

04ARTS Foundation
Fall 2004

Visual Thinking Strategies Newsletter

Dear Friends of 04ARTS,



*Penelope Speier, 04ARTS
Executive Director & Philip
Yenawine, VTS Co-founder*

"Since entering the profession of museum education in the late 1960's, I have focused on a single goal: enabling people to connect to art in ways that are meaningful, lasting and pleasurable to them." – Philip Yenawine, *Theory into practice: The Visual Thinking Strategies.*



*Isabel Romero, Fine Arts
Teachers Specialist & Camille
Bach, Director of Fine Arts,
SAISD*

In the spring of 1998 I was honored to sit next to VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies) Program co-founder, Philip Yenawine, at a dinner party hosted by ArtPace.

Philip, a veteran museum educator fresh from being the former Education Director at MOMA in New York, fascinated me with the VTS methodology and curriculum.

This was important news for San Antonio's underserved students in the arts! A research backed art curriculum that could be taught by classroom teachers K-8 that gave students the tools to view and discuss art in a student centered developmentally appropriate manner.

I was excited and wanted to bring the VTS to San Antonio. Peter and Julianna Holt, both art collectors and art education advocates, were intrigued and wanted to be involved in what turned out to be a 6 1/2 year journey with the goal of integrating the VTS into the San Antonio Independent School System's 65 elementary schools. We aimed for the District to embrace the program and ultimately take it over administratively and financially.

I am pleased to announce that by January '05 this handover will become a reality.

With lots of help from Linda Pace of ArtPace, Kronkosky Foundation, Coates Foundation, Marcus Foundation and many more, the VTS now is taught in approximately 55 of SAISD's 65 elementary schools and 7 middle schools.

Camille Bach, Director of Fine Arts, and her associate, Isabel Romero, have worked diligently and enthusiastically to become certified VTS trainers for the SAISD teachers.

Our museum partnerships with SAMA and the McNay have flourished with the training of both docent corps in the VTS method. VTS Program 4th & 5th grade students visit the museums as part of the program.

VTS/SAMA/SAISD/04ARTS Family Day has become a biannual event where VTS students come with their parents and families to the museum to create art and have VTS museum tours performed by SAMA docents.

Dr Torres, Curriculum Superintendent at SAISD, is committed to the sustenance and continued growth of the VTS on SAISD campuses. He prescribed more frequent monthly trainings for more schools at SAMA, who are invited to attend through on-line SAISD registration.

We have trained over 500 teachers and will continue to monitor the program through monthly meetings with Camille Bach and Isabel Romero.

Teachers and students enjoy the VTS program. It is a fun way to learn visual and verbal literacy through viewing and discussing diverse images of paintings, sculptures and photography depicting worldwide cultures that expand the students vision of the planet and understanding of differing ideas and viewpoints by encouraging speculative thinking and the imagining of new horizons in thought.

Thanks to each of you for making this program a tremendous success for thousands of inner city students and hundreds of teachers. Please continue to support our ongoing art education efforts. We still need your help to reach more students.

Read more in this newsletter to learn of stimulating and wide reaching current news of VTS initiatives in our community.

Thanks to all,

Penelope Speier
Executive Director
04ARTS Foundation



Stacy Levy, Artist & Felix Padron, Director, SA Office of Cultural Affairs



WaterCourse By Stacy Levy

The San Antonio River is the material of this one-of-a-kind installation merging science and art.

UTSA Downtown Art Gallery
Durango Building, Southwest Room 1.124
501 West Durango Boulevard

Speakers Forum: Saturday, December 4, 2004
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

“Making the Hidden Visible” a dialogue between Steve Graham, Director of Watershed Management, San Antonio River Authority and artist Stacy Levy moderated by poet Marian Haddad.

Opening Reception: Saturday, December 4, 2004
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Moving Waters News

Using the VTS methodology we are developing an interactive workbook that will educate students on the workings of nature and river life through journaling and art making, and to make it available to teachers and parents free of charge. We are also interested in developing educational art-making days centered on river habitat and ecology.

