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Stokrocki Early Roots

Born in Poughkeepsie, New York [1946] on the Hudson River, I grew up in the Polish/Italian neighborhood. In the 1920's, Poughkeepsie was the 2nd capital of New York State. For 40 years, my Dad, Walter Stokrocki, worked for IBM as a tool and dye maker. Most of our family worked for IBM, including my brother-in-law and nephews. I worked one summer for them analyzing/repairing circuit boards.

On my Mom's side, her mother Mary Birago Dosio died when my mother, Lucy was 12 years old, a loss that devastated her. One of ten children, she moves to live with her older brother Joe. She quit school at 16 and worked in a meat packing plant. She met my father who lived across the street from her. He joined the army in 1940 as a bombardier navigator. They married and my mom followed him to different army bases and out to Nevada, where he trained Chiang Kai-shek's troupes.

My parents named me after both my grandmothers - Mary and my mom – Lucy. My dad and mom loved to take us [Fran and Diana] to the Catskill Game Farm and we walked a lot to the IBM Country Club.

I attended Holy Trinity Elementary School and Church, decorated bulletin boards, sang in the choir, and joined the Brownies and Girl Scouts, otherwise, my life was pretty boring.

Later, dad bought me an *Around the World Program* subscription from the American Geographical Society, paint-by-number kits, and the *Walter Foster* series on

how to paint. I gave one of my first oil paintings to my grandmother Mary [dad's side], and later retrieved it after her death.

I attended Our Lady of Lourdes High School from 1960-1964, in the former Poughkeepsie High School building, where I father went to high school. The nuns were tough and only Sister John Mary encouraged me in English Literature. We painted a nun's pottery that she sold, and we designed costumes for the plays, but I had no art training. I was shocked to discover that I graduated 16th in the class that included all the boys too.

At 16, I became a paid nurse's aide and put myself through college, later getting a New York State Regents Scholarship and National Defense Education Loan. I worked on nearly every floor in the hospital.

I started my college career at Dutchess Community College, volunteered to take over my *Chronos* Yearbook as Art Editor, and graduated in two years. I later transferred to the State University of New York [SUNY] at New Paltz, 1966-1969, and earned my teaching certificate as well. I was Editor-in-Chief of the 1968 Yearbook that also became part of my art portfolio.

My first teaching appointment was in Dover Plains, New York (1969) where I paid back my school loan in one year living in a one-room apartment, the former kitchen of the Old Drovers Inn. Living sparsely, I paid back my school loan and traveled to Europe on \$10 a day that summer by myself. My first trip abroad, I wrote to Mom & Dad (1970):

Amsterdam is lovely! I have a beautiful hotel room. The people are very friendly, and the men are very handsome. There are many hippies, motorbikes, and

Volkswagens here. Today, I went to the Heineken Brewery and had a few samples of Dutch beer. I also went to the Rijksmuseum and saw Rembrandt's house.

Mary's Artwork

Commercial artwork consisted of layout and design. I learned how to photographically render products in watercolor, such as Oxford bone china, translucent porcelain that is composed of bone ash (calcium phosphate ash of burned bones). While teaching in Massachusetts, I made artwork similar to my students. I was a kid at Heart/Art! I drew my bedroom with cartoon characters, when living in a former seminary in Blackstone-Millville, MA. Fellow art teachers made a group quilt with my tie-dye tree insert. I took six credits of weaving and dyeing, creating such treasures as vests, circular weavings, and a 12' floor totem that I later gave to a nearby kindergarten.

One summer at Penn State, I took a drawing course with Jo-Lynn Ott. She saw me munching on candies and told me to transform them. I made a series based of enlarged Bassett's Licorice with hidden female hips & lips (pastel drawing, pen & ink). My philosophy professor exclaimed, "How can you be so [sensually] revealing!"

I first painted the Superstition Mountains in Arizona at SUNY New Paltz, in 1968 from the cover of *Arizona Highways* [magazine] that my dad brought home one Christmas. In 1991, I repainted the Superstitions (acrylic, 4x8' in 3 panels) when I moved to Arizona. Dad told me that some Native American spirit brought me back to where I was conceived. In 1946 at the end of the war, my father was training Chang Kai Chek's troupes and my parents rushed back to New York to deliver me. I have lived here in the foothills for 15 years.

