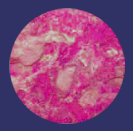

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Upstander for Social Justice through Art Education

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Abstract

The concept of social justice and social justice activism is rooted in feminist activity. The suffragists and abolitionists, the Civil Rights Movement, Feminist Movements, American Indian Movement, Occupy Wall Street, Marriage Equality, Black Lives Matter, 2017 Women's March, and more, can serve as inspiration for contemporary social justice activism through art education. Feminists have played important roles as *upstanders* throughout history. This article on feminist art encounters with *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females –Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein* (H2F2) offers pedagogical opportunities to develop upstander behavior, which is significant to social justice art education. The desired effect of the curricular encounters is to foster skills in critical thinking, empathy, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement—all of which are needed to end oppression and sustain social justice in a democracy.

Keywords: upstander, bystander, social justice, holocaust heroes, bullying, social justice and art education

Stoking the Fires of Social Justice: Stand up, Speak Out, and Help Others in Need

On August 28, 2017, a group of White teenagers allegedly called out racial slurs and assaulted a bi-racial eight-year-old boy with sticks and rocks. The teenagers shoved the child from a picnic table and fastened a noose around his neck. Hospital personnel reported that before the young boy was able to free himself from the rope, he dangled back and forth by his neck three times. None of the teenagers came to his rescue. The young child was rushed to the hospital and subsequently air-lifted to a nearby medical facility where he was treated for his injuries (Estrada, 2017). The tragic circumstances surrounding the eight-year-old, among others, have deepened my resolve that people must not be bystanders when witnessing the persecution of others. Instead, they ought to stand up, speak out, and help others in need. Being an upstander for social justice is crucial to progress toward social justice.

Upstanders choose to become involved, frequently endangering their lives to help others, while bystanders elect to distance themselves or play it safe by *minding their own business*. I love life and I love living; yet, much of my existence as a Black woman has felt like being on a perpetual battlefield. I have been subjected to bigotry, harassment, and bullying, accompanied by gender and racial discrimination. Fortunately, there have been upstanders in my life who spoke out, and took action when they saw mistreatment and injustice occur.

Similarly, I perceive myself to be an upstander. As a Black feminist (womanist) scholar, I stand up and speak out against bias, discrimination, harassment, and bigotry with hopes that all individuals will have equitable opportunities and circumstances to thrive and succeed in a world free from injustice and oppression. Likewise, I have invested energies toward envisioning and creating *just* classrooms and societies. In general, I question what more can be done to build and sustain socially just societies that are pluralistic, democratic, and resistant to violence against those perceived as Other? Specifically, what can

teacher educators do to include social justice and social change content into art education? Given the spread of ideologies that promote hatred, bigotry, bullying, and violence, such questions are more relevant than ever.

Linda Stein's art, with its realistic and imaginary avatars and figures, tackles oppression in various forms, including, racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism "through the lens of bullying and gender justice" (Stein, 2016, p. 12). Curricular encounters with *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Female –Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein* (H2F2) is a prime example of how art educators might use art to explore issues of social justice and social justice activism regarding upstander behavior. The art in the H2F2 exhibition represents female heroism during the Jewish Holocaust. Using empowering images of women, "Linda Stein's work symbolizes, expands upon and makes visible a world of female bravery" (Steinem, 2016, p. 7). Within the H2F2 exhibition, Stein's tapestries honor 10 female heroes who saved lives and risked their own existences to change violent, oppressive conditions that destroyed and prevented life during the WWII Holocaust[1].

In this article, I explore issues of social justice and social justice activism related to upstander and bystander behavior. I begin by discussing the conceptual meaning of social justice and social justice education. Next, I deconstruct notions of upstander versus bystander characteristics and traits. I conclude the article by exploring social justice curricular encounters with Linda Stein's artwork, *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females*, to highlight how works of art can be used to build capacity for upstander behavior toward challenging injustice. Curricular encounters with Stein's work can foster the heroic imagination. Beginning with viewing Stein's art, participants in social justice art education are able to "visualize bravery for themselves," while grappling with deep moral questions that are raised by the Holocaust (Stein, 2016, p. 16). The desired outcome of the encounters is to foster skills in critical thinking, empathy, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement—all of which are needed to end oppression and sustain social justice in a democracy.

