

Who is Ms. Silver?



In the book titled “The Music Teaching Artist’s Bible” Eric Booth starts chapter 1 with a question. “What is a teaching artist?” This question caused me, like many, to examine how my teaching reflects who I am as an artist and human. This is something that I think about often. In fact, I think about the image I am giving of myself and the values I display to my students daily. One thing mentioned by Booth that I reflect deeply about is that art is not just the product or act being done, but equally the experience that the product or act provides for any who views or participates in it. There are two things I tell my students regularly that this sentiment reminded me of. One- is that I want them really present in the making process, and not be overly concerned with reaching a specific product in the end. The second thing I remind them is that not everybody is going to react to their work in the same way. One piece may make one person smile while it makes another person sad. They cannot control how others will react to their work.

For a long time I have referred to myself as a teaching artist. I feel it accurately and appropriately reflects who I am and what I contribute to my community. I also believe that this is not a blanket term that fits every educator of the arts and I appreciate the recognition of this. For me I feel that this title fits the style of education that I am providing for my students. Booth mentions a belief that teaching artists are often successful when we stay grounded to our practices, as opposed to “over-accommodating” the needs of the institutions where we work. This is absolutely a description I subscribe to in my classroom. I tell my students from day one that the structure of an effective art studio will be different then the structure of an effective math or science classroom, and I believe that this is a huge part of why my art classes and students have so many moments of success.