

## The NAMES Quilt and the Art Educator's Role

---

Doug Blandy, Karen Branen,  
Kristin G. Congdon, and Laurie E. Hicks

During October of 1989, more than 9,000 individual memorial quilt panels were collected and displayed in Washington, D.C. by the *NAMES Quilt Project*. The panels, covering the equivalent of nine football fields, made public the grief of thousands of individuals and families whose loved ones have died of AIDS. This quilt, the *NAMES Quilt*, is an international effort to create a living visual memory of the devastation that the AIDS virus has inflicted on those who have died from the disease and those who have been left behind to grieve.

It is the purpose of this article to argue for the importance of including the *NAMES Quilt Project* within art education contexts and to give examples of how this has already been achieved. The AIDS virus can no longer be ignored by anyone from any racial or economic background. All children, youth and adults must understand its reality.<sup>1</sup>

### The Virus

On March 11, 1991, wire services reported that the World Health Organization issued the latest of its reports on the numbers of people with HIV or AIDS (Group projects spread of AIDS: Epidemic hits Latin America, March 11, 1991). Their report concludes that by 1995 three million people in North, Central, and South America will have AIDS. In a previous report this organization predicted that 20 million people throughout the world will have HIV infections and that four percent of the United States population are people who test HIV positive or have the AIDS virus. According to the World Health Organization, AIDS is the leading cause of death in the United States among white males age 25 to 34. Officials indicated that the number of men, women and children who have died of AIDS in North, Central, and South America is 113,000; however, they admit that the actual number may be closer to 226,000.

By 1985, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta reported that 20,487 men, women and children had been diagnosed with AIDS; 17,359 have died since 1981 (*AIDS: The Artists' Response*, 1989). Despite thousands of deaths from AIDS in the early 1980s, 1985 is considered the year in which most people in the United States became familiar with HIV or AIDS. This familiarity resulted not from the educational efforts of federal, state or local government, but from the media attention given to the death of actor Rock Hudson (Shilts, 1987). Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control indicate that AIDS did not spontaneously appear. The medical community watched as the numbers of HIV and AIDS diagnoses and deaths increased rapidly in the early 1980s. Shilts (1987) has argued that AIDS is an epidemic that could have been prevented if the "sophisticated" and "lavishly" funded medical science complex that exists in the United States had responded quickly and effectively. He indicts American public health institutions for failing "to perform their appropriate tasks to safeguard the public health. This failure of the system leaves a legacy of unnecessary suffering that will haunt the Western World for decades to come" (p.xxii). Government officials at all levels- medical scientists, public health authorities, mass media and gay community leaders, are all held culpable. Shilts states:

In those early years, the federal government viewed AIDS as a budget problem, local public health officials saw it as a political problem, gay leaders considered AIDS a public relations problem, and the news media regarded it as a homosexual problem that wouldn't interest anybody else. Consequently, few confronted AIDS for what it was, a profoundly threatening medical crisis. (p. xxiii)

There can be no doubt that the AIDS epidemic is profoundly affecting American thought. AIDS is now integral to American culture. Consequently, it is not surprising that AIDS has become central to contemporary aesthetic discourse. The situation is such that at least one critic is able to claim that "virtually every form of art or entertainment in America has been touched by AIDS" (Goldstein, 1990, p. 295). The contributors to this discourse represent all aspects of American life. Art works that respond to the AIDS epidemic are being created by people with formal art preparation as well as by people who are self-taught. Artists are using all of the media available to them to respond to this disease and its socio-cultural ramifications. This has been particularly true of artists who are gay. Goldstein (1990) has recognized that large numbers of gay men in the "creative disciplines" have died from, or have been diagnosed with, HIV or AIDS. He writes that "The arts enabled gay men to bear witness to their situation, express feelings of grief that society often distorts, and sexual caution that would be necessary to combat a sexually transmitted disease with no known cure" (p. 297).

