The State of Arts Education: Reflections on Values, Learners, and Content

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the College of Fine Arts of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

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May 2018
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This thesis titled
The State of Arts Education: Reflections on Values, Learners, and Content

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ABSTRACT

CRUM, JOHN D., M.A., May 2018, Art History

The State of Arts Education: Reflections on Values, Learners, and Content

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The 5th annual State of the Arts exhibition was hosted by Ohio University’s College of Art + Design. This juried show was open to the public from September 26th through October 14th, 2017, and featured forty-two works from forty-two artists currently working in the K-12 visual art curriculums of Ohio. This essay was created in conjunction with a catalogue for this show. This thesis argues there are three major questions those working in education must wrestle with: What is the content that should be taught? How should the nature of the learner be defined? Whose values should be reflected in the classroom? Such an analysis reveals multiple mindsets coexisting and competing for a voice. The historical and philosophical movements supporting these differing mindsets have positive and negative out-workings. The correspondence with the participants in the show revealed/highlighted that these teachers are central to their art program. Furthermore, Ohio’s art curriculum accommodates the strengths of each art teacher, and if these teacher-artists are not stifled by outside forces, their perspectives can be powerful. Ultimately, this research suggests that the value of the visual arts is their ability to infuse meaning and purpose in life.
DEDICATION

For my family
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Jennie Klein, whose encouragement, patience, and guidance has made a profound impact on my education. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Marilyn Bradshaw and Dr. Andrea Frohne, for their time and their willingness to challenge me.

Also, this thesis could not have been written without the inspiration of James Daniel McMannis III. He thoroughly changed the way I see the world.

I am grateful for the communication and corporation I had with the participants in the 2017 State of the Arts exhibition. I would like to extend a special thank you to my former students at Washington State Community College and my colleagues at Caldwell High School. Their encouragement, criticism, questioning, and patience are unparalleled. Without Ms. Jordan Blackstone’s help, I could have never done this.
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INTRODUCTION

The teacher-artist voice is instrumental in decoding the role that studying the visual arts plays in understanding the human condition. Those working within the visual arts curricula of Ohio serve as soldiers for the obvious. Ellen Dissanayake writes in *Homo Aestheticus*, “One of the most striking features of human societies throughout history and across the globe is a prodigious involvement with the arts.”¹ These teacher-artist voices either reflect or alter the cultural values through the content being disseminated. Whose values, what content, and the nature of humans are necessarily contemplated and answered by all educators. Often these answers challenge an accepted perspective, and develop nonlinear visual venues for dealing with the complexity of human existence. Arts education shamelessly encourages multiple perspectives and voices to be heard and respected. Studying the visual arts offers a tool set for learning and developing creative thinking which deals with the issues of the day. Yet, keeping and sustaining art education within the k-12 school system is a challenge for many. The content used or excluded in education is reflective of the societal values and the definitions circulating the nature and purpose of humans.

The philosophical and ideological theories on art are often disconnected from the field of education. Some of this disconnect is due to the many perspectives and the bureaucracy in education, and part of this is because of the nature of the field of art. Art is constantly reacting to new ideas and is in a perpetual state of flux. The vocabulary employed to talk about the arts becomes common vernacular to those within higher

education, but falls short with those having differing values structures. Furthermore, other disconnects are created by local communities, state mandates and federal policies impact.\textsuperscript{2} Ohio University’s School of Art + Design is actively making bridges from contemporary discourses on art and art making to art education by inviting art educators to participate in an exhibition which features their work.

In October of 2017, Ohio University hosted the 5\textsuperscript{th} annual \textit{State of the Arts} exhibition. This juried show invited artist-educators currently teaching visual arts curriculums across the state of Ohio to submit work. Hundreds of invitations were sent, but only forty-two works were selected. Every year a faculty member, the gallery director, and a graduate student work together to jury the exhibition. This year, the gallery director was Courtney Kessel, the faculty member was professor of art history, Jennie Klein, and the graduate assistant was Rebecca Chmielewski. Klein remarked, “We had many submissions and only so much space, so our first criteria was to select the work that we felt best represented the artist and that fit well with the other submissions.”\textsuperscript{3} This year’s group brought an eclectic collection of works together which is demonstrative of the pluralistic state of art education. The works ranged from painting to drawing to photography to digital renderings to clay to mixed media.

While gathering the information to assemble the catalogue for the \textit{State of the Arts 2017}, five questions were sent to the forty-two teacher-artists represented in the show. Their answers, along with the work they submitted, demonstrate the individualistic and powerful voice each teacher-artist has. The teacher is essential to the

\textsuperscript{2} Richard Jochum, \textit{The Changing Education of the Artist, Perspective on Art Education} (London: Continuum, 2000), 152.
\textsuperscript{3} Jennie Klein, e-mail message to Corrine Rivers carbon copied to Author, October 2, 2017.
nuanced situation of each art program. The knowledge, beliefs, and values of these individuals create a pluralistic narrative within the framework of each school district, the Ohio Department of Education, and the United States Department of Education.

The first question was tiered, and asked how the participants would describe the state of art within their school, their community, and within the United States. At the local level, the answers ranged from the positive to the negative. Jamie Kiggins (Stivers School of the Arts, Lancaster) wrote, “I am both proud and grateful to have the opportunity to teach in a school in which art is a top priority.” Thomas Schemrich (Bay High School, Fairview Park) stated, “The state of art in my school is flourishing. Projects are being created in public spaces; bringing the efforts and capabilities of creative minds/hands into the ‘normal student’s experience.’” Cherie Bauer (Bay High School, Lakewood) remarked, “Art within my school and community is a point of pride.” Others spoke of arts education as declining, undervalued, less than other subjects, or underappreciated. Many provided the reason for their answers was the location of their respective schools, which reflected deeper issues such as poverty and proximity to art resources. Others related it to the lack of support from administration which further reflect the values of their given culture. David Wolf (Edison High School, Collins) said, “They (the administration) embrace STEM\(^5\) rather than STEAM\(^6\). Professional development rarely, if ever, deals with the arts and “specials” overall.” Wolf’s comments calls attention to a debate about which subjects within a curriculum should be emphasized. Matthew Reynolds (West Carrollton High School, West

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\(^4\) The quotations came from answers to a questionnaire that were submitted for the exhibition along with the artwork.

\(^5\) STEM is an acronym standing for the subjects Science, Technology, Engineering, Math

\(^6\) STEAM adds the subject art
Carrollton) comments on this divide, “I think that as a whole, our country is split on the arts. I get many students whose parents refuse to let them pursue art after high school in favor of ‘real jobs’ in other fields. That being said, I am also seeing a growing societal move to a better designed world, something artists have a key role in. So, I guess we'll see where this goes in the next twenty years.” The state of the arts in the community was almost unanimously positive with the mention of public sculptures and arts related events and festivals. Of course, the larger communities have institutions such as museums and colleges. For example, the Cleveland area has *Front International*[^7] and *BAYarts*.[^8] The more rural schools still seem to have great support and local community events. Kiggins speaks of an “active arts scene, including museum, galleries, public sculptures and a seven day annual arts festival” in Lancaster, Ohio[^9] Wolf pointed out the community was quick to ask the art club for “help with fundraisers, art contests, t-shirt designs, etc.” Minimal commentary was provided in response to the way our national culture views the arts. Some commentary was given concerning regionalism. Randi Channel (The Graham School, Columbus) remarked positively, “I can't believe it's taken me so long to discover South Eastern Ohio.” Perhaps this is due to the direct effect the local decisions have upon the arts and the educators. It is also plausible that

[^7]: FRONT is a new Art Triennial based in Cleveland and opening the summer of 2018. This citywide art program will bring together international, national and regional artists, curators and scholars to propose a new format for biennials and triennials. It focuses on process, research, collaboration and long-term engagement with Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.

[^8]: BAYarts is in the Huntington Reservation in Cleveland Metroparks, located in Bay Village near the border of Cuyahoga and Lorain Counties. The BAYarts campus includes the John Huntington House, the Irene Lawrence Fuller House, The Station House leased by Vento Trattoria and a historic caboose. Until 1927 when the land was purchased by the Cleveland Metroparks Department, the Huntington Reservation was the summer estate of John Huntington, inventor, industrialist and key founder of the Cleveland Art Museum.

[^9]: Lancaster, Ohio is in Fairfield County. Fairfield County’s website, [https://visitfairfieldcountyoh.org/art.html](https://visitfairfieldcountyoh.org/art.html) highlights some of the art related institutes. These include the Decorative Arts Center of Ohio, Two Broke Artists and the Art & Clay on Main. The annual art festival is called the Art Walk.
the society has a lack of belief in universal overarching ideas. Bauer made this observation, “In the United States I see a shift from the global nature of art embraced at the beginning of the 21st century to a kind of compartmentalization of art by region. We have been through regionalism before, reflective of populist culture... As if artists are more inspired by the cultures they come from and are becoming more inwardly focused on past traditions and values. Sometimes I see artists making a critique of those traditions and values, and sometimes I see them extolling them.”

The second question asked participants to share why they wanted to be an art teacher. The answers are summarized with the word passion. They either had an intense desire for the making of something, enjoyed the thinking used with the arts, or recognized the significance of being in an influential role. Even when faced with difficult teaching circumstances, these educators were proud to speak of their passions. It is safe to say the art program is intimately tied to the individual art teacher. Megan Evans (Fort Hays Art and Academic High School, Columbus) responded with, “I teach art because I want to share my passion and knowledge in visual art with the next generation of creatives.” This tie to the individual teacher also fosters multiple perspectives to present themselves within art curriculums. Later, it is demonstrated that the state model curriculum accounts for this.

