

SPRING-SUMMER 2021

FRESH PAINT

VOLUME 44 • ISSUE 1

The Alfombras: Creative Acts of Cultural Memory in Art Education

Museum Spotlight: The Polk Museum of Art





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October 14 - 17, 2021 • Caribe Royale Orlando



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FEATURES

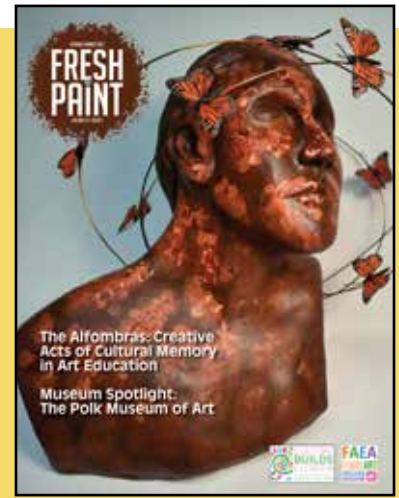
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OUR COVER ARTIST

Amanda Nachman (Grade 12)
Peace within a Butterfly Effect
Sculpture
Dunedin High School
Teacher: Salvatore Gulino

The purpose of this publication is to provide information to members.

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PRESIDENT'S REFLECTION

Dr. Jackie Henson-Dacey
President, FAEA



Members like you contribute to the vibrant, creative, collaborative visual arts, and design education community in the state of Florida. Thank you for your engagement during this uniquely challenging school year. Supporting each other is a key aspect to what makes us resilient and successful. This spring semester high-

mented by past-president, Dr. Nicole Crane. Nicole has led FAEA with grace and prudence. Her guidance and advice are always diplomatic and purpose driven. She is a true scholar-practitioner. She is a national STEM certified teacher and has shared her knowledge and expertise with colleagues throughout the state and nation. Her contributions to art education have been innovative and built on a foundation of respect. It is with great pleasure to recognize and congratulate Nicole for her outstanding leadership and practice in the state of Florida and as the National Art Education Association's Elementary Art Educator of the Year.



YOUTH ART MONTH®

Art Connects Us

lights the remarkable work of our learners through the K-12 Assessment and Exhibition and Youth Art Month (YAM) winner. This time of year also invites us to recognize excellence in art education through NAEA awardees and the comprehensive work of our committees and task force. Our work together at FAEA is like a 'flush' in poker. The work we are doing has the fullness and abundance of the etymology of the word. It comes from the Latin 'fluxus' which means 'flow'. At times our work seems to be in flux, but in the end refining our ideas and initiatives together as a community clearly illustrates Csikszentmihalyi's (2008) Flow Theory. This theory is part of the construct of the Creative Leadership Model. High engagement in this collaborative process provides our membership with exceptional professional development opportunities and resources that inspire and support the important work you do now and in the future.

Over the last year, the committees have demonstrated resilience and creativity, with learning how to support each other in new ways to keep FAEA moving forward. FAEA committees were designed and imple-

Another great leader in art education is Teresa Woodlief. Teresa has been a dedicated leader for FAEA for many years, acting as the FAEA student chapter representative while attending UNF. She presents engaging workshops and participates collaboratively with colleagues to move art education into innovative pathways, such as Arts Integration and Art Talk @ CRES blogger. It is my pleasure to recognize and congratulate Teresa on her award of Elementary Art Educator for FAEA and Southeastern Regional Elementary Art Educator of the Year.

Rounding out our NAEA Award Winners from Florida is Francesca Levy, an art educator in Miami-Dade County who won the NAEA New Professional Art Educator Award. Francesca is a co-founder of the Anti-Racist Art Teacher organization, and she is also the founder of Art For Everyone, a nonprofit that raises money to provide classroom art supplies for art teachers in need. FAEA is thrilled to have three outstanding members who were recognized by NAEA for their initiative, leadership, and dedication to art education.

We are also delighted to congratulate Miranda Pulmano (grade 6) for her winning entry for 2021 YAM Flag Design. Thank you and congratulations goes out to Jacqueline Ortiz, her art teacher in Broward County Schools. A digital display was shared at the 2021 NAEA

20-21 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Convention in March. FAEA is excited to provide the student and school with a physical flag to hang in their community showcasing the excellence in art education.

Now is the time to look around your community and identify those art educators so deserving of state and national recognition for 2021. Revised nomination forms for FAEA Awards have been published and on our website. It is also a great time to think about running for the 2022 Board of Directors, under the esteemed leadership of president-elect, Nancy Puri.

Art associations around the globe have implemented solutions that reflect the unique needs of their communities. There's no one-size-fits-all solution to instruction, assessment, and leadership. FAEA is working on a face-to-face conference this October 2021 at Caribe Royal in Orlando. The professional development committee, chaired by Nancy Puri, are doing their best, planning our conference accounting for the continued uncertainties of the pandemic. We've made several key changes to address social distancing as members are eager to network and experience quality professional development again face-to-face. It is the utmost importance to protect the health and safety of members, vendors, and presenters as we move forward on designing a world-class event.