Children's Book Illustrations and Ecological Education

My neighbor Emily York, a former school librarian, invited me to illustrate books for her great grandchildren. *Lindsey's Surprise* (2007) consisted of such discovered animals as the anxious quail and cautious bobcat. *Sarah's Desert Surprise* (2008), the second book, consisted of dancing cacti in oil pastel. We told Sarah to "squint her eyes and see the forms glistening in the sky." The children encouraged us to develop a third book on reptiles, 2009) *T J's Desert Surprise* (acrylic). This nonvenomous green snake on the cover was one of the friendliest. This small, nonvenomous snake is Minnesota's only green or grass snake. Also found in northern Mexico. [The children all live in Wisconsin.] See www.desertsurpriseseries.com. In 2010, Mary was the Featured Artist @ The Superstition Mountain Museum, Apache Junction, AZ. Mary also has published two research articles using the books in the schools and featuring visual literacy (Stokrocki, 2010, Stokrocki, 2014). Brent Wilson's (1984) themes and structures in the graphic narratives helped me analyze their stories.

Move to Boston

I connected with high school friends and moved to Boston in 1970. We lived outside of Fenway Park under The CITGO sign. I located a job teaching art at the new Blackstone Millville Regional Jr.-Sr. High School on the border of Rhode Island. The first year I had to beg, borrow, and search for recycled art supplies because they had none.

In 1974, I transferred to Medway High School as the Art Department Chair. Long time teacher friends, Linda Murphy and Cathy Collishaw, often shared teaching ideas.

In the summer of 1976, I traveled through Turkey & Iran with a teacher boyfriend and we started collecting Turkish meerschaum pipes and tribal carpets. Using Feldman's (1970) Art Criticism method, I started exploring my Noah's Ark carpet from Diyarbakir Turkey with students in several countries and continue to invite people to find the hidden treasures in it. Feldman's method of questioning influenced my teaching throughout my career.

Then I started taking classes at Massachusetts College of Art, and after 30 credits, I began the Master of Science Degree. I had to fight to get into the program and to get out. Good grades weren't enough, but who recommended you. Most of my Profs went to Harvard. Later, former teachers Judy Burton, Al Hurwitz, Diana Korzenik, and Al Anderson, recommended me for the Penn State Doctoral program (1979). My professors kept on telling me to stop complaining and to get working. Later, they said, "See where all those courses and credits got you!"

Penn State University

I started the Penn State program in the summer of 1979 to try it out with Bob Ott and was excited about his museum education class. I wrote Penn State to get into the program earlier and they found a teaching assistantship for me in the fall of 1980 to supervise Saturday Classes for Children with Ralph Raunft. Later, I documented Ken Beittel's summer ceramics class and wrote my dissertation on it, *Spheres of Meaning: A Qualitative Description and Interpretation of an Art Learning Environment*. Beittel left on

sabbatical to Japan and a year later, I was running out of funds and started looking for serious university positions, accepted a teaching job at Cleveland State University in 1982. Persistence pays off also due to my 10 years of teaching in the public schools. Pennsylvania State University invited me back to receive the 2007 College of Arts & Architecture Outstanding Alumni Award of which I am very grateful.

Cleveland State University and Supervising Students

At Cleveland State University, 1970-79, I taught two-dimensional design and art education courses in the basement with no windows with Betty Copland whose positive personality sustained me. When Betty retired, I was the only female professor for a while. When the new female Dean of Liberal Arts arrived, then I was relieved of some of my duties. I also supervised student teachers and professional internships in the schools, which enabled me to start researching master teachers.