The third and fourth questions created the most controversy. These questions asked participants to discuss their art educational philosophies and how the work they submitted related to their teaching practices. Some were dismissive of the questions, perhaps indicating a weariness from the day to day challenge of engaging students, pleasing administrators, and interacting with the community. Others expressed great
conviction being guided by clear and passionate goals. Shannon Fish (Lancaster High School, Rockbridge) stated “My philosophy is that contemporary art education must balance technical, media-based instruction with conceptual, individualized exploration that includes history, aesthetics, and criticism. I develop lessons that integrate an inherent combination of content areas, so my students find relevance in all learning. My belief is that art extends beyond pencils, paint, or clay, and extends into all aspects of life. Art is the place where all the pieces of education come together—encouraging creative, critical thinking skills and teamwork.” Some of the artists can separate the work they make from the work their students produce. Others see these as constantly informing each other. Karan Walsh (William Mason High School, Lebanon) speaks about this relationship: “The work I submitted is a work I made specifically for a video which I made to help teach my kids a new way to handle media. I created a YouTube channel a few years ago, to help give my kids online instruction in techniques I may not have the opportunity to show them in class, or they could review at home if they miss a demo. This link, https://youtu.be/Ys4Cy4yCGKU, is to the video I made as I created this piece.” Whether the artist is intentionally making work to teach better, or the work is accidentally spilling into their teaching practices, all artists acknowledged some relationship between their work and their teaching practices. From these responses, it is easy to see multiple perspectives on art and numerous perspectives on education and how these relate to the individual teacher artist.

Contemporary theories of art education pay attention to the responses of the viewers of art. Whether it is teachers like Fish who emphasize individual exploration, or Walsh, who incorporates access through technology, teachers are attuned to their
students’ wants and needs. Wanda May, a scholar of art education, believes the goal of art education is to keep everything open and fluid in order to unmask constructed realities. May asserts contemporary work should be evocative and invite endless possibilities. The work should not be didactic and should not produce closure. She presents this as the positive of postmodern contemporary education.\textsuperscript{10} The art critic Craig Owens, building on the work of Roland Barthes, emphasizes the distinction between a work and a text. Owens writes: “Singular and Univocal, the work is an object produced by an author: whereas the text is a permutational field of citations and correspondences, in which multiple voices blend and clash.”\textsuperscript{11} Most contemporary critics hold this view that an artwork is a text written to many and provides the viewers with many possible readings.

In light of this, three fundamental factors challenge all those engaged in education, and they are summarized as follows: the content and definitions of what is to be learned and taught, the nature of humans who are to learn, and the values of the individuals within society. The very definition of art is central to defining and answering these interlaced questions of education. The goal of this essay is to discuss the state of art education while unpacking how past influences and movements have informed the contemporary about these three fundamental factors. In pursuing this ideal that all should have the opportunity for a quality education, it is understood that the contemporary promotes multiple narratives, multiple readings, and openly marks a break from certainty. The comments in the first few paragraphs serve as a springboard

\textsuperscript{10} Wanda May, “Philosopher as Researcher and/or Begging the Question(s),” \textit{Studies in Art Education} 33, no.4 (1992): 226-43.

to discuss the problematic ideal of free and appropriate public education (FAPE)\(^\text{12}\) and the relationship art education has within the overall curriculum for every student. The competing philosophies that pick the content to be taught, that analyze the nature of those who learn, and reflect the values of a society are either reinforced or broken apart with respect to each art program. In short, the state of art education is one which advocates for multiple pluralistic perspectives, but is bound by the situation of each art program.

Looking at the various types of pedagogical models demonstrates the answers to these fundamental questions are many. The perceptualist art curriculum emphasizes mimetic procedures. It is a search for the absolute copy and uses a reductionist mindset.\(^\text{13}\) The formalist art curriculum is a reduction to the visual elements which are perceived as universal. It is exercise driven, representational or abstract.\(^\text{14}\) The expressive art curriculum emphasizes the intuitive making through idea or material exploration. It privileges the essential and the unique individual.\(^\text{15}\) The genre-based art curriculum studies a preconceived canon. Those who are considered experts select the works. It is contingent upon teacher expertise and uses the imitations of the past work of students and exemplars. These could include still life, life drawing, landscape, and ceramic figures. Pastiche curriculums imitate the canonic exemplars and tend to assimilate the Postmodern practice of parody.\(^\text{16}\) Technical curriculums center on developing a succession of specific technical skills. Object-based curriculums respond

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\(^{12}\) Free and appropriate public education (FAPE) is the right of all children. It is guaranteed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1990.


\(^{14}\) See note 13 above.

\(^{15}\) See note 13 above.

\(^{16}\) See note 13 above.
to common artifacts.\textsuperscript{17} These can be spectacles or themes. Work can take the form of anything from a big still life to an installation. Critical and contextual curriculums investigate art as a means of social and cultural production.\textsuperscript{18} This model privileges cognitive and analytical procedures. Issue based curriculums serve as an integration of the personal with the social, political, and moral thought through responses to current and contentious issues.\textsuperscript{19} Postmodern curriculums promote pluralistic perspectives and approaches and embrace new technologies. As expected, there is not a universal agreement with art teachers about which curriculum is best. There are also many more models than the nine listed above. In fact, many pedagogical models become hybrids as instructors combine elements from each. Lesley Burgess and Nicholas Addison assert that any attempt to define the field of the contemporary will be erroneously reductive, for this attempt must strive to contain an expanding and changing phenomenon.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} See note 13 above.
\textsuperscript{18} See note 13 above
\textsuperscript{19} Burgess and Addison, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{20} Burgess and Addison, 19.
CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES OF CONTENT

Definitions of Art

Throughout history, the word art has had multiple meanings and applications. Examining this history reveals how some of the views of art came to be. The current disposition is to readily associate art with objects and beauty. The etymology of the English word *art* suggests *art* is the skill in producing the object and not the object human beings produce. The arts of the beautiful are often placed in differing categories. The traditional fine arts include drawing, painting, sculpture, and printmaking. Today, they encompass such technologies as photography and video, and have titles like environmental, installation, performance, and conceptual which further categorize work. Untutored people’s works of art are sometimes labeled as folk art. The applied arts can refer to architecture, interior design, fashion, and graphics. Another realm is better known as visual culture and encompasses posters, comics, websites, video games, and movies. Those attempting to reform and conceptualize the art curriculum suggest the term art should be dropped and replaced by cultural production or visual and material culture. Critics claim an entire inclusion of all things visual is pragmatically impossible.21

In reality, only within the last couple centuries did the term art come to mean these objects, paintings, sculptures, and performances. Traditionally, art referred to know how, or technique. It was the 19\textsuperscript{th} century which relegated the arts to aesthetics.

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The more traditional Western definition of art is a broader definition and shines some light on our current understanding.\textsuperscript{22}

The English word for technique comes from the Greek word \textit{techne} which in Greek means art. The word art is frequently used within Plato's dialogues and Aristotle's treatises. In fact, the word art is used as commonly as the word \textit{science}, and more frequently than the words \textit{history} and \textit{philosophy}. For the Greeks, art and science are the two primary forms of knowing. Science referred to what, why, and wherefore, and art referred to understanding how. If we speak of the know-how, they would have spoken of the art possessed. The Greeks didn't make the distinctions we do between the arts and crafts. They used the word \textit{art} for production and performance as having great worth or dignity. The Greeks did distinguish between the liberal and the servile arts. The Greeks recognized that almost every human being is an artist because each can make something or do something. Applying this traditional means that cooks, dressmakers, plumbers, grammarians, and drivers of automobiles are artists.\textsuperscript{23}

Distinguishing between the various arts as being liberal, useful, and fine might be helpful for categorization, but it too has come under significant scrutiny. If an art is liberal, it can be reproduced in the mind. If an art is useful, it has utilitarian purpose(s) behind it. \textit{Fine art} needs further clarification. Fine, in this sense, is not being used as an adjective. Translating \textit{fine arts} from \textit{schöne kunst} (German); or \textit{beaux arts} (French) gives the idea of final. Meaning, they are not to be used as a means beyond themselves.

\textsuperscript{22} Mortimer Adler, \textit{Art, the Arts, and the Great Ideas} (New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994), 45.
\textsuperscript{23} Adler, 46.
Rather, they are an ends to themselves. The useful is always a means; the enjoyable is always an end.\textsuperscript{24}

The view of the arts as \textit{liberal} has been perceived differently throughout history. Often it is thought that the visual arts lack \textit{logos}. The fine arts tend to be thought of as the product of intuition, and the liberal arts and sciences tend to be thought of as being the product of reason. The distinction is often used to justify the exclusion of visual art from liberal arts curriculums or to make an argument that art cannot be taught.\textsuperscript{25} As mentioned earlier, \textit{Techne} and \textit{ars} are the nearest terms to our term art. They mean “organized knowledge and procedures applied for the purpose of producing a specific preconceived result”\textsuperscript{26} or “simply by rational production.”\textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{Modernity}

If one can establish what the visual arts are, and it is believed they should be included in the K-12 curriculum, then the question becomes, what content is included, and how should the content be disseminated? It is safe to say the state of art and the state of education in any age are affected by the attitudes, beliefs, and criticism of the time they are situated in. The values and the content emphasized have a reciprocal relationship with each one informing the other. Historically, the aesthetic content of that time provides a lens to view the values of a given society. When trying to establish a point of reference to talk on contemporary American art education, it is difficult to avoid a discussion of Postmodernism. It is equally difficult to understand Postmodernity without understanding European modernity. Most of the foundational

\textsuperscript{24} See note 23 above.
\textsuperscript{25} Burton Blistein, \textit{The Visual Arts and The Liberal Arts}, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962), 45-47.
\textsuperscript{26} Blistein, 40.
\textsuperscript{27} Blistein, 41.
theories for the art practices today go back to the first half of the 20th century. How an educator defines the nature of the learner, the values in place, and the content taught are all influenced by the reactions to these two movements.

Modernity in Europe begins at the Enlightenment, with the belief that science can change the world. It was modern ideology that championed the idea of a foundation of universal truths. Best and Kellar define Modernism as a term “denoting those processes of individualization, secularization, industrialization, culture differentialization, commodification, urbanization, bureaucratization, and rationalization.” European Modernity gathered support by emphasizing freedom and the individual. Modernism as a movement has an essential core, which is summarized with the following premises: there is a coherent foundation of truth applicable to every person, reason is a force for a just social order, morality will progress with knowledge, the perfectibility of humankind is possible, knowledge is a progression, and Western art can elevate and refine humanity. Modernists thought that through the application of science, problems like poverty, ignorance, and superstition would be eliminated. The central link to these beliefs is progress. Knowledge, technology, human freedom, morality, education, and the arts would all progress and make the world a better place.