I continue to be in awe with the journey as your president of FAEA and strive to provide new initiatives and fresh energy to support our growing needs as we venture forward in 2021. Each individual educator in our association is experiencing their own unique journey of understanding and adapting. Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.) Task Force continue to research new ways to introduce and share strategies to provide quality art education to all learners. As we gain more expertise in D.E.I., FAEA will provide resources to best support you and your students' diverse needs. Our Adaptive Arts Task Force, chaired by Marisa Griffin, is also actively engaging with experts in the field to share their own stories and journeys as we tackle the work needed to be inclusive in our pedagogical practices and assisting members with a bird's eye view of implementation and leadership. As we shuffle this deck of cards, we are striving to produce a 'royal flush' with our next iteration of support and leadership! Be part of the experience, stay connected with our Spring and Summer virtual programming.



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Jackie Henson-Dacey
Sarasota County



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Polk County



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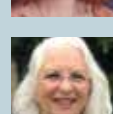
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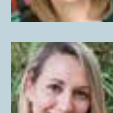
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Sarasota County



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Bonnie Bernau
Alachua County



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Michael Ann Elliott
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Member at Large
Christy Garton
Orange County



**Kathleen D. Sanz, PhD
Board Consultant, FAEA**

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS/ADVOCACY

WOW, what a year of challenges that we have faced as visual arts educators! FAEA has met regularly to determine the needs of all of our members. No easy task, nor has it been easy for everyone in the classroom. The Board has worked hard to provide as many resources as possible to our members, and I hope that you have been able to gain support and guidance for you and your classroom from these opportunities. That is why we exist as an Association: to promote art education in Florida through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership. Please review some of the ways FAEA is working to maintain and move visual arts education forward in our state.

The Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs (DCA) Grant Funding

Annually, FAEA applies for funding from the DCA Matching Grant program. In recent years, the Association has received partial funding based on the Department of State's approved budget. The current allocation request has been placed in the budget at 50% of the appropriations requested. The next step is for Governor DeSantis to sign. We will keep you updated as to the progress of the grant that will have an impact on the FAEA budget.

Legislation 2021

The legislative session ended April 30th. When the session concludes, typically it takes two or three weeks to compile a comprehensive report detailing all the results of the relevant education bills. The FDOE interprets the information, and then it is placed in the statutes and provides guidance to Districts for implementation.

Florida Seal of Fine Arts Senate Bill 1740 & House Bill 1375

Our major goal for the 2021 legislative session was to get the Florida Seal of Fine Arts Legislation passed (SB 1740 and HB 1375). The proposed legislation would create a Fine Arts Seal on High School Diplomas for students who have completed significant coursework in fine arts as well as two additional accomplishments, such as community service in the fine arts realm, a capstone project, etc. While the bills did not pass this year, we have made progress in getting support for the legislation and generating interest.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Senator Darryl Rouson, District 19, St. Petersburg, and Representative Benjamin Diamond, District 68, St. Petersburg, for sponsoring and championing this bill for the second year in a row. Additionally, Sen Rouson's staff and Rep Diamond's staff reached out to the FDOE prior to the start of the session to secure their support. Fortunately, we were able to work with FDOE to provide input.

Our next steps are to work throughout the summer and fall to not only refile the bill, but also

secure co-sponsors and the support of all committee chairpersons. FAEA and other affiliate organizations will continue to look for ways to partner with legislators about including fine arts in the school grading formula. We need all FAEA members to become engaged in these endeavors to move forward our legislative agendas. Please be sure to contact the FAEA Advocacy Chair (Chrissy Schebilski - chrisskiarts@gmail.com) or the FAEA office (info@FAEA.org) if you are interested in moving our arts agenda forward.

2022 Legislative Session

The 2022 legislative session will be held earlier next year, opening January 11, 2022, and will run for 60 consecutive days to March. Staff and volunteers will begin working very shortly on strategies to strengthen arts education in Florida. FAEA will again ask legislators to file the Florida Seal of Fine Arts bills.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Funds (ESSER)

Congress set aside approximately \$13.2 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). The U.S. Department of Education will award grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) for the purpose of providing local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are LEAs, with emergency relief funds. These funds are meant to address the impact that COVID-19 has had on elementary and secondary schools. These federal dollars are being made available to each school district and may be used for reasons such as staffing, hiring adjunct faculty, rebuilding visual arts programs, providing instructional materials and supplies that include digital applications for art instruction, etc.

FAEA is working on providing support to members to advocate effectively for ESSER funds particularly in districts without a district supervisor. We need to be assertive about asking school boards and superintendents to include the arts in this funding! Learn more about federal ESSER Emergency Response Grants available 2021-2024 for education.

