

Illinois Art Educator of the Year: Stacey Gross



Stacey Gross is a National Board Certified Teacher at Centennial High School in Champaign where she teaches photography, graphic design, cinema studies, AP Studio Art, and dual credit classes. She also serves as the Fine Arts Department Content Area Chair. In addition, she serves as the K-12 Visual Arts Coordinator for Champaign Unit School District 4. In that capacity, she acts as a liaison with administration for the art teachers in the district, organizes professional development, advocates for the visual arts, and promotes the visibility of art students and teachers. Now in her 22nd year at Centennial, Gross prides herself with creating a robust art program that fosters a broad appreciation of art and strong technical skill, while stimulating critical and creative thinking. Gross also co-sponsors Centennial's Gay-Straight Alliance.

Her dedication to her profession leaves a lasting impact on Dr. Judy Wiegand, Superintendent of Champaign Unit School District 4: "Time and time again, Ms. Gross has demonstrated exceptional teaching and leadership skills. Her progressive approach to teaching, coupled with her advocacy for the art program, ensures that art plays a relevant role in the high school curriculum at Centennial and throughout the district." A Quincy native, Gross earned a MA ('01) and BFA ('94) in Art Education, with a studio concentration in photography, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is a practicing artist who works primarily with camera-less darkroom photographic processes to create abstract imagery. She is an avid traveler, with a passion for Japanese art and culture.

Stacey states: "I am grateful to the Illinois Art Education Association for the honor of being recognized as the Art Educator of the Year and to those who supported my nomination, along with my colleagues, administrators, mentors and collaborators who inspire me to be the best teacher I can be and to instill a passion for art in my students. It's especially incredible to be honored for doing what I love! It's humbling to be singled out in a field of tremendous Art Educators, who do amazing work to bring meaningful art experiences to students in Illinois."