



ArTeacher

Issue No. 102

miarted.org

Spring Summer
2026



The Michigan Art Education Association's mission is to promote quality visual arts education through leadership, service, and professional development.

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MAEA ArTeacher is published three times per year: January, May, and September by the Michigan Art Education Association. Publications for Spring/Summer and Fall are in newsletter format published as full editions and are posted on the website. The Winter publication is in micro-newsletter format with the full edition posted on our website.

Annual Membership includes membership and publications for both the National Art Education Association and the Michigan Art Education Association: \$135 [Active Membership], \$135 [Associate], \$70 [Retired], \$120 [First Year Professional], \$50 [Student], \$260 [Institutional].

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Deadlines for submitting material to the MAEA ArTeacher:

April 1 – Spring/Summer

July 1 – Fall

November 1 – Winter

To submit, please email articles to: inhul2@gmail.com or executivesecretary@miarted.org.

Graphic Designer: Amy James

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Cover photo by [green_i](#) on [Freelimages](#)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Illya Tolbert

I attended the 2025 convention in Louisville, the 2024 convention in Minneapolis, the 2023 convention in San Antonio, and the 2022 convention in New York City.

One thing I've learned from attending several of these conventions is that if you want to see the keynote speakers, you need to arrive early. Otherwise, you might end up sitting on the floor, leaning against a wall, or not getting in at all.

The day one keynote speaker in Chicago was fiber artist Bisa Butler, who is credited with helping create a new genre of quilting. She uses photographs, sketches, and vivid traditional textiles to create vibrant, life-size portraits made entirely from fabric.

I thought I arrived pretty early, but the line stretched up the escalator and down two hallways, wrapping around many corners before I finally found the end. When we finally made it into the packed auditorium, I was sitting near the back. During her talk, Butler shared how she was once an art teacher and how she developed her unique style of portraiture. Her work combines fabric, photography, drawing, and bold textile patterns to create powerful portraits. Her quilts celebrate Black life and identity, often showing everyday people in vibrant and dignified ways.

This year's convention in Chicago was exciting as usual, filled with art educators from all over the country. Every workshop seemed to be full, and huge crowds came out to hear the keynote speakers. If you have never attended the national convention, it is definitely something to consider. The 2027 convention will be back in New York City.

SAVE THE DATE!

MAEA 2026



November 5-8, 2026
DoubleTree by Hilton
Blue Water Convention Center

PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE

presidentelect@miarted.org



Emily Miller

The Importance of Submitting Student Artwork Beyond the School Hallways

Student artwork often fills school hallways with color, creativity, and pride. While hallway displays are valuable for celebrating student work within the school community, submitting student artwork to local, regional, or state art shows and exhibitions offers opportunities that extend far beyond the classroom. These experiences help students grow as artists, build confidence, and connect with their communities.

One of the most important benefits of submitting student artwork to exhibitions is the validation students feel when their work is recognized outside their school environment. When students see their art displayed in a gallery, museum, library, or community center, they begin to understand that their ideas and creative voices matter. Participating in art shows also helps students develop a stronger sense of pride and ownership in their work. They begin to understand that artists often share their work with wider audiences and this process becomes a natural part of their artistic development.

Exhibitions beyond the school setting also help connect students to their local community. When families, community members, and local artists attend exhibitions that include student work, they gain a deeper appreciation for the creativity and talent present in their schools. This connection strengthens support for arts education and allows students to feel like contributing members of their community's cultural life.

Another important benefit is that art shows introduce students to the professional side of the art world. Even at a young age, students can learn about the process of preparing artwork for display and submitting work for consideration. These experiences help students and families understand that art is not only something created in the classroom, but something that can be shared, curated, and celebrated in many different spaces. For some students, participating in exhibitions can spark interest in pursuing art more seriously. Being part of an art show may be the first time a student considers themselves an "artist." This can have lasting effects, encouraging them to continue creating, take additional art classes, or explore creative careers in the future, even starting at a young age.

