.



If you are presenting at the 2027 NAEA National Convention, apply to have your convention registration paid for with the Larry Gibson Memorial Scholarship. Apply here: <https://forms.gle/uM2n8nzd7aFB6qK56> by Nov 30th.



Register now!

Calendar of Events



NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
STUDIO

NAEA Webinars

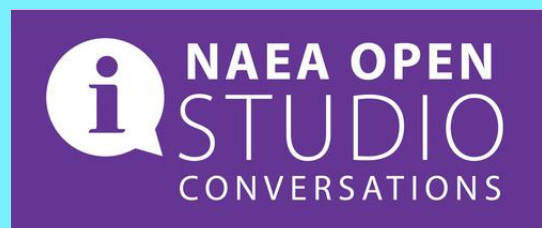
FREE for NAEA members; \$49 for nonmembers

A Curious Classroom: Designing for Discovery Through Thinking Routines
Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Practices for Healing and Connection in Art Education
Wednesday, November 4, 2026



Until Sept. 30th



NAEA Open Studio Conversation

FREE for NAEA members

Educators, Museums, and an Artist Collaborate to Bring Contemporary Indigenous Art to Classrooms
Thursday, October 22, 2026



Calendar of Events

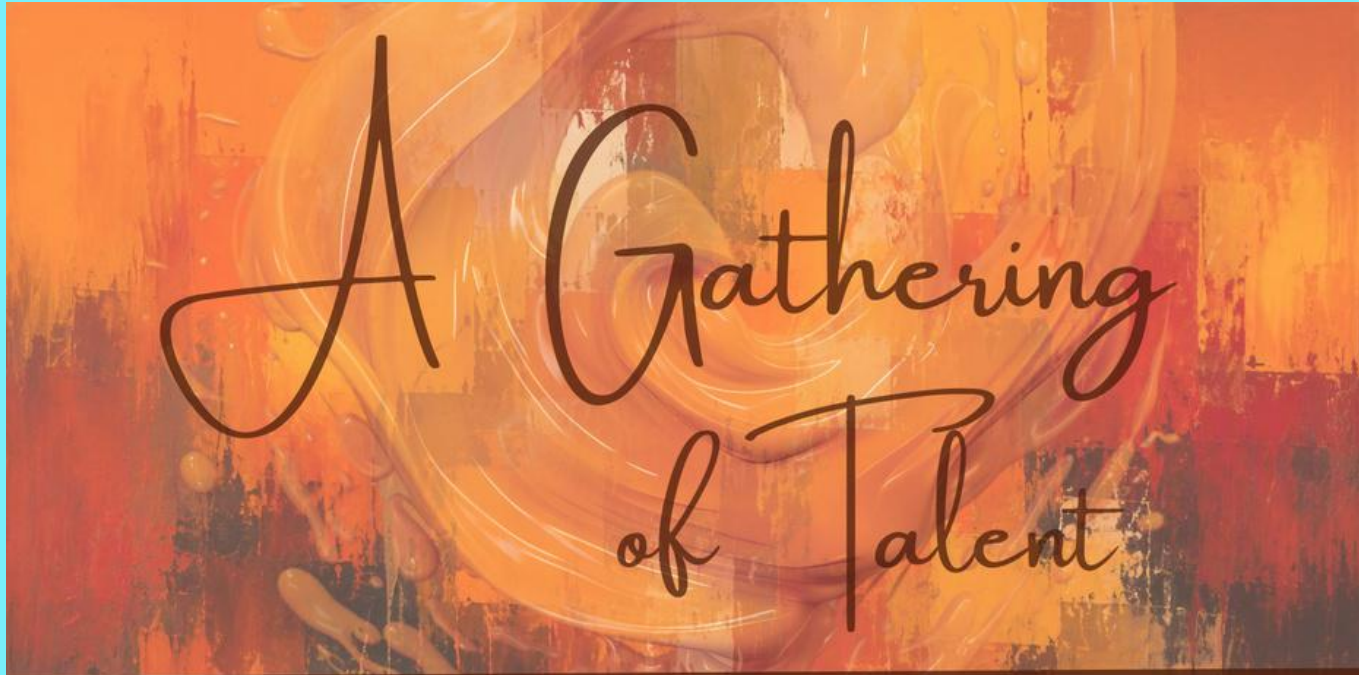
Oct 26th: Full Board Meeting Monday Oct 26th, at 7pm (Virtual)

