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"One idiosyncrasy of the published American and European art education historical literature is the number of overlooked or hidden histories of women art educators."

Mabel D'Amico (1909-1998): Reminiscences From the Past

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From the 1920s through the 1940s, a number of artist-teachers developed methods of creative self-expression in their teaching. The life and teachings of artist and art educator Mabel D'Amico (1909-1998), wife of Museum of Modern Art museum educator Victor D'Amico, are considered within this context. This article attempts to construct an educational biography of Mabel D'Amico using oral history as a primary method. While Victor D'Amico's story as an art educator has been told, Mabel D'Amico's story has remained in his shadow. Through her work and personal philosophy Mabel D'Amico attempted to create closer relationships among her students, the school, and the students' home and community. Thus, understanding Mabel D'Amico's life as an artist and an educator can be a powerful way to uncover hidden histories of artist-teachers and women leaders from the era of pedagogical progressives in art education history.

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History, Memory, and Biographical Research in Art Education

Oral history allows researchers to bring forward voices from the past, opening up new spaces to include in the historical record the experiences and perspectives of individuals who might otherwise remain in the shadows of others or hidden from history. With an emphasis on identifying new possibilities within everyday experiences, educational theorists D. Jean Clandinin and Jerry Roseik (2007) urged researchers to lend a listening ear to the stories people tell. Spoken recollections and reflections play a vital role in narrative research, which highlights what we can learn about history and society through lived experiences by focusing on the narrated lives being told (Chase, 2011, p. 421).

When I visited Mabel D'Amico's home and archive in Amagansett, Eastern Long Island, NY (see Figure 1) in 2009, the inviting space and rooms filled with her artworks and knickknacks left me wondering why she never appeared in the art education literature I read. The space at once drew me closer to her and I yearned to know more about her life and work. In this light, and using oral history as the primary method, this article tells a story of the life of artist-teacher Mabel D'Amico (1909-1998). To gather the principal data, I interviewed two individuals who worked very closely with Mabel: Christopher Kohan and Marcia Cohl. This article is my attempt to construct a biographical account of Mabel D'Amico's life using material gathered from these two interviews as well as a variety of primary documents collected from Mabel's home in Amagansett. I begin by placing Mabel in a historical context with other art educators of the time, then presenting three vignettes that provide some insights into her story.

Lives do not necessarily serve as models, but stories do. Humans can be seen as storytelling organisms who individually, collectively, and socially live storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this vein, my informants Kohan and Cohl can be seen as characters in Mabel's story, and their own stories reveal how Mabel experienced her world as a teacher and an artist. The organization of the narrative reveals much of a narrator's relationship to his or her subject and history (Portelli, 2006, p. 36).

Narrative research begins with the experiences and occurrences that individuals convey in their lived and told stories (Creswell, 2007, p. 54). Biographical research often reveals the

Figure 1. Mabel D'Amico (Photo credit: Linda K. Alpern). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.

details that help untangle the life of an individual within the construction of a narrative, and it is a form of narrative research (Creswell, 2007; Finkelstein, 2013). Biographical inquiry provides a fresh perspective on new possibilities and dimensions for education—new ways to examine how one describes the behavior of others and new ways to appraise the impact of the pedagogical process on students and teachers.

Under the umbrella of narrative research, oral history consists of gathering personal reflections of events and their causes and effects from several individuals (Plumer, 1983, as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 55). Depending on the spirit in which oral history is used, it might not be as much an instrument of change as a means of transformation for content and purpose (Thompson, 2006, p. 26). In the context of this article, oral history opens new areas of inquiry within the biographical research of shadowed lives, particularly women's stories and life experiences, thus giving the history of art education another dimension. This article is not about the validity of using oral history as a method, nor does it question the reliability of the sources used to gather information that consists of the narrators' recollections of events and moments about the subject. Rather, the article considers the role of historians in choosing their interview subjects who might provide another means of tracing and discovering written documents, images, and stories that would otherwise not be possible. By introducing new evidence from the underside, opening new areas of inquiry, challenging assumptions and accepted judgments of historians, and recognizing people whose lives have been in the shadows or hidden, oral history sets forth a process of transformation (Thompson, 1998, pp. 29-30).

