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Mentor's Introduction

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Art education theory and practice have relied on a somewhat curious mix of conceptions of the individual. Drawn from various disciplines, these conceptions range from mechanistic ones stressing the biological organism to mystical ones stressing the transcendent genius of the unique artist. Within this range, researchers have sought and found many truths; yet, there remain important truths to be found and articulated. The longer I dwell with existentially-based modes of research, the more I respect and appreciate the immense personal commitment that researchers give in such inquiry. The hope for meaning-to-be-disclosed is a force that both compels and propels an individual into an intense, personal-yet-sharable journey. Nancy Lambert is an experienced professional who finds that much conventional child art research — cognitive development studies, case studies, descriptive studies of school groups, etc. — inadequately represents significant meaning present in the artistic lives of children. Her search is to find a way to somehow disclose that meaning which she sees present during her art sessions with children. The promise her inquiry offers is that of informing — and reforming — our understanding of what it means to be an individual child doing art.