Art production, criticism, and education are found to still be under the influence of Modernism. The artistic beliefs within the modernist mindset can be summarized with the following assumptions: a belief in progress in the history of art and that art must move toward the innovative; a belief that art has the power to influence social

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norms; a belief that meaning resides in the work of art itself; a belief that quality is a property intrinsic to the work itself; a belief that art is accessible to all regardless of context or culture; and that all persons respond similarly to the visual properties of art.

The ideology of modern art assumed a progressive course in which each generation of teachers and artists would push ahead to find new expressions. Art historians of modernism marked progress as taking place when imagery moved toward the non-representational. This theory of historical progress in art became established through the university systems and in textbooks. In art museums, this history of art was used to organize and illustrate the history of man. In reality, these institutions were used to reinforce educational biases. Art education, influenced by the modernist movement, taught that utilizing the power of art would bring individual and cultural refinement. For instance, in the 1960s, museums received government funding to offer museum tours which emphasized western masterpieces to disadvantaged students. Now, the view that a short exposure can confer dignity and morality has few followers. This age also created a canon of great works which was accepted and approved by powerful scholars and connoisseurs.

Since, man viewed history and time as linear and leading to perfection, art education would also progress and improve through changes. Modernism saw the change as generally equated with progress. Modernists believed that nature could be brought under systematic control through science. They applied scientific systems of classifications to different disciplines including the arts. Art historians developed

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30 Modernist Art Historians noted progress when artist moved toward “abstraction.” This movement included impressionism, cubism, and abstract expressionism.

methodologies for classifying art into categories based on historical periods, styles, and formal properties. They elevated form and formal elements to the positions of universals, and argued that form within art had the power to move people in similar ways. The quest for the universal language lay at the core of all seeking understanding. This led to articulations of principles of design and form, and these are still present in Ohio’s model curriculum today. Modernist educators consider knowledge of design and composition fundamental to making art and believe works of art could be experienced aesthetically in any culture, place, and time. Art teachers typically received their training in studio classes organized around media processes. The work itself determined what was aesthetically relevant and not the context.  

Robert Atkins dates modernism from 1860 to 1970, explaining that the styles and ideologies used through those years are based upon a series of shifts in belief and culture. Social and political revolutions swept across Europe. Western European culture became urban, less rural, more industrial, and less agrarian. Organized religion was on the decline, and the old system of artistic patronage changed. It was unlikely that artistic individualistic pursuits would thrive in capitalistic art markets, but freedom was promised and pursued. Many artists, feeling free, experimented with work that was highly personal. They no longer needed to glorify the wealthy individuals and the institutions of state and church. The slogan ‘art for art's sake’ began to reign.  

Modernists referred to themselves as avant-garde, meaning, they were ahead of their time and no longer bound by historical limitations. Modernist artists are especially

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critical and rebellious of the restrictions placed on the artist in the academies of the 1700s. The art salons and their juries were generally critical of the status quo, and they frequently challenged middle-class values. While traditional pre-modernists painted scenes of the French Revolution and Napoleon's invasion of Spain, the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists abandoned historical subject matter and turned away from the realism and illusionism which had been the emphasis since the Renaissance. For example, the futurists celebrated the sights of speed while constructivists emphasized scientific modes of thinking. The abstractionists embraced spirituality to offset the secularism that was sweeping across the West. Others looked toward non-Western cultures and often presented these as demonstrative examples of the uncorrupted universal form. Some even started emphasizing childlike imagery and yearned to escape adulthood.34

Immanuel Kant would lay the foundation for Western artistic modernism. Although this foundation didn’t mature until the 1930s, Kant’s theory of aesthetic response suggested viewers should arrive at interpretations similar to others. This goal is contingent to experiencing the work in and of itself. When encountering art, the viewer should place their self in a heightened state of sensory awareness. This forces the viewers to give up personal interests and conditioned responses. The viewers should rise above time place and personal suppositions to reach an aesthetic judgment.

Modernist art educators believed this criticism would unite multiple perspectives.35

34 Atkins, 176.
From this, Clive Bell and Roger Fry introduced a theory known as formalism. Formalism and modernism are closely linked. Form was paramount, and the artist’s intent became irrelevant. This allowed cross-cultural interpretation and evaluation of any art from any place or any time. Clement Greenberg, the most influential formalist critic, championed the abstract expressionists. While this is going on, regionalist artists like Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood were painting the scenes of America, and the social realists were depicting class struggles. The expressionists championed the existential ideal of religious freedom and of psychic self-expression through abstraction. Backed with Harold Rosenberg, they flattened their paintings to their formalist principles that a painting is two dimensional in nature. Modernity taught that a painting should not attempt to move toward three dimensions. Harold Rosenberg’s statement that, “A painting is not a picture of a thing, it is a thing itself,” demonstrates the thinking of the time. 36

Modern art sought a quest for originality. Modernity’s value of innovation of experimentation led to Impressionism, Fauvism, Abstract Expressionism, and stylistic innovation. In summary, modernist artists rebelled against the establishment, rejected naturalism and became preoccupied with the mediums and formal properties. The positive outworking of the modernist mindset was the unification in applying art education as a necessary part of a school's curriculum. Art was definable, important and applicable to the cultivation of each student. Art education reacted to this by teaching adults not to impose their views on children’s art. Instead, the art teacher should teach

the formal art elements and the principles of design. These elements and principles could reach everyone and would not corrupt the innocence of the child.\textsuperscript{37}

Postmodernity

Although Atkins dates the end of modernity almost half a century behind us, its discussion provides talking points about current issues in art education. Modernity functions as a fixed point for understanding what comes next. Many suggest we are living in an age known as Postmodernity, while others suggest this movement is also behind us. Regardless of whether we are or are not living in Postmodernity, an understanding of the philosophical ideas of Postmodernism serves a starting point in explaining the influences of the contemporary content. Postmodernism is best understood by contrasting its premises with those of Modernism. This is why so much time was given to explain Modernity, for it gives Postmodernity something to critique. Some even say that Postmodernism is a logical outworking of the premises of Modernism.\textsuperscript{38}

Scholars critical of Modernity look at oppressions under monarchies and industry as evidence of a shift in thinking. Some emphasized the violence that occurred in the world during the modern era. Some examples of these oppressions are the civil rights movement, the exclusion of women from the public sphere, the colonization of other lands, the destruction of indigenous peoples, and the social practices which legislate and dominant minority’s day to day life. These scholars look at the promises

\textsuperscript{37} Burgess and Addison, 17.
of quality and liberation for all people and point out few have enjoyed this quality and liberation.

There is no unified theory on Postmodernism. In fact, several different theoretical directions are grouped together. Some of these are even in direct conflict with each other. The theories tend to share some ideas, such as a cautious and limited perspective of truth and knowledge. Typically, they believe that knowledge is mediated by culture and language. Postmodernity claims that all judgments are subjective and relative to the social context in which they are made. Although many talk about being in or after Postmodernity, not all theorists believe that modernity is dead. The difficulty in speaking of the multiplicity of voices is due to many distinct mindsets being prevalent. Modernist mindsets are still evident, and it is safe to say that many still operate within a modernistic framework. Modernity is influenced by rationalists like René Descartes and Immanuel Kant. Postmodernity is influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Dewey, and more recently Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty.\(^{39}\)

Best and Keller also identify two important strands of Postmodern theory: structuralism and poststructuralism. Structuralism is influenced by earlier semiotic theory. Ferdinand de Saussure identified language as a system of signs consisting of words and concepts. Words are signifiers and concepts are the signified, and it is the culture that unifies these. Structuralists strive to explain phenomena through the identification of hidden systems. They insist no phenomenon can be explained in isolation from other phenomena, and even among these, there is little agreement. They

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attempt to separate from previous scholars who sought explanations through
sequencing historical events. For example, Claude Levi Strauss used linguistic analysis
in anthropology. Jacques Lacan used psychoanalysis, and Louis Althusser promoted
Marxism, all under the umbrella of structuralism. These sought to discover unconscious
codes or rules that underlie phenomenon; thus making phenomena visible that were
previously invisible. Like the modernists, these strove for objectivity and emphasized
rigor, claiming a scientific status.\footnote{See note 39 above.}

Poststructuralists, such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois
Lyotard, and Roland Barthes responded by attacking the structuralists for their
scientific pretensions, universal truths, and their belief in an unchanging nature. Both
poststructuralists and structuralists reject the idea of the autonomous subject. They
insist no one can live outside of history, and emphasize the arbitrary nature of signs.
They stress language, culture, and society as being arbitrary and conventional, which
are agreed upon rather than natural. They use historical strategies to explain
consciousness, societies, and signs, and these are to be historically and geographically
dependent. They collapse the boundaries between philosophy and other subjects.
Postmodernists build on the semiotic projects of Roland Barthes and others, who study
the system of signs in societies and who generally assume that languages, signs, and
images are signifying systems. Poststructuralists believe Karl Marx’s emphasis on the
power of economic relations is too dogmatic and limited to explain history and society.
Poststructuralists find Marxism oppressive and no longer relevant for the Postmodern
era. They advocate for a radical democracy.\footnote{See note 39 above.}
Most think of the social boundaries being destroyed in the 1960s, but aesthetic boundaries were also being destroyed. Joseph Beuys claimed everyone was an artist, and Andy Warhol declared everything was art. Arthur Danto suggests this period is a history of dismantling the concepts emphasized in the first half of the 20th century. Many critics see modernism as an eraser. Pablo Picasso erased the ideal of beauty; Jackson Pollock erased subject matter; Franz Kline erased three-dimensional forms; and Donald Judd eliminated the artist touch. Then the conceptual artists of the 60s and 70s erased the need to have an object itself.  

