

[-Webmin Understanding](#)

[Anger](#)

[-Veronica on Popcorn](#)

[-All Announcements](#)

- [Announcements](#)
- [Local Events](#)
- [Fundraisers](#)
- [Arts / Entertainment](#)
- [Religious Events](#)

The Digital Photo Age

By | Category: [WyckoffNJ](#)



American Koosh by Tyler

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but unless you have those thousand words in your head, a picture is just a picture. The ability to express oneself with words, to communicate feelings, ideas, concepts, is at the root of human evolution.

Text messaging, chat rooms, and emoticons are all new technologies that are actually counter-productive to this development. But other technologies have brought new opportunities; and, Eisenhower Middle School in Wyckoff, NJ and Raul Yzaguirre School For Success in Houston, TX, have entered into a collaborative effort to exploit these new tools.

The students of Harold Olejarz in New Jersey and Tom Chambers in Texas are working on what is

described as the Gulf Coast/East Coast Digital Art Collaboration which is based off the Literacy Through Photography program. They encourage students to explore their world through photographs and use this as a method for developing writing and communication skills. Even though the schools are 1600 miles apart, modern technology has created the tools and the platform for an inventive effort.



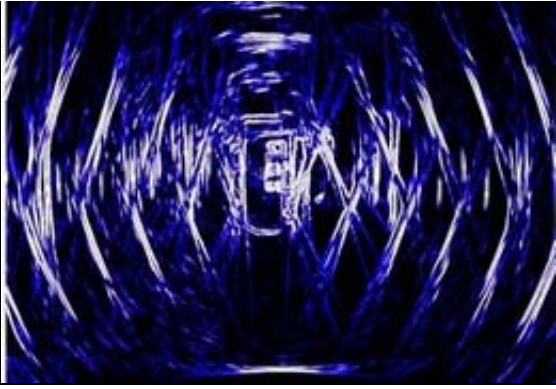
The term “photography” did not exist till 1839 when Sir John Herschel put together two Greek words for “light” and “writing”. The collaborative effort by these two teachers is bringing students back to that original understanding by using photography, digital software, and a platform where students are encouraged to communicate ideas and analysis.

The students engage in creative thinking, critical thinking, and work at communicating these ideas. Students in the two schools exchange photographs which are then digitally manipulated, taking the vision of one and transforming it into another vision.



The original photography of many students can stand alone as works of art. The inspired images offer a refreshing perspective from a population which is still mastering the use of words in communication, and the use of photography appears to be a natural voice for many. The framing, context, and images reflect ideas that open up a variety of avenues for discussion. Their inventive minds have produced a number of photographs that would garner praise from the fine art community. The program offers an opportunity not only for the young artist to express the thought process involved in creating the original photograph, but the platform allows for other students to examine why the image appeals to them.





The original photographs created by the students are shared with participants from both schools for the purposes of digital manipulation. Photographers have been manipulating photographs for generations with a variety of techniques such as double exposures. The advancements in technology and software now open the creative door to a new generation which can manipulate, change, or enhance photographs in a variety of ways.

There are many who will say that digitally manipulated photos are not art, but they would be putting forth an antiquated argument used against photography in the 1800s. Matthias Groebel, **George Grie**, Olga Kisseleva, John Lansdown, and Joseph Nechvatal are prominent artists involved with digital work, and they would probably argue that digital manipulations are legitimate fine art. There would also be a healthy argument from the numerous galleries and museums around the world that offer digital art work to their patrons. It is an aspect of the art world that is still in its infancy, and like all genres those with a creative vision will find admirers and supporters. We live in a digital age. The Internet is becoming as common in homes as plumbing and electricity. It would be odd and unexpected not to have the art world influenced by this, to reflect this, and to use these tools in the creation of new art.





The great benefit offered these students on two opposite coasts is the opportunity to develop fundamental skills and understanding. For better or worse, human nature does not not change, only the circumstances we find ourselves in. The inspiration for the student's work can be found in the passions of their respective teachers. Harold Olejarz is Art and Technology teacher at Eisenhower Middle School, Wyckoff, New Jersey and has made presentations on the use of digital media at state and national educational conferences. Tom Chambers is Technology Applications teacher at Raul Yzaguirre School For Success in Houston, Texas and has been a documentary photographer and visual artist for over thirty years. The two teachers began their collaboration online while Tom was working in China, and on his return to the United States decided to implement a program to benefit their students. More work done by the students can be found at

<http://eastcoastgulfcoast.blogspot.com/>, while the original collaboration between the teachers can be viewed at <http://tomharold.com/next.html>.

12 comments

[Leave a comment »](#)

1. alicia cervantes **February 2nd, 2009 3:44 pm** :

nice

2. DeeDee Bott **February 2nd, 2009 4:18 pm** :

Everyone wins with projects such as these. Great Job, Harold and Tom –

3. Alondra **February 2nd, 2009 5:27 pm** :

i love those shoes.

Good job with the picture =]

4. **omar cervantes February 2nd, 2009 7:01 pm** :

Dear,Alicia

I love your painting and i would love to make you an artist come to me to 708-b and i will put your paiting in display.

5. melissa **February 2nd, 2009 8:16 pm** :

people deserve alot of good things when they work on these type of projects good job good luck:)

6. **Tom R. Chambers February 3rd, 2009 1:26 am** :

Thank you very much for this great and informative coverage of our joint LTP and Digital Art

Blog projects. My students thank you.

7. **Laurence Gartel February 3rd, 2009 1:48 pm :**

Nice leap from 1800's to present time. HOW DID THE DIGITAL ART AGE START???????

Do your homework. -))

I applaud Tom Chambers efforts.

Laurence Gartel
Digital Media Pioneer
<http://www.gartelmuseum.com>

8. **Pam Friedman February 3rd, 2009 2:11 pm :**

I am a middle school technology teacher in Westfield, N.J. and have long been impressed with the work produced by students in your school. Mr. Olejarz is a friend of mine; we met as Google Certified Teachers in NYC in 2007. This project is outstanding and you are very lucky to have such a great teacher in your school district.

Pam Friedman

9. Rita DiMarco **February 3rd, 2009 2:59 pm :**

Kudos to both teachers and classes. What a terrific project!

10. **Martin Mendelsberg February 3rd, 2009 7:19 pm :**

Excellent work by these youthful digital artists. With the emergence of well informed digital instructors like Tom Chambers, we will witness a much more democratic cultural environment. The age of museums, dealer galleries both large and small is rapidly vanishing in favor of a much more diversified population of independent artist entrepreneurs.

11. **JD Jarvis February 3rd, 2009 7:36 pm :**

It is said, "The art speaks for itself." But it only speaks of itself and only in the words and imagination of the viewer. The artist must speak for the artist. Tom and Harold are doing important work in leading students to both a vision and a voice.

Keep up the good work guys!
JD Jarvis

12. **Ansgard Thomson February 7th, 2009 3:12 pm :**

As one of the oldest digital fine artists from Canada I am pleased that the respect for digital fine art is taught in at least these 2 schools .
This will help to bring about changes in the art world .

Congratulation
and best wishes to teachers and students .

Ansgard Thomson

Leave Comment-Full Name Required

The Wyckoff Journal discourages anonymous comments, but may withhold a name upon request