Placing Mabel D'Amico in a Historical Context

From the 1920s through the 1940s, a number of individual artist-teachers developed a method of creative self-expression in their teaching. This group included such people as Marion Richardson (1892-1946) in England, and Florence Cane (1882-1952), Natalie Robinson Cole (1901-1984), and Victor D'Amico (1904-1987) in the United States. Each expressed the belief that a child is an artist with an innate desire for expression, and formal teaching methods that are more appropriate for adults thwart a child's natural expression. Each also asserted the belief that art teaching was best done by highly sensitive individuals who are artists themselves (Efland, 1990). This belief resonated with David Tyack's notion of pedagogical progressives—a title used for men and women historically interested in changing institutional practice, making education more responsive to the needs of children, and integrating the school into its immediate community in the United States (Rury, 2013). The life and teachings of artist and art educator Mabel D'Amico are considered in these contexts. Her story is one of many that need to be told.

Despite many publications on the history of art education, the lives and contributions of many female art educators—and particularly the complex interrelationships of their stories with social, cultural, artistic, and educational contexts—have often been overlooked or hidden. The first issue of *Women Art Educators* was published by the National Art Educators Association (NAEA) in 1982 (edited by Enid Zimmerman & Mary Ann Stankiewicz), followed by a second issue in 1985. The narratives in these issues addressed the lives and contributions of several women, whose personal histories were illuminated for the first time. Kristin Congdon and Enid Zimmerman (1993) later coedited a volume on contemporary women artists and art educators, comprised of autobiographies, accounts of personal and classroom practice, artworks, and book reviews on issues of sexism, feminism, multiculturalism, and postmodernism. A fourth volume published by the Canadian Society for Education Through Art presented stories in which artists and authors included themes related to antiracism and political artwork, art and social

change in classrooms, international and cross-generational connections, and grieving and loss concerns (Sacca & Zimmerman, 1998). The fifth and last volume in this series, published in 2003 (edited by Kit Grauer, Rita Irwin, & Enid Zimmerman), focused on teaching in nonformal and formal contexts, mentoring, healing friendships, intercultural women's concerns, empowerment, spirituality, and retirement. Important to note here is that women scholars were writing about women art educators. While the scope of my search is limited to art education, one cannot rule out the possibility of archiving and chronicling the stories of women art educators in other sources, including university records or family histories.

Efland's (1990) chronological account offers a Eurocentric narrative of the impact of German and English art education institutions, movements, trends, and philosophies on pedagogical practices in the United States. Arguably, great men of art education have been at the forefront in defining the historical eras in Efland's text, but few women certainly surfaced in shaping those eras. The Penn State Seminars on the History of Art Education, conducted in 1985 (edited by Brent Wilson & Harlan Hoffa), 1989 (edited by Patricia Amburgy, Donald Soucy, Mary Ann Stankiewicz, Brent Wilson, & Marjorie Wilson), and 1995 (edited by Albert E. Anderson, Jr. & Paul E. Bolin), spotlighted several histories of art education, with stories of a handful of women art educators surfacing in these seminars. In their book *Remembering Others: Making Invisible Histories of Art Education Visible*, Paul Bolin, Doug Blandy, and Kristin Congdon (2000) argued it is not surprising that most of the art educators they discussed who have not been adequately recognized for their dedication and accomplishments in education are women. Stankiewicz (2001) in *Roots of Art Education Practice* focused on events, artists, and educators at the turn of the 20th century as a springboard to reflect on current beliefs and habits, and addressed questions of what art educators can do in the 21st century and why. Interestingly, this book mentioned several women art educators, but Mabel D'Amico was not included. Elliot Eisner and Michael Day (2004) also painted a broad picture of the history of art education in the 20th century, but, again, did not include specific historical accounts of women art educators. However, one idiosyncrasy of the published American and European art education historical literature is the number of overlooked or hidden histories of women art educators. This triggers a quest to dig deeply into these histories by using archives and oral histories to uncover the women's rich narratives buried within. Once I learned about Mabel from a colleague, my own personal quest to discover hidden stories led me on this journey to conduct this research.

