



Maggie Maggio | Smashing Color

Color and Light at NAEA Conference

April 6, 2014



I spent last weekend in San Diego at my first National Art Educators Association conference. It was huge – a three-day event with over 1000 seminars, 6000 attendees, and an exhibition hall filled with booths that included demonstrations by the major art supply manufacturers, samples from companies featuring teacher resources and talks by representatives from college arts programs around the country.

I attended many informative seminars and some wonderful Special Sessions, but I had the most fun at a workshop titled “Reinventing the (Color) Wheel: Color Mixing with LED’s.

I’ve been looking for easy ways to mix color in light in the classroom and was thrilled by the creative approach of this talented team of educators from New York.

This timely workshop is a collaboration between Doing Art Together, a non-profit arts education organization, City Technology at CUNY City College, and teachers at PS 5 and Christopher Avenue Community School in Brooklyn. Its a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) project that integrates art and science and addresses one of the hot topics at the conference – how to engage students in hands-on learning experiences that combine art with technology.

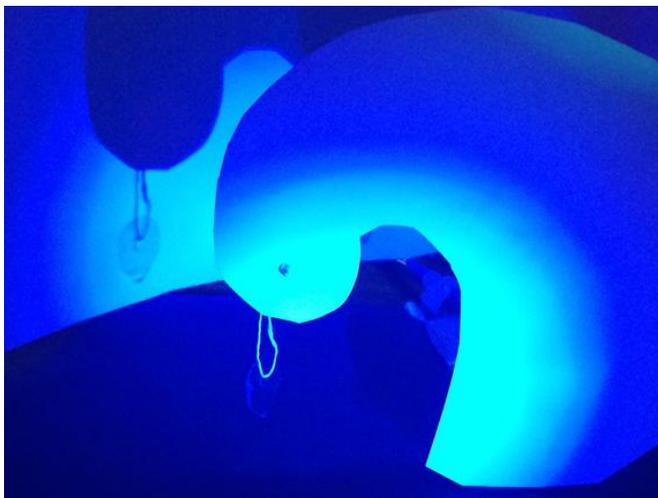


In the first part of the workshop, the attendees learned about the additive system – mixing colors of light.

They connected batteries with red, green and blue LED bulbs using bulldog clips, mixed the secondary colors of cyan, magenta, and yellow, constructed a mini-stage, and played with colored shadows.

The second part of the workshop was where science meets art. Each table was given an index card with a feeling word and invited to create a stage lighting design to communicate that feeling with light. We were given all sorts of building materials, including a sheet of poster board for the curved stage, scissors, tape, cardstock, paper cups, pencils.

Our table's word was "sadness." Here's our design:



Here are some of the other "stages." Can you guess the feeling?



I've been thinking a lot lately about how color study crosses so many disciplines – from physics, optics, chemistry, biology, anthropology, and neurology, to history, poetry, art, design and psychology. I'm sure I missed a few subject areas!

The idea of a more holistic, 21st century approach to teaching color is catching on. This workshop is a wonderful example of cross-disciplinary, observational learning. The group that designed the workshop is presenting again at the National Science Teachers Association conference in Boston this weekend. I'm curious to hear how the science teachers like the experience of using light as an art medium. I hope they have as much fun as I did.

Members of the Team

Jenn Brehm | Teaching Artist, Doing Art Together

Cheribum Cannon | Teacher, PS 5 in Brooklyn

Anja Hernandez | Project Coordinator, City Technology at CUNY City College

Jody Hilton | Science Teacher, Christopher Avenue Community School in Brooklyn

Heather-Marie Montilla | Executive Director, Doing Art Together

Rute Ventura | Teaching Artist, Doing Art Together

Links

[Doing Art Together](#)

[City Technology](#)

[National Art Educators Association](#)

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Feelings in the photos above: Sadness, Fear, Anger, Love