Postmodernists believe the art of new pluralism is liberating. Arthur Danto says, “You could be an abstractionist, a realist, an allegorist, a metaphysical painter, a surrealist, a landscape artist, or a painter of still-lifes and nudes. You could be a decorative artist, a literary artist, an anecdotist, a religious painter, a pornographer. Everything was permitted since nothing was historically mandated.” One scholar may judge an artist to be a major influence, and another may see one as less important. For example, Fried stresses the importance of minimalist artists, while Danto sees the pop artists as most influential. In Postmodernists terms, these writers and renditions are thought of as stories. Derrida holds to the idea that all explanations of the world are merely discourses fabricated by people. He believes we never get close to reality, only to what we say about it. There is no truth, there is only discourse.  

While modernists want meaningful innovations, Postmodernists generally borrow from the past. They place old information into new contexts. Modern critics,
theorist, and educators ignore all who are not working within the approved modernist's styles. Postmodernism embraces a much wider array of art-making activities and projects. Modernists like to be pure when it comes to medium. Postmodernists are eclectic and freely find and manipulate imagery, techniques, and inspiration. Postmodernists are infinitely skeptical. Modernists believe in the possibility of universal communications, and Postmodernists identify and emphasize the difference. Postmodernists believe artworks possess characteristics and meanings based on their sociocultural context, and as evidence, they look at how pieces have been interpreted differently in various places and cultures. Critics and historians are now likely to consider religious affiliations, socioeconomic backgrounds, personality differences, genders and religious affiliations of not only the artist but the viewers.\footnote{Barrett, \textit{Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary}, 43.} The teachings of the art educator Wanda May are applicable here again. She says the rigid categorizations of modernism do not allow for the variables that make us human. May adds Postmodern art education should generate works which produce strong images, meanings, or feelings to mind.\footnote{Wanda May, “Philosopher as Researcher and/or Begging the Question(s),” \textit{Studies in Art Education} 33, no. 4 (1992): 231-32.}

The Canadian scholar of art education, Harold Pearse, divides the history of art into Premodernism, Modernism, and Postmodernism. He states, “By dispossessing itself of the premodern tendency to repress human creativity to avoid usurping the supremacy of a divine creator, and the modern tendency to overemphasize the originative power of the autonomous individual, the Postmodern imagination can
explore alternative modes of inventing alternative modes of existence.”\textsuperscript{47} The model of the modernist artist as a productive inventor has been replaced. These new artists find fragments of meaning and rearrange them. Pearse states the Postmodern artist is a “postman delivering multiple images and signs which he has not created and over which he has no control.”\textsuperscript{48}

Marxism runs through aspects of Modernity and Postmodernity. Marx attributes transformative power to the arts. Art can mirror society, or it can reveal how we view the world in a social and historical context. Critical theory originally was associated with the Frankfurt School, and it is based upon Marx and Freud. They see all claims to truth as being influenced by poor and varied interests. Neo-Marxist theory investigates how the meaning and authority are affected by class, gender, geographic location, and/or one's proximity to an institution. This theory considers the effect of gender, race, and subculture on art production and reception. Since the term Marxism can carry unwanted connotations, many use other terms such as critical theory, ideological criticism, and social theory. The movements aimed at revealing power struggles include Feminism, Multiculturalism, Colonialism, and Queer Theory.\textsuperscript{49}

The art educator, Kriston Congdon, claims the feminist movement has attempted to increase dialogue about women’s art and women artists. One necessary discussion centers on recognizing women in the history of art. Another dialog occurs when gender-differentiated approaches are applied artistic processes, works, and


\textsuperscript{48} See note 47 above.

\textsuperscript{49} Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, \textit{Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods} (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2006), 175.
aesthetic responses. Congdon also claims a crucial conversation needs to help develop a non-hierarchical approach to appreciating art. This is largely influenced by Jacques Lacan’s work on the gaze. Lacan carried on the work of Psychoanalytic theory and influenced feminist criticism. Lacan reworked Freudian theory to account for the biological developments of becoming human. He believed language and ideology influenced the identity of a human. In Lacan's view, the subject is without center and is characterized by lack.50

Much of the complexity underlying feminist discourse revolves around two premises. One asserts the importance of the distinction between two sexes. This is referred to as biological feminism. Another is called gender theory and asserts the distinctions are cultural and not biological. Hilde Hein discussed Helen Frankenthaler and Bridget Riley's success, but says their content is not feminist because their work did not look as if it was created by women and their work didn't discuss the historical condition of woman. Women working against institutionalizing sexism sought to de-gender their art to compete with male artists. Feminist art historians started writing revisionist histories and exhumed women from the past.51

Elizabeth Garber offers four distinctions which add to this conversation. The first and most important is between sex and gender: “Sex is the biological traits we are born with. We are either male or female. Gender, on the other hand, is learned through socialization. Feminine and masculine traits are associated with gender.”52 Garber says

the second goal is to change how things are. History records the social and political goals of the women’s movement as it relates to these changes. One becomes a feminist by declaration, recognizing that women are socialized into male categories. Thirdly, feminist and feminine are not interchangeable terms. Socially determined qualities such as delicacy and gentleness are associated with the term feminine. In other words, not all women artists are feminists. Fourthly, feminism it is not a fixed set of principles, but a varied philosophy. In other words, feminism can never be a central dogma. A distinct female aesthetic has been debated, although no real agreement exists. This search for unification was more important in the 70s than today. Many suggest women are already bound together by not only childbearing but also oppression. Feminism, as defined by the French tradition, using Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva, is concerned with theories of the body. They offer feminine writing in response to phallocentric philosophies and writing.53

Feminist Art educators advocate for explicit inclusion of women artists in art curricula for all students of all ages. Georgia Collins and Renee Sandell, both feminist art educators, present the following outcomes to an issues based art education: “(1) provide real-life female role models, increase pride and self-esteem, and the excitement of discovering a lost heritage; (2) provide all students a more complete, complex, and provocative picture of artistic activity and achievement in our culture; (3) prepare more realistically those students headed for art careers in which they will find themselves competing with artists of both sexes; and (4) stimulate critical thinking with regard to the status and values attached to various art activities in our culture.”

53Garber, 210-25.
in art education seek constructive and positive ways to recognize and incorporate women's contributions into art learning.\textsuperscript{54}

Divisions within feminism have arisen over issues of class oppressions and privileges relative to race. Alice Walker, Angela Davis, and bell hooks were at the forefront of these assertions.\textsuperscript{55} Postcolonialism, along with feminism, argues that racial, class and ethnic oppression is derived from the patriarchy. They react against universalizing tendencies and a lack of sensitivity to women’s experiences across culture. Lucy Lippard writes, “...and of course we were never all that cohesive. Definitions of feminist art were always passionately contested. It was one of our strengths that there was never a single unified feminism or a single unified feminist community.”\textsuperscript{56}

Feminists, Postmodernists, and Multiculturalists see the plural nature of society, and politically, they push for diversity, individuality, and plurality. Postcolonialism has its roots and the 1980s and has since strengthened until this day. This viewpoint is closely aligned with multiculturalism.\textsuperscript{57} Postcolonialism wishes to explore the cultural situation of those who under the control of a colonizing power, or those who have been under the control of a colonizing power. Their interests lie in the processes of colonizing and decolonizing. The theory applies to representation of anyone made other (the colonized) by the discourse of the colonizer. They call attention to mechanisms used during colonization and point out these do not end when control ceases.

\textsuperscript{55} Barrett, \textit{Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary}, 53.
\textsuperscript{56} Lucy Lippard, "No Regrets." \textit{Art in America} 95, no. 6/7 (2007): 75.
\textsuperscript{57} Barrett, \textit{Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary}, 56-57.
Postcolonialism seeks to resist the eurocentrism that privileges the west. The goal is to place these objects in museums in light of social and political discourse.58

Yet another set of contemporary voices are those associated with Queer Theory, which is most connected with the work of the French historian of ideas, Michel Foucault. By showing the authoritative power of discourse, Foucault has had a profound influence on postmodernism and gay activism. His writings reveal how discourse represents gender and sexuality. Foucault warns about those in power, claiming they will assume the self-appointed role of disseminating truth. The powerful will reveal, conceal, and control the truth to those in subjection to them. This includes those who are unable to speak for themselves. Many in this world view reject the liberal values of privacy and appeal to tolerance. Instead, they address publicity and self-assertion, believing Foucault has demonstrated that all sexuality is socially constructed. The very name queer is meant to confront this head on, as these theorists encourage reclaiming offensive words. Activist art influenced by queer theory has used images to confront the crisis of AIDS.59

Amelia Kraehe states the “art curriculum is a composite of cultural expressions, the values and experiences students and teachers bring with them into the classroom, and the social context of the learning environment”60. The challenge of an art educator is not only knowing the art and education, but understanding the sociocultural influences on and within these fields. The pedagogical decisions affect the students’

58 Barrett, Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary, 69-61.
understanding of forms, traditions, and meanings. The changing cultural realities of schooling are reflected in the education of certified art teachers.