Social Justice and Social Justice Education

There are various terms associated with concepts of *justice*, including *equity, impartiality, fairness, righteousness*, and *morality*. The addition of the term *social* to the philosophical notion of justice discerns the difference between legal aspects of justice in which governing structures of a society punish offenders based on a code of conduct that labels some behaviors undesirable. Unlike legal justice, according to political philosopher, John Rawls (1971), social justice is about making sure that the least advantaged members of society have equal access to civil liberties, human rights, and opportunities of others. Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007) believe, "social justice education is both a process and a goal" (p. 3). They maintain:

> The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. (p. 3)

When considering social justice, it is useful to discuss social injustice—not merely as the unfairness of misfortune but as an inequality that is unjust and can be solved if individuals take action. For example, Adolph Hitler believed that Germans were members of a master race, superior in mind and body to all others; thus, he perceived racial mixture as a threat to the German nation. Therefore, during the Holocaust, it was socially unjust, although it was practiced, for children with Caucasian, German mothers who were fathered by Africans serving with French colonial troops during the allied occupation of the Rhineland to be consigned to forced sterilization (Opitz, 1992). It is not just misfortune that these children (referred to as Rhineland Bastards) were considered Black and inferior and thus denied an opportunity to have children of their own, but that this gross wrongdoing could have been remedied through collective upstander actions.

Like the Holocaust, slavery, lynchings, and other human rights abuses of the past are not, as some people would like to believe, accidents in history. Contemporary human rights abuses and injustice (i.e., racial profiling, shootings, and murders of unarmed Black people by White police officers) continuously happen because individuals, groups, and nations make decisions and choices to act or not to act (Knight, 2010). Those who explore bystander behavior (inaction) and upstander behavior (action) toward challenging injustice, will recognize that the

1. I extend a note of thanks and appreciation to Linda Stein for her generosity in sharing her art and ideas with me, by phone and at her Tribeca studio. Her work and thoughts concerning brave upstanders served as a catalyst for this piece of writing.

unjust outcomes are not inevitable.

Social psychologists have studied when and why people help others when individuals are in distress (Becker & Eagly, 2004; Shellenbarger, 2012; Soloman & Soloman, 1978), as well as the reasons why individuals sometimes don't help others (Darley & Latané, 1969). The "bystander effect" is a social phenomenon that occurs when people fail to help those in need due to the presence of other people. In many cases, people feel that since other people are nearby someone else will take action.

When confronted with maltreatment, individuals respond in various ways. Activist-artist, Linda Stein, refers to these forms of reaction as the *4B's: Bully, Bullied, Bystander, and Brave Upstander* (Stein, 2016). These, I define next.

> A ***Bully*** is a person who targets another, often supported by a group, to intimidate (such as with hurtful rumors using social media) or act aggressively toward another with threats or violent actions.
>
> The ***Bullied*** individual is one who is the victim of bullying and may suffer depression, social withdrawal, physical injury, addiction, self-harm, and even suicide.
>
> A ***Bystander*** is knowledgeable about unjust acts, such as bullying, and does nothing to prevent the injustice.
>
> A ***Brave Upstander*** joins with others, or stands alone, to protect others from violent circumstances in everyday experiences, such as bullying, or actively engages in promoting the well-being of others to balance inequalities or oppression.[2]

Many individuals who witness violence and harassment of others choose to play it safe and be **Bystanders**, like in the case of the attempted murder of the eight-year old bi-racial child **bullied** by White teenagers. Thus, it is vital to examine why some choose to act or not act when confronted with bigotry, harassment, and bullying. In what follows, I deconstruct the bystander effect in/action followed by upstander acts for social justice.

2. A website (Keifer-Boyd et al., 2016a) on the *Social Justice Art Education* curricular encounters with Linda Stein's art as well as a research study on the impact of the encounters in building capacity and a sense of responsibility to become brave upstanders is at http://h2f2encounters.cyberhouse.emitto.net/

The Bystander Effect In/Action

There are two major factors that contribute to the bystander effect. First, the presence of other people creates a diffusion of responsibility. When there are other observers, individuals do not feel as much pressure to act, because they assume the responsibility to do something is shared among all of those that are present. The second reason is the necessity to behave in an appropriate and socially acceptable manner. When other bystanders fail to re/act, individuals often take this as a cue that a response is not necessary or is improper. Onlookers are also less likely to intervene, if the situation is ambiguous and causes them to question what is happening (Manning, Levine, & Collins, 2007; Soloman, Soloman, & Stone 1978). Even so, bystander inaction is more complicated. Individuals who are otherwise caring may still shy away from taking action in a crisis situation. Their re/actions are partially based on whether they consider the situation as an emergency and whether they know how to provide assistance. For example, a person who knows nothing about Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) likely will not rush to revive a person who is not breathing. Too, how one is feeling on a given day will influence that individual's actions or inactions. People who are in a good mood are more likely to help than those who are in a foul mood.