Art exhibitions at all levels allow schools to highlight the value of arts education. When student artwork is displayed in public venues, it demonstrates the impact that art programs have. These exhibitions showcase the meaningful learning that takes place in art classrooms and help advocate for the continued support of arts education.

While school displays will always play an important role in celebrating student creativity, expanding opportunities for students to exhibit their work in the broader community can be transformative. Art shows and exhibitions allow students to share their voices, build confidence, and experience the joy of seeing their creativity recognized beyond the classroom walls. By submitting student artwork to exhibitions outside of school, educators help students see that their art has a place in the world and their creativity deserves to be seen.

PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

pastpresident@miarted.org

What an amazing NAEA National Convention! Now that I'm home and back to the usual routine, I still find time to look at the photos from the inspirational keynote speakers: Bisa Butler, Liz Flores, and Jeffrey Gibson. I'm sure everyone who attended these presentations came away with enthusiasm and a deeper commitment to what we do as art educators every single day. Passion and dedication are two key ingredients for showing up and making a difference in the lives of our students.



Meeting Bisa Butler after her keynote presentation.

Speaking of making a difference, this past March I attended the Cultural Advocacy Day event in Lansing. Representing MAEA is important and having the opportunity to speak with various politicians is key to establishing relationships with those who approve funding for art education. One of the big takeaways from that event was hearing Erin Harkey speak; she is the current CEO of Americans for the Arts. In her presentation in support of advocacy, she stated, "The most powerful tool you have is you." Yes! We need to continue advocating for our students, our certification programs, and our well-being as art educators.

When I got back from Lansing, I dove into a new book, *Mattering*, by Jennifer Breheny Wallace. The main idea behind mattering is related to feeling significant or valued. This conjured up thoughts of my students and sparked a conversation I had with them about times in their school years when they felt they mattered, when they felt they didn't, and what difference it made in their personal well-being. As I read, with my pen and post-it notes in hand, I highlighted many statements I believe speak to us as art educators. Here are a few:

- > "We need people in our lives who we can open up to, who know us well enough so they can see when we are struggling for air, and who will reach over and put that oxygen mask on for us," (Wallace, 2026, p. 77).
- > "Being intentional and consistent about spending time together creates the conditions for deeper conversations, the kind that strengthen trust and connection," (Wallace, 2026, p. 81).
- > "As we help others grow into who they are meant to be, we become more of who we are meant to be, too," (Wallace, 2026, p. 114).

So, as you go about your days and finish your school year, I hope you will find time for your personal well-being, as well as time to be present with your students. They need you to lead with joy, passion, and grace, because you matter to them.

Wishing you a summer of relaxation and creativity!

References: Wallace, J.B. (2026). Mattering: The secret to a life of deep connection and purpose. Penguin Random House.



Jane Montero



Advocacy Day in Lansing with September Buys and Nathan Kukla.



Left to Right: Amy Pfeiler-Wunder, NAEA President-elect; Laura Lott, NAEA Executive Director; and me.

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

vicepresident@miarted.org



Roger Drabant

The Michigan Art Education Association (MAEA) recently celebrated the success of its annual State Show, held at the Hickman Gallery on the campus of Adrian College. This highly anticipated event showcased the exceptional talent of students from across the state, featuring the Top 300 selected works spanning elementary, middle, and secondary divisions.

The exhibition highlighted not only the artistic skill of Michigan's young creators, but also the dedication of the educators who guide and inspire them. Each piece represented hours of instruction, mentorship, and creative exploration within classrooms throughout the state. In addition to the MAEA State Show selections, the exhibition also included works from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Show, further enriching the diversity and scope of the artwork on display.

The Closing Reception was a vibrant and well-attended celebration, drawing more than 100 guests from across Michigan, including attendees who traveled from as far as Traverse City. The event brought together students, families, educators, and supporters of arts education to honor the achievements of these talented young artists and to recognize the importance of the arts in education.