J.Z. Grover (1989) in her introduction to the exhibit *AIDS: The Artists' Response* writes of the powerful effects that art makers are having on popular perceptions of AIDS and people with AIDS. Her point of view is interesting in that she suggests that the role of artists has been to personalize and localize a disease that is primarily known through statistical information. She rightly insists that despite the widespread occurrence of AIDS, it is basically a local phenomenon. She states:

Until these local differences are a routine part of everyone's thinking on AIDS, we will continue to get AIDS information and services that are inoffensive to a Jesse Helms or to

CBS, NBC, or ABC censors, under the guise of addressing what the AIDS epidemic is all about. Until these local differences are acknowledged, what the rest of us and our epidemics will get is watered-down, unspecific, and worst of all, irrelevant and dangerous information and policies. (p. 4-5)

Grover argues, that once recognized, the AIDS epidemic "has produced not only an *interruption* in many artists' personal lives, but also an *eruption into* their professional lives: a revelation of the applications and the limitations of previous theory and practice" (p. 2). The result of this revelation, according to Grover, is no less than the realization that AIDS has demonstrated the failure of late twentieth century modernism and democracy. Grover's essay is helpful in that it not only identifies the "raw materials" with which artists are working, but also categorizes the nature of their myriad responses. Grover identifies the "raw materials" of the AIDS epidemic as "signs of meanness and fear (to be critiqued), signs of heroism (to be praised), signs of struggle (to be supported), and signs of isolation (to be bridged)" (p. 2). She categorized the "themes and periodizations" of the resulting art work as consisting of: "the AIDS epidemic: acquired dread of sex" (p. 3), "safe(r) sex" (p. 3), "remember me: memorial work" (p. 3), "fight back. fight AIDS!: activist work" (p. 4), and "us versus them" (p. 5). Some believe that artists and art can contribute to the end of the epidemic (Crimp, 1987). One might question the ability of artists and art to wield such power to such an effect. However, fewer gay men are being diagnosed with HIV or AIDS, a "citizens movement" for the prevention/treatment of the disease is underway, the release of new drugs and the curtailment of a homophobic response to the epidemic have been attributed, in part, to such art groups as the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) and the NAMES Quilt Project (Goldstein, 1990).

Given the proportions of the AIDS epidemic there is little doubt that art educators have, or will, contract HIV or AIDS, and know, or will know, children, youth and adults with HIV or AIDS. The effect on our field will be no less than the greater effect that AIDS is having on American culture and society. However, evidence from the literature of art education suggests that art educators have been no quicker than other Americans in ac-

knowledging the AIDS epidemic and its personal and socio-cultural ramifications. To our knowledge, the first substantive article of the relationship of art education to AIDS was written by Schellin (1990) and appeared in this journal. Other than Schellin's article, AIDS has primarily been discussed in art education literature as it relates to the AIDS memorial quilt (the *NAMES Project*). Clark, 1990; Ettinger & Hoffman, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990; and Blandy & Hoffman, 1991, have brought the field's attention to the *NAMES Project* within the context of art education curriculum development, multiculturalism and research resources. In addition, art educators who are not contributing to the literature may be dealing with AIDS in their classrooms in a very profound way. Although each of us is aware of individual occurrences of this type, the extent to which this is occurring throughout the field is unknown.

### History of the NAMES Quilt

The idea for the *NAMES Quilt Project* occurred to Cleve Jones, a San Francisco gay activist, in November of 1985 during a candlelight procession that commemorated George Moscone and Harvey Milk. Jones saw the cardboard placards, attached to the stone wall of the Federal Building which listed the names of those who had died of AIDS. He wished that the placards looked more like a quilt, and when he said that word "quilt" to himself, it gave him powerful and comforting memories (Weinstein, 1989). He wondered if there would be enough gay, angry men with sewing machines out there who would be willing to create quilt squares. Jones, who does not consider himself an artist, was influenced by other artists. He was aware that Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* brought together a large number of people to work cooperatively, employing traditional media, to create plates from porcelain and table runners adorned with embroidery. He was also influenced by the sensual fabric of Christo's *Running Fence* in California. Christo had stated that the organization of putting such a large scale piece together was as much a part of the work as the final product. And Jones thought about *The Vietnam War Memorial*. Despite the fact that he was raised a Quaker and disliked any glorification of war, he was drawn into the wall by the names. They gave impersonal statistics meaning. Jones made the first panel for his friend Marvin Feldman. He found

that the process helped him banish his cynicism and paralysis (Weinstein, 1989).

Jones' speculations were correct. His idea filled a great need. Mostly by word of mouth, people who had lost a friend, a relative, a loved one or even an acquaintance, began making quilt squares. They were then sent to the national headquarters of the *NAMES Project* in San Francisco. These panels were sewn together to make one large quilt which, in an impressive and moving ceremony, was laid out in the Washington D.C. Mall as the names of those who died were read aloud. When the pieces had all been displayed, onlookers were able to become participants by walking amongst the quilt squares, taking in the beauty of the piece, and grieving with others over the tremendous loss. This loss can be put in perspective when one remembers that far more Americans have now died from this epidemic than were killed in the Viet Nam War. In October of 1989, *The Quilt* was displayed in Washington D.C. in its entirety for the last time (Schellin, 1990). It has become too large to display all together in one place and now, must be shown in smaller, more regional segments. The San Francisco office is having difficulty handling the enormity of the project as the losses have been so great and the need and response so involving.