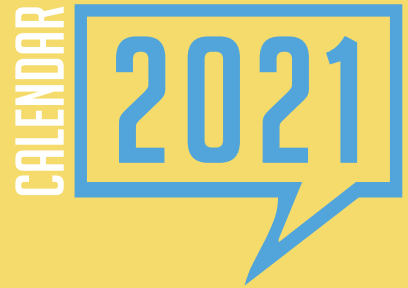
Membership

FAEA membership is open for the 2021-2022 school year, and we encourage you to invite a colleague to join you in ensuring that visual arts education continues as strong as possible for all Florida students.

Hope that you have a summer of safety and health,



Kathleen D. Sanz, PhD



Summer Workshops

Register today to attend FAEA's hands-on art workshops this summer! Learn more details by visiting FAEA.org.

June 18 | 10:00am - 12:00pm EDT
Title: Finding Your Why
Presenter: Cassie Stephens

June 22 | 9:30am - 12:30pm EDT
Title: Plein Air with Irina Ashcraft
Presenter: Irina Ashcraft

June 25 | 9:00am - 12:30pm EDT
Title: 5 Senses Immersive Art Experiences - Exploring Your Niche: Compose With Your Physical, Spiritual, and Mental Environment
Presenter: Brandee Thunberg & Miriam Machado

July 8th | 9:30am - 12:30pm EDT
Title: Exploring & Mapping Visual Design with FSU
Presenter: Dr. Rachel Fendler & Dr. Sara Scott Shields

July 15 | 10:00am - 1:45pm EDT
Title: 5 Senses Immersive Art Experiences - Exploring Nature & Architecture at the Ringling Museum & Grounds
Presenter: Dr. Jackie Henson-Dacey & Chloe Dubois



ABOUT FAEA

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Association is to promote art education in Florida through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.

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Division Updates



**Elementary School Division
Division Director**

**Colleen Schmidt
Partin Elementary School
Osceola County**

Happy Spring! The end of this very challenging school year is almost here. It is a very busy time for me, working on displaying artwork, finishing up the school yearbook and my art fundraiser. Plus the challenges of still teaching off of the art cart.

Please look at the FAEA website and notice that we do have virtual PD offerings, as well as virtual museum tours, available on-demand that are free for members! Visit the Digital Learning page on the FAEA website to view these sessions.

FAEA will also be having summer professional development. Please be on the look out in your email for more information. We have some amazing things planned!

The professional development activities are a great way to learn and discuss new ideas to bring back to your school. Your participation and input during the sessions make them even better.

We are planning to have a regular fall conference this year. We are looking forward to having an excellent conference and getting to see all of you again.

As the end of the school year draws to a close, don't forget to make some time for self-care. The busy end of year activities can often be overwhelming and your well-being should not be forgotten. I wish you good health and a peaceful end to your school year!



**Middle School Division
Division Director**

**Ashley Monks
Indiantown Middle School
Martin County**

As Charlotte once webbed ... Salutations! Welcome to the final quarter of school and the beginning of summer.

Inspiration is a common thought for artists, educators, and even students. We seek inspiration from many different resources. Museums, galleries, whatever we are reading, new emerging artists and even our own students can be our inspiration. Parents often show me artwork that their children have created from my neighborhood, which I am sure you are quite familiar. They ask me how I find projects for my own students, and as many of you know I find inspiration from everything around me. So I ask you, what inspires you? Surround yourself with your favorite things to create new pieces of art or your student's new favorite project for the upcoming school year.

Conference is happening for next year and I cannot wait to say hello to you! Look out for open registration during the summer months. Thank you members for all that you do.



**High School
Division Director**

**Latonya Hicks
Largo High School
Pinellas County**

As things come to a close, be sure to take a moment to celebrate how far we've come. For so many of us this year has been a exercise in patience, futility, anxiety, progress, and so many more dichotomous emotions. Dig through and find the experiences that made you better at your craft and celebrate them. I have heard of so many wonderful teachers that we pushed for a variety of reasons out of our vital profession. Wish them well while acknowledging that you are still here. My charge to you is to grab hold of what stays in your memory and let it be only the best of what this year has been.

Award shows, new methods and approaches to engagement, increased technology integration, advocacy, self-care, balance, student successes, etcetera are worth celebrating. Wherever the 'joy' resides, go there. What will you keep? With summer approaching, you can use some of that time to decide what will become a permanent part of your processes.

Celebrate how far you've come!

Membership is open to all art teachers, art supervisors, arts administrators, museum professionals, university professors and students, those who are retired from the profession, and anyone passionate about our goals.

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FLORIDA ART
EDUCATION
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A MEMBER**

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Division Updates



Supervision/Administration
Division Director

Pamela Haas
School District of Osceola County
Osceola County

As we round out this most challenging school year, let us remember the important work that we have as arts education supervisors. The arts play an increasingly important role in the emotional development and academic success of our students. One of my favorite quotes on arts education by William Bennett, Former US Secretary of Education says it all, "The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic...music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment." We have witnessed the impact of the arts this year especially in the role the arts play with Social Emotional Learning (SEL). I am excited to see the arts in the forefront of these discussions in our districts and state levels.