The Modernist Western art canon traces its origins through Western Europe to classical Greece. Multiculturalists, Queer Theorists, Feminists, and other Postmodernists point out that formalism (being their universal aesthetic standards for evaluating and judging visual art) often used the art classroom as a space for discrimination to occur. The classroom pedagogy was reinforced by the dominant culture as they privileged the traditions and artwork of the economic and political elite. Postmodernists recognize the growing diversity across the United States and seek to equally disperse the critical knowledge and skills to successfully address the educational needs of all the students. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandate was meant to address the persistent inequalities in educational outcomes. These were linked to factors of race, social class, language and disability. The knowledgebase underlying state teacher certification has also been scrutinized for educating diversity. As we will see, discipline-based art education opened the doors for postmodernist approaches in art programs. Art education refocused the conversation to include the historical, contextual, evaluative, and definitive content and art related to personal expression.61

Pre-modernity

Not everyone is excited about Postmodern ideas, and many reject Feminism, Postcolonialism, Queer Theory, and Multiculturalism. Some scholars suggest there is a major fund of knowledge that all Americans should learn if they are to be considered culturally literate. Ralph Smith suggests there is a tradition of great art that is worth

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61 Kraehe, 162-172.
preserving and transmitting. Smith defends the canon and argues there are judgments of artistic excellence and there are reasons to trust these.\textsuperscript{62} “Works of high culture are inestimable sources of intense enjoyment, gratification, and humanistic insight; and such works are significant constitutes of national pride and unity.”\textsuperscript{63} Opponents of the canon argue it legitimizes only certain types of art. The argument often centers on the word quality, and then who is the judge of quality. Quality is embraced by those on the right of the aesthetic spectrum. The left tends to disdain it, arguing it is used to uphold the authority of the white male. Careful readers can identify an art educator’s suppositions.\textsuperscript{64}

Still others reject modernism, but for different reasons. The Art Renewal Center (ARC) makes it clear what they are about with their slogan \textit{Leading the Revival of Realism}. Looking at the ARC philosophy and mission statement, Premodernists promote a return of skill-based training, standards, and excellence in the visual arts. The website even lists ARC approved schools, and they are openly suggesting a return to quality. The philosophy of ARC was written by Fred Ross, who vehemently attacks the Modernist doctrine. He claims the Modernist paradigm dominated the way arts were taught in higher learning, and the educators at that time never learned the skills used to create realistic pieces. He says they denigrate the skills and subjects which enabled fine art. The ARC argues that communication is the primary purpose of fine art, and communication can only occur when the listener and the reader have the same language. The realistic images provide the narrative and the skills used in rendering rendering

\textsuperscript{63} See note 62 above.
these are the vocab. Ross says, “Traditional realism can cut across all other languages and be understood by all people…The Modernist paradigm banished the only universal language that exists: realistic imagery with the techniques and skills required to achieve it.”

Ross challenges the notion of academically trained realist artists being elitists. “If a work succeeds in the primary reason for what it was created for, communication, then that success becomes the reason it is denigrated. Modernism endows the meaningless with meaning. Pre-modernism is art about life it is about the human condition, modernism is art about art. How many times does the canvas need to be pointed to as being flat?” Ross and others point out that modernists use prestige suggestions to block all other viewpoints as being ignorant and tasteless. He claims their need for critics and philosophers to explain a piece demonstrates that their pieces and doctrines are elitist.

Art education has developed and expanded, but not without its knowledge base rooted in the ideas and values of modernism. If modernism means anything, it gives us a liberal belief in progress empowered through formalist experimentation with universal art education upholding these tenets. Modernists believe singular understanding of an experience can be communicated directly. It is the Postmodern model which sees this merely as a representation and a construct. Those calling for a return, like those associated with the ARC, to the western humanist tradition through academic art are promoting an ideology which renews a constructed conservative vision.

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66 See note 65 above.
67 See note 65 above.
of the past. Although Postmodernism does not perpetuate the canonic tradition, it is in
dialog with past codes. While modernism sought to deny this, Postmodernism builds up
on this.68

Peter Abbs, a commentator on art education, believes a progress in the arts
depends on a sense of tradition. He identifies two schools of thought on this: the
conservative and the Postmodern. He asserts these are opposites, but says art education
needs both of these mindsets. Students need to submit themselves to the intrinsic
qualities of great works across time, but students need to preserve the freedom to
change. They need to be able to tell a different outcome. He goes on to say that the
conservative mindset challenges and educates us, while the Postmodern mindset offers
materials to endlessly refashion and reformulate.69

68 Barrett, Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary, 64.
69 Burgess and Addison, 25.
CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTION OF THE LEARNER AND THE IMPACT OF VALUES

Contemporary art education has its foundation in the history of art and general education. Some of these philosophical points of contention include John Locke’s discussion on the mind being a blank slate; learners being passive receivers instead of active seekers; what senses need to be engaged for efficient learning; and what extent the environment impacts learning. The positions of these points will influence the educational practice of each teacher-artist.

Historical Influences on the Nature of Learners

Jean-Jacques Rosseau advocated that the interests of the child and the everyday life of the child should inform and influence the educational model. Simply stated, children should be permitted to be children. Eventually, educators in this school of thought emphasized the learner should be actively engaging their environments with hands on manipulations of materials and systematically structured lessons.\(^70\)

John Dewey was also greatly concerned with the relationship of learners not only to the environment but to the society in which we live. Dewey held that education directs and controls meaningful experience. These constructed meaningful experiences are contingent upon the active participation and engagement of the learner. Education was not merely preparation for life, but life itself.\(^71\)

\(^{70}\) Sally J. Scholz, "That All Children Should Be Free: Beauvoir, Rousseau, and Childhood," *Hypatia* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 396.

E.L. Thorndike was a contemporary of Dewey who developed the *stimulus-response theory*. This held that learning consists in establishing a series of connections in the brain, which results from the response to a stimulus. Thorndike concluded that learning was a matter of repetitive drills, and a given subject should be broken down into practicable parts.\(^\text{72}\)

Directly confronting this view are those in the Gestalt school of psychology. Gestalt psychologists affirm wholes are primary and the parts derive their property from these wholes. The learner grows from understanding the relationships among the various aspects of the learning situation. Rudolf Arnheim, best known for his book *Art and Visual Perception*, explains works of arts as Gestalts. They are completely functional units and by necessity must be perceived as wholes. With this as a guide, each part affects all other parts simultaneously. Gestalt maintains the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.\(^\text{73}\)

Behavioral psychology, most notably developed by B. F. Skinner, considered the learner to be a relatively passive organism which was governed by stimuli. Through proper control of the external environment, the learner’s behavior is predictable. This study of objective behavior has informed the curriculums used by computers assisted instruction. Behaviorists have informed educational evaluations, measurements, and testing. Schools have responded to behaviorism by requiring the writing of behavioral objectives. The government's 2002 program, No Child Left Behind, created a system of high stakes testing.\(^\text{74}\) Many art educators criticize behaviorism because of its

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\(^\text{72}\) Edna M. Arthurs, “From Whence We Came,” *Contemporary Education* 70, no. 4 (1999): 47.


narrowness. These educators claim the theory does not account for the individualistic, intuitive and creative displays of human experience.\textsuperscript{75}

The humanistic psychologists, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, emphasize these personal components of life and learning. The humanists consider behavior as the only observable expression of an inner being. The learner has freedom to make choices, and the individual is unique. This subjective inner world may never manifest in outward action. The teacher facilitates learning in order to turn the learner into an educated person. According to Rogers, the goal of education must be for an individual to learn how to learn, to adapt. Art educators who emphasize the creative and unique expression of human personality tend to be humanists.\textsuperscript{76}

Jean Piaget argued the child does not ‘flower’ as Rousseau suggested, nor is ‘programmed’ as Skinner suggests. Instead, the child sequentially develops through three stages or periods. These stages of cognitive development are the sensorimotor period, the period of concrete operations, and the period of formal operations. This implies that educators must have knowledge of the learners' characteristics in order to instruct and create a curriculum which works with that child.\textsuperscript{77}

Current applications of cognitive psychology emphasize various levels of thinking and how these relate to knowledge. Art educators work in creating a basic general knowledge in order for the student to think independently while encouraging problem solving and the questioning of this basic storehouse of information. This

thinking curriculum works well with art educators whose methods and inquiries are derived from four art disciplines: criticism, aesthetics, art history, and art production. Educators can engage students in their thinking about art and visual culture, and they can solve problems through active engagement in their own creation of art objects. This approach also encourages the interpretation and analysis of the social and political contexts of visual culture.  

The nature of the learner is also influenced by Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (MI). Although published in 1985, this theory has been a major driver for change. This theory looks at the range of human accomplishments and the differing capacities of humans. Gardner describes eight distinct intelligences and suggests there may be more. The eight include naturalist intelligence, linguistic Intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence. The traditional view of emphasizing linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence is narrow, and many art educators view MI theory as justification for the interactions occurring in the art room.  

During the 1970s, research into the functions of the brain came to the forefront of the discussion of the nature of the learner. The left hemisphere right hemisphere debate supposed that the left brain was the site of analytic, rational, logical, and linear thinking. The right side of the brain was holistic, non-rational and intuitive. This was  

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used as a push in the logical-mathematical and verbal learner; however, more current research suggests there is little to no truth to this theory. Four generalities have come to light within contemporary neuroscience: (1) The brain changes physiologically as a result of experience. (2) IQ is not fixed at birth. (3) Some abilities are acquired more easily during certain sensitive periods, and some call these windows of opportunity. (4) Learning is strongly influenced by emotion. The assumptions made on the nature of what it means to be human and how these humans are conceptualized as being learners directly ties to the content one teaches and to the values of that culture.80

The Values of Society

Democracy reached a new level of maturity in the 20th century when the United States attempted to educate all its citizenry. It was the 20th century that brought the ideal of twelve years of compulsory education to all regardless of sex, race, religion or ethnic origin. In a democracy, these two ideals, universal suffrage and universal schooling, are necessarily interconnected. John Dewey recognized this, and in the very title of his book, Democracy and Education, he tied these two words together. The essential and revolutionary message was that a democratic society must provide an equal educational opportunity for all. Suffrage without schooling naturally produces a type of mobocracy. It does not produce a constitutional government, and it does not produce democracy by the people and for the people. This means that all children are given the same quantity, twelve compulsory years, and the same quality.81 At the

beginning of the 20th century, fewer than 10 percent of those eligible for high school enrolled. Now most enter, and 83 percent graduate. While the quantity part has drastically changed, it is the quality part of this equation which comes into question.\textsuperscript{82} Horace Mann is known for saying “education is the gateway for all,”\textsuperscript{83} but what is education and what is its purpose? These questions are not only tied to the nature of the learner, but are also tied to the values of the culture.