This successful exhibition would not have been possible without the dedication and generosity of you, the MAEA members. Many volunteers contributed their time and energy outside of their classroom responsibilities to organize, curate, and host the event. Their commitment ensures that opportunities like the State Show continue to thrive year after year.

At a time when volunteerism has become less common, the MAEA stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved through collective effort and passion. The organization's members continue to demonstrate that a strong, supportive community can sustain meaningful experiences for students and educators alike. Your work not only makes events like the State Show possible, but also reinforces the vital role of arts education across Michigan.

Visit MAEA's website

miarted.org

for a full color version of the newsletters.
Go to Resources and then Publications.

MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

membership@miarted.org



Aubryana Tripp

Hello Membership,

It was so nice to see so many of you in Chicago. 170 Michigan members made it to NAEA26, way to represent! Conferences like this are a powerful reminder of the creativity, passion, and dedication that art educators bring to their classrooms every day. I was able to attend a variety of sessions, connect with art educators from across the country, and leave with new ideas and perspectives that I am excited to bring back to my students.

While in Chicago, I also had the chance to visit the incredible galleries at the Art Institute of Chicago.



Many of us were able to see a special exhibit featuring works by Henri Matisse on its opening day. Experiencing such powerful artwork in person was both inspiring and energizing as an educator and artist.



Of course, conferences are also about community. It was wonderful to spend time with fellow art educators, sharing stories, laughing together, and strengthening the connections that make our organization so special. These moments remind me how fortunate we are to be part of such a supportive community.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Jackie Whiteley for her dedication and service as the previous Membership Secretary. As she passed the torch to me, she has been incredibly supportive and helpful during this transition. I am grateful for her guidance and the work she has done to support our membership. It was also such an honor to see her recognized at the NAEA Convention for being named Michigan's Art Educator of the Year, alongside four other outstanding Michigan art educators who were also recognized with awards.



As Membership Secretary, I want to thank each of you for being part of MAEA. We are currently ranked fourth in the nation with 759 active members. Our organization thrives because of members who are passionate about supporting



art education and one another. If you know a colleague, student teacher, or new educator who could benefit from being part of this community, please encourage them to join.

If you have any questions about your membership or need assistance, please feel free to reach out. I am always happy to help.

NAEA DELEGATE'S MESSAGE

naeadelegate@miarted.org



**Erica
Davis-Hernandez**



Delegates Assembly
with Jane Montero
(Past President)



Alyssa Stewart, Alison Schmidt,
Artist Shannon Downey & Me



NAEA ED&I Liaisons



Western Region Awards Ceremony

Every time I meet with my ED&I state liaisons at NAEA, I am reminded how fortunate I am to live in Michigan. We have a governor who has supported increased funding for education statewide, implemented free breakfast and lunch for all K–12 students, and enacted laws to protect our most vulnerable communities through measures such as the 2023 amendments to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA). These commitments reinforce my pride in both my state and my professional community. I am equally proud to be a member of NAEA, where ED&I continues to serve as a central pillar of the organization's work.

Before Jane and I arrived at the Delegates Assembly, we met virtually with fellow delegates to review and vote on revisions to 13 position statements, as well as to recommend a new statement on materials and sustainability in art education. These platform and position statements are valuable tools for advocacy within your own school programs, and I encourage you to explore and use them. Please feel free to reach out if you need support in doing so.

The assembly itself brought together state, provincial, and interest group delegates, creating a rich and collaborative environment. Artist and activist Shannon Downey, also known as Badass Cross Stitch, delivered an inspiring keynote, and we even participated in our own craftivism during a creative break. Her artist series session was standing room only. I also attended other powerful sessions, including those led by Faheem Majeed and CFAE, featuring Korean-Indigenous Chicago artist Debra Yepa-Pappan. Witnessing artists and educators actively making a positive impact in their communities was both energizing and affirming.