As we look forward to the next school year, please also en-

courage your teachers to become a part of FAEA in the coming year and seek out creative funding sources to provide your teachers with membership in the organization. FAEA will also continue to provide high quality professional development opportunities for our teachers over the summer months. The FAEA Summer Workshop opportunities can provide an avenue to help re-ignite our creative passions over the summer. FAEA also continues to provide digital learning opportunities, most workshops are recorded for later viewing.

As we wind down the 2020-2021 school year and prepare for the next chapter, I hope you are able to take some time over the summer to recharge your own batteries with some self-care. Wishing you a wonderful summer full of health, family, friends, and of course some creativity!

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Division Updates



Local Art Education Assembly
Division Director

Christine Schebilski
Heron Creek Middle School
Sarasota County

As the year winds down you may likely be reaching a time of reflection. The end of the school year brings opportunities to exhibit student art and reflect on student progress. Your assembly may be taking time to recognize outstanding members and perhaps award them. It is also important to evaluate what your local art education assembly has accomplished over the school year. During your time of thinking and recognition, do not forget to revisit your mission statement.

A mission statement is a formal statement of your assembly's values and the goals that it aims to achieve. A mission statement can be simple, such as Netflix's which is, "to entertain the world", or Reddit's, "to bring community and belonging to everybody in the world." Your board and interested members must identify what it is that you are aiming for. Next, identify and plan ways to reach your goals over the next year or next five years. Consider who can be a part of helping you reach these goals. Reach out to your community and invite them to become a part of your organization. With summer approaching, you can use some of that time to prepare for reaching your goals which may include setting meeting dates, developing professional development opportunities, and planning socials so members can get to know one another.

Reflect, reassess, and charge forward!



Museum
Division Director

Miriam Machado
Art Museum @ FIU
Miami-Dade County

Collaboration: Teaching artists and museum educators.

Collaboration occurs when organizations and individuals commit to work together and contribute resources and expertise to achieve a common, long-term goal.

Museums partner with teachers who are often artists or work as school museum educators. These relationships are critical to creating an impact in the community.

I worked with Peter, a museum educator born in Jamaica, who has been working with Miami Dade Schools for over 20 years. Still, I really did not know him until we collaborated on a workshop together. I knew he was an artist working with found objects but never learned more about him or his work. Our collaboration had focused on field trips, exhibition content and was mutually beneficial, or so it seemed, for over 10 years.

We organized a professional workshop inspired by an exhibition that re-contextualized our permanent collection, and was curated by an artist who primarily uses found objects. Peter and I met to plan for the upcoming workshop. I then learned for the first time about his influences, training, and his art-making philosophy. I suddenly realized how much I connected to his work and how many programming opportunities I had missed.

We learned inventive ways to create with recycled materials during the workshop, applying engineering and problem-solving skills while making connections to the real world. I had a renewed respect and admiration for Peter—the artist and the educator. One teacher shared during the workshop how her spirits were lifted from the experience as an unexpected consequence. This collaboration revealed that successful partnerships require taking the time to work closely and know each other better as individuals. This leads to a better understanding of the shared goals and enriches the lives in our communities.



Division Updates



Higher Education
Division Director

Jeff Broome
Florida State University
Leon County

By the time this issue of *Fresh Paint* arrives in your inbox, the spring semester will have concluded for most of us working in higher education. This is a hectic time of year for university faculty. We spend our days either preparing for summer coursework, conducting research, or wrapping up loose ends from the previous semester. It is easy for us to lose sight of all that we accomplished over the past academic year. As such, I wanted to take a moment to recognize just a few of our higher education division members who received recent recognition by presenting at the *2021 Virtual National Art Education Association (NAEA) Conference*. Most notably, Susannah Brown delivered a lecture entitled, “A Look Towards the Future by Reflecting on the Past,” in honor of her 2019 National Higher Educator of the Year Award. Other higher education division members who presented at the NAEA

convention included Egda Claudio, Danielle Henn, Sara Scott Shields, and Amber Ward. Please join me in congratulating these FAEA members for their service to our affiliated national organization, while also forgiving me if I unintentionally overlooked any other divisional representatives who may have presented at the convention.

Along with acknowledging the members above, I hope you also take a moment to reflect on your own accomplishments throughout the past academic year. We have endured much over the last 14 months, and you should all be proud of your efforts—just as FAEA is proud of you.



Retiree
Representative

Bonnie Bernau
Alachua County

Can you feel it? I believe there is sunlight at the end of our pandemic tunnel and FAEA is here like the warmth of that sun—connecting to all who want to be a part of an organization dedicated to keeping art education strong in Florida. YOU feel the glowing benefits of life-long friendships and enriching opportunities through our professional organization, so if you know of any retired art educators who haven’t joined our retirees group, please reach out and encourage them to become members. We all shine brighter together!

Speaking of being together, I hope you have enjoyed the museum tours and digital learning opportunities developed by FAEA this past year from the comfort of your own home. If you missed any, go to www.faea.org/programs/digital-learning/ to see what you might enjoy, share, or want to view again. Additional summer events are being planned which will be announced on the FAEA website as well. We have big news ... mark your calendars now for FAEA’s annual conference October 17th at the Caribe Royal Resort in Orlando! Yes (fingers crossed), we will be face to face! I can’t wait to meet you there!