Upstander Acts for Social Justice

The concept of upstander is linked to social justice activism. Social justice activism describes a type of action that is intended to resist, reverse, or achieve social change. There are two fundamental beliefs that relate to and support social justice activism. The first belief is that some groups suffer disadvantages as a consequence of their gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ability, language, age, nationality, or religion. The second belief is that individuals or groups can be upstanders and challenge or disrupt barriers that deny equitable opportunities and circumstances for all to live and thrive in a world free from oppression (Knight, 2011). Although I advocate upstanding behavior when witnessing the persecution of others, I recognize that there are times when interventions may be dangerous for Brave Upstanders and for those whom they are supporting. Therefore, directly confronting the Bully may not be the best idea, particularly if there is a concern that the Upstander may become the Bully's next target. For example, in Portland, Oregon in May, 2017 an individual who held extremist and racists beliefs

murdered two upstanding individuals and seriously injured a third person when they tried to stop his anti-Muslim rant and verbal assault of two women visually identified as Muslims on a subway train, one wearing a Hijab. Though Brave Upstanders do not allow the fear of possible harm or material loss to impede their actions (Fletcher, 2007; Franco & Zimbardo, 2006), given the tragic outcome of the Portland incident, it is always prudent to assess any situation before getting involved to avoid injury. Next, I examine traits and characteristics embodied by upstanders.

Upstander Traits and Characteristics

Upstanders share certain traits or characteristics that make them more likely to take action in the face of injustice. In general, research shows that upstanders like to take control of situations; they re/act empathetically to others, and they have a strong sense of moral and social responsibility (Fletcher, 2007). Moreover, upstanders consciously keep the fear of possible injury or material loss from hampering their actions, as they tend to be hopeful that difficult predicaments will turn out well (Fletcher, 2007; Franco & Zimbardo, 2006). Below is a more detailed list of some characteristics shared by upstanders:[3]

- **Upstanders tend to be concerned with the safety and well-being of others.** According to a 2009 study, empathy and compassion for others are key variables that contribute to upstander behavior. People who help others regardless of danger and adversity do so because they genuinely care about people and they are able to feel what those in need of help are feeling (Shellenbarger, 2012; Zimbardo, 2011).
- **Upstanders are adept at considering points from the perspective of others.** Research suggests that upstanders are more than caring and compassionate, when they encounter a situation where an individual is in need, they are readily able to picture themselves in that same situation and envision ways to help (Shellenbarger, 2012; Zimbardo, 2011).
- **Upstanders are capable and self-confident.** It takes both skill and self-confidence to act when others are fearful or less secure in their ability to take action. Research suggests that upstanders tend to be confident in themselves and their abilities. When confronted with a challenge, upstanders have an inherent belief that they can manage the situation and succeed, despite any probability of failure. A portion of their confidence might stem from an upstander's above-average coping skills and abilities to manage stress (Shellenbarger, 2012; Zimbardo, 2011).
- **Upstanders have a strong moral compass.** There are two fundamental characteristics that distinguish upstanders from bystanders. Upstanders live by their values and they are inclined to withstand personal risk to adhere to those tenets (Shellenbarger, 2012; Zimbardo, 2011).
- **Upstanders proceed despite trepidation.** A person who steps in to challenge a bully on behalf of the bullied is not just brave; s/he or they also possess(es) an ability to overcome fear. Research suggests that upstanders are positive thinkers characteristically, which contributes to their ability to look past the immediate danger of a situation and see a more optimistic outcome. In many cases, upstanders tend to be risk-takers in general in other areas of their lives (Shellenbarger, 2012; Zimbardo, 2011). Figure 1 is a parallel list of upstander behaviors versus bystander behaviors.

Bystander Behavior	Upstander Behavior
Show indifference or silence when witness to injustice or persecution of others.	Speak up and speak out when witness to injustice or persecution of others.
Ignore bullying or acts of violence that foster hatred against the *other*.	Challenge and correct acts of bullying or conduct that fosters hatred and violence against the *other*.
Condone verbal abuse (e.g., name-calling, ridicule, teasing, derogatory and degrading language, slurs, insults, jokes, and threats).	Interrupt verbal abuse (e.g., name-calling, ridicule, teasing, derogatory and degrading language, slurs, insults, jokes, and threats).
Do nothing to assist the bullied individual when witness to physical violence (e.g., pushing, hitting, and tripping).	Stand up and take action to assist the bullied individual when witness to physical violence (e.g., pushing, beating, and tripping).
Disregard online/cyberbulling.	Oppose online/cyberbullying.
Support the continuance of bullying through indirect participation (e.g., laughing, and cheering on the bully)	Neutralize or discourage the continuance of bullying through drawing the support of others and disapprovimg of laughter and cheering on the bully.

