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introduction

On April 12 and 13, 1991 a symposium at the University of Illinois commemorated the scholarly and artistic contributions of Dr. Kenneth R. Beittel, pioneering researcher and scholar in the field of art education. Participants from Japan, Canada, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas presented papers that either focused on the biographical stages -- empirical foundations, psychological experiments, case studies in the drawing lab, philosophical research, and pottery as spiritual discipline -- or centered on the praxis of choice, tradition, and paradox in Beittel's re-interpretations of art and research in his four modes of inquiry -- synthesizing individual and cultural values in art, self-defining discipline in art, continuity and change in art and art education, and humanistic traditions in teaching art.

While Dr. Beittel's significant body of research is a major force on thinking and practices in art education, it is his mentorship of more than 170 doctoral students that relates most directly to this publication. "Beittel's praxis, committed as both artist and researcher, is a singular source of his compelling authenticity in our discipline. Undoubtedly, this praxis is fundamental to his appeal as a mentor for so many doctoral students, evoking those 'overtones that persist' in the respect and admiration they accord him throughout ensuing years" (Zurmuehlen, 1991, pp. 7-8).

He, too, had mentors in art education and pottery whom he continues to admire and respect. His book (1991), published by The Pennsylvania State University in conjunction with the symposium, is dedicated to "Viktor Lowenfeld whose radical support for the creative process was based on the conviction that art is truly education for higher consciousness and Manji Inoue one of Japan's Living Intangible Cultural Treasures, my teacher in the Arita tradition of porcelain" (p. viii).

Mentors influence us perhaps most profoundly as our first professional audiences. "Many for whom Beittel, as mentor, was a first audience still write for him, although he many not see their words; others, for whom his writings constituted a spiritual mentorship, also write for him as a continuing audience" (Zurmuehlen, 1991, p. 8). Among these are some of the doctoral students in this publication. In all their papers we also learn much about the mentors for whom they write.

Marilyn Zurmuehlen
Editor

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