In a democracy, the values of the tax paying public are to be reflected by the local, state, and national governments. School systems respond to the needs and values of the larger society with the oversight of administrations. Specific content has been chosen to shape and influence a culture's view on troubling and controversial issues. This content included the civil rights movement, space exploration, drug and alcohol abuse, the threat of AIDS, talks on the probability of global warming, and pollution. The content used in art education has been influenced by the values of the citizenry as much as the innovations of art, the influences of psychology, and the development of philosophy. Understanding the art created in a particular culture and the educational methodologies implemented requires knowledge of the purposes, functions, and meaning of artwork within the context of their creation.\textsuperscript{84}

Another influence from our values is the development of the United States as a nation. The United States did not share the artistic and architectural traditions of much of the rest of the world. While Europe was dotted with the architecture from the past, survival and practical living required the time and energy of the colonists. Cultivating

\textsuperscript{83} Horace Mann quoted in \textit{The Paideia Proposal}, 4.
\textsuperscript{84} Adler, \textit{The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto}, 10.
the fine arts did not take precedence. In a sense, the business leaders and politicians replaced the aristocracy. These groups tended to champion the arts only when they were used to make money or seen as profitable. As a result, some see art education as peripheral rather than essential.85

One example of an art educator who capitalized on the values of his culture was Walter Smith. Smith was known as a proponent of industrial design in the mid-nineteenth century. He implemented art instruction and created books because the business community needed to design goods which could compete on a global basis.86 Another example is Viktor Lowenfeld. Lowenfeld’s emphasis on creativity and self-expression was based on two sources. One was a particular view of child development and the second was the concept that there are stages of art development. Lowenfeld’s work coincided with the artwork being championed in the 20th century and the assumptions many psychologists were making at the time. In other words, the positions these art educators held influenced their practices; the values of the culture they were working in supported the application of their educational philosophies.87

The quality of a program varies from state to state and from district to district according to the values of the school’s administration and community. Sadly, a major player is financial stability. Art teachers often must advocate to the parents and the community. Sarah Curry (Charles F. Brush High School) positively remarked,

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“Thankfully members of our community have recently organized to create an organization called the ‘Art Boosters.’ Their intent is to support, promote and encourage the visual art departments in our school district.” Revered philosopher of education Harry S. Broudy asked the question, “Is art necessary or just nice?” He posed the idea that there are many subjects and topics for students to study. Broudy argued in his view that art was absolutely necessary for the general education for all who will become citizens in a democratic society. Sadly, many do not share this view.

The history of art education can be seen as a critique of democratic values. Part of why Postmodernity criticizes Modernity is because the democracy was set up for some, and not for all. Many today see the art program as an appropriate place to share values and deal with social issues and problems. Major artists have demonstrated this role of art: Pablo Picasso used Guernica to protest war and violence, and Judy Chicago's The Dinner Party brought feminist issues of injustices to light. The freedom necessary for the success of an aesthetic act needs freedom of thought and action. A successful art program must have an atmosphere designed to encourage the individual. At times this is nonconforming and expressive. Often, this separates art classes from other subjects. Ellen Gagliano (Athens City Schools, Athens) writes, “The exercise in creative problem solving, where there can be more than one ‘right’ solution to a problem is in jeopardy of being removed from our public schools and our society. Once expression and creative problem solving has been removed from our schools, students begin to feel constricted into thinking there is a right or wrong version of society. Those

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89 See note 88 above.
who don't fit the mold are going to suffer, and as result, our society will suffer too. I teach to keep the spark alive. ...to let students know there are many solutions, many ways to respond and interact with the world. There are many ways to be ‘right.’ There are many ways to give back to society. There is great joy in creating with your hands, and taking the time to put care into a work to share with your classmates. I hope they can carry these lessons into their future.” In *K-12 Education*, Lesley Burgess and Nicolas Addison discuss the difficulty of addressing social issues that are not values of a given society. Although most can agree that as citizens we learn to respect and live with our neighbors in various social contexts, few can agree on what extent an art program should push the accepted boundaries.⁹⁰

Prominent Rationales for Art Education

One of the most prominent justifications for the inclusion of art is the understanding that creativity is its own value. Three of the most influential writings on the development of creativity were written in the 1940s and 1950s: Victor D'Amico's *Creative Teaching in Art*, Viktor Lowenfeld’s *Creative and Mental Growth*, and later Manuel Barkan’s *Through Art to Creativity*. The 1920’s progressive movement related expressiveness and creativity to a theory of personal development. Lowenfeld placed a primary emphasis on the development of creativity within education. He cautioned against imposing adult views on children and magnified children's perspectives. Art was thought of as a body of knowledge that could be learned by children. Judith Burton recently removed some of the psychological principles and views that are no longer

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⁹⁰ See note 69 above.
held in Lowenfield’s work and recentered an art educational model with the learner's experiences of the self, the world, and relationships.\textsuperscript{91}

Manuel Barkan pushed away this child-centered approach and pushed toward the content of the work. He believed understanding the role art plays in society and culture could not just develop through the process of art-making. The concept of art education was broadened to learning art history and culture. Further ties to other disciplines created what is known as Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), which grew out of a movement toward a Comprehensive Art curriculum and has encouraged many Postmodern views. Dwaine Greer named and defined this approach, which views art as being taught in other disciplines. This rationale expands art content to include aesthetics and art criticism. This emphasizes knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary for the general education, but also for those with special abilities and those who will pursue art as a vocation and those who will pursue advanced study. DBAE had a goal of establishing art as a regular subject within the school curriculum.\textsuperscript{92} Elliot Eisner pointed out that “DBAE addresses the four sorts of things that people do with art: they make it, they appreciate its qualities, they locate its place in culture over time, and they discuss and justify their judgments about its nature, merits, and importance.”\textsuperscript{93} The four major curricular components include art making, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics; these are interconnected and of equal importance. The position of Eisner is

\textsuperscript{93} Elliot Eisner, The Arts and the Creative Mind, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 27.
the student learning that occurs in the art classroom cannot occur elsewhere but is applicable to all other classrooms.

The Getty Center for Education in the Arts supported the Discipline-Based approach. This center sponsored the largest research and development project in the history of American art education. It began in 1982 in the Los Angeles area, and the program reached a million students within 10 years with professional development programs in many states including Ohio. This group collaborated with The Council of Chief State School Officers, The Parent and Teacher Association, Secondary and Elementary School Principals, National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Art Education Association. One outcome was the National Standards for the Arts in 1994, and this has served as a model for many state guidelines. Another outcome was the National Board Certification for Art Education (NBPTS) and the first National Assessment of Educational Progress in the Arts in 1997. Comprehensive Art Education today is the most prominent rational in the US, with the basic ideas being that art learning is essential.\footnote{Carole Henry, “Reflections on Manuel Barkan’s Contributions to Art Education,” \textit{Art Education} 55, no. 3 (2002): 6-11.}

States responded to the national standards by creating and aligning their own standards, and Ohio is no exception. The Ohio Department of Education's Visual Arts Standards for grades K-12 have content standards for each grade level which are arranged according to three cognitive and creative processes: \textit{perceiving/knowing}, \textit{producing/performing} and \textit{responding/ reflecting}. These cognitive and learning processes work with the idea that there are \textit{enduring understandings} and \textit{progressive points}. The enduring understandings are \textit{personal choice and vision}, \textit{critical and
creative thinking, authentic application and collaboration, and literacy. The progressive points suggest the student will recognize that different cultures created works of art to be enjoyed, looked at, and valued. The students will explore a range of artistic concepts and construct meanings about the works. They connect making art with individual choice and with an understanding of personal cultural identity. The produced artworks are to express and represent the students’ experiences, imaginations, and ideas using a range of media including new technologies and form. Furthermore they are to express opinions about artworks and apply critical and creative thinking to assess and refine their artworks.95

The Ohio Department of Education also lays out a model art curriculum. The frameworks of visual competencies, also known as the cognitive and creative processes, enable a common model to take place. Here the enduring understandings and the progress points are made more specific. The content statements are made around an essential question with the student learning being elaborated on. How the student will demonstrate learning, instructional strategies, resources, assessment, the performance tasks, career connections, the learning standards, connections to other disciplines, and diverse learners are topics within this model. By letting the teacher’s perspective be present, and outlining nonspecific productions, the teacher can use appropriate depth of knowledge connections through tiering the outcomes. The first tier means that competencies are defined by skills, knowledge, and attitudes. The second tier requires students to demonstrate their competencies by communication. The third and last tier is

achieved by the student’s self-competence, social competence, and methodological competence. This means the student can present and justify an interpretation within a social aspect, as well as choosing and reflecting on a strategy. This view is still tied to the DBAE pedagogical model with the perception that the arts are inherently interdisciplinary. This model also uses the four disciplines of DBAE: art making, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics with the goal of creating real life connections.96

Educating the citizens does not lie with the federal government; rather, it is the responsibility of each state and US territory. The federal government undoubtedly is influential due to the funding given to states. However, education in each state varies according to the local school board and the different buildings within a given district. The results from the National Center for Educational Statistics reveal some of the legislative views on art education in 2017. Ohio is one of 22 states that does not define the arts in statute or as a core or academic subject. Ohio is one of 44 states that does require arts instruction at the elementary school level. Ohio is one of 44 states that does require arts instruction at the middle school level. Ohio is one of 44 states that does require arts instruction at the secondary school level. Ohio is one of 25 states that require course credits in the arts for high school graduation. Ohio is one of 20 that does not provide funding for an education grant program or a state-funded school for the arts.97


Advocacy groups such as the *Ohio Alliance for Art Education* (OAAE) take positions on the legislation that is bound to affect art education. On their website, they admit that arts education is facing challenges. “Despite model programs, studies, and research that demonstrate the value of arts learning, national education policies and budget constraints continue to put arts education programs at risk of being reduced or eliminated.”\(^{98}\) Even though the arts were named as a core subject under 2001 federal law, *No Child Left Behind*, The Center for Education Policy reported in 2006 that 22% of school district surveyed had instructional time reduced for the arts. The reason was to make more time for math and reading since these are the subjects that are tested. Ellen Gagliano (Athens City Schools) criticizes the current testing mindset: “We are a visually literate society. We are bombarded with images everywhere we go, yet Art Education and learning about our visual consumption and communication has been systematically striped out of our nation's public schools. Funding issues and excessive testing are leaving no room for the hands-on activities that teachers once used because ‘it won't be on the test’. When their jobs are tied to their students’ success on these tests, they no longer have the freedom to teach what they think students need to have a fulfilling and expressive life. We are left with fewer and fewer opportunities for our students to explore the physical-hands on problem solving that the United States was once known for. I find this a tragedy that we must fight as art educators.” Unlike NCLB, the common core does not designate subjects as being core. However, like

