**NAEA Members Travel to Havana, Cuba**

Thirty-five members took part in NAEA’s fifth academic research travel experience as part of the NAEA International Research in Art Education Program. See President Pat Franklin’s column on page 2 for more information.

**2016 NAEA National Convention: Chicago**

In a recent article in *Edutopia*, Elena Aguilar (2015) shared “5 Characteristics of an Effective School Team.” One of the key components of a team functioning at a high level is having a facilitator, leader, or shared leadership. Leaders of teams allow for planning and intentionality to move the team forward in its effectiveness.

Whether you work in a school/district, college institution, museum/gallery, or art education organization, are you part of an effective team? Are you a leader of the group? What do you do to facilitate the team’s success?

The 2016 NAEA National Convention in Chicago will assist you with your leadership journey as we focus on the theme of LEAD! Share Your Vision for Art Education. Plan to join us March 17-19, 2016. You may register for the Convention and make hotel arrangements at [www.arteducators.org/convention](http://www.arteducators.org/convention)

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Welcome... to the December 2015 issue of NAEA News!

Submissions for February NAEA News are due December 1.

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Members, see PAST ISSUES at www.arteducators.org/naeanews

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cultural Connections: Promoting Global Understanding

Patricia (Pat) Franklin

Members of NAEA have had extraordinary opportunities over the past 5 years to participate in research delegations exploring the status of art education in other countries. Many of these participants have commented that their travel experiences have been life-changing as well as assets to their professional growth. Members of our Association have become world travelers, carrying and sharing the benefits and value of art education around the globe.

Each time art educators travel abroad, or to other regions within the United States, they are leading by sharing examples and connecting with other art educators. Through these travels, they have the opportunity to share back information to share with their colleagues and students. And they are creating bridges to support global understanding through the arts. It is wonderful to see the opportunities our educators create to reach out to teachers in other cultures, and they are thrilled to do it! They know that every new experience directly or indirectly benefits their students and our profession.

Your NAEA leaders recently had two international opportunities which directly support our mission to advance visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding. In late July, NAEA leaders accepted an invitation to participate in a sharing opportunity in China. Our leader delegation included Past President Robert Sabol, Chief Learning Officer Dennis Inhulsen, and myself. The NAEA delegation was invited by Yang Mythos Art Education International Group President Moses Wang and YMM founder Mythos Yang to participate in the YMM 10th-Anniversary Grand Exhibition and the 2015 China-U.S. Art Education Summit in Shenzhen. China. The summit’s goal was to establish a platform for international art educators to exchange information. Representatives included presenters from China, the US, France, Canada, and India. Dialogues focused on logistics, curriculum, and assessment in art education. The forum provided an opportunity for NAEA to participate in important global conversations about art education.

This was an honor for NAEA leaders to participate in this special 10-year anniversary event. Through YMM’s generosity, our leaders were able to travel and experience first-hand the people and culture of China. Our NAEA leader delegation gave an opportunity to observe relations and artifacts representing China’s rich history. Additionally, we experienced the host city of Shenzhen. The youngest city in China, Shenzhen represents its bright future. We look forward to continued conversations and connecting in other ways with art educators in China.

In October, a delegation of 35 NAEA members traveled to Havana, Cuba, as part of the NAEA International Research in Art Education Program. Because we are committed to achieving both NAEA’s Strategic Vision goals and our mission of promoting global understanding, NAEA sponsored our fifth academic research travel experience.

These visits gave us a glimpse into the importance of the arts and the role they played in preserving Cuban culture. We were able to interact with students, faculty, and administrators of elementary and secondary arts education facilities as well as institutions of higher education preparing students for careers in the arts.

One highlight of the Cuban experience included interacting with students of an after-school visual arts program which served special-needs learners. This was of particular interest to several members of the delegation and they were overjoyed to see the inclusion of special needs in this program. Our cultural experience also included a home visit to community project artist Jose Fuster. We appreciated how his playful creations provided an uplifting influence for his older neighborhood. Before our visit ended we had been carried away by the uniquely Cuban visual art, music, and dance.

Many of our delegation were convinced that they had been Cuban-ized, to coin a phrase used by our tour guide at the Museo Nacional De Bellas Artes in reference to Cuban artists’ interpretation of Cubism. He explained that Cuban artists always put their own cultural spin on styles of art and we could easily see the truth in this statement.

NAEA delegation to Cuba responding to a student performance at a performing arts school dedicated to school of Paolina Concepcion.

Our experiences in Havana were memorable! Those in our delegation who traveled with the first group to Cuba shared that little appeared to have changed since the 2005 Cuban experience. In conversations with Cuban educators, however, change is anticipated over the next 5 years based on relaxation of US-Cuba restrictions. During the NAEA National Convention, members of the delegation will share the benefits of this professional development opportunity, the outcomes of their research, and the influence this experience has had—and will have—on their art classrooms and programs. Please join us and take the opportunity to learn more about this cultural exchange and future opportunities planned by NAEA.

Our 2016 National Convention in Chicago is only a short time away! See you soon! ■

Endnote 1 www.arteducators.org/about-us

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