Telling the infinite varieties of the human story is very much at the heart of all art, don’t you agree? I hope you will help tell our FAEA story by submitting pictures with captions from past years adventures to Jenny Abdelnour jenny@faea.org to add to our organization’s Storytelling Project. Thank you to those who have already sent in pictures and stories!

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Art Swap

by Chrissy Schebilski

“Just make art.” “Make art everyday.” These statements can be daunting to art educators as we strive to balance our time. This past winter, members of the Sarasota Art Education Association were able to find the time to make art by joining the SAEA Art Swap. First, members were invited to complete a survey about themselves, their interests, hobbies, favorite media, and what type of art they would buy if given the opportunity. Then, each participating member was given the survey results of another member and asked to make art for them. The Art Swap concept was inspired by the *Art Teacher Swaps* by Whitney Ehnert or @mumsart on Instagram. Participants were given deadline dates for sharing a picture

of the materials that would be used, a sneak peek of the work in progress, and then sending the art. A follow-up SAEA meeting was held where participants shared the art they received. The art ranged from a mini quilt, to painted blocks, to pet portraits, floral painting, and mosaics. When sharing their art, participants said they “like to make art for others,” and “enjoyed making something other than a sample for a lesson.” Participants expressed they enjoyed learning about shared interests and building community. Please see the photos above from our meeting on Zoom January 25, 2021. If you would like more information, please contact me at chrisskiarts@gmail.com.

Art Connects Us

Youth Art Month (YAM) is a national arts advocacy program that is administered by the Council for Art Education. Celebrated during the month of March, this program is designed to encourage support for quality K-12 school art programs. The Youth Art Month program provides a forum for recognizing skills such as problem-solving, creativity, observation, and communication, which are developed through visual art experiences. All visual arts teachers in Florida are encouraged to participate in Youth Art Month through a variety of opportunities, including the YAM Flag Design Competition, Youth Art Month Art Program or Artwork program, YAM Recipe of the Month blog, and the Year in Review Report.

This year, the national theme was “Art Connects Us.” The winning flag design from each state is displayed during the annual National Art Education Association (NAEA) Convention at the Youth Art Month Museum. Since the NAEA Convention was held virtually this year, the flags were displayed in a digital exhibition during the convention.

In Florida, FAEA hosts the annual YAM Flag Design Competition, which invites K-12 students to submit a flag design to represent the state of Florida. The winner of the 2021 YAM Flag Design Competition is 6th-grader Miranda Pulmano from Glades Middle School. You can view the current and past winning designs in the YAM Flag Online Gallery on the FAEA website.

student artwork in public. Celebrations can be as simple as a single class learning activity that focuses attention to the value of arts, or celebrations can involve collaborations that result in multi-school art exhibits. FAEA has a list of resources available on the website that helps teachers plan ways to get involved, including ideas for activities, fundraising guides, and planning calendars.

YAM Recipe of the Month

FAEA has started a new blog on the website called YAM Recipe of the Month, where FAEA members share their “recipe” for success in participating in Youth Art Month. These recipes feature interesting and engaging ways to advocate and celebrate your school’s art program. If you have a recipe that you would like to share, please email info@faea.org.

Year in Review Report

At the end of each year, FAEA submits Florida’s Youth Art Month national report to the Council for Art Education. This report includes a digital scrapbook compiled of a list of accomplishments and local press releases highlighting Florida’s K-12 art programs, such as student art exhibits, advocacy events, community support and outreach, funding for the arts, and other arts-related activities that occurred throughout the school year. It is through these yearly state reports that the Council recognizes programs for outstanding achievement with financial rewards and trophies. If you would like to be a part of Florida’s yearly report, please send photos, descriptions, and/or media articles to info@faea.org.



Flag Design Competition

Each state holds a design contest in which students design a flag or banner that creatively reflects their state and incorporates the national theme.

Artwork Program

The Youth Art Month program encourages K-12 teachers, schools, and school districts to advocate for their art programs by celebrating and displaying

Summer Workshops

Register today to attend FAEA's hands-on art workshops this summer!
Learn more details by visiting FAEA.org.

