

I could go on and on in telling stories of my dear friend, David Ecker. So nearly I can remember, we met in 1958 or 1959. He was a bright and energetic art educator whose interests ranged far and wide: teaching art, philosophy, aesthetics, and people!! I will forego a listing of his articles. As soon as I could do so, I invited him to teach at Ohio State University in 1960. David's interests and energy knew no bounds. He lifted weights, drank beer, and joyed in the telling of stories - exploits in the Korean War, adventures in hitchhiking across the United States, working in the mining industry and trying out for a part (for a Hollywood movie: "Joe Palooka". He and his first wife, Gloria were good friends for my wife, Flora and myself. Gloria's death was tragic, a victim of cancer in her mid thirties. Later, David met Willavene. They jointly owned an airplane. Oh, the stories I can tell of their wonderful courtship, David's moving to New York (he and I joined the Faculty at New York University in 1968), and his marriage to Willavene. How wonderful for both of them!

I am so proud that the Ecker boys: Greg and J. J. refer to me as "Uncle Jerry". For years and years, there was a closely knit grouping of professional friends: Manny Barkan, Elliot Eisner, Irving Kaufman, Ed Feldman, David, and myself. My wife Flora referred to us as "Art Educators' Mafia". As time went on, we each went our own separate ways. David stayed on at New York University, focusing on his students, cooking, flying, knife making, and the development of the Institute for the Advancement of Living Traditions in Art. Of our "closely knit grouping", Manny, Elliot, Irving, and now David are gone.

Oh how fortunate I am to have known him!

JERRY HAUSMAN



## ART TEACHERS I HAVE KNOWN

by Jerome J. Hausman

In general, history is made up of accounts and analyses that help us understand who we are and how we have come to where we are. Oftentimes, we speak of "the history of art educators," but there's no simple narrative that tells the full story. These are histories. When you come down to it, our history is made up of accounts of people and institutions—their actions and ideas. As the years go by, I frequently pause to think about individuals who've influenced me. These thoughts and memories serve as the basis for this series, "Art Teachers I Have Known."—J.J.H.

History is made up of the stories we tell about people and events. Despite our best efforts to assemble these accounts, there is so much that is lost. I fear my tale of David W. Ecker will be one of many lost in the sands of time. He's currently living in New Hampshire, and maintaining an apartment in Greenwich Village, N.Y., with his wife, Willavene, who continues to teach at New York University. I continue to refer to him as "young David Ecker," even though he is now "retired" and clearly has achieved "senior-citizen" status.

Ecker grew up on Long Island, N.Y. After high school, he attended SUNY Farmingdale (State University of New York). During the Korean War,

have him as a friend and colleague: robust and energetic, well grounded in philosophy and aesthetics, and a talented teacher! I consider his article, "The Artistic Process as Qualitative Problem Solving" (*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1963), to be one of our most insightful statements bringing together philosophy and teaching practice at the time.

While on the faculty at OSU, Ecker worked on numerous projects. Perhaps most important was his participation in organizing the Seminar in Art Education for Research and Curriculum Development, held at Pennsylvania State University in 1966. Later that same year, he was

cus steel (co-directed with G.N. Pant of the National Museum, New Delhi, 1985); and he created the International Society for the Advancement of Living Traditions in Art (ISALTA).

As an advisor in NYU's doctoral program, Ecker worked with students from all over the world. His students have completed field research in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Tibet, Jordan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Brazil and the

# David W. Ecker

he served as a commanding officer of an Army intelligence unit, and was awarded a Bronze Star and two battle stars. I remember hearing his tales of combat on Pork Chop Hill.

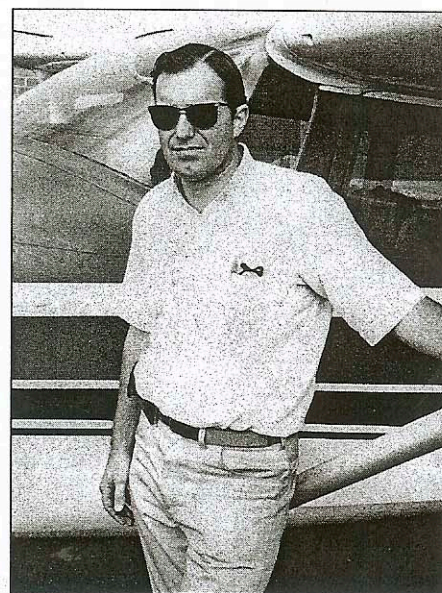
He received his Bachelor of Science degree from SUNY and Albright Art School in Buffalo, and spent 1956 teaching at the American Community School in Asuncion, Paraguay, where he met and married his first wife, Gloria.