First Encounter With Mabel D'Amico

In 1940, Victor and Mabel D'Amico moved to Amagansett in Eastern Long Island in New York and began construction of their home, incorporating contemporary concepts of modern design. They lived there until their deaths in the 1990s, and the home today serves as an archive of their legacy and pedagogy. The building contains early modernist furnishings, found objects, collections of their possessions, and their artwork. The property also features a historic Lazy Point fisherman's cottage, outdoor sculpture, and gardens (see Figures 2, 3, and 4).

I first encountered Mabel's life and work up close when I walked into her Amagansett home in 2009, and met Christopher Kohan, president and trustee of the D'Amico property. Since his early 20s, Kohan lived with the D'Amicos and became a significant part of their lives. Because the couple had no children, Kohan may be the *only* individual with the most information on both Mabel and Victor, who can offer unique perspectives that have never been shared publicly. He recollected his first meeting with the couple:

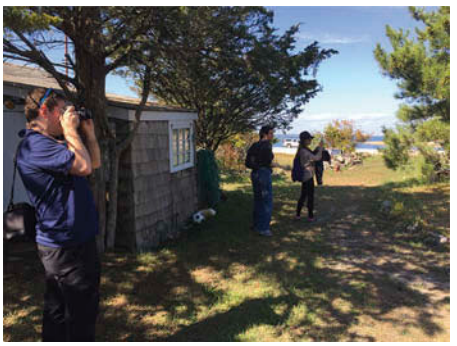

Figure 2. Lazy Point Cottage, Amagansett, NY (Photo by author).

> The first time I met her was here at The [Art] Barge. That might have been 1974 or 1975. I most likely would have met her on Saturdays. … There used to be group critiques that Victor would conduct. That's when there was a social time at the Barge—the studio was taken down, all of the easels and tables and stools were put away, chairs were set out, a long table put in the center. Then, on Saturday morning, Mabel would come and create a fantastic centerpiece in the table with driftwood and piles of sand right on the table. [She would] wet the sand and then put in little flowers coming out of the sand, so very naturalistic centerpieces. Victor used to then make strong coffee and there would be cookies for the critique. So, I must have met her then and continued to meet her probably in those types of settings until 1979 and then they asked me to stay in their house while they took a two-week vacation to Florida. (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

Kohan offered some insight into Mabel's personality both as a supportive wife and unique artistic personality:

> She was always a very cool individual. Even then as I did get to know her, she was not one to ramble on and on and on and talk on and on and on and, you know, slap you on the back. She was always very reserved, proper, and controlling with her emotions. When Victor was around, it was all about Victor, very, very much. It wasn't until I moved into the little cottage next door to their house that the ice broke between she and I. (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 1, 2014)

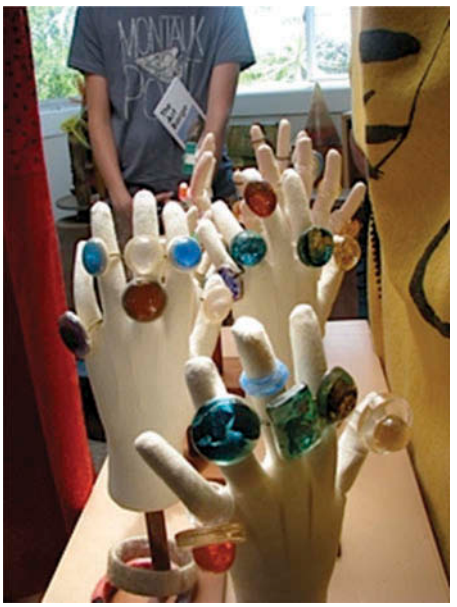

Figure 3. Rings made of acrylic, resin, molded, pigmented and combined with gold and silver lead, by Mabel D'Amico (1960). (Photo by author). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.