Not the Right Person, but the Right Time

Lonely Mary met Philosophy Professor Bill Vallicella at a Hermeneutics Symposium at University of Dayton in 1981. My dissertation was grounded in this interpretation theory. I wrote the organizers to help me find a place to stay and ended up in the Rectory there. The next year (1983) we were married and had a long-distance marriage for several years until he started teaching at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

In 1986, I followed Bill to Indiana University for his Guggenheim Fellowship and contacted Gil Clark and Enid Zimmerman for the chance to attend their summer program. I ended up documenting Guy Hubbard's teaching in three different computer classes. Enid became a mentoring colleague who graciously gave me feedback on my research and encouraged me to take on extra challenges. Later, we (La Pierre, Stokrocki, & Zimmerman, 2000) published *Research methods and methodologies for multicultural and cross-cultural issues in art education* and the results of our National Art Education Association (NAEA) cross-site analysis grant (Hafeli, Stokrocki, & Zimmerman, 2005), to name a few of our many studies together. Thank you, Enid, for all your help.

Ethnographic Research

Some of my fondest research experiences have been documenting master art teachers in the schools. A lesson on the art world of young, elementary students with Jean Sommers from Cuyahoga Heights (Stokrocki, 1986a) expanded into a portrait of an effective elementary art teacher for *Studies in Art Education* (Stokrocki, 1986b). Another study on *Teaching preadolescents in an urban setting from the perspective of a Black art teacher* (Stokrocki, 1987) became an art criticism-teaching model. I used a videotape of Sandra Noble leading students in a discussion comparison of similarities/differences between two artworks in my Methods of Assessment classes. She always insisted that students search for differences with the words, "YES YOU CAN!" Yet another study featured an extreme case (Stokrocki, 1988). Some students disliked reading about art. "I'd rather read about dirt bikes and football," complained one young man. Grace Lampberth therefore had students design a football stadium and its clay sculptures. Then

she showed one student how to rescue his work, “Build up these [clay] shoulders here.” I did 10 of these early studies and compared them in a cross-site analysis. I remember Ken Marantz later bugging me, “So what’s next? My retort was that the art education problems were still the same and he pushed, “What was I going to do about them?”

As Chair of The Seminar for Research in Art Education, I pleaded for use of more images in research and offered a model, Teaching art to multicultural students in Rotterdam: The art teacher as intercultural educator (Stokrocki, 1989) that became a full-scale exhibition. Art teacher Harry Berk was Indonesian and Dutch and inspired students to compare their former and present cultures. Examples included one Surinamese girl who contrasted her “primitive” [her word] original land and her new “luxury” progress [hi-risers and classical museum) that she called *The Green and Modern World*. A Dutch boy pictured Prince and other Pop starts in Holland. A Turkish girl on left bottom compared mosques/bazaars of her former home. The Dutch boy showcased museums. Other Surinamese student missed “the warmth and sun” of her former home.

Perhaps my most famous research study was “Teaching suburban ninth graders: The facilitator approach” in the *Ohio Art Education Association Journal* (Stokrocki, 1990) because of the number of online hits that it received. Kurt Reichert, art teacher at Mentor High School explained his self-portrait grid lesson and presented his own model, drawing techniques, and different compositions. He ran his ninth-grade elective class as an art club and invited these students to help judge the annual elementary art show. He also revealed that he had “lousy sequencing” and the standards were changing. I used this model study for my Methods of Assessment Course at ASU for over 25 years. See

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~ifmls/>

I later presented the important qualities of listening, perseverance, and cooperation necessary for conducting ethnographic research during my Mary Rouse Award Speech, sponsored by the NAEA Women's Caucus (Stokrocki, 1992). Thank you, Lynn Beudert, for nominating me.

Arizona State University

I was hired as Professor of Art and Art Education and later became Area Coordinator at Arizona State University (ASU) in 1990. For over 30 years, I taught Methods of Assessment in which I encouraged students to document master art teachers and develop evidence portfolios of teaching/learning. They used such tools as sociological profile, space maps/sociograms, Pre/post tests, pre/post questionnaires, lesson summary matrix, art criticism, and metaphor explanation of their experience. I used John Michael's (1983) art orientations (primitive, mechanical, intellectual, and intuitive) to help students understand adolescent art development. As a theoretical basis, I used Eisner's (1991) educational criticism, a process of describing, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating for evaluating an everyday school activity in order to understand it more fully. Teaching is not perfect, and this is what the lessons were trying to become (Eisner). To my website, I uploaded another model study, "Teaching Southwest Cultures Through Art" of master teacher Larry Woodson leading three other teachers in a unit on reconstructing the caliche clay architecture of the ancient Hohokam Indians. The latter study was the result of a 1998 NAEA Visual Arts Education Research Grant for the 21st Century. See <http://www.public.asu.edu/~ifmls/POFolder/PartObTOC.html>

