

The Aesthetic Implications of Participatory Art in Education: Balancing Social and Artistic Critique

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Introduction

- In this study we aim to explore the merits of Participatory Socially Engaged Art (PSEA), specifically, through the lense of aesthetic based education exploring the social impacts.
- We analyzed several systems and explained actual scenarios that involve Aesthetic Based Art Education.
 - Both Social Emotional Learning (SEL) a style of education focused on fostering social and emotional growth (Haralovich, 2023), and Problems Based Learning (PBL) an education style focused around solving a specific problem share core values with PSEA (Constantino, 2002)
 - We outline the justifications for PSEA, and explore the modern application of aesthetic learning, specifically through our system.
 - We also analyze field research conducted by my colleague, where he implemented the system in a classroom (Chu, 2020).
 - We explore 2 other implementations of Socially Engaged Art (SEA) with both Lee and Koh showing the potential social reaches of PSEA.
 - We believe that PSEA offers a unique blend of social and aesthetic factors that promote a novel approach to education, we believe an attempt to implement this system in school-settings would not only garner more data, but possibly provide a better environment to explore aesthetics.
 - PSEA offers an avenue for students to become an active part of art education and potentially create socially impactful work.
- Our study could explore new alternatives to the way art education is traditionally taught, allowing projects to be more impactful and socially relevant.

Theoretical Framework

- Throughout research we use the idea of Claire Bishop (Bishop, 2012) and aesthetic theorist who focuses on the balance between social and aesthetic factors. with pieces social relevance being of importance.
- Bishop works to shift the focus of aesthetics form expressive and reactive to include secondary audiences.
 - Much of aesthetic based education draws inspiration from these authors with Dewey being particularly impactful.
 - Dewey laid the groundwork for many of the aesthetics explore, being a major player in the theory behind SEL (Haralovich, 2023)
 - Our general framework shares similarities with styles of education currently being explored.

Problem Based Learning (PBL)

- PBL, the first style we explored, initially focuses on a problem some kind of issue that requires critical thinking to solve, this problem is usually presented in a way that requires you to use a nuances perspective to solve it (Constantino, 2002).
- The impact of this solution is normally only felt in the classroom, but with PSEA, we believe that this “problem” can become a catalyst for social change.
- Utilizing the perspectives from teachers and students alike, the collaborative pieces within PSEA create and outlet for novel solutions.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

- SEL the second explored system focuses on developing emotional and social within students. is also a byproduct of PSEA education styles, incorporating the viewpoints of others into a shared work is one of the most important aspects PSEA system holds.
- Furthermore, critical thinking persists in all three systems with emphasis on this thinking being integral in producing a socially challenging piece.

Participatory Socially Engaged Art (PSEA)

- PSEA shares broad overlaps with both PBL and SEL, with social emotional growth and cortical thinking being byproducts of a PSEA system
- We offer a distinct kind of collaboration where the bond between educator and student is blurred mores than PBL
- Social outreach is another area where PSEA has separate goals, under the context of our system secondary audiences become an additional focus in the creation of art pieces.



The two images above are examples of SEL works from Haralovich

- The first displays a forest scene drawn by a student
- The second shower a maze by the ocean

Figs. 2 and 5 (Haralovich, 2023)



Through rubbing, students began to pay attention to the subtle corners of the community they once ignored.

(Chu, 2020)

Literature Review

Art education is not traditionally concerned with outside audiences that view pieces. Recently, some studies have been conducted showing the potential impacts of pieces geared towards engaging secondary audiences.

Unpacking the Aesthetics of Working in Public Space in Malaysia and Southeast Asia through the Lens of Art-Led Participative Processes.

- Koh explains the impacts of Socially Engaged Art (SEA) within Malaysia, a country currently going through social change (Koh, 2020).
- It highlights a group called Buku Jalan using socially engaged art to break long standing social boundaries.
- PSEA and SEA are extremely smiler systems, with SEA’s main goal being causing social change through art pieces, the main differential is PSEA exists in the classroom where SEA is broadly a viewpoint on art creation

A Study on Visual Arts Teacher Practice Participatory Art Curriculum: “In the Rub of Shezidao” Course as the Case.

- Chu discusses an implementation of PSEA within Taiwan.
- His class was able to use a specific form of art to promote social change.
- The project helped to include multiple viewpoints from each students, and encouraged collaboration with the instructor. It was engaging for students, and offers a potential starting point for other educators (Chu, 2020)

Art as Pedagogy: A Multiple Case Study of Participatory Socially Engaged Art.

- Lee specifically shows a potential shift by showing the engagement of both primary and secondary audiences with pieces, its this kind of insight we believe the field of art education needs (Lee, 2023).

Our aim within this study is providing an alternative to this traditional model, with the appeal of artwork to the secondary audience becoming a central aspect of styles. An important belief we hold, separate from the traditional field is that if art has aesthetic value, those not involved directly in making the piece should feel some of that value.

Conclusion

Throughout our exploration of PSEA we have discovered some interesting trends that are large parts of various education systems.

- A focus on critical thinking, individuality, and perspective seem to be core values of PBL, SEL, and PSEA.
- SEA is being implemented as a way to reach audiences beyond the initial sphere of influence, this has been shown by both Koh and Lee who showed how secondary audiences could be impacted by these works.
- There is still a great need for further exploration into PSEA, the field study conducted by my mentor shows a strong potential for both engagement, and social change.
- In order to discern whether or not this could be a universal benefit, it could be good to implement the system on a greater scale.
- More research is necessary to reach specific conclusions, as a literature review was our methodology.

Overall, Bishop's ideas of the secondary audience, and a shifted focus to a collaborative setting could lead to a new system for teaching Aesthetic Based Art Education. We urge instructors to try this system to understand if it can lead to a renewed focus on the student and social value of pieces.

Resources

Resources are scannable using the QR code below.