Most people of Mabel's generation are now gone, but a handful remain. Marcia Cohl was an old neighbor of the D'Amico's from Amagansett who now lives in New Hampshire. She reminisced about their first meeting:

> She [Mabel] was just very gracious and welcoming and not overly, overly. She was a Yankee, you know, so there was restraint. So, we have things in common; we're talking. We both like animals. We like cats, the outdoors, the beach, finding

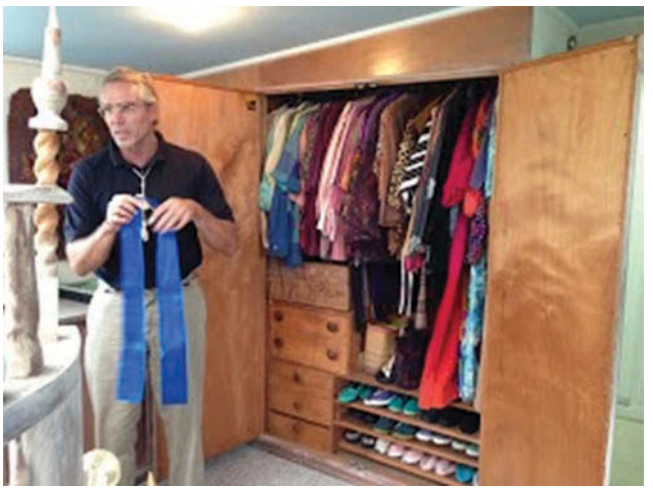

Figure 4. Handmade clothes by Mabel D'Amico being shown by Christopher Kohan (Photo by author). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.

> things on the beach—because she has all these different things that she called treasures. (M. Cohl, personal communication, February 19, 2015)

Below, I reconstruct Mabel's life using three vignettes based on a series of oral history interviews with Kohan and Cohl, in addition to examining photographs, artworks, documents, and objects from Mabel's Amagansett home. Vignettes are narrative investigations carrying within them an interpretation of the person, experience, or situation that the writer describes. They tend to restructure the complex dimensions of their subjects in order to capture, in a brief portrayal, what has been learned over a period of time (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). The following vignettes tell the story of Mabel's early life, high school art teaching, and work as an artist.

Mabel D'Amico's Early Life

Mabel was born April 19, 1909, to Mabel Deale and George Birckhead in White Plains, Westchester County in New York. Mabel's maiden name was Birckhead, which was an old Elizabethan name; her father's family perhaps settled in the second Jamestown settlement in Virginia in 1619. They had family connections in New England, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC. Mabel's maternal grandparents lived in Greenport, thus connecting her early on to Eastern Long Island. The girl's childhood was spent with a number of elder relatives, especially her grandparents, discovering the woods in Westchester County and camping on the cliffs of Montauk with her parents. At an early age, Mabel discovered and appreciated the beauty of nature, which inspired her for life. She learned to read when she was four, an activity opening her up to a life of teaching and learning (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 1, 2014). Cohl narrated an incident she learned about Mabel's childhood:

> The family was out clamming, and she [Mabel] was in the boat. They must have been out, way out, wading or something like that. And here's this small child, she might have been six or seven, and after a while she got really hungry… so she ate the mussels that were in the boat that they

had already picked. (M. Cohl, personal communication, February 19, 2015)

Marcia articulated that Mabel was a very self-determined individual right from her youth and through adulthood—a quality many women at that time did not comfortably express.

Not much is known about Mabel's adolescent years other than she graduated from White Plains High School in 1919, then attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York (see Figure 5).[1] Kohan recalled that Mabel considered her college years the start of an individual freedom, meeting and making new friends, exploring Greenwich Village, experiencing New York in the 1920s and the beginnings of modernism [which] became an important personal development (personal communication, October 15, 2014).