Figure 1: Bystander versus Upstander Behaviors

3. This list was adapted using "Seven Qualities of Heroism" by Kendra Cherry (2016).

Philip Zombardo, a psychologist at Stanford and founder of the Heroic Imagination Project (HIP), believes that individuals can be taught to be upstanders[4] (Zimbrano, 2011). Therefore, he developed a four-week program to help adolescents learn how to be heroes. The project is intended to produce the next generation of heroes as efficiently as terrorists and other evil-doers produce bullies. Utilizing decades of experimental psychological research, the HIP curriculum focuses on three primary areas: (a) the "dark side" of human nature or injustice, (b) building empathy, and (c) studying heroes and practicing heroism.

Following a "hero pledge," the first phase of instruction focuses on human weaknesses that support evildoing, including the impact of prejudice and the bystander effect in which people are reluctant to intervene when others are present. After learning about human nature and its frailties, the second area of study focuses on building empathy or helping individuals become more in tuned to the feelings of others.

Sometimes bystanders fail to help the bullied because they assume they deserve what is happening to them. When students understand this misconception, they are more likely to get involved and less likely to *blame the victim*.

The next level of study, titled "Internalizing the Heroic Imagination," introduces students to past and present heroes. Since people *nearby* shape human behavior greatly, the program attempts to provide students with models of upstanders for social justice. During the last phase of instruction in the HIP program, students practice bravery, by enacting heroism in real life (Lehrer, 2010).

Zimbardo believes that heroes are not demigods; they are ordinary people who do extraordinary things (Zimbardo, 2011). As such, individuals can be taught to be heroes and upstanders for social justice. Studying the lives and stories of legendary heroes is an important part of fostering a heroic imagination because heroes can serve as models of upstanding behavior. The Heroic Imagination Project provides insight into how upstander traits and characteristics might be learned through art education and curricular encounters with *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females—Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein*, discussed in the following section.

4. In this article, I use upstander and hero interchangeably as both embody moral courage.

Fostering Heroic Imagination Through Art: Curricular Encounters with Holocaust Heroes Fierce Females

The collective memory of World War II disregards female heroism, brave women who risked their lives in combat operations and sabotage (Fogelman, 2016). Though less well known than their male counterparts, many courageous female heroes used strategies of resistance to injustice in the WWII Holocaust to make the world a more just and compassionate place. The *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females—Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein* exhibition makes visible a group of ten female heroes who were, by extension, upstanders, leaders, and role models. Figure 2 is a mixed-media tapestry of all ten female heroes.

Figure 2. *Ten Heroes 859*. Leather, archival pigment on canvas, fabric, metal, zippers, 56 x 61 x 2 inches (2016 © Linda Stein).

Curricular encounters with *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females –Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein* can help individuals embody upstander ideals.

> By conceiving of heroism as a universal attribute of human nature, not as a rare feature of the few 'heroic elect,' heroism becomes something that seems in the range of possibilities for every person, perhaps inspiring more of us to answer that call. (Franco & Zimbardo, 2006, p. 31)

With hopes that art educators will think critically about their own ability to act heroically as upstanders, a team of art education curriculum scholars, the C-Team, Cheri Ehrlich, Ann Holt, Wanda B. Knight, Yen-Ju Lin, and Adetty Pérez Miles, led by Karen Keifer-Boyd, developed encounters with *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females—Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein* (H2F2) to foster critical consciousness and upstander action to challenge injustice (Curricular Encounters with *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females—Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein*).[5] The C-Team consists of art curriculum scholars and practitioners who have expertise in kindergarten through higher education teaching, museum education, information communication technologies, and social justice education who created several curricular encounters to guide art educators toward the development of the previously mentioned characteristics and traits of upstanders (Keifer-Boyd, et al;, 2016b).

The C-Team piloted the curricular encounters with a group of art educators both virtually and onsite at Linda Stein's studio in Tribeca, New York, during 2016. The following, "Justice Encounter: To Act or Not to Act," is an example of steps taken to foster the heroic imagination.

