

City Space and the Pulse of Creativity

DOI: 10.24981/2414-3332-4.2017.5

Yu-Hsiang Chen, Lecture
National Taiwan University of Arts, Taiwan

城市空間與創意脈動
陳育祥講師
國立臺灣藝術大學

摘要

在全球化的影響之下城市變成重要節點，城市空間愈來愈場景化，創意人才在這些節點間不斷流動。城市有許多的樣貌，就像一個複雜的人類集合情境。當人與空間這兩個元素碰撞在一起，不論對城市氛圍是寫實的還是批判的，後現代的藝術教育可以扮演的角色就是找出個體內在與外在世界的連結與探索。本文介紹一個關於城市空間本位的課程模組以及學生的作品，透過數位影像與手繪圖像，反映出他們對城市現象的觀察與回應。

關鍵字：城市，影像，藝術教育

Abstract

Under the influence of globalization, cities have become important nodes, city space has turned increasingly "scenified," and creative people constantly float between these nodes. A city has various faces, just like a complexity with the aggregation of people. When the two elements, human and space, clash together, despite the realistic or critical city atmosphere, the role postmodern art education can play is to explore and find out the connection between what is within the individuals and the outside world. This article introduces a city space-based course module and its students' works, which reflect their observation and response to phenomenon in the city through digital images and hand-drawn pictures.

Keywords: city, image, art education

Features of a city often include intensive humanistic landscapes, fast-transmitted global culture, self-dominant consciousness of residents, as well as diverse community culture. With various facets of a city, how we view a city in fact is quite similar to the way we see the complexity with the aggregation of people.

According to Jacobs (1984), one crucial factor that determines the liveness of a city is the diverse culture, and it is through its constant attraction of talented people that enables a city to develop. Csikszentmihaly (1996) suggested that cities with grand academic and commercial centers tend to act like magnets, attracting people with ambitions to make their names in cultural fields. In such a sense, a city is a stage where one's creativity can be focused on and demonstrated. As we are now in an era of fast-globalization, the special environment of a city along with the floating creative people has thus become an issue worth discussing. The holistic impact of globalization includes aspects of both environment and culture. Since we are currently in the process of large-scale urbanization (Castells, 2011), and there are increasingly more population and activities centralizing in metropolitan areas, globalized cities have



Figure 1. Art work by WANG, AI-LAN

been regarded as important nodes in many discourses concerning globalization.

With such importance of cities, Florida (2002) explained the relationships between creative people and the competitiveness of global cities, and he further emphasized that the social atmosphere in a city also plays a role in influencing the flow of creative people. Florida also defines such creative people as "creative class." According to Florida, the creative class can be classified into "super-creative core", including leaders of cultural thoughts such as scientists, engineers, professors and artists, and "creative professionals," namely high-tech specialists, business managers, management consultants and medical personnel. Suggested by Florida, it is technology, talent and tolerance that decides the classification of the above-mentioned creative class.

In recent years, while Florida has his points in creative city and creative class, Patt (2008) discussed from a critical stance and argued that in Florida's discourses regarding creative class, people of Bohemianism have been considered to be an aid in city development, and images of cities are changed with creativity and cultural

art so as to attract investments and the aggregation of high-tech industries as well as creative people, but in addition to all these, there is in fact the lack of a long-term program of cultivating creative individuals or art workers.

In fact, to view from perspective of art education, students can explore humanities and aesthetics. To focus on the real environment, teachers may relate the curriculum to the space and culture outside the school. For instance, teachers can help students understand the culture and true space around the campus, and further guide them to form their cultural identity or critical attitude toward certain phenomenon in their own ways.

Art, to some extent, is the representation of elements in the real environment by humans in a formalized way. Art comes from life, and is practiced in life as well. Therefore, one of the dimensions of art education is to equip individuals with art literacy in the everyday life.

According to Dewey (1934), art enriches our experiences in life; Eisner (1989) also believed the abilities of art are required through learning rather than born in nature, and he emphasized the importance of well-designed curriculums so as to arouse appropriate learning of art.



Figure 2. Art work by YE, YING-XUAN



Figure 3. Art work by JIAN, CHENG-HAN

Therefore, aesthetics is about all the ways humans think of art and beauty, analyze the relationships among art, culture, and lives, and the exploration and connection between what is within individuals and the physical world. In other words, art education is the combination of aesthetics and educational research to explore the relationships among art, culture, and lives with greater views, to understand the educational value of aesthetic experiences, and to thoroughly criticize cultural phenomenon in the society.