According to Kohan, Mabel likely met Victor at Teachers College in the early 1930s, but might have known of him through his work at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) when she began working as an art teacher at Rye High School in Westchester, New York in 1929 (as confirmed by her resume found in her home). Based on the marriage certificate hanging in their home, Victor and Mabel married in 1945 at the Ethical Culture School in New York City. Mabel continued teaching and served as the chairperson of the Art Department until 1969 (as confirmed by her resume). She taught art classes for children and war veterans at MoMA in New York and at the Victor D'Amico Institute of Art (The Art Barge) in Amagansett. Mabel was also instrumental in planning and executing the Children's Art Carnival with Victor, which traveled to the International Trade Fair in Milan, Italy and Barcelona, Spain in 1957; the World's Fair in Brussels, Belgium in 1958; and as an honorary tribute to the Indian prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi in New Delhi, India in 1963. These activities were evident in the planning notes found in the couple's home, in which Mabel offered a commentary on Victor's ideas. Beginning in 1960, Mabel regularly exhibited her artworks at various art galleries in Eastern Long Island (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 1, 2014, and confirmed by her resume).

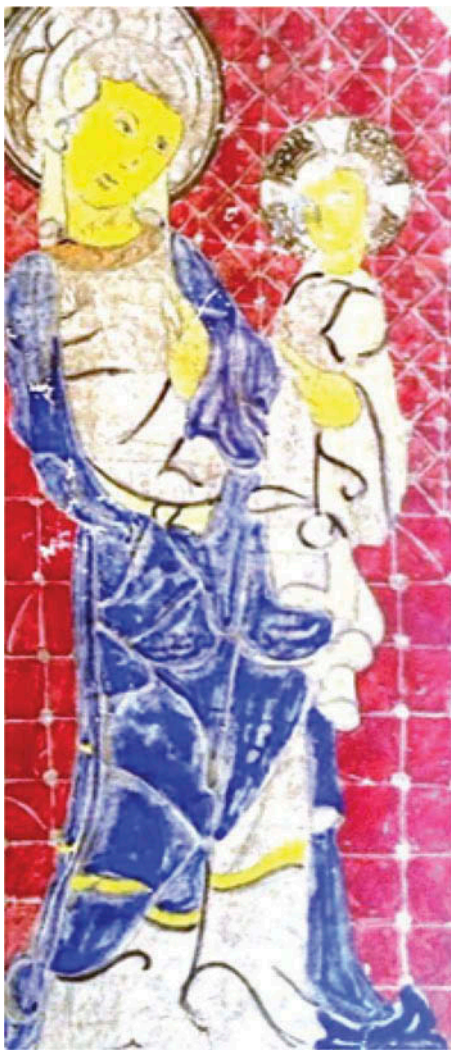

Figure 5. Cover of drawing journal from Pratt (undated) (Photo by author). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.

High School Art Teaching

There is no documented material on Mabel's pedagogical practices, but the following vignette was loosely constructed from Kohan's reminiscences, in conjunction with one course syllabus, two typed undated papers entitled "Teaching Democracy Through Art" (henceforth known as n.d.1) and "Vitalizing the School Curriculum Through the Arts" (henceforth known as n.d.2), and photos discovered in boxes stored at the Amagansett house. In her first paper, Mabel wrote a telling statement about her understanding of the nature of art:

> Art breaks the barriers of language, race and creed. It is an international language. Developing a fine sense of appreciation for art values is a large move toward eliminating intolerance. The basis of all good art thru the ages is a planned, ordered way of doing things, highly individual, but conforming in the broader sense to the fundamental laws of design. (n.d.1, p. 1)

It seems Mabel might have perhaps been familiar with art appreciation and fundamentals of design from her studies at Pratt as well as Teachers College. Perhaps Victor guided her in writing as notes were scribbled throughout these papers asking for clarification and correction.

In her second paper, Mabel expressed a strong belief that art might contribute to the wholesome growth of a student. During her years at Rye High School as art educator and chairperson, she articulated the nature of the art courses offered as well as the school's philosophy:

> Art is given one period a week. During the four years of senior high school the students may take the College Preparatory Course, the commercial courses, the Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Fine Arts, Music or General Courses.… The school is conservative, but in spite of formal tendencies there are distinct progressive trends shown by the attitude of some members of the staff.… There is a measure of cooperation and understanding among the teachers of the so-called "special subjects"—dramatics, home economics, art, and shop. (n.d.2, p. 5)

