



## Editor's Letter

**M**y university art education students are all digital natives. They do not remember a time when computers were not in their lives. Time, distance, and quantity of images and ideas pose few problems to them for inspiration or research; they can search the world, past and present, on the Internet. Yet they are still learning to look beyond the familiar and to judge the quality and meaningfulness of the art content they choose to share with their students.

I want my students to be knowledgeable about artists who are using traditional and nontraditional media and techniques to create new art forms. Artists worldwide are exploring these new directions, some in what may be called a global style. This style was evident in the Venice Biennale 2011 last summer, where art was on exhibit, inside and outside, all over Venice.

One of my favorite installations I would describe as a global style was *Crystal of Resistance*, by Thomas Hirschhorn, in the Swiss Pavilion. The pavilion was entirely filled with crude crystalline structures, mannequins, duct tape, tinfoil, broken glass, photographs, dolls, televisions, telephones, chairs, plastic, paper, and other found objects precariously taped together. The viewer had to step in and around a maze of

all kinds of dangerous-looking pointed objects and obstacles to the point of claustrophobia.

All of the objects and images displayed would be familiar across the globe through television and the Internet, such as photographs of political demonstrations and the violence of war, Barbie dolls, plastic furniture, CDs, and mass-produced plastic chairs. Everything looked purposely hurriedly and sloppily put together—a reflection, perhaps, about the world's consumer-driven production of waste.

Now, you may not be able to go to the Venice Biennale, but there are many meaningful and comprehensive resources available online. One of the best is PBS's Art21 ([www.pbs.org/art21](http://www.pbs.org/art21)). Now in its sixth season, Art21 offers free artist videos, curriculum guides, and other materials, all available online. And we here at *SchoolArts* continue to focus on contemporary artists in our Looking and Learning feature.

We encourage you to continue to look beyond the familiar to “create the conditions for thinking something that has not yet existed” in the artroom. Keep looking both near and far—you may be amazed at what you will find.

*Nancy Walker*

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