Mentor's Introduction

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In 1982, Mary Ann Stankiewicz and I co-edited the first volume of Women Art Educators 1. At that time, we wrote that although research about women has been conducted in psychology and education, there was little written about women in the field of art education. Now, almost a decade later, there have been a number of published research studies and several books about women who taught and teach art at all levels, time periods, and under a variety of circumstances. There still are, however, contributory women art educators yet to be discovered.

Many women played major roles in establishing methods, strategies, and curricula that are familiar today in current art and art education contexts. Knowledge of the contributions of these women, and the societal constraints they faced, can lead to an awareness and understanding of women's issues, past and present, in the field of art education.

Of concern to those who are interested in researching the lives and practices of women who taught and created art in the past is how to present these women's lives and accomplishments fairly and equitably. Many current histories about such women are based on tracing their contributions through collections of established references written after events occurred. Often in such sources subjects are depicted through present day points of view rather than through understandings of the time period under consideration and the social environment that conditioned reality.

Theresa Marche' has written about Orra White Hitchcock with candor and sensitivity. She has built her evidence using many primary sources that are supplemented with secondary sources that have been carefully authenticated. In addition, Marche' has been non-judgmental and approached her subject, Orra White Hitchcock, through the lens of the time in which she lived. Marche' has not attempted to cast Hitchcock as a feminist, rather she has told her story and written about her legacy in light of nineteenth century conventions and constraints under which Hitchcock lived and worked.

Theresa Marche', like Hitchcock, is interested in science and art and this may explain, in part, her empathy and understanding of her subject. I hope that this brief glimpse of a "virtuous woman" that Marche' has presented will be expanded and curtains will open to provide an even fuller view of Orra.
White Hitchcock's life and her contributions to the fields of art and art education.

Footnote

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