June 18 | 10:00am - 12:00pm EDT

Title: Finding Your Why

Presenter: Cassie Stephens

June 22 | 9:30am - 12:30pm EDT

Title: Plein Air with Irina Ashcraft

Presenter: Irina Aschraft

June 25 | 9:00am - 12:30pm EDT

Title: 5 Senses Immersive Art Experiences -
Exploring Your Niche: Compose With Your
Physical, Spiritual, and Mental Environment

Presenter: Brandee Thunberg
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The Alfombras: Creative Acts of Cultural Memory in Art Education

By Heidi C. Powell, University of Florida, United States



Figure 1 | Vegetable Alfombra inside El Merced

Key words: *cultural memory, memory pedagogy, alfombras, Guatemala, art immersion, Semana Santa*

Introduction

Having lived in Guatemala in the late 1980s and then revisiting La Antigua, Guatemala several times over the past few years, I have come to recognize the strength of art making as a material form of cultural memory in study abroad programming. La Antigua (The Ancient) is home to one of the most amazing, yet temporary displays of artistic craftsmanship in Central America, the Alfombras of Semana Santa (Carpets of Holy Week) (Figure 1). I believe, situating oneself in creative community settings in other countries embodies Taylor's (2002) notion of vital acts of transfer, where action and engagement transmits social knowledge, historical and cultural memory, and a sense of identity. This builds cultural resonance through "arts-based memory pedagogy" (Powell 2017: 29) where participants find common ground in a new culture through unfamiliar acts or ways of art making, bridging historical knowledge and contemporary practice while learning in art education. In this essay, I ask, how can participating in immersive experiences as acts of cultural memory in other countries develop

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The Alfombras

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Figure 2 | Calle Del Arco-Arch Street, La Antigua, Guatemala

Figure 3 | Calle de los Carros. Cobblestone Street



cultural resonance enhancing spiritual, cultural, and community dialogues in art education?

La Antigua, Alfombras, and Alfombras Today

La Antigua (*Figure 2*), a UNESCO heritage site (UNESCO, 1979), maintains aspects of its original history and cultural elements with Spanish Baroque and colonial architecture, cobblestone streets (*Figure 3*), and ruins from the Catholic Church. Founded by the Spaniards in 1524 on the Kaqchikel-Maya city called Iximche (Schele, et. al., 1999: 297), the conquest brought with it religious processions, the first of which took place on March



Figure 11 | Flowers sorted in buckets



Figure 10 | Corozo Pod

10, 1543 (Bell, 2001: 2). Once established as a Spanish colonial capitol in 1549 (López López, 2017), the processions, with alfombras, took on a greater role in the life and culture of the city especially during Semana Santa where the processions frame the narrative of the life and crucifixion of Christ. Here, the alfombras serve as offerings and are one of the most magnificent aspects of craft and tradition rooted in the historical fiber of La Antigua.

Now, nearly 500 years later, it is still a powerful visual to the memory of the Spanish conquest where cultural confluence and contemporary craft and design work hand in hand as a momentary offering, sacrifice, invocation, or act of gratitude grounded in spiritual contexts. As a participant in creating an alfombra, I not only learned about the process itself, but I also learned about the social and cultural nuances that drive the need for this expressive intersection of artistry and spirituality as a living exhibition of five centuries of cultural continuity. Originating in the 7th century in the Canary Islands with sand and emerging through Spain in the 10th Century to Central America in the 16th Century (Bell, 2014), alfombras today are crafted using both raw and colorfully dyed sawdust, a wide range of organic materials such as pine needles, vegetables, fruits, leaves and flowers (Figure 11) including corozo (the pod/flower of the palm). Corozo (Figure 10) is unique to the Semana Santa experience, not only for providing its white rice like appearance but also for its uniquely sweet, yet sour smell.

The alfombras blanket the cobblestone streets, each one exhibiting its own unique iconography often including religious motifs, folklore narratives, personal designs, or even themes related to local businesses. Each is created

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The Alfombras

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Figure 4 | Columns at the entrance of El Merced