Students from Stephen F. Austin Elementary Internal Fine Arts Charter School have had the opportunity to work with local artists Joey Fauerso and Jenny Browne, as well as nationally recognized environmental artist Stacy Levy, creating works of art based on their knowledge and experience of the San Antonio River. It is our goal to research and develop the Moving Waters workbook and related projects over the next year, utilizing the highest levels of expertise within the fields of environmental art and elementary education to create a program that educates students on the city they live in, and their own very personal relationship with the natural world.

Over the next year 04ARTS new website, www.04arts.org, will become a viable resource center for teachers. We have grant requests out now for the development of an archive of images of local and regional artists for teachers to use as a supplement to their VTS lesson plans.

The new Moving Waters workbook will have footnoted art-making lesson plans that can be downloaded from our website by teachers and parents to use with their children.

We have received funding for the Moving Waters' program from the City of San Antonio Office of Cultural Affairs, HEB's Tournament of Champions, San Antonio River Authority and the Frost Trusts and are working in partnership with Blue Star Space for Contemporary Art and UTSA to host artist Stacy Levy's upcoming visit and art installation.

*Stephen F. Austin Elementary Internal Fine Arts Charter School
art students working with Joey Fauerso & Stacy Levy*

A special thanks to our Sponsors

Peter & Julianna Holt of Holt Companies, Kronkosky Foundation, Coates Foundation, Linda Pace, Target Stores, Ford Salute to Education, Frost Trust, Halff Foundation

VTS Fall Family Day at SAMA
“Our American Story”

A Native American Shaman held back the rain until the completion of a festive afternoon in the gardens of SAMA.

Over 1,500 VTS students, parents, teachers and family members from the SAISD participated in a Family Day whose theme was taken from the show at SAMA of the photographs of Plains and Northwest Native Americans by the esteemed photographer Edward Curtis.

VTS trained docents gave tours to large new VTS art savvy crowds assembled in the museum. Mary Shaddox, bilingual docent, remarked that in the past several years parents and students have become informed museum visitors through their ongoing participation in the VTS sponsored Family Days, becoming welcome additions to the museum family.

Art-making activities included painting, Matachine dancers, flute making demonstration, bead making, pinch pots in clay, sand paintings, medicine pouch construction, parfleche, print making and colonial portraits. Delicious Native American themed food was served by Beto’s Restaurant.

A thanks goes to all of the 100 volunteers from area high schools who worked carefully and kindly with the students.



Images from Fall Family Day 2004

Contribution Pledge

Yes, I / we would like to make a difference in the art education of many San Antonio elementary school children!

Donor _____

Company (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

I / we pledge a contribution in the amount of _____ to the San Antonio Visual Thinking Strategies Program

I am / We are unable to make a commitment at this time but would like more information regarding how I/we may become involved in the program’s growth in the San Antonio area.

To make a contribution, you may mail a check or money order to Visual Thinking Strategies, 04ARTS Foundation, 410 East Arsenal Street, San Antonio, TX 78204. You may also contact us at (210)212-4900 ext. 128, by fax at (210)212-4990, or by email at pspeier@04arts.org.

04ARTS Foundation

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.04arts.org

What the teachers say....

"I have a student who started school with me this year who had very low self-esteem. When he participates in the VTS lessons he blossoms and really does come into his own sense of self worth."

"The VTS skills compliment the TAKS objectives in that they expect the students to not only know the answers to questions, but also why and how those answers are formulated."

"The children love to research the artist or photographer on the Internet. Their artwork starts to improve because of attention to detail. They begin to reason."

"One day during reading group I noticed my students were using the VTS questions on the illustrations in the book which helped in their comprehension of the text. Also, without my direction, a group of four children organized themselves and one person asked the others the VTS questions. The others answered while respecting each other's different ideas. The best part was the depth displayed in their answers."

- SAISD teachers' comments taken from program evaluations

"It has become clear to me through the course of my VTS training that the VTS program is committed to long-term commitment that gives way to long-term results. It's really exciting to work for a program with the scope and ambition of the VTS."

- Joey Fauerso, Artist



04ARTS FOUNDATION VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES PROGRAM

410 E. Arsenal Street
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