

Art education reading
response: problems
confronting visual
culture



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02 May Problems Confronting Visual Culture Many critics argue that one cannot evaluate a certain object as a work of art by merely looking into it for it is often regarded as an object with indefinable meaning, structure and socio-cultural reference. For this reason, a new movement which focuses in Visual Cultural studies points out that art education should not be limited to studying what we often see as drawings, paintings and photographs, rather it is a field of study recognizing the predominance of visual forms of media and communication and critically evaluate its totality with reference to one's society and culture. Presently, fine arts comprise a small fraction in the study of visual culture but one author puts in that this should no longer be the core of study to feed students with knowledge on art study as well as its importance and impact in all aspects of the contemporary society. With this argument, there arises the question if fine arts should be retained as the central focus of the field, and if not, what should the educators include in creating an effective visual culture curriculum and how does one define the limit of its content.

Efland points in the difference of fine arts which are also deemed as "high art", from the lower forms of popular culture called "kitsch." Nevertheless, these forms of art is being affected by postmodernism, a term which means progress or development of arts in the last decades of the last century which is "often characterized by disillusionment," (36). He adds that as long as modernist optimism prevailed, "fine" or "high" art will be way too good in comparison to other forms of art. Thus, the concept created new form, style, and composition in the art world.

Visual art had become a point of interest among us not only because it is part of everyday life, but its presence is so immense that we cannot easily

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ignore how it is impacting our lives in its strictest sense. And we study these “visual as a reflection of culture and as something that has cultural efficacy in its own right, contributing to the production, reproduction, and mutation of culture (The University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Visual Culture,” par. 1). But Efland cited two problems that is affecting the visual culture, and one of which is the vast array or genre that visual cultural studies covered that it may seemed unmanageable for a time allotted in discussing arts, and if it gain consensus which particular area or content to teach, the problem would be the assessment of objective in choosing such area of study. Another difficulty is the leveling tendency because visual culture advocates emphasized that the curriculum should consider all forms of art equally, without any favoritism.

Advocates strongly pursue a curriculum that would reflect every art form as a valuable tool in forming critical understanding of society and culture. However, since fine arts had been the point of art study, critics tend to exemplify that exclusively focuses on certain “privileged” forms of the visual though it is considered as a serious art that can be more feel and understand and tends to move human beings towards their inner selves. In contrast, popular art or everyday aesthetic sites like the television and movies could also be considered as legitimate sources of the real art because it represents the everyday life which can be feel - a reality of the present experiences and activities. Given these comparison, Efland strongly points out that a visual culture curriculum “should represent both side of the genre.... No valid educational purpose is served by limiting the range of visual culture either to the realm of the everyday or to arts that transcend the everyday, but if each has the other to serve as a basis for comparison, then the special attributes

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of each genre can become clear.”

Work Cited

“ Visual Culture.” 30 August 2007. University of Wisconsin-Madison. 30 April 2010

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