In addition to the artist series, the keynote presentations were among my favorite experiences. I have attended ED&I sessions since their inception, and they are always thoughtfully scheduled before the first general session, so participants don't miss other events. This year, however, we ended our meeting early to attend Bisa Butler's presentation – an exciting moment made even more memorable by front-row seats arranged for the ED&I cohort.



Bisa Butler

Michigan was also well represented in the Western Region and Division Awards. I had the pleasure of attending with my former student teacher, Alyssa, who was experiencing her first national convention. We captured a meaningful photo with NAEA President Cindy Todd, all of us representing the Rochester district – past, present, and future. Cindy began her career in Rochester, I am nearing the end of mine, and Alyssa is just beginning hers. It was a full-circle moment that underscored the impact of mentorship and continuity in our field.



Cindy Todd, Alyssa Stewart & Me

NAEA DELEGATE'S MESSAGE con't

With over 180 Michigan members attending NAEA Chicago, organizing a full gathering proved challenging, but we were able to capture a group photo of about 36 attendees. I also brought picture books as giveaways for those who joined us. The remaining books found a joyful home with pre-service teachers from Texas Woman's University who attended the Lobby Activism event hosted by the Coalition for Feminism in Art Education. That event featured zines, a red hat knit-in, temporary tattoos, activist art, and t-shirts, all culminating in a powerful group antiphony. Although I was listed as a presenter, I emceed the Interest Group (IG) Awards and helped facilitate the IG Leader to Leader meeting with my IG Leader Co-Coordinator Lark Keeler and now former Pacific Region VP Abi Paytoe. Each morning, I began my day with the Caucus on the Spiritual in Art Education (CSAE) sessions, which included yoga, sound experiences, and journaling. These gatherings, along with other interest groups, provide meaningful opportunities to connect with like-minded colleagues, build community, and amplify our collective voices in art education.



IG Awards with Lark Keeler

I am also honored to share that I was accepted into the 2026 School for Art Leaders (SAL) program. While in Chicago, I had the opportunity to meet several members of this new cohort, and I look forward to continuing to grow my leadership and communication skills while developing a project to support my advocacy efforts. In addition, I will be attending the NEA Conference on Racial and Social Justice and representing Michigan at the NEA Representative Assembly in Denver. These opportunities remind me that we are stronger together.

As you look ahead to summer – whether your plans include professional development, travel, or time at home – I hope you find creative ways to support your personal and professional growth. May your experiences nourish your spirit and inspire your continued work in art education.

ADVOCACY MESSAGE

julie.jacobusse@gmail.com

On March 4, 2026, our Holland City Mayor proclaimed in his chambers that March is Youth Arts Month. He also came to visit my art room the day before while some of my fifth graders painted a March is Youth Arts Month banner to hang up at our school. The students loved meeting the Holland City Mayor and showing off their creations in art class. The mayor is a graduate of Hope College. He said his minor was in art and sculpture and that the skills he learned has helped him in life while working on his car at home with welding especially. It was a great celebration for Holland City Schools and students.



If you have not already, reach out to your local mayor and see if they will proclaim March is Youth Arts Month for next year. This is the time of the year I reached out to our mayor as it takes time to get it on their agenda and start to create the proclamation document. I can send you a link to the one I helped to create for Holland.

Julie Jacobusse,
Advocacy Co-Chair



MUSEUM DIVISION MESSAGE

sundstje@gvsu.edu



Jessica Sundstrom



Bisa Butler, *Down, down baby* (2024), after Gordon Parks, *Girls Playing in Water* (1956), cotton, silk, vinyl, velvet, lace netting, and polyester, quilted and appliquéd, 107 x 105 inches, courtesy of the artist.

It's been a couple months since the NAEA Convention in Chicago this year. This was my first time attending, and I really enjoyed the opportunity to connect with other museum educators, visit museums, and learn new methods for teaching and exploration. For me, one of the biggest draws to this year's convention was that Bisa Butler, a contemporary quilt artist, was the Thursday morning keynote speaker, and I am still reflecting on what she shared with us.

