

Editor's Letter

Many of us have looked at the pages of an old family album and perhaps laughed at the ways family members have changed over time or looked at different ages. Sometimes we are totally dependent upon the photographs to tell us about our heritage and relatives we may have never seen in person.

We use collections of photographs as visual documentation of our individual family trees. The photo album is a complex record, not unlike the countless works of art produced by cultures in different times and places around the world. Sometimes, art objects, like our family photographs, are all that remain of a culture. Works of art throughout history could be described as documenting the human family album. Just as old photographs give us insights into another era, works of art help us position ourselves in time and help the past connect to our own experiences.

Art historians and art teachers can be seen as keepers of the human family album, telling stories about art and helping students of all ages to sequence art objects and guide organized searches for possible contextual meanings. As an art teacher, you have tremendous power in the heritage of art and artists you choose to share with your students. How complete is your family album of art across

time and cultures? Are there "photographs" that are missing? Whose artists' stories and work do you explore with your students? What criteria do you use to determine who that should be? There is an interesting online discussion about this very topic under Secondary Art Education on Art Education 2.0 (arted20.ning.com) titled "The Top 10 Artists Every Art One Student Should Know." John Biggers is an African American artist widely acclaimed for his complex, symbolic lithographs, paintings, and murals based on themes of universal human values. I was fortunate to get to know him a number of years ago when I developed an online unit about him. We are pleased to share him with you this month. Check out

"The Art of John Biggers" by Mary Coy on page 36.



Nancy at an Egyptian art exhibit at the Dallas Museum of Art.



John Biggers: The artist's hands with his work.

Nancy Walker

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