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Expanding the work of art: Teaching and learning towards personal, social and political transformation

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With the backdrop of racialized violence and vitriolic national discourse around issues of citizenship and censorship in the US, art increasingly is serving as a space for social interaction and transformation. The current practices of artists and teachers suggest new models and methods for an expanded field of art practices and social relevancy. What can critical artistic pedagogies look like in practice and how can we describe or support more complex understandings of teacher and artist practice that move from personal understandings of capacity and agency to social and political action in the classroom and in the community through the arts? In order to construct new understandings and representations of the complex nature of teaching and learning as a space for personal, social, and political transformation, this paper presents the work of visual art teachers in New York City who have developed youth-directed, socially engaged, activist oriented projects that attempt to subvert the structural and conceptual limitations of traditional art methods and contexts for learning in public education. Inspired by the work and working methods of socially engaged, artist activists, this presentation will share specific strategies and teaching moves related to a critical artistic pedagogy that attempts to re-define the work of the student, the teacher, and the arts in society.