Walking through the *NAMES Quilt* one finds that the panels are made from pieces of clothing, leather, lace, cotton—anything imaginable. They are made with paint, felt tip markers, embroidery thread, and yarn. Personal mementos such as toys, are sewn onto the panels. Eight panels (each three feet by six feet) are sewn together to make a larger block. The panels are varied. They speak about the lives of all kinds of people; fathers, mothers, children, celebrities, workers such as teachers, people who died, many without being able to publicly name their killer. Cindy Ruskin (1987) writing on the *NAMES Quilt* notes that

each quilt panel has its own tale, and it is the richness, humanity and vital nature of these many and varied stories that together compose the greater story of the *NAMES Project*. These are not stories of an illness. Rather, they are stories of courage, fear, and anger, and mostly, they are stories of love. They tell of people who worked and played,

who laughed and fought, and who are finally remembered. (p.11)

There can be no doubt that there is a political aspect to the *NAMES Quilt*. It makes visible the individual personalities of those who have died from an ignored virus: a disease killing (mostly) those who are perceived by the powerful of our world as undesirable. The artistic process should, and has responded to this situation. Schellin (1990) asks, "What is the *strength* of art in a time when possibly twenty percent of all the children in America, and more than half the children in the world, go to bed starving? What's *important* about *art* in relation to the millions of people who go without medical attention in a country which seems to reserve ordinary, daily health for those who can afford to pay for it?" (p. 85). Schellin further asks how a society can teach children about art without recognizing metaphors for AIDS and the implications for art education of the AIDS epidemic.

If art today must be, and sometimes is, about daily life, it must also be understood as political. The *NAMES Quilt* clearly has a political agenda. As the Viet Nam protest marches of the 1960s made the horrors of the war visible, the *NAMES Quilt* has made us see the AIDS epidemic more clearly. We see the horror, but we also see the humanness.

Quilts have always functioned to comfort. Alice Walker (1983) tells a story which discusses this function. In her book, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, the author tells about her mother giving her a family quilt pattern. Walker worked on this quilt while she developed and spoke to the characters in her book *The Color Purple*. Shrug, Miss Celie, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, Harpo and others came alive to her while she quilted. Walker tells us that when she finished the quilt, she wept as she said goodbye to the characters whom she had known so well for so many months. She said the finished quilt remained and comforted her.

Each panel of the *NAMES Quilt* tells the story of an individual who has died, but it also tells a story about the person who created it. Jones talks about the first panel he made, for his best friend of 14 years: "I spent the whole afternoon, thinking about Marvin. . . . I thought about why we were best friends and why

I loved him so much. By the time I finished the piece, my grief had been replaced by a sense of resolution and completion" (Ruskin, 1988, p. 18). He said he felt comforted by the quilt. The content of his piece may be about Marvin Feldman, but the panel is also clearly about Jones.

In their 1987 book, *Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women and Quilts on American Society*, Ferrero, Hedges and Siber state: "The quilt, that soft and tender and most personal of objects, accompanied Americans from cradle to grave" (p. 18). Quilts are clearly autobiographical in their individuality and universal to Americans in their comfort and their purpose. Postmodern approaches embrace autobiography, pluralism and the multiple functions of art. In fact, one art critic, John Rajchman, (1985) wrote that as we move into a postmodern era the main question is no longer "what is art," but "who are we in all of this?" (p. 171). Clearly, the *NAMES Quilt* attempts to answer this question not only for us as a people, but for us as individuals.

Fortunately, there are participatory ways in which artists, art educators, students and the general public can act to educate, memorialize, publicize and grieve the devastation of the AIDS epidemic. Involvement in the *NAMES Project* is one such way.

### Quilt Panels in Orlando, Florida

The need for establishing the *NAMES Project* in the Orlando, Florida area became more evident after Karen Branen attended a local workshop led by Bernie Segel, M.D. Many of the participants at the workshop expressed anguish and frustration due to the loss of family and friends who had died from AIDS.

Orlando needed an outlet for this pain. People needed a way to heal and manage their grief, and commemorate lives. Branen believed the *NAMES Quilt* might provide such an outlet. She approached the University of Central Florida (UCF) Community Arts Program about taking on the task of initiating the Quilt project. The ultimate goal was to locate a community group to take ownership and continue the project after it became established.