To Act or Not to Act

The curricular encounter, "To Act or Not to Act," began with processes to look at, experience, and discuss Stein's tapestries and sculptures. Art educators gained an understanding of each *Holocaust Hero Fierce Female* through discussion and imagery depiction in the tapestries. Figures 3 through 12 focus on each female upstander in individual mixed-media tapestries by Linda Stein..

5. The curricular encounters are at http://h2f2encounters.cyberhouse.emitto.net/.

Figure 3. *Anne Frank 839*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 55 x 59 x 2 inches (2015 © Linda Stein).

Figure 4. *Ruth Gruber 805*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 57 x 57 1/4 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 5. *Vitka Kempner 815*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 56 1/2 x 58 1/2 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 6. *Noor Inayat Khan 813*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 56 1/2 x 58 1/2 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 7. *Zivia Lubetkin 811*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 56 1/2 x 58 1/2 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 8. *Gertrud Luckner 843*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 54 1/2 x 59 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 9. *Nadezhda Popova 803*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 58 1/4 x 59 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 10. *Hadassah Bimko Rosensaft 810*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 56 1/2 x 58 1/4 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 11. *Hannah Senesh 806*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 54 1/2 x 58 1/2 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Figure 12. *Nancy Wake 802*. Fabric, archival pigment on canvas, leather, metal, zippers, 58 x 58 x 2 inches (2014 © Linda Stein).

Participants considered choice of colors, symbolism, and design elements, among other things. They moved from mere observation of the works to thinking more critically about what they were seeing, and as such, to greater insights concerning the underlying issues, ideas, and narratives regarding the pieces.

This particular encounter with Stein's work also evoked narratives and inspired stories of bigotry, xenophobia, homophobia, bullying, and becoming an upstander. Promoting sensitivity and attentiveness to injustices experienced by others allowed participants to think about, discuss, and *rehearse* their responses in a safe and supportive setting.

The encounter further provided opportunities for art educators to explore the roots and outcomes of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, the dangers of indifference, and the importance of individual and civic engagement. Participants, working in groups, created a template of upstander behaviors versus bystander behaviors while sharing how their life history shaped personal perspectives on upstander and bystander behavior toward social justice. (See Figure 1.)

The encounter considered lessons learned from the Holocaust that relate to current world events (i.e., intense surveillance, police brutality, racial profiling, stereotyping, etc.). Narratives that sprung from viewing Stein's tapestries and sculptures provided opportunities for participants to engage in self-reflexivity. Questions included: "How have I been complicit in perpetuating racism, sexism and stereotypes or creating a climate of animosity, xenophobia, or homophobia (i.e., through jokes, bystander behavior, comments, and casual remarks, etc.)?" On the other hand, "How might I exhibit upstander behavior in either mundane or monumental ways?" The objective of these queries was to foster upstander traits and characteristics concerning empathy in reaction to unjust actions and words and to sensitize participants to recognize and respond to injustice.

To foster the heroic imagination, art educators visualized social justice and used mental imagery to achieve a desired outcome as upstander. What do you see? What are you doing? What are others doing? Using these questions, participants created mixed-media works concerning how they imagined themselves, as upstanders, changing their institutions and their psyches to take seriously the nurturance of consciousness, conscience, compassion, and community.

Likewise, the organizers of the five-month Holocaust Heroes Fierce Females exhibition (Adetty Pérez Miles and Scott Peck) at the National Center for Jewish Art at the Museum of Biblical Art (MBA)—in Dallas, Texas, during 2016-2017—took purposeful steps to foster the heroic imagination of educators and their students through art. Using "curriculum development and creative activities and pedagogies" to study the lives and stories of the legendary H2F2 role models, proved to be useful toward facilitating individual reflection concerning the significance of being socially responsible and becoming brave upstanders for social justice. (Pérez Miles & Peck, 2017, p. 61).

In summary, bullying is preventable. The previously highlighted case of the bullied biracial eight-year-old boy, like others, could have had a different outcome if bystanders had spoken out, stood up, or intervened. Even so, it takes empathy to see oneself in a person who is being bullied and it requires courage to act or to get involved.

A critical mass acting as upstanders is needed to transform societies and to achieve the ideals of social justice. While there is no assurance as to how one might respond when faced with injustice, encounters with H2F2 works of art[6] offer multiple entry points for individuals to develop the skills to consistently start speaking up and speaking out against bigotry, bullying, and violence as helping others, consistently, offers hope for social justice.

6. "Social Justice Art Encounters with Linda Stein's Art" is accessible online via an interactive website at http://h2f2encounters.cyberhouse.emitto.net/. The purpose of the experiential activities is to foster the heroic imagination for upstander action through the study and making of art.

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