He was an art teacher at Babylon High School in New York (1957–58), and attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he received a master's degree. Between 1959 and 1960 he was a part-time instructor teaching philosophy of education at Wayne State University. In 1960, he joined the faculty of the school of art at Ohio State University (OSU).

It was around this time I came to know David Ecker. His article, "Toward a Philosophy of Art Education," was published in the NAEA Research Yearbook that I edited. What a treat to

the project director for "Improving the Teaching of Art Appreciation," a U.S. Office of Education Cooperative Research Project in 1966. Together with Elliot Eisner he edited "Readings in Art Education." Along with Manuel Barkan and myself, he helped guide the development of what was to become the Aesthetic Education Project under the auspices of the Central Midwestern Educational Laboratory. He was a key player in the first phase of deliberations on the conceptual basics for the project, with work done in Aspen, Colo., in 1968.

In 1968, Ecker and I joined the faculty of NYU. So much more might be written of his exploits in New York City. He married Willavene Wolf, an educational psychologist, whom he knew at Ohio State. David's interests roamed far and wide: he took courses in cooking (Chinese and Armenian, studying with James Beard); his field research as an artist-blacksmith in India resulted in an international symposium on Damas-



The "young David Ecker."

U.S. No wonder he's been a leader in preserving and nurturing those arts in danger of being lost. He has been at the forefront of promoting multicultural art education in both third-world and industrialized societies.

Today, David Ecker spends most of his time in Moultonborough, N.H. I fear that he has lost interest and enthusiasm with much that is now happening in American art education. What a loss! His insights are needed more now than ever. ■

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# 1960s

## ARTICLE SELECTION

Ecker, D. (1963). Some Inadequate Doctrines in Art Education and Proposed Resolution. *Studies in Art Education*, 5(1), 71-81.

## Jerome Hausman

*Editor, 1959-1961*

How many times have we heard it said: "it's all a matter of timing"? Each of us has seen instances when an individual is "carried forward" by the tides of circumstance. George Kubler (1962) observed:

good or bad entrances are more than matters of position in the sequence. They also depend upon the union of temperamental endowments with specific positions. Every position is keyed, as it were, to the action of a certain range of temperaments. When a specific temperament interlocks with a favorable position, the fortunate individual can extract from the situation a wealth of previously unimagined consequences. (p. 7)

My "entrance" to the field of art education, more than 50 years ago, was one in which I encountered prevailing doctrines as identified by David Ecker: (a) we believed in developing the full potentials of the child; (b) we believed in educating the whole child; (c) we believed the art teacher understands and meets the needs of the child; (d) we believed in teaching according to developmental levels; and (e) we believed in promoting creativity through art. At the time, I thrived on these beliefs. However, Ecker's article begins by pointing out that these relatively unquestioned assumptions have at least one feature in common: "they confuse facts and values."

With the passage of time, we can see clearly that intervening factors have radically altered the context in which 'art' is being created, experienced by others, and taught. The larger context of art education is in flux. The very notion of 'art' is now seen as an essentially contested concept. New media and technologies have made possible radically different forms. Our social, cultural, and economic circumstances have made possible new and expanded roles for artists in community settings.

Such circumstances and events exert forces that alter our notions of art and art education. We need to continually examine prevailing doctrines for teaching of art. Ecker's article illustrates this by shifting emphasis from Lowenfeldian doctrine to the idea of

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“qualitative intelligence.” He points out that “qualitative ordering is not confined to painting, sculpture, and drawing activities.” The “doors of possibility” are open to many forms and eventualities. Of course, art teachers will continue to instruct in methods, materials, and techniques, but the end-in-view is not limited to particular outcomes. As Ecker stated, we seek “general formulations as prescriptions for directing qualitative intelligence.” The outcomes resulting from such instruction will be as varied as the people and contexts involved. After all, quality can be manifested in many ways. As art educators, we should welcome the possibilities afforded by diverse media and ideas. Ecker’s conclusion is straightforward and open-ended: “We believe art education ought to play a major role in the development of that qualitative intelligence which is engaged in refining itself, even as it extends its bounty for the refinement of others.”

#### Reference

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