From this second paper, it seems Mabel was creating a closer relationship between the students and the school as well as among various school subjects and the students' home and community. This relationship could be formed by securing a closer integration of the students' mental and emotional qualities into coordinated subject matter that would disclose values to apply to everyday living. Mabel quoted Belle Boas in support of this idea: "Art is a component of general education, and it can help the whole curriculum" (n.d.2, p. 7). Perhaps Mabel was influenced by Boas's 1924 text *Art in a School* as well as her teachings during her time at Teachers College.[2]

Mabel developed her curriculum independently at Rye High School and firmly believed in the integration of the arts. She was also responsible for a high school art magazine entitled *Zeyfer* that featured students' artwork and writing. These were evident from a number of curriculum documents outlining lesson plans and various copies of *Zeyfer* that I reviewed at her home. Publication details are unknown at this time and further evidence of her work as department chairperson needs to be gathered. However, based on the information currently available on her high school work, one can clearly see the emergence of a transformative leader. Mabel's vision and knowledge of the field, then, likely made her a very successful chairperson during the late 1960s and early 1970s during the second wave of feminism and the time when American classrooms became feminized (Stankiewicz, 1983). Mabel perhaps continued to find innovative ways to improve approaches to art-and-design curriculum making or arts integration that would foster deeper and broader understandings of academic content, while also humanizing and enlivening school teaching practices.

A Liberation of Sorts

> So, when Victor died [in 1987],... the ceiling colors throughout the whole house, and the colors that you see everywhere, she had them painted out... got rid of the colors. She hung [artwork] between the windows. She filled every windowsill counter with glass bottles that she collected and the objects that she created. She filled a lot on the floor too! So she softened up the house a lot more and filled it in... It was arranged but it wasn't clutter. Victor wouldn't have permitted all of those things... she didn't have to ask anybody to do anything. (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 1, 2014) (Figures 6 and 7)

Here, Kohan suggested that Mabel's life and ways of being underwent a transformation after Victor's death. Mabel seemed to have a new sense of rebirth and independence. Her association with the Art Barge became more active and frequent than it had been when Victor was alive. Her new status as a single, independent woman and artist and her presence at this venue helped to demystify the notion that each place belonged to only one person: "Victor's Barge" and "Mabel's house." It was apparent that Mabel was now asserting her own individuality in two places that had been strongly associated with her more dominant husband. Kohan indicated that after Victor's death, Mabel became much more active and personable than she had been before:

> So I mean we had a lot more people visiting, which was really very delightful for her. She really enjoyed people giving her the attention of visiting this house with her in it. I mean, as you see it now without her in it, it's quite fascinating, but when she was here it was quite the calm visit, you know, to meet and talk about—you know, she really opened up. So there was not a problem then for her to be shy. She excelled with her artwork more. She excelled with people more. (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 15, 2014)

Figure 6. Filled spaces at the house, Amagansett, NY (Photo by author). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.

Figure 7. Stabile. Fused glass and gravel rake, paint on windowsill (1980). Mabel D'Amico (Photo by author). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.

This transformation also formed the basis of Mabel's artistic practice. Maxine Greene (2003, cited in Sullivan, 2005, p. 115) noted that art cannot change things, but it can change people who can change things. Imagination can be seen as the place where the possible can happen. The promise of change that comes from wonder takes shape in what we create, through what we make and experience, or from what we come to see and know through someone else's experience (p. 115). To Mabel, this implied changing from one state to another, taking something out of one context and placing it in another, thereby creating a completely new form. Her imagination was particularly inspired by her walks along the shore at Lazy Point in Amagansett. Kohan referred to this in explaining two of Mabel's artworks:

> These two examples with the lightbox, entitled *City Lights*, and the "Christmas tree lights," are just two of the prime examples that really explain, not only maybe her artistic career and her artistic thinking, but maybe even her life attitude, where she let things happen in life, or she made things happen in life.… Whereas the "Christmas tree lights" has no title and is really just purely that. It's Christmas tree lights in a round plastic frame that's a mandala-like or hexane shape, [with] blinking options to change the patterns that control the light. She then adapted it by painting it her favorite color, turquoise blue, which you see here in the landscape. And then always being able to build and construct a wooden frame around the piece so that it's protected and it can hang properly, and you really have an instant piece of artwork that's a little more adapted than something totally constructed, but still works very much as the other piece that's constructed from idea or scratch.… I watched how she really learned to adapt with life, change things that she could—or not, you know, change. And be very open with it all, no resistance in any of it. (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 15, 2014) (Figure 8)