Figure 5 | Statue representing Santa Maria de Cervello, a Mercedarian nun



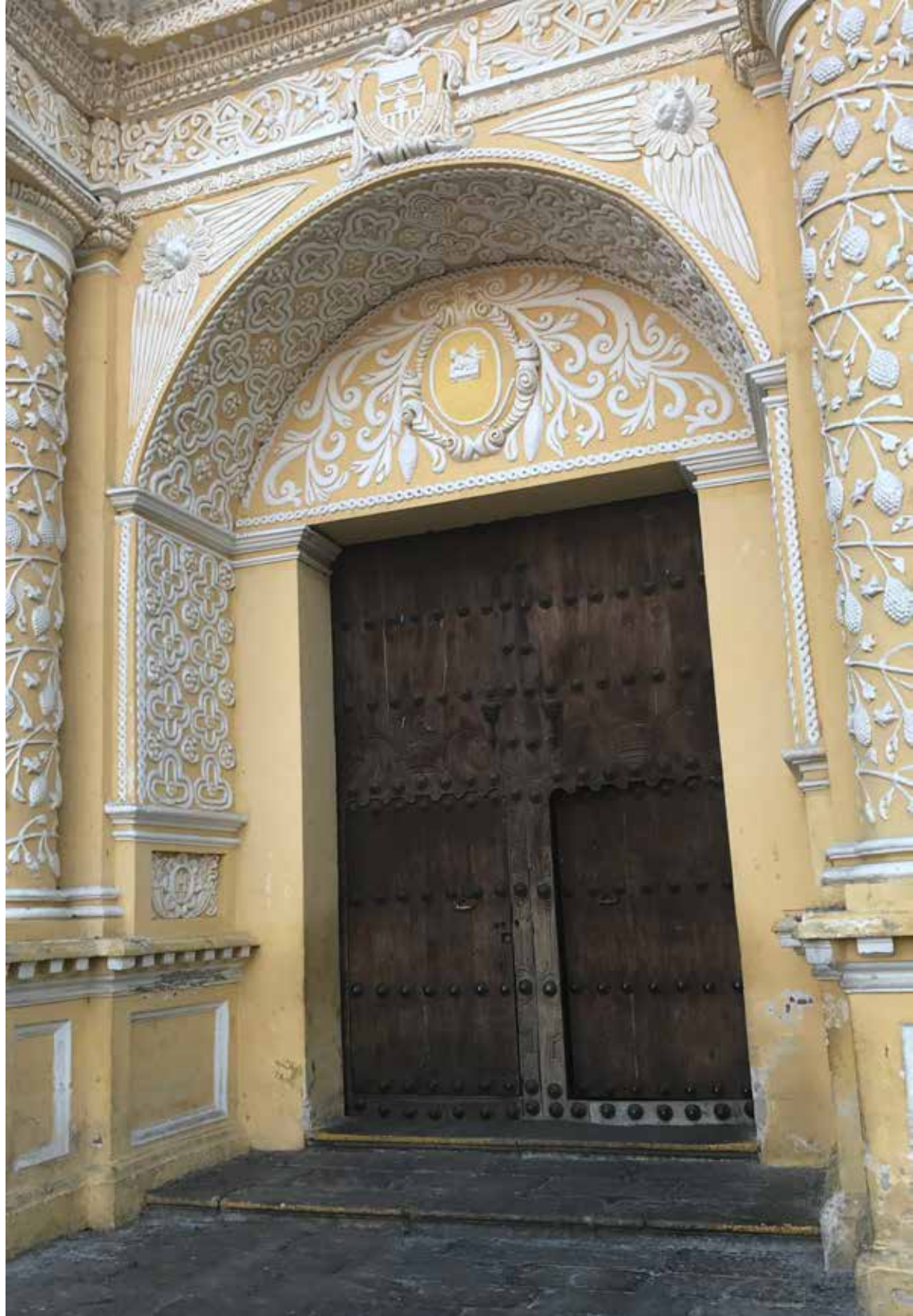


Figure 6 | Entrance of El Merced

on a specific processional path designated for a specific church, the church being the start and end of a procession. There are numerous processions that happen day and night throughout the week of Semana

Santa. Iglesia de La Merced (*Figures 4, 5, and 6*) is the main starting and stopping point on Good Friday.

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The Alfombras

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Figure 8 | Dying sifted sawdust pink



Figure 9 | Dyed and bagged sawdust



The Process of Alfombra Making

The community art making of alfombras is one of collaboration often including those with and without experience, young to old, families, interest groups, neighbors, and the random participant. Hyunsook (2014: 64-65) speaks to the idea that socially engaged arts practice plays a vital role in how we come to understand diversity of human experience and builds

cultural diversity-related competencies. This idea is present in alfombra making, although some alfombras are spontaneously made. Most begin well in advance of Semana Santa with a group of people and a design, and require collaboration of thought and craftsmanship as well as a developed sense of community understanding.

Craftsmanship is also important, for example, in the making of

alfombras. A general knowledge of how much sawdust is needed to fill the area as well as what dye colors will be used, creating design stencils, or cut outs, and a knowledge of how to layer colors is important. Once the sawdust is sifted, dyed and bagged (*Figures 8 and 9*), and the stencils ready, the materials (*Figure 7*) are taken to the site to begin the process. An alfombra can take many

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Figure 7 | Alfombra making materials, raw and dyed sawdust, wood for frame, stencils, screens, cinder block for supports, cones to keep people from the work area.



The Alfombras

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Figure 14 | Sawdust being sprayed with water for the foundation of the alfombra



Figure 12 | Stencils for the theme of friendship

Figure 13 | Border stencils

hours to create, and groups usually start in the morning for the evening processions. The process begins on a cobblestone street by creating a frame of wood acting as the border in which to build up the layers of sawdust. The raw sawdust layers (*Figure 14*) are added and built up to the top of the wooden frame where a wooden plank is then drawn over the surface to smooth it so the colorful sawdust can then be added. The color is added by sifting the sawdust over the larger areas and then using stencils (*Figures 12 and 13*) to create

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The Alfombras

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Figure 15 | Edge of the alfombra before the flowers are applied as a border





Figure 16 | Stencils laid on top of first layer of sifted color

the sharper forms of the stencil designs over the freehand sifting (*Figures 15*).

