

Visual Literacy, Youth, and Identity Formation

Oona Myllyntaus¹, Rachel Sinquefield-Kangas¹, Christiane Herth²

¹University of Helsinki, Finland,

²Université Paris, 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Abstract

The purpose of our workshop is to experience and explore with teachers and scholars a visual arts curriculum framework designed for the digital media era. The content of the workshop aligns with the ‘Common European Framework of Reference for Visual Literacy’. It also draws parallel connections to Herbert Read’s theoretical Education Through Art (1943).

Today, visual arts teachers need to teach methods of viewing, apply critical pedagogy, and address socio-cultural issues, in particular. Further, we subscribe to the paradigm that big socio-cultural ideas, which are interlinked to students’ worldviews and conception of self, should be taught in conjunction with visual literacy and critical thinking in order for students 1) to learn how to learn and 2) to express their ideas through visual media. The aim of this workshop is first to visually explore how images inlaid in our daily digital consumption work towards influencing the construction of personal identities of young people. Following the Visual Thinking Strategies Exercise the workshop will progress into a critical discussion aimed at challenging a dominate theme evidenced during the Visual Thinking Strategies Exercise. The final step of the

workshop will include an art making process in which participants re-design the digital commercial image reflecting their own personal views or beliefs in regards to the critical topic of debate.

Keywords

Identity formation, Digital media, Visual literacy, Visual thinking strategies, Youth.