



# Touchstone Center's November Newsletter

November 2013

Greetings:

I am pleased to announce that the Touchstone Center has begun, as part of its 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2014, a series of projects under the overall title of *Towards a Democracy of the Imagination: Celebrating the Possibilities of Childhood*. While a number of these projects are still in their planning stages, a few have already begun and will continue into next year.

One such project is *Spaces of our Imagining, Spaces of our Dreaming: Children and their Inner Worlds of Knowing* taking place at PS 99 (Queens). This program consists of a series of year long arts and education workshops with Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade classrooms conducted by visual artist, [Karen Fitzgerald](#), in collaboration with myself. Based on the seminal ideas of the French philosopher, Gaston Bachelard – and my book inspired by his thinking, [In the Space of the Sky](#) -- Karen is helping children create a variety of structures in which their vibrant worlds of imagining can be housed and expressed through art and writing.

I also recently completed a two-day poetry residency at [The School in Rose Valley](#). A school where the natural world and learning are integrated. Its innovative director Todd Nelson, along with a group of dedicated teachers, has created an environment in which children truly flourish.

On November 15, I began teaching a workshop, *The Play of Imagining: Early Childhood and the Elemental Life of Wonder*, as part of a series of four conferences for early childhood directors and educators. It will be held over the course of the year presented by [CCNY – Early Childhood Advisory Group](#) and the Lutheran Services Group.

In other news: [Kathy Creutzburg](#) has recently installed her steel sculpture WAVE in the Green Oasis Garden on 8<sup>th</sup> Street between C and D in New York City. Inspired, in part, by [We Are Rivers](#), which Kathy illustrated, WAVE will be on view until April 2014. Kathy, as part of her summer residency at the Rogers Environmental Education Center in Sherburne, New York, facilitated the design and construction of a public sculpture based on [A Tree Lives](#), illustrated by Noah Baen. The project consisted of middle and high school students creating clay tile reliefs depicting a variety of aspects about the life of a tree for the surface of her mosaic tree sculpture.

George Hirose, whose photographs, in collaboration with visual artist Elizabeth Crawford, are the illustrations for [\*CAVE: An Evocation of the Beginnings of Art\*](#) is having an exhibition at the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Y entitled [\*MAGIC GARDENS: Night-time Photographs from the East Village Community Gardens\*](#).

Heidi Neilson, who illustrated [\*Play, Said the Earth to Air\*](#) – based on Gigi's Alvare's original puppet stage – as well as being the designer of many Touchstone Center Publications is showing some her prints at the [International Print Center](#).

Carol Grocki Lewis, my wife, collaborator, and Touchstone Center teaching artist, is displaying her pottery as part of the [2nd Annual Yorkville Holiday Sale and Exhibition](#) she organized with Allison Valchuis.

And lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce [Jaclyn Majewski](#), who is the editor of this email letter, as well as our [Facebook page](#) -- which we invite you to join as we continue to reflect on the vibrancy and importance of childhood play.

Enjoy the first of the season's holidays.

Best,  
Richard

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