Nov 5-7: Fall Conference Register and book your room

Nov 15: Newsletter Entries Due

Jan 2: YAM Entries Due

Jan 16th: Full Board Meeting: Saturday Jan 16th (In person, Clanton, AL)



A Gathering of Talent

AAEA Region 2 Art Show

Nov 5-19 Artwork Due by Nov 1

email: aaea.region2@gmail.com



YOUTH ART MONTH[®]
COUNCIL FOR ART EDUCATION[®]

2026–2027 Flag Design Contest “My Community, My Story”

Winning artwork will hang at the National Art Education Association Convention in NYC

3 Entries Per School

Due Jan 2, 2027

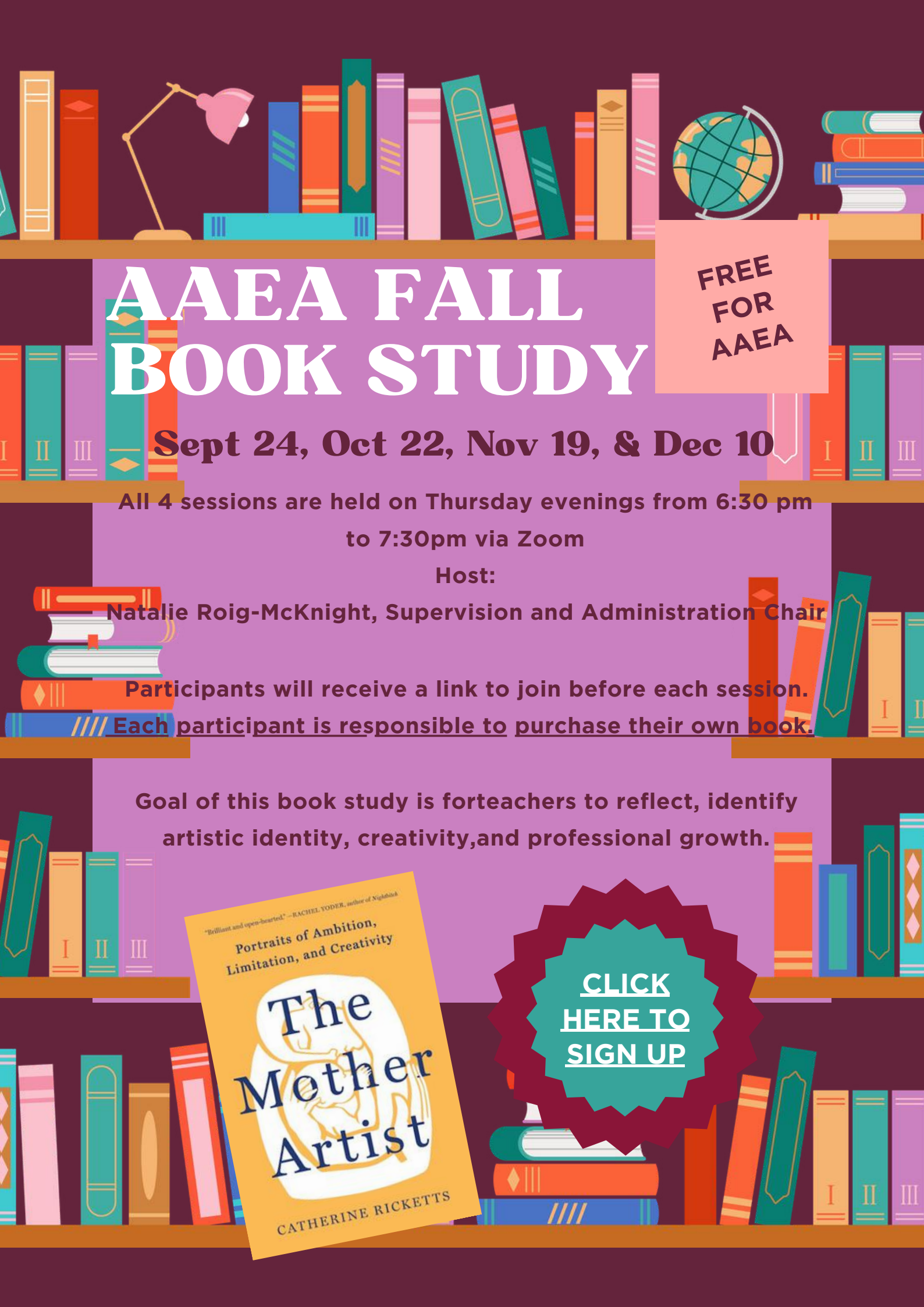
Email entries to:

aaeaYAM1@gmail.com

[More Info and Forms Click Here](#)



**Alabama Art
Education Association**



AAEA FALL BOOK STUDY

FREE
FOR
AAEA

Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 19, & Dec 10

All 4 sessions are held on Thursday evenings from 6:30 pm
to 7:30pm via Zoom

Host:

Natalie Roig-McKnight, Supervision and Administration Chair

Participants will receive a link to join before each session.

Each participant is responsible to purchase their own book.

Goal of this book study is for teachers to reflect, identify
artistic identity, creativity, and professional growth.

"Brilliant and open-hearted" —RACHEL YODER, author of *Nightbird*
Portraits of Ambition,
Limitation, and Creativity

**The
Mother
Artist**

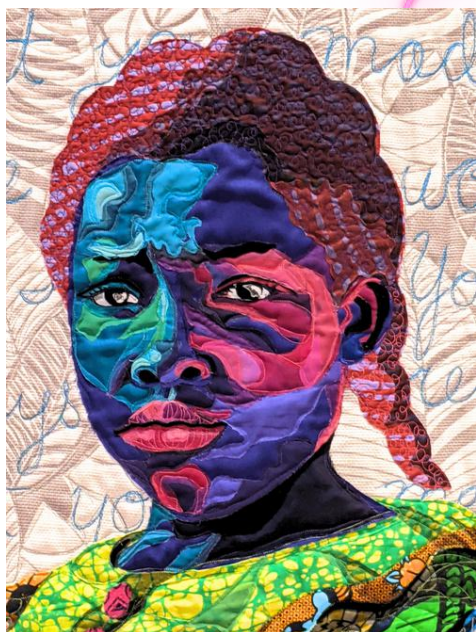
CATHERINE RICKETTS

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LESSON

plans

Submitted by **Kerrie Pirkle**



Stories Stitched in Color:

Quilted Portraits Inspired by Bisa Butler

Grade Levels: 8th & 9th Grade Visual Art

Time Frame: 5–7 Class Periods (Adaptable for 90-Minute Block Scheduling)

Artists of Focus: Bisa Butler (Contemporary Fiber Artist) & Gordon Parks (Civil Rights Era Photographer)

Lesson Philosophy & Overview

In this unit, students embark on a creative journey at the intersection of portraiture, digital technology, and textile tradition. Inspired by the vibrant work of contemporary artist Bisa Butler and the poignant photojournalism of Gordon Parks, students transform historic photographs into multi-layered, symbolic portraits.

Through a dual-track approach, 8th-grade students explore value mapping and graphic design using paper collage, while 9th-grade students delve deeper into traditional fiber arts through fabric layering, batting, and

hand-stitching. Across both tracks, students discover how artists use non-local color, pattern, and texture to celebrate Black history, honor lived experiences, and tell enduring visual stories.

