Mentor's Introduction

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Much of art education literature, probably the majority of it, is written for consumption by other art educators. We often assume, or know, that the author of an article is one of our colleagues, another university art educator or an art teacher, writing from within the system. I do believe that it is important to consider an author's position within the art education system as part of the context for reading a particular article. Such is the case in reading Ardeshir Kia's broad views of art education. While most of us are insiders with respect to the system, Ardeshir is somewhat of an outsider in terms of his position in U.S. art education.

Except for a few muckrakers among us, we are usually very cautious not to offend because who knows where one's support will be located. Although Ardi is in the process of becoming part of the U.S. art education system, his lifelong experiences in other places have made freedom and democratic processes more dear to him than among most of us. His broader world-view of art education has led to his emphasis on a fiercely burning view of independence, individuality, and democratic process in art education. Ardi's sensitivity to broad democratic issues in art education should be read in the contextual sense that I have suggested.
Through such a process of inquiry and debate art education will prosper as a vital part of U.S. life and will not become fossilized through technocratic academies.