Research with Native Peoples

My first year at ASU, the university awarded me a grant to conduct ethnographic research on the Navajo Reservation, which I extended for four years. My first year in establishing trust, I documented the Anglo art teachers in Chinle, Arizona. My second year, I met the new female Navajo elementary art teacher, Isabel White, and wrote about her precious teaching of clay wiggling things, entitled *A School Day in the Life of a Young Navajo Girl: A Case Study in Ethnographic Storytelling* (Stokrocki, 1995). In 1995, I won the Manual Barkan for Excellence in Research. [Thank you Maryl DeJong for nominating me]. My third year, Elmer Yazzie at the Rehoboth Christian Boarding School in Albuquerque revealed his teaching secrets. Later, Navajo art teacher, Alan Jim in Tuba City, invited me into his educational sweat lodge. We wrote about it as ritual and aesthetic education (Stokrocki & Jim, 1999).

Most people misconceive aesthetics as the pursuit of the pleasure or beauty alone, but the Navajo believe in the search for beauty or balance in life, and they use such ceremonies as the sweat lodge to restore it.

Although he is Navajo, Alan Jim practices the Lakota sweat-lodge ritual, a pan-Indian practice. This was an educational event for students. We crawled into this place, shared 4 rounds of prayers and water at night, and crawled out to look at purple moon. This aesthetic and spiritual event heightened our sensory awareness & deepened my cultural appreciation of painful beauty.

In 2001, I met art teacher Marcia Buckpitt at an Arizona Art Education Association Conference and she invited me to document her three-week summer program at the

McNary Elementary School that we taught together. That summer, we introduced students to Keith Haring and used their new Kid Pix animation program and we all learned about its features included character animation, transitions, special effects, and frame by frame animations (Stokrocki with Buckpitt, 2002). One student depicted a deer running from the devastating fire amid pine forests. Every year fires occur in the Arizona White Mountains, high desert.

In 2005, the NAEA granted me the Lowenfeld Award and I wrote about these research experiences, *Searching for Meaning: Visual Culture from an Anthropological Perspective* (Stokrocki, 2006). This included studies of Navajo students drawing "What I Like to do on the Rez." All students featured outdoor activities. At the third-grade level, however, 50% of the students (8/16) featured cars (3), trucks (3), vans, (2), helicopters (2), and a motorcycle (1). I felt that Lowenfeld would have loved ethnographic research because he questioned students in depth about their drawing experience.

Research with Native People continued with such publications as *Casino capers: Exploring the aesthetics of superfluidity* (Stokrocki with Castile, Delahunt, Eldridge, & Koreck, 2010). Borrowed from Mbembe's (2004) study of the new architecture in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa, superfluidity is associated "with luxury, rarity, and vanity, futility and caprice, conspicuous spectacle, and even phantasm" (p. 378). He discusses the exploitation of a mass of human material in the city.

During my 2012 Fulbright in Taiwan, I danced with Aboriginal People at their annual Tribal Unification Ceremony at Mount Ari. I accompanied Professor Charles

Chin-Hsiung Director of Taiwan Indigenous Peoples Education at the National Chiayi University, who invited me. Jin-Shiow Chen, my sponsor invited me to write about Art and Spirituality of Native People on the virtual world of Second Life (Stokrocki, 2012). I found many discrepancies there. Native People do not all live in teepees but also long houses, etc. USSEA President Steve Willis, part Cherokee, was surprised to find a powwow staged on Second Life. Another site posed the question, “What is wrong with this picture?” in a display. All images were stereotypes for discussion. Even Laurie Eldridge, part Cherokee, criticized the Indian Princess costumes for sale. She stated, Native women dress in regalia not costumes. I even found the group ‘MOOI’ by AMIS who invited players to explore traditional aboriginal culture and folk religion in Taiwan.