Essential Questions

- **Preserving History:** How can visual art tell the story of a person, a culture, or a pivotal moment in history?
- **Medium as Message:** Why does Bisa Butler choose fabric and quilting—media historically tied to home, warmth, and utility—to elevate her subjects to fine art?
- **Emotional Resonance:** How do non-local color palettes and dynamic patterns communicate mood, value, and personal identity?
- **Reimagining the Past:** How can digital tools allow us to reinterpret historical documentation through a contemporary artistic lens?

Learning Objectives & Competencies

By the conclusion of this unit, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze & Connect:** Examine the thematic and technical approaches of Bisa Butler and Gordon Parks, discussing art as a tool for historical preservation.
2. **Manipulate Digital Media:** Utilize digital image editing software (Canva) and value-mapping tools (IMGinline) to translate photographic tones into distinct visual planes.
3. **Simplify & Translate Form:** Convert complex photographic values into simplified contour shapes suitable for collage or textile assembly.
4. **Construct & Craft:** Assemble a multi-layered portrait using paper collage techniques (8th Grade) or hand-sewn fiber methods (9th Grade).
5. **Reflect & Articulate:** Compose a written artist statement detailing the historical choice of their subject and the symbolic intention behind their color and pattern selections.

LESSON

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Curriculum Alignment (Alabama Course of Study – Visual Arts)

- VA.Cr1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- VA.Cr2: Organize and develop artistic work.
- VA.Re7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- VA.Cn11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context.

Key Vocabulary

- Quilt & Fiber Art: Artwork constructed from layers of fabric or flexible materials held together by stitching.
- Value & Contrast: The lightness or darkness of a color, used here to define facial structures and light sources.
- Non-Local Color: Color chosen for expressive or aesthetic impact rather than literal accuracy.
- Pattern & Symbolism: Repeating visual motifs used to convey identity, heritage, or emotional tone.
- Mixed Media & Collage: Compositions created by joining diverse materials and textures on a single backing.

Materials & Studio Setup

Shared Resources

- Computers or iPads with internet access
- Digital Tools: Canva (image cropping/contrast) and IMGinline (Thermal Image effect set to Standard Sensitivity)
- Printer & standard paper
- Dark crayons (Black, dark blue, or dark brown; no white or yellow)
- Pencils, scissors, craft glue, and masking tape

Grade-Specific Supplies

- 8th Grade (Paper Quilt): Assorted brightly colored construction paper/cardstock, thermal printouts, fine-tip markers/pens (for drawn stitch lines).
- 9th Grade (Fabric Quilt): Bright broadcloth fabrics (assorted solid colors and subtle patterns), hand-sewing needles, embroidery/sewing thread, poly-fil batting, fabric shears, sewing pins/clips.

Narrative Step-by-Step Instructional Arc

Phase 1: History, Context & Cultural Storytelling (Class Period 1)

The unit opens with a deep dive into the storytelling power of textiles. Students analyze how quilts served as historical records in African American history and examine Bisa Butler's monumental portrait quilts.

Next, the class explores the Civil Rights era photography of Gordon Parks, discussing how his lens documented dignity, resilience, and daily life amidst segregation. Students consider how shifting a black-and-white photograph into a vivid fabric matrix changes the viewer's emotional connection to the subject.

Phase 2: Image Selection & Digital Value Mapping (Class Period 2)

Students select their subject based on their grade level focus:

- 8th Grade: Select an iconic segregation-era photograph by Gordon Parks.
- 9th Grade: Select a photograph of a prominent Black historical figure.

LESSON

plans

Digital Workflow:

1. Import the photo into Canva, cropping it closely into a dramatic headshot and boosting contrast to highlight facial features.
2. Export the image and upload it to IMGinline.
3. Apply the Thermal Image Effect (Standard Sensitivity), which converts the subtle gradients of the face into defined visual "zones" or value maps.
4. Save the file using the standard format: StudentName_ClassPeriod and send it to the teacher for printing.

Phase 3: The Carbon-Transfer Process (Class Period 3)

With their thermal value maps printed, students prepare to transfer the visual contours onto their chosen working substrate:

1. Turn the printed paper over and coat the entire backside evenly using a dark crayon.
2. Secure the printout (crayon-side down) onto the background cardstock (8th) or base fabric (9th) using masking tape.
3. Trace firmly over every visible contour line using a pencil.
4. Lift the paper to reveal the transferred contour map on the background surface.