If you are unfamiliar with the quilts of Bisa Butler, you might first believe that you are looking at vibrant and highly detailed paintings. In fact, up until at least 2022, Butler regularly included the line "There is zero paint on this artwork" in her social media images. Butler's quilts are all portraits, largely based on historical photographs. Her artwork honors and celebrates the lives and history of African Americans.

During her keynote, we were able to see many of Butler's quilts and hear about her life. As a former high school art educator herself, Butler was able to share stories about her experience of becoming an educator and some of the challenges that can occur in the classroom, such as class management and students' attention. She also spoke about her journey as an artist, as she figured out her own style, navigated "no's" from the art world, and stayed true to herself. She talked about the bravery it takes for any person to share a new thing or skill that they are trying. These are all experiences that had the crowd murmuring in agreement, laughing knowingly, and audibly expressing admiration.

One moment that really seemed to resonate with the audience was when she shared images of her first quilt portrait compared to her most recent, emphasizing the importance of practice and never giving up. As an artist and an educator, I appreciate that she is willing to share her earlier artworks. To be able to show students the progress that one can make if you find an interest or a passion and pursue it with longevity is an amazing resource. Maybe most importantly on a personal level, it reminded me to be kinder to myself and my artistic practice.

NAEA is hoping to have the recording of Butler's talk available for conference goers to watch in April, and I highly recommend you gather some friends and art making materials and be inspired by her words. (Looking for Butler-inspired inspiration? The GVSU Art Museum has hundreds of historical photographs on the online collection that are free for you to use at artgallery.gvsu.edu!)

Wet Cyanotype Prints

on handmade light-sensitive paper

Lesson Plan for Grades 3–12



Step 1: Mix photo-sensitive solution and coat papers. Store away from light until ready to use.



Step 2: Experiment with wet techniques and creative plate designs.



Step 3: Expose under a UV lamp or in the sun. Soak in a tray of plain water until any remaining solution is removed. Add Brusho for color options.

Experimental and playful, this alternative photography process can be used to create one-of-a-kind artistic monoprints.

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SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT TWO OF THE MAEA FOUNDERS

Adrienne616@gmail.com



**Adrienne DeMilner,
Historian**

Imagine finding out that our own founders of MAEA were connected to a famous architect whose homes are now posed as museums! In my research into the three women that founded the Michigan Art Education Association, I discovered that two of them were bold enough to write to the famous Frank Lloyd Wright when they decided to live together in the Lansing area where they worked as art professors in the early 1900's. We are a bold lot and such is true for those who started this organization. I will be following with more finds and hope to inspire those of you still teaching in the BEST field ever.

In the 1920's, a renowned architect by the name of Frank Lloyd Wright was building incredible homes that are considered architectural marvels today. Most of his homes are now museums and some are privately owned. Alma Goetsch and Kathrine Winkler wanted such a home, and heard that he was building "Usonian" homes that were more affordable for modest incomes. In 1938, they wrote him a letter and were accepted. They explained that they were two art professors who wanted their home to be used for art and entertaining. Frank Lloyd Wright approved and granted them one of his models which stands today in Okemos, Michigan.



The Goetsch-Winckler House, located in Okemos, Michigan, is a significant example of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian architectural style. Designed in 1940 for two Michigan State University art professors, the house exemplifies Wright's vision of affordable, yet artistic, living in harmony with nature. This compact, single-story home features Wright's signature horizontal lines, open floor plan, and an emphasis on natural light.

Today the Goetsch-Winckler House is privately owned and can be booked through airBnB! K-12 educators and architects receive a discount of 10%, because after all, FLW was an educator as well as an artist. Visit their website to see more photos of the home or head to Lansing!

 
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Membership with MAEA is membership to both NAEA and MAEA:

Mail to: NAEA Membership, 901 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 **(Make a copy for your records.)**

-OR- Membership online: www.miarted.org click on *About*, then click on *Membership*

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