AIDS support groups were contacted by Branen to determine if anyone had been working on panels for the *NAMES Project*. She discovered that little had been done in the area. The support groups were delighted that there was interest in beginning the *NAMES Project*. The Community Arts Program applied to the *NAMES Project* in San Francisco for affiliate status.

It seemed to be the right time to begin the *NAMES Quilt*. No obstacles were created as requests were made for donations of material, sewing machines, and the other necessary supplies. The church that had held the Bernie Segel workshop volunteered a meeting room. The public was informed through radio, television and newspaper community service announcements while letters and fliers were sent to AIDS support groups. Hospices, churches, and other community organizations announced the project time and place to their constituencies.

Branen reported at the 1991 NAEA conference, that anxiety ran high with the coming of the first meeting. She wondered if anyone would show up. Would they need a more aggressive advertising campaign? Would anyone care? On the first night, anticipating the worst and hoping for the best the group was prepared at the very least to start their own panel "for those who died alone." However, the word was out and people came. The *NAMES Project* had begun in Orlando. Numbers varied each week as work on the panels continued; some came only for information, others came to work on their panels. No one came and left without working on the panel for those who died alone. Conversations included a mixture of tears and laughter. The panels were given life through reminiscing and AIDS statistics became people with names (Blandy, Branen, Congdon, Hicks, 1991).

Six panels were completed through the Community Arts Program *NAMES Quilt* affiliate and a seventh panel was made by an AIDS support group. Included in the group were four panels for infants, one anonymous panel, and one panel for those who died alone. A seventh panel was created from donated lyrics to a song written for an AIDS fund raiser.

All of the panels were displayed twice on the UCF campus. The University of Central Florida AIDS Institute Director, Sharon Douglass, coordinated the first showing during an AIDS Awareness Day. The second display was a formal exhibition in the UCF Library Lobby. This exhibit brought media coverage and tour groups like Elderhostel. In the summer of 1990, Sharon Douglass carried six panels to the *NAMES Quilt* in San Francisco.

CENTAUR, a local AIDS support group, volunteered to continue the project with the help of the Community Arts Program. Being understaffed they could not handle it alone. After several months, another group, the Center for Gay and Lesbian Concerns, received Chapter status from the National *NAMES Project* office. Community ownership was complete as the quilt panels were being made at two sites. In June 1990, the Center and CENTAUR held a candle light vigil with the exhibition of panels created by the Orlando Chapter. Family and friends were remembered and the panels spoke silently to the city.

### Creating a Social Memory

Hicks (Hicks cited in Blandy, Branen, Congdon, Hicks, 1991) in her remarks at the 1991 NAEA conference panel on AIDS, remembered the day when she first realized that something had to be done to address the lack of information her university students had concerning AIDS and the individuals who lived with and died from it. She recounted a discussion on related health hazards with a group of elementary education majors. This discussion included not only the necessary safety information, but also a critical examination of misunderstandings and assumptions. One of her students voiced dismay that she insisted on talking about the possible existence of AIDS in schools. Hicks emphasized that the student was obviously not alone in her amazement.

The discussion presented Hicks with some very interesting and extremely distressing information about her students, and about society as a whole. Hicks' students did not believe that children in Maine could possibly carry the HIV virus, and

"surely if they did, they wouldn't be allowed to attend school." The ignorance and resulting prejudice of Hicks' students concerning the HIV virus and individuals with AIDS related diseases had a profound effect on her. It became very clear that she would need to find ways to help them understand AIDS, not only as a devastating epidemic, but also its effect on the lives of individuals. She wanted them to know the stories of people who have died from AIDS related diseases, to gain insight into the overwhelming sense of loss these deaths bring to individuals and whole communities, and finally, the role art can and has played in sustaining a memory of their lives.

Hicks' students are now making one 3x6 foot panel, which will read "For those who taught us to create and for those who taught us to teach." Another panel is being created for the friend of a student. A third panel will be made for a young man hospitalized with AIDS. This work in Hicks' class is very much in keeping with what Branen discovered in Central Florida as residents came together to acknowledge grief and remember those who died. It is also consistent with one of the themes that Grover (1989) found in art related to AIDS. The concept of memory can be an important part of curricular approaches to integrating the *NAMES Quilt* into art education. We feel it is important to focus on how our memories serve as forms of personal history and how we make our memories public through the process of sharing them with others. It is this process of creating a public record which turns private stories into a form of public experience. These shared experiences are the fabric out of which we build our understanding of the past and present, out of which we create a social memory. In reading various materials on AIDS, the *NAMES Quilt* stands out as a clear example of how private experience has been made public in an effort to "remember." Therefore, an indepth look at the concept of creating a social memory is essential to our understanding of the *NAMES Quilt* and its place in our society's experience of AIDS.