Mabel never stopped experimenting with new combinations of materials, often taking

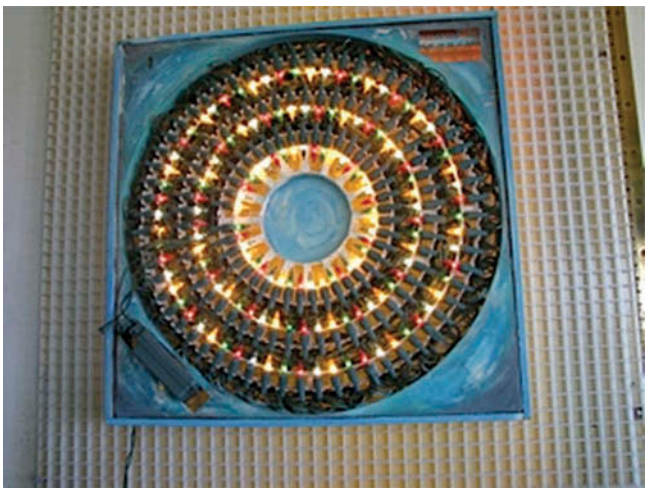

Figure 8. "Christmas tree lights." Mabel D'Amico (Photo by author). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.

objects she found on her journeys and using them innovatively as the basis of her creative process. She likely encouraged her students to look at objects in new ways as she did; nothing escaped her inventive imagination. As Kohan commented:

> As late as 1994, at the age of 85, she [Mabel] continued to learn new techniques and apply them in innovative ways. This can be seen in her study of transfer prints, a new process at the time, which, as she did with so many things, began to transform the technique. She also thought as a teacher as it is evident from the many notes she took during the class and many experiments that resulted from this study. (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 15, 2014) (Figure 9)

Several records of exhibitions of her artworks at various galleries were found in storage boxes, although further information needs to be gathered. Mabel also taught at the Art Barge after Victor died. Kohan recollected that she designed a week-long class on creating animal sculptures using chicken wire and concrete and developed a variety of sculpture courses on her own. Once Victor had died, she proved she was very capable of functioning on her own (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 15, 2014). Kohan shared further that while her independence and art making thrived after Victor's death, Mabel also began experiencing her own health challenges, as he shared with a sense of sadness:

> She [Mabel] then had probably a little series of strokes, which in a sense coincided during that class. Her teaching was more *let it happen*... She wasn't able to verbalize how to use the tools to cut the wire and bend it and twist it and form it... She really didn't have the teaching ability anymore... she knew it within the first day that it was a lot of extra work for her, so I also stepped in and helped her with the process because it was difficult for her to communicate... It wasn't as controlled as she normally would have done it as a teacher. And then she pulled back. She said, "There, that's enough." (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 15, 2014)

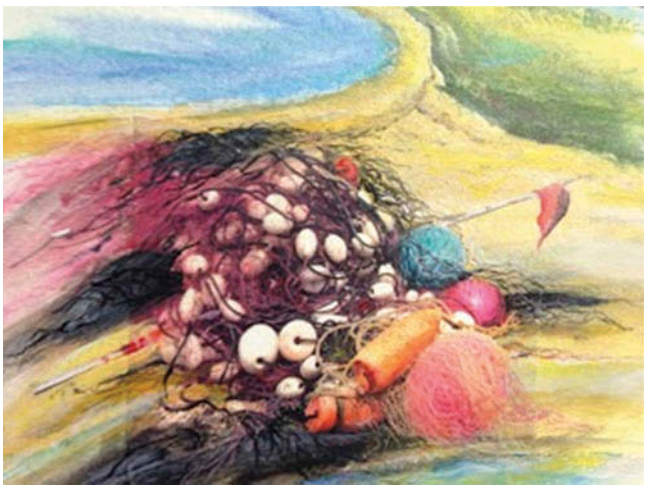

Figure 9. ***Ball of Color*****, photo image transfer, acrylic on paper (1992). Mabel D'Amico (Photo by author). Location: The Mabel and Victor D'Amico Studio & Archive, Amagansett, NY.**