NCLB it fails to legitimize the visual arts. As mentioned above, Ohio does not consider the visual arts to be a core subject.99

Through the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), ODE is emphasizing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). This allows untested subjects, like the arts, to be tested and determine a teacher’s contribution to the growth in learning made by their students. At the local level, teachers set measurable goals based on their art classes and disciplines content standards. A pre-test is given early in the school year with a posttest following in the early spring. Again, this test does not legitimize the subject of art, rather it attempts to legitimize the teacher.100

The frustration of keeping the arts in schools is felt by many. Since Ohio does not provide funding for the arts, it is often one of the first disciplines to experience financial cuts. Many districts ask for levies to help with funding, and the American public by all indication seems to be invested in the visual arts. One poll, sponsored by Americans for the Arts and Ipsos Public Affairs, surveyed 3,020 Americans. The results were published in June of 2016 in Americans Speak Out About the Arts: An In-depth Look at Perceptions and Attitudes About the Arts in America, which released their public opinion poll on arts education and governments art funding. The following findings were published:

1. “63 percent of the population believe the arts ‘lift me up beyond everyday experiences,’ 64 percent feel the arts give them ‘pure pleasure to experience and

99 See note 97 above.
participate in,’ and 73 percent say the arts are a ‘positive experience in a troubled world.’”

2. Seven in 10 American adults (68 percent) attended an arts event in the past year.

3. “An even greater proportion of Americans (77 percent) say they experienced the arts in a ‘non-arts’ venue such as a park, hospital, shopping mall, or airport.”

4. Minorities were more likely to attend an arts event. (71 percent vs. 66 percent). Higher rates of attendance for minorities were noted for multiple art forms, including dance, museums, and theater.

5. “Arts institutions add value to our communities.” Regardless of whether people engage with the arts or not, 87 percent believe they are important to quality of life, and 82 percent believe they are important to local businesses and the economy.

6. “We donate to the arts.” 27 percent of the population (more than 1 in 4 Americans) made a donation to an arts, culture, or public broadcasting organization within the past year. Donors were typically younger and had higher incomes and education.

7. “Americans are more than twice as likely to vote in favor of a candidate who increases arts spending from 45 cents to $1 per person than to vote against them (37 percent in favor, 16 percent against).”

8. Nine in 10 American adults (88 percent) agree that the arts are part of a well-rounded K-12 education.
9. “90 percent believe students should receive an education in the arts in elementary school, middle school, and high school. 82 percent say the arts should also be taught outside of the classroom in the community.”

10. “Half of all Americans are personally involved in artistic activities (49 percent) such as painting, singing in a choir, making crafts, writing poetry, or playing music.”

11. Among those who are personally involved in making art or displaying art in their home, 60 percent say that “arts and music outside of the home” makes them feel more creative—a rate that jumps to 70 percent for Millennials.

12. 53 percent of social media users say that they are more exposed to the arts thanks to connecting online. 59 percent agree that art created on social media is a legitimate form of art.

13. 27 percent of Americans boast a tattoo (12 percent have more than one). Three-quarters believe that tattoos are a form of art (73 percent).

14. 67 percent of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 62 percent agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better.”

15. Despite the individual and community benefits, just 45 percent believe that “everyone in their community has equal access to the arts.”

The Ohio Alliance for Arts Education (OAAE) advocacy agenda outlines goals to improve art education in Ohio. The goals are listed as follows: “Goal 1: The arts are

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included in Ohio’s ‘core’ curriculum. Goal 2: All students have access to quality arts education programs. Goal 3: The arts are included in statewide efforts to improve student achievement.” The OAAE also lobbies for and against legislative proposals.

Currently, in House Bill 2116 Section 3319.22, the OAAE opposed removing the PreK-12 teaching license and replacing it with two distinct licenses; a K-8 and a 6-12. Additionally, section 3319.361 would permit “a superintendent of a city, local, or exempted village school district to employ a person licensed under section 3319.22 of the revised code to teach a subject area or grade level for which the person is not licensed.”

The OAAE recommends teachers are highly qualified in the subjects they teach.

Another challenge comes in from ORC §3313.603 with the fine arts waiver. Section 8 says, “Five units consisting of one or any combination of the following subjects: foreign language, fine arts, business, career-technical education, family and consumer sciences, technology, agricultural education, English language arts, mathematics, science or social studies courses.”

As mentioned earlier, Ohio is one of 25 states that require course credits in the arts for high school graduation. This does not mean that all students will take a visual arts course. In other words, Agricultural Science, Computer-Aided Drafting or any CTE approved course can be substituted for the arts.

As mentioned in the model curriculum for visual arts, there is an emphasis on career connections. In fact, career technical education (CTE) is experiencing a big push

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102 See note 98 above.
104 See note 101
from the state. K-12’s success has been judged by the idea of college and career readiness. In many districts, the push has been moving towards these CTE classes with funding being appropriated for classes under this title. The connection is tied to immediate careers, and much of the money and rhetoric in education has been in reference to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, known by the acronym STEM. One of the telling characteristics of our time is this emphasis on STEM. STEM classes are intimately tied to the CTE mindset. These fields are pushed by educators, businessmen, economists, and politicians. They believe American students are not adequately prepared in math and science for the competitive global economy. The arts response to this has been to add the arts and make STEAM.\textsuperscript{105} Georgette Yakman is credited with creating the term STEAM in 2006, and it has been an encouraging art educational topic ever since. In fact, when one looks at becoming a member of the National Art Education Association (NAEA), the free downloadable sample magazine is the November 2016 issue titled STEAM and features two articles on STEAM. Ohio lawmakers emphasize this in the Ohio budget where incentives are provided for students to pursue STEM careers.\textsuperscript{106}

STEAM seeks integration of the arts into the framework of scientific discipline. It is the scientific rooted in aesthetics. The STEAM classroom uses a thirst for knowledge and curiosity as driving forces and principles for knowledge construction. This kind of education calls for an integrated multidisciplinary approach to learning that sets out to solve real-world problems. Thinkers in STEAM point to the growing do

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it yourself (DIY) culture which has emerged within the digital platforms on the Internet. DIY culture emphasizes experimentation and exploration of genuine interests in technology and tends to move away from mere consumption. The thread linking them is being creative with materials. In fact, this has its own educational model known as think, make, and improve (TMI). Resnick, working within this educational model, speaks of this and proposes a child make images, create, play with their creations, share their ideas and reflect. All of this leads to imagining new processes and ideas. Because it is organized or directional, it tends to be undervalued. The concept of STEM makes it plausible to envisage the teaching-learning process as an active zone driven by experiment and play. It is cross-curricular and transpersonal. The budget allows partnerships to create independent STEM public schools. These schools must partner with a school district, joint vocational schools, institutions of higher education, and business organizations. This is contained in Ohio Revised Code Section 3326 01 page 646 of House Bill 119.

Joan Platz proposes that music and the arts are essential for students who are pursuing careers in the STEM areas, purporting that educational opportunities in the arts prepare students for a career in the 316 billion dollar communication, entertainment, and technology industries. She cites, "The Creative Industries Report, more than 548,000 businesses nationwide are related to the arts and employ 2.99

million people.”\textsuperscript{110} In Ohio, there are 16,000 arts-related industries that employ 89,000 people. In addition, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors students acquire from studying the arts are identified by the Partnership for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Skills and other organizations: “These skills include creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem-solving; communication and collaboration; flexibility and adaptability; and social and cross-cultural skills.”\textsuperscript{111}

A number of STEM schools have focused on the field of arts and communication in Ohio. They see career technical education as merging technology with the arts. This enables students to pursue careers in journalism, broadcasting, graphics, performing arts, and visual arts technology. Samples of integrating art into STEM and career technical education can be found on the Ohio Structural Management System.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{112} See note 110 above.
CHAPTER THREE: MY REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a teacher-artist myself, this research provides a springboard for an exploration, perhaps a revisiting, of my core beliefs about education, the arts, and, specifically, art curriculum within the classroom. What follows is a snapshot of my “ideal” vision for my work.

My Values

There have been eras in human history in which thought processes have been too defined. The ravines cut so deep that narrowness is the only way known and accepted. During these times “best” is a matter of dogma. In one sense, the current situation is the antithesis of narrow-mindedness. The freshly dug caverns are interconnected with older caverns by the flooding and the refusal to define the objective. “Best” is a judgment few are willing to make, and those willing to call something “best” face major criticism. If I had the opportunity, my ideal high school curriculum would revolve around one question: What is best?

From my perspective, it is best to value fortitude (those that push even though it’s hard), temperance (those who can control themselves and focus on the task at hand), justice (those who provide an honest day’s work), and prudence (those who know what to do and how to do it or can devise a plan of action to get it done). These values, align with my beliefs and behaviors and, together, they shape the culture of my classroom.

My Beliefs

I make the assumptions that every life has intrinsic worth and that life has meaning and purpose. I believe the purpose of education is not to provide specific answers, which are soon outdated, irrelevant, or wrong given the accelerated rate of
change in the world. Rather, the purpose of education is to provide the means (the knowledge, methods, and critical processes) for the student to pose and answer questions. The “means”, often called “critical thinking”, is the only constant in the ever-changing relationship between self and the world at large.

I believe the visual arts are a legitimate discipline and are worthy of study. The visual arts do not need the sciences for their justification. It is for this reason that I am not a proponent of STEAM, which embeds a subordinated position for the arts. It creates a paradigm where the arts must continually justify their existence in the name of STEM, and if this happens, I am skeptical that the arts will have an easy time recovering from this.