In discussing the *NAMES Quilt* with students of all ages, attention can be drawn to the ways in which quilts are used to create a memory of an individual's personal or political life. Contextualizing the *NAMES Quilt* within a large tradition of quilts and quilting will help students understand how quilts

have historically been used by women to record and comment on the events, people and places of their lives.

Throughout American history, quilts have played a central role in the lives and remembrances of women. Women gave Friendship Quilts, for example, to friends about to be married, to daughters, to departing loved ones. They contained the names of these friends and frequently included poems or other expressions of sentiment. As such, they represent an important public remembrance of the private and collective lives of women. Friendship quilts are frequently "the only remaining record of the women whose names are inscribed on them" (Lipsett, 1985, p.28).

In addition, women's quilts have also been an important source of social history and perception. In many cases, women were unable to document their narratives in writing, yet we find important insights into their lived experiences embodied visually in quilts. Harriet Powers' quilts provide us with an example. She was an African-American slave woman, born in Georgia in 1837; she died in 1911. Her narrative quilts are drawn from the stories of everyday life, the Bible, and accounts of unusual astronomical events. They frequently provide us with a public record of an individual's confrontation with and memories of the oppressive conditions of slave existence (Fry, 1981; 1990).

Quilting also provided an opportunity for women to work together, to remember private experiences, and to embody these experiences in their quilts. In the isolated conditions of rural life in the early days of expansion into the West, quilting in company with other women was one of the major ways in which women's friendships were enhanced. Quilting brought women together who otherwise would have had very little in common, and thus made an intolerable life tolerable (Ferrero, Hedges & Silber, 1987; Mainardi, 1973).

As previously mentioned, quilting has historically served a political function. During the Civil War, for example, women used quilts as signposts on the Underground Railroad. Quilts were used to identify which houses were sympathetic and

to indicate when conditions were safe or too dangerous to proceed (Ferrero, Hedges & Silber, 1987).

These themes of remembrance in the history of women's quilting - quilting as the expression of private experience and public record, quilting as a vehicle for forming social bonds among otherwise disparate individuals, and quilting as a form of political action - provide an important context for students in their efforts to understand the *NAMES Quilt*.

In order to integrate the *NAMES Quilt* into the art education classroom, one might seek to link student research on AIDS and the *NAMES Quilt* to the themes from the history of women's quilting. For some, the emphasis might be on how individuals express their private experience of living with AIDS or being left behind when a loved one has died of the HIV virus. For others, seeking primary information on AIDS and the *NAMES Quilt* might uncover how the reality of AIDS has brought together people who would otherwise have led distinct and unrelated lives. In this way, students might see how the *NAMES Quilt* provides a vehicle for social bonding that is a significant factor in bridging the gap between private tragedy and public incomprehension. Finally, some students may come to understand the *NAMES Quilt* as a form of political action and thereby come to acknowledge their own personal relation both to those who have AIDS and to the entire social context within which AIDS is experienced and addressed. These insights may help students understand how those who create the *NAMES Quilt* refuse to permit the private experiences of their friends and family to be ignored by the rest of society, how the *NAMES Quilt* contributes to the political education of the society about AIDS, and how, as a result, it challenges the inaction of policy-makers.

### Conclusion

Understanding the *NAMES Quilt* as a form of political action is central to the task of integrating it into the art education classroom. Quilting as a political act presupposes comprehension of the AIDS epidemic in all its various dimensions. But it also presupposes an active alignment of that comprehension

with personal involvement. In order to encourage this synthesis of thought and action, one might have students participate directly in the design and creation of quilt panels. These panels would reflect the students' understanding of AIDS and the quilting tradition, and might be dedicated to the memory of friends, family, teachers, or others who have died or will die of AIDS related diseases.

The orientation to the *NAMES Quilt* can be used not only in university classrooms, but also in art classes at the primary and secondary levels. Our model contextualizes knowledge of the *NAMES Quilt* within the parameters of the larger tradition of quilting, as well as actively engaging students in the development of their own education through individualized and group research. Finally, it involves students in the making of panels for the *NAMES Quilt*. These panels, and panels yet to be made, constitute our social memory of AIDS and its effect on human life.