Phase 4: Studio Construction & Assembly (Class Periods 4–6)

8th Grade Track: The Paper Collage Quilt

- Students treat each mapped shape as a puzzle piece, assigning bold, non-local paper colors to different value zones.
- Shapes are traced onto colored cardstock, carefully cut out, and glued down onto the base line drawing.
- Students add hand-drawn graphic patterns to background areas and use fine-tip markers to draw subtle "stitch lines" around each paper shape, simulating the look of a quilted seam.

9th Grade Track: The Stitched Fiber Quilt

- Students trace mapped facial shapes onto broadcloth fabrics and cut them out using fabric shears.
- Layering a thin sheet of poly-fil batting beneath their base fabric, students position their cut fabric shapes on top.
- Using needles and thread, students hand-stitch the pieces together using running or backstitches. The visible thread adds texture, structural dimension, and authentic quilting craftsmanship.

Phase 5: Refinement, Reflection & Exhibition (Class Period 7)

To finish the artwork, students add background patterns and symbols that connect to their subject's history or story. The unit concludes with a written reflection (Artist Statement) answering:

1. Who is represented in your artwork, and what is their historical significance?
2. Why did you choose these specific colors, fabrics, or patterns? How do they reflect the personality or mood of your subject?
3. How does quilting or collage transform a flat photograph into a multi-layered story?

LESSON

plans

Differentiation & Accommodations

- Fine-Motor Support: Provide pre-cut geometric shapes or simplified contour maps for students who require assistance with precision cutting.
- Peer Collaboration: Pair 9th-grade students for peer assistance during thread threading and knot-tying steps.
- Compositional Choice: Allow students to choose between simplified 3-tone maps or complex multi-tone maps depending on skill level.

Assessment Criteria (100 Points Total)

- Color & Value Translation (25 pts): Effective mapping of light and dark values using bold, intentional color choices.
- Craftsmanship & Execution (25 pts): Clean cutting, precise alignment, and strong assembly (glue technique for 8th; secure stitching for 9th).
- Digital Process Mastery (20 pts): Proper execution of digital cropping, thermal conversion, and image file management.
- Historical & Narrative Reflection (15 pts): Thoughtful selection of a subject and a clear, reflective artist statement.
- Studio Habits & Care (15 pts): Safe and responsible use of tools (fabric shears, needles, digital devices) and consistent studio effort.



8th grade on paper



9th grade on fabric

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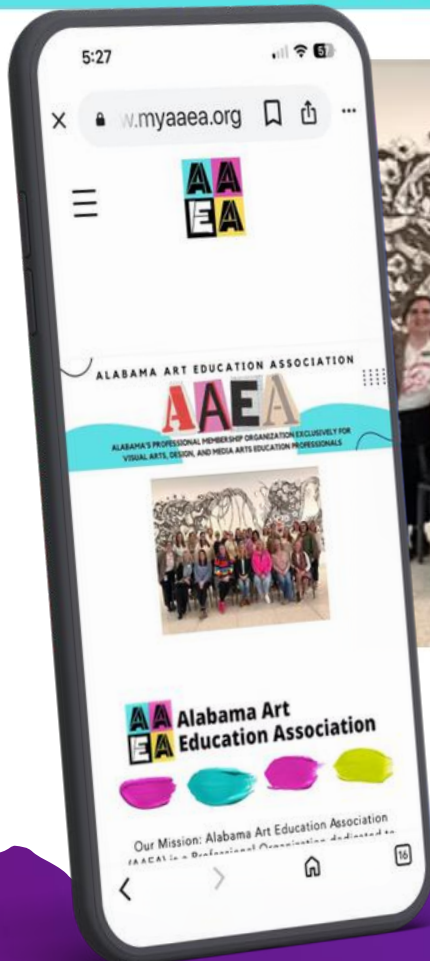
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