It seems apparent that Mabel's rapid aging might have affected her spirits and ways of being. Mabel's health deteriorated during the late 1990s and she passed away peacefully on November 22, 1998, at her home in Amagansett. Kohan recalled her burial and quoted Neal Fink's eulogy[3]:

> And so when we went to the burial, he was standing there with a book in his Arm… but the book was the dictionary. So he said the night before, he sat around and started reading the dictionary to find a word that would describe Mabel. And he started with the A, B, D, G, and he said it took him all the way up to the letter S before he found a word, and the word was "serene"… and not a dry eye in the burial.… (C. Kohan, personal communication, October 15, 2014)

The Extraordinary in the Ordinary

This brief narrative of Mabel D'Amico provides a glimpse into an ordinary woman's life. I argue that Mabel D'Amico's determined personality and her ability to lead and create works of art can be seen as an extraordinary accomplishment given the context of her times. Virginia Woolf (1929) eloquently stated how the extraordinary woman depends on the ordinary woman:

> It is only when we know what were the conditions of the average woman's life —the number of her children, whether she had money of her own, if she had room to herself, whether she had help in bringing up her family, if she had servants, whether part of the housework was her task—it is only when we can measure the way of life and the experience of life made possible to the ordinary woman that we can account for the success or failure of the extraordinary woman… as a writer. (p. 77)

Even though Woolf was mainly referring to writers, the same could be said for most women. Mabel's extraordinary personality resonates with this quote—she chose to be an ordinary woman with a unique attitude

and different approaches to ways of being and living. A consistent thread of "transformation" is woven into Kohan's narration of Mabel's life, posing questions for more exploration. The ways in which the interviewees constructed their memories of Mabel trigger new inquiries within the context of biographical research and oral history in art education, thus inviting us to think further about rethinking forms of written histories and stories that remain in the shadows of art education history. Mabel's life extends the conversation on challenges and opportunities related to revealing the hidden histories of pedagogical progressives at the end of the second decade of the 21st century. This kind of study holds a number of implications for writers of education histories generally, and biographical research on art educators specifically. Moreover, this study invites scholars to dig deeply into training and pedagogical practices, historical and critical attitudes, and social milieu and environment of the time (Sandell, 1979) to divulge the stories of many unrecognized art educators. Perhaps these stories document ordinary-extraordinary people and movements that have shaped the why and how of our purpose as art educators. Given that women might represent the majority of art educators, the sociopolitical dimension is worthy of consideration in future research.

When viewed from different positions in her studio and home, Mabel's artworks and archival material warrant multiple perspectives of inquiry from which can emerge new understandings of her pedagogical practices. As Eisner (1997) noted, there is no better place to see the stars and no better position to discover new seas than from the edges. Mabel's life and work provide an edge on which to stand and shine a light on her hidden story.

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ENDNOTES

[1] www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/students-free-art-class-harlem-art-center-290-knox-avenue-12041

[2] No evidence has yet been identified on the specific connections between Boas and Mabel at Teachers College or in the Mabel D'Amico materials in Amagansett. The process of tracking down Mabel's students is underway. This ongoing research project was made possible through an NAEF Grant I received in 2014. I have traveled to Amagansett, NY, regularly to conduct work in the archives and 2-hour digitally recorded interviews (then transcribed professionally). My hope is to conclude the research in Fall 2018 and follow up with a second article. No Institutional Revew Board approval was required for this research.

[3] Neal Fink, a retired priest, and a *friend* of the Barge who later became a Trustee was asked to speak at Mabel's burial as a priest and a friend and someone who was familiar with funerals and burials. He normally would have read from a Bible during a ceremony but because of Mabel's nonreligious beliefs he looked toward the dictionary instead of the Bible.