INSEA: Enrich Your Life and Make International Connections

Volunteering for odd jobs and assuming leadership roles builds character. Professionals need to learn that it’s a group effort and if you need help ask for it. Leadership abilities grow from simple to more complex assignments. Presidency may be just a figurehead position, implementing what others germinated. Then you discover that you are responsible for the next Regional Conference as the President of the United States Society for Education through Art [USSEA] and the only help emanates from the teachers in the schools in 2002. Such commitments can last for over 8 years. This grows from appointment to a World Counselor and later graduating to a regional Vice-Presidency of the International Society for Education Through Art [8 years]. Most of my appointment involved setting up USSEA’s first website and operating it for nearly 10 years, until I discovered someone qualified to take the position.

Be Ready -- Seize the Day! Work Bank Consultant to Turkey (1995-1997)

One day when I was getting ready to teach at ASU, my Chair asked if I would like to go to Turkey for the year as a Consultant to design curriculum. Since I had been there before, naturally I was interested. He told me to find someone to teach my classes and ASU would send both my husband and me. I called Bill in Tennessee and told him to fly home, get himself together in a week, and he could accompany me for free. We worked for a year, he taught at Middle Easter Technical University, and the next year. With my colleague Olcay Kirisoglu, we wrote curriculum guides for Elementary and Secondary Education. Ten Turkish University professors also met with us to discuss implications of the new programs. The next summer, The World Bank, flew me back to evaluate our program. Since the books were not ready, YOK put us on buses and drove us around the country to speak to 35 universities to promote the new curriculum. In 2004, she sponsored “Living on a Bridge: The 7th European Regional Congress,” InSEA in Istanbul, Turkey.

Needless to say, this appointment was one of the highlights of my life because we lived with the Turks, who were very hospitable, and traveled to places that we could not today. This experience enabled me to buy beautiful carpets for our teaching exploratory art criticism in 37 universities that ranged from Istanbul, to Cappadocia, to Bursa, to Antakya (Antioch) Syria, to Lake Van where Noah’s Art was locate, and back to Ankara from where the project emanated.

Discovering my Roots

I attended several InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) Conferences in Rotterdam, Hamburg, Germany, Istanbul, Turkey, and Budapest, Hungary. The Regional Conference at the University of Warsaw, Poland in 2002, with Mariusz Samoraj and Irena Wojnar as hosts was very special for me. Arriving early, I went to document The Creativity School in Warsaw. This experience also enabled me to search for my Polish grandmother Mary's roots in Tykocin near the Russian border. Through my sponsor, I met Stefan Kuplinsky and his family. Great granddad Kuplinsky escaped during War World I with two little girls--my grandma Mary and her sister Stasha. His wife Maryana died there and he remarried in the USA. Other families were carted off and forced to work in Siberia by Stalin. My family name changed at Ellis Island. I came from humble folk roots. My grandpa's family of five boys all came from the Black Forest area near the German border. He married my grandmother in New York.

Mariusz brought the children to Krakow in southern Poland. We also visited Auschwitz with its deceitful promise, "Work hard and Be Free." We (Stokrocki & Samoraj, 2003) documented "The Green School" as an Aesthetic, Ecological and Moral Folk Experience in Poland, discovering that -- *without the green, the spirit can't survive!*

Reluctant Feminist Gets the June McFee Award

What outstanding contributions did I make to win the National Art Education Association 2007 Women's Caucus June King McFee Award? Just surviving in a heavily dominated man's world in the beginning of my career was difficult. I documented several female master teachers that enabled us all. Later, I wrote about the Red Hat Society to uphold OLDER women who dare to be creatively different. For my McFee speech, I

wrote with my former student Julia DiSiena, who sent me 23 years of correspondence, revealing similar middle-class roots, reciprocity and possibility, and desire for connection. Julie's enthusiasm for learning about multicultural education and different types of people struck me as unusual. This resulted in a "Holy Mentormony," the establishment of sacred mentorships—those that continue to glow (Max, 2007). S/he who finds a mentor, finds a treasure (Kapur, 1997). At the last minute, I was invited to be Co-President of NAEA Women's Caucus (2018-2020), a six-year commitment, that encompassed my working with many female avatars on Second Life virtual world Nonprofit Commons as well.