The last step is to add organic materials such as flowers (*Figures 16, 17, and 18*), which provide visual contrast and design elements as well as an aromatic component. Then, the waiting for the procession begins and upon its arrival

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Figure 17 | The edge of the alfombra with complete stencil designs and flowers



Figure 18 | Center of the completed alfombra

The Alfombras

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the cucuruchos (in purple) (Figure 20) and/or cargadoras (with veils) (Figure 21) carry the processional floats walking over the alfombra offerings. Those dressed as Romans (Figure 19) lead, and the musicians and penitents follow the procession and also people with shovels (Figure 24) and a truck (Figure 25) follow to scoop up what is left over after the procession has moved through. The alfombra turns from artwork to offering (Figures 22) to cultural remembrance (Figure 23), transforming past, to present preserving community discourses of history and the notion that art is a “vehicle for exploring the world in which we live” (Hyunsook, 2014: 64). It is my belief that by immersing oneself in another culture and another environment, we offer ourselves opportunities to identify and explore new ways of knowing.



Figure 20 | Cucuruchos are the male carriers of the processional floats



Figure 21 | Cargadoras, female carriers of the processional floats

Cultural Endeavor as Art Education Experience

As a participant in one of the most creative and elaborate celebrations in the world emphasizing Spanish tradition and indigenous cultural beliefs, I invite you and those around you to explore the value of participating in community art making as cultural endeavor—as a new way of thinking about approaching community dialogues through art education and culturally immersive experiences. In the process of exploring cultural memory through events like Semana Santa in Latin America, we open ourselves up to new ways of understanding cultures unlike our own, finding places of cultural resonance, and perpetuating a positive future for generations to come.

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Figure 19 | Men dressed as Roman soldiers that lead the processions, representing the Romans that were at the crucifixion of Christ



Figure 24 | The clean-up crew with shovels



Figure 23 | Two kids who collected the leftover flowers from the alfombra after the procession



Figure 25 | The taillights from the truck all the alfombra remains were put in



Figure 22 | The alfombra after it was walked over by the procession

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This column provides FAEA members with information about Florida art museums and the academic offerings they provide. Ride with us to the Polk Museum of Art, located in central Florida.

Museum Spotlight

The Polk M



Museum of Art



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Museum Spotlight

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The Polk Museum of Art at Florida Southern College is an American Alliance of Museum-accredited teaching museum that enhances lives through inspirational and engaging art experiences for all. Only a block away from Lake Morton and two blocks from the College's campus in downtown Lakeland, its 50+ year history tells a story similar to other American cultural institutions. It was founded as an all-volunteer museum that emphasized art, history, and science content for young learners. It eventually hired professional staff and narrowed its focus to the visual arts. In its early years, the institution worked with the Polk County School District to establish a curriculum-based visual arts education program. Additionally, the Museum is a Smithsonian Affiliate and sees 140,000 visitors annually.

While the Polk Museum of Art offers many educational programs, here are a few K-12 highlights and resources:

Annual Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

The Polk Museum of Art hosts the nationally renowned Annual Scholastic Art and Writing Awards for Polk County. The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, founded in 1923 by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, have inspired bold ideas in creative teens throughout the country. This program invites students in grades 7-12 to submit original works produced in any media and compete in the nation's longest-running and most prestigious scholarship and recognition program. Past participants of this national competition include Amanda Gorman, Zac Posen, Idelle Weber, and Andy Warhol.

The Museum's exhibition features Polk students who placed within the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. This exhibition is made possible by the generosity of Joy and Michael Martin.

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Museum Spotlight

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Art (Un)Boxed

Inspired by the Museum's permanent collection of American art, Art (Un)Boxed allows participants of all ages to create artwork in the comfort of their own home. Each kit is based on the popular art classes normally held at the institution. The kits include easy-to-follow instructions, art supplies, and how-to videos that foster creative thinking.

One 13 year old participant remarked, "The project was fun and simple, and challenged me to think creatively. It was just as fun and chal-

lenging as Polk Museum of Art's in-person class. I would highly recommend this activity for kids with artistic passions and creative thinking."

The Museum designed the kits to provide hours of creative inspiration and exploration. Recommended for ages 7 and up, these kits are available seasonally via pickup or shipping.

Student Exhibitions

Student Exhibitions are in direct collaboration with Polk County Schools. The museum hosts six exhibitions per year in the George Jenkins Gallery that fea-



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Polk County

School District students. For each exhibition, the artwork is adjudicated, then matted and framed, and displayed in the George Jenkins Gallery. Nearly 600 students are featured each year. From each of the exhibitions, one piece is purchased by the Museum as well as the School District.

4th Grade Tours

The Polk Museum of Art created 4th grade tours, tied to Florida State Visual Art Standards, to introduce Polk County students to original works of art for study, contemplation, reflection, education, and enjoyment. This program helps students sharpen their critical thinking skills, develop creativity, and understand diverse groups of people in a deeper and more meaningful way.

Penfield Library

The Museum is home to the Penfield Library, a specialized collection of monographs and serials on art and art history. Located on the second floor of the Polk Museum, the non-circulating collection is accessible by appointment.

You will want to add Lakeland to your itinerary this summer. The Polk Museum of Art is a beacon that may be inspirational to you.

Fresh Paint's next edition will feature a new Florida cultural gem in Museum Spotlight!

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