### References

- AIDS: The Artists' Response*. (1989). Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.
- Blandy, D., Branen, K., Congdon, K.G., & Hicks, L.E. (1991, March). *The NAMES Quilt: Creating a Social Memory*. Paper presented at the National Art Education Association Convention, Atlanta, GA.
- Blandy, D. & Hoffman, E. (1990). Resources for research and teaching about textiles as a domestic art in art education. *Art Education*, 44 (1), 60-71.
- Clark, G. (1990). Art in the schizophrenic fast lane: A response. *Art Education*, 43 (6), 8-23.

- Crimp, D. (1987). AIDS: Cultural analysis/culture activism. *October*, 43, 3-16.
- Ettinger, L.F. & Hoffman, E. (1990). Quiltmaking in art education: Toward a participatory curriculum metaphor. *Art Education*, 43 (4), 40-47.
- Ferrero, P., & Hedges, E., & Silber, J. (1987). *Hearts and hands: The influence of women and quilts on American society*. San Francisco: The Quilt Digest Press.
- Fry, G.M. (1981). *Harriet Powers: Portrait of a Black quilter*. *Sage*, 4 (1), 11-16.
- Fry, G.M. (1990). *Stitched from the soul: Slave quilts from the antebellum south*. New York: Dutton Studio Books.
- Goldstein, R. (1990). The implicated and the immune: Cultural responses to AIDS. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 68, Suppl. 2, 295-319.
- Group projects spread of AIDS: Epidemic hits Latin America. (March 11, 1991). *The Register-Guard*, p. 3a.
- Grover, J.Z. (1989). Introduction to AIDS: The artists' response. *AIDS: The Artist's Response*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.
- Lipsett, L.D. (1985). *Remember me*. San Francisco: The Quilt Digest Press.
- Mainardi, P. (1973). Quilts: The great American art. *The Feminist Journal*, 2 (1) 18-23.
- Ruskin, C. (Photographs by M. Herron). (1988). *The Quilt: Stories From the NAMES Project*. New York: Pocket Books.

- Schellin, P. (1990). Art education in the time of AIDS. *The Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, 10, 83-93.
- Shilts, R. (1987). *And the band played on: Politics, people, and the AIDS epidemic*. NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Walker, A. (1983). *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*. San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Weinstein, J. (1989). Names carried into the future: An AIDS quilt unfolds. In A. Raven (Ed.), *Art in the Public Interest*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 31-42. (Article originally appeared in *Village Voice*, June 21, 1988).
- Zimmerman, E. (1990). Questions about multicultural and art education or "I'll never forget the day M'Blawi stumbled on the work of the Post-Impressionists," *Art Education*, 43 (6), 8-24.



### Footnote

1. If you are interested in contributing 8x8 inch squares to be included on the panel, please contact Laurie E. Hicks, Department of Art, Carnegie Hall, University of Maine, Orono, Maine 04469-0112. In an effort to establish within the art education community an awareness of how we might contribute to the creation and continuation of this social memory, we organized a presentation on the *NAMES Quilt* at the 1991 National Art Education Association Conference in Atlanta, (Blandy, Branen, Congdon & Hicks, 1991). The presentation was followed by an evening of working on a panel for the *Quilt*. The panel, which reads "Members of the NAEA Remember," is a collection of 8x8 inch quilt panels, pieced together - a quilt on a quilt. This panel is still in the process of being created. Students and faculty from the Department of Art Education at the University of Oregon also contributed a panel that was displayed at the conference.

## A Para-critical/sitical/sightical Reading of Ralph Smith's *Excellence in Art Education*

---

jan jagodzinski

*What is art? Prostitution.*  
———Baudelaire

It is precisely such gratification [the experience of art at its best] that Kenneth Clark had in mind when he expressed his belief that even today 'the majority of people really long to experience that moment of pure, disinterested, non-material satisfaction which causes them to *ejaculate* the word *beautiful*, ' an experience, he went on to say, that is 'obtained more reliably through works of art than through any other means'.(Smith, p.62, italic, my emphasis)

Consider, for instance, some of the concepts that are brought to bear when we either contemplate, study, admire, criticize, or discuss an outstanding work of art. We may take for example *The Rape of the Sabine Women* by the seventeenth French painter Nicholas Poussin, of which Paul Ziff says that when we approach it we may attend to its *sensuous features*, to its *look and feel*.(Smith, p. 45, italic my emphasis)