Interdisciplinary Art Education

Crossing bridges and finding ways to make art relevant always fascinated me. Interdisciplinary learning ideally is holistic learning in which bridges are created to unify learning and connect disciplines. The book included models and examples of interdisciplinary education from several cultures ranging from interrelated arts, formal integration, parallel-disciplines, arts-infusion, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary partnerships, visual culture studies, and intercultural programs.

Examples featured experiences at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels in schools and communities. Themes included ecology and heritage, cultural heritage and violence, civil rights, and patriotism = issues of identity. I discussed the pros and cons of such programs and present models for a terror-stricken world. I was thrilled to see the NAEA re-publish my edited book, entitled *Interdisciplinary Art Education: Builds Bridges to Connect Disciplines and Cultures* (Stokrocki 2005, 2009).

Fulbright Scholar to Taiwan

For my sabbatical in 2012, I contacted Jin-Shiow Chen for the opportunity to teach/research in Taiwan three years in advance. My suggestion for future scholars/teachers is to get a letter of invitation. She encouraged me along with Karen Keifer-Boyd and to apply for a Fulbright. Another piece of advice is to start the letters of recommendation, pointing out your strengths for others to finish. After 18 pages of Internet forms, I still needed five more letters of recommendation and two sets of medical examinations (one of the USA and the other for Taiwan). After 14 hours on the plane, with 2-days of jet lag, you will arrive to discover that you can't move due to sitting too long and need a full body massage.

But it is worthwhile to endure, because you will be judging all 274 next year's applications. You may find yourself in the middle of an agriculture university, living in the dorms with no elevator, where everyone leaves on the weekend, and you need to walk/ find a bicycle, and learn to take the trains.

Explorations in Virtual Worlds

I was invited to work on the virtual world of Second Life by my former graduate student Sandra Andrews to add educational components to her site called Floaters that was meant to empower disenfranchised people (Stokrocki & Andrews, 2010). Here, Sandra empowered me to start teaching on virtual worlds. I have taught Digital Ethnography on Second Life since 2007 in which students go on Art Treasure Quests, interview avatars, and make digital stories.

The National Art Education Association later published my edited book, *Explorations in Virtual Worlds: New Digital Media Literacy Investigations* (Stokrocki, 2014). My recent research involved explorations with middle school students on the VCER OpenSim, sponsored by University of British Columbia and run by Sandrine Hsiao-Cheng Han. They built 3-D desert installations of animals and plants based on ecological problems, like poaching of Gila monsters at my ASU Hive. In 2020, I have my own school on virtual world of Second Life (SL) now, where I teach students to build and write Digital Stories. I won the NAEA Technology Award in 2018.

Future of Mary Stokrocki

After publishing 10 books 10 (including one digital CD book), three illustrated children's books, 42 book chapters, 200 articles (most of them juried), and 18 book reviews because professors had to publish to be paid, I can now write/research my interests. In 2020, I retired and as Professor Emerita, I continue to advocate for empathy and social causes, work with Native People and community events, explore virtual worlds, and co-publish with former students and colleagues.

Future of Art Education

Several options are available and range from the virtual to the real/communal. I think of the virtual as a playground for the possible in building future teaching sites and networking with international friends. Certainly, as we age, our real functions may decline, but we have the capacity to engage digitally with others and share our stories and solutions.

What I would wish to see is that teachers and students work together to learn to build options and solve problems. The rhizomatic theory of education calls for sprouting possibilities/impossibilities (Wilson, 2003). What seems unremarkable and boring in the beginning is preparing us for future challenges. Are we ready to “Seize the Day?” The question is not if we are qualified to teach certain concepts, but are we willing to take risks, to have the courage to struggle with the problems, and are we humble enough to learn from our mistakes (Stokrocki, 2000). “I will leave you my daisy [Polish emblematic name] for good luck.”

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