The STEAM mindset gives false hope to the arts. It is enticing to dream of bigger budgets and talk of being progressive through innovation. It is tempting to justify to parents the legitimacy of an art class by relating it to the money their child will make and the stable careers they will immediately have. Rather, the strength of the visual arts is that they are embedded in the liberal arts. STEAM is about specialization in knowledge to fulfil jobs, and I believe this undermines the value of the arts.

A true education allows the student to identify the good and how the pursuit of it and its possession satisfies. A job is good in that it provides a means of subsistence, and sometimes a job provides satisfaction from its performance. A job implies an exchange of money for service (to someone else or a group). Notice the dynamic this assumes: the powerful versus the powerless.

Training in the performance of a task is not education. Rather, an education requires knowledge of oneself. Education requires recognition of one’s intrinsic dignity,
unique capacities, and formation of character. A free people require self-know, and a subordinate people simply need training. Consider the example of the American slaves: the southern landowners never wanted people to read or write…they wanted them to perform a task.

Of course, education and getting a job are related. All employers want employees who possess fortitude, temperance, justice, and prudence. However, I do not believe the purpose of education is to get a job, but a job is an outgrowth of being educated. Current focuses have disguised the difference between the ends and the means, tending to justify education only as a means. I believe the visual arts are both a means and an end. They are a discipline of their own and deserve to be funded and studied. The visual arts have their own language and have something powerful to offer humanity. The strength of the visual arts is that they provide an understanding of generalities and things common to all humans.

I see a society that is desperately hungering for meaning and purpose. I see massive doses of meaninglessness being prescribed to our youth. As teachers, we are trained to prepare for the worst. ALICE\textsuperscript{113} trainings (as preparation for possible scenarios of school violence) are now uncomfortably common. The school districts of Ohio are arming teachers through the FASTER\textsuperscript{114} program. Secularism, pluralism, and privatization as contemporary moods have their positives, but they also have unintended consequences. For those of us who struggle with existence, postmodernity has little to

\textsuperscript{113} ALICE trainings are common in response to school violence. ALICE is an acronym standing for: Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate.
\textsuperscript{114} FASTER stands for Faculty Administrator Safety Training & Emergency Response. The FASTER program attempts to make schools not soft targets by providing training to school officials in order for them to be armed.
offer. I believe the greatest gap humans have is the distance between their head and their heart, and I believe the arts can bridge this gap. They can be pleasures of the spirit which satisfy desire. They can feed the better angels of our nature...provided we know the difference between right/wrong and good/evil.

My Behavior

Knowing this, I have an opportunity to have crucial conversations about assumptions and meaningful questions. The ideal art curriculum leads to an understanding of worldviews, and there are four major questions that each worldview posits.

- Origin: Where did humans come from?
- Meaning: What is the purpose of life?
- Morality: What is right and what is wrong?
- Destiny: What happens when we die?

I see the discussion of worldviews as being rooted in three tests of truth: logically consistent, empirically adequate, and existentially relevant. I try to intertwine this with the study of art.\(^{115}\)

Curriculum: Content and Skills

The art classroom is centered on knowing the language and then applying the language within meaningful contexts. I believe as a teacher I am to provide definitions, and I define these using the formal elements. The formal elements consist of the cognitive (iconography), perceptual (the art elements- gesture, shape, light, line,

\(^{115}\) The information provided in these last sections makes no claim to originality. Rather, this information is based upon common questions and definitions used in educational and art historical textbooks and classrooms.
perspective, and design), expressive, and utilitarian components that constitute a work of art. These are based in the textbooks used in art history and studio art or on standard practices in art history and studio art.

A formal analysis is a verbal description and interpretation of a work of art. It normally consists of an examination of the subject matter, the major art elements, and the underlying themes or symbolic meanings (iconography). These three areas are often grouped into the terms “content” or “formal elements.” An analysis describes how the formal elements are used, what kind(s) of information the formal elements convey, and how the formal elements solve the problem posed by the piece.

Constructive criticism takes place the form of critiques (group and individual): Learning in studio art courses is based on a critical method: what is working or successful and what is not working or unsuccessful? It is important that students work to improve their skills in the areas or steps where they are unsuccessful. The varying steps in making the work, by necessity, build upon themselves. Being successful in each step leads to more successful outcomes, and these happen more quickly. This critical method may take the form of individual or group critiques and/or written evaluations or evaluation sheets. Early in the year, it will be expected that there will be more unsuccessful elements than successful. Later in the year, it is hoped this will be reversed. I believe I am to remind the students it is not a critique of them as people, but of their artwork. It is better to think of the work’s elements as either being successful or being unsuccessful and then stating why. The goal then is to formulate ideas, and then use the formal art elements to aid with the words necessary to get the point across.
Each student’s work is centered on a concern. A concern may be subject matter (or lack of), the formal elements, or a work of art as a solution or answer to a problem or question posed to or by the artist. The formal elements are the means (tools) which an artist uses to solve the problem. This makes the art room a place where all students have their own voice.

Upon successful completion of the art classes, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate application of a system or methodology for creating and solving problems.
- Define, explain, and apply perceptual skills used in making works of art: formal elements of gesture, shape, line, light, perspective, visual issues, expressive issues, and iconography.
- Define, explain, and apply conceptual skills used in painting: vocabulary, thought process, and methodology of making art.
- Demonstrate technical skills used in specific mediums: process and methodology of manipulating media.
- Demonstrate development of a personal image: artwork containing a personal or unique point of view.

The Ideal

The goal I have is to produce a culture. My values, my beliefs, and my behaviors dictate the culture of my classroom. As a teacher-artist, I am responsible for cultivating the culture of the classroom supported by my curriculum. If I am able to foster a positive culture, then I can integrate certain components of my curriculum that otherwise might have been omitted. Since I value skills and honest conversations about essential questions
of life, it is important that I teach the application of skills within a meaningful context. I must select content that enables me to do both. I believe my students are capable of engaging in conversations that create tension, so I place certain materials in front of them to struggle with. If my behaviors (teaching styles) reflect that I want to teach students how to think and not what to think, I will craft learning experiences that align with that element of culture. Eventually, this becomes a cycle: the curriculum (content and skills) reinforce the culture which allows for further exploration/engagement in curriculum.

Thus, curriculum has a reciprocal relationship with the cultivated culture.

I want the student to ask the question: What is best? I want them to be hungry for knowledge. I want them to think for themselves. I want them to challenge me as much as I challenge them. If anything has come out of this research, it is the realization that teacher-artists are the hope for the arts. They have a say.
CONCLUSION

It is understood that human beings are social creatures and are bound to make relationships through communication. The arts provide a means for this communication and play a significant role in our understanding of what it means to be human. The visual arts not only teach us to recognize these relationships, but also show us how to communicate more efficiently. Randi Channel (The Graham School, Columbus) stated, “The skills students learn in the art room can be applied to their lives in innumerable ways.” Artists have always reacted to the thinking and the issues of the day. Often, this challenges an accepted perspective and develops nonlinear visual venues for dealing with the complexity of human existence. The studying of arts offers a toolset for learning and developing creative thinking.

The reality is that art education is in a perpetual fight for its survival. One teacher-artist, who wishes to remain anonymous, says, “We see what we want to see. Arguments supporting the visual arts are only heard by those who want to see their treasures.” Commenting on the harsh reality of being an art educator, Rod Black (Newark High School, Canal Winchester) commented: “I think every art teacher starts out believing that they will balance the core classes by opening their students’ eyes to beauty, creativity, and visual literacy. But in reality, 99% of the normal day is stressful, boring, and routine, like any other job. I keep teaching for that 1%, those amazing sparks in the night.” Whether responding to sparks, mining treasures, or going to through the monotony of the day, the frontlines are held by the teachers of visual art.

Although the future of art education is uncertain, these teachers know they have an influence. Heath Bennett (Logan Elm High School, Circleville) stated, “As a life-
long learner, I am dedicated to the education of students to influence the world around us with the love of the visual arts. Regardless of ability, everyone can be taught to tap into the artistic ability within them that each were born and created with.” When reading the responses provided by the art teachers featured in The State of the Arts, it is clear they believe the arts can provide answers to the pressing questions of the day. Mathew Reynolds (West Carrollton High School, West Carrollton) remarked, “I feel that as a teacher, it is my responsibility to prepare my students to make the world a better place. My classroom is a place not just for learning art, but learning how to function as a thoughtful, responsible member of society.” Sarah Curry (Charles F. Brush High School) offers a slightly different perspective: “Teachers wear many hats. On certain days I can be a mother, a sister, a friend, an enforcer, a counselor. Many days the lesson in my classroom doesn’t even involve art. Many times we are simply discussing an issue in the world that needs to be addressed. As we all know, for many of our students we often provide the only reason for them to show up to school at all. This does not mean all our students will become artists, and that is a good thing. We are raising critical thinkers that are ready to analyze the world, and don’t think they are not watching us.” Whatever the future of visual arts schooling will be, it will undoubtedly continue to react to the changing conceptions of youth, the definitions of art, and the values of society.

The positive outworking of Postmodernism is there are perspectives and voices. The current state of arts education still permits an individual teacher voice to emerge. Sadly, the individual nuances of each art educator job with the influence of the Ohio Department of Education often stifle these voices to varying degrees. The challenge
comes from uniting and understanding the multiplicity of voices. Art teachers are not content delivery mechanisms, and when contemporary art education is analyzed, a compendium of voices emerges. The readers of art are important in our time, and if each reader has a voice, it logically produces more perspectives. Indeed, the number of competing answers is probably one of the greatest commentaries of our time. Simply stated, this conversation is not easy. Pre-modern, Modern, and Postmodern mindsets are still present. Within each one of these are strands and caverns of thought. Any discussion of the arts, or the humanities for that matter, is flooded with a sea of responses. To some, it reeks of discord; to others, these many and varied voices sound like an angelic chorus.
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