In the past when Disciplined-Based Art Education (DBAE) was dominant, only technical issues were practiced and dealt with in the subject matter. However, it is stressed in the critical/social-oriented aesthetic inquiring that in art education and curriculums, only through the understanding of the history and development of the society, economy, culture, and knowledge can one truly comprehend the meaning and value of beauty (Pinar et al, 1995).

Hence, when teachers are practicing courses under the national curriculum guidelines, it is vital for them to first build the connection between the curriculum and the

authentic environment. In the era of globalization, the body of knowledge motions rapidly within new media and the actual space, so from the postmodern education perspective, art education should also focus on the instability, the discontinuity, and the relativity of knowledge, and pay more attention to the interaction of individuals' experiences.

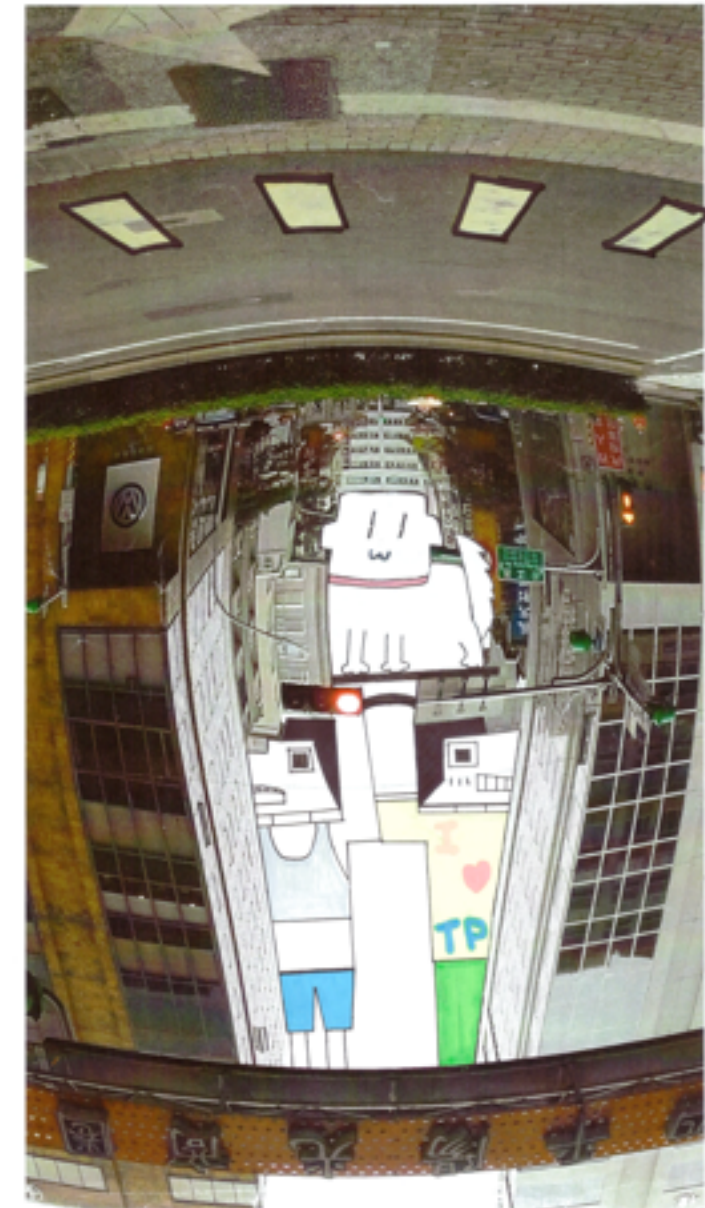


Figure 4. Art work by WANG, WEI-XIANG

relativity of knowledge, and pay more attention to the interaction of individuals' experiences.



Figure 5. Art work by HUANG, YU-ZHEN

The students' works in this article were collected from a researcher-instructed preceding class of a city-space oriented curriculum under the High-scope Project of Ministry of Science and Technology. The course puts great emphasis on students' close observation of city space and environment so as to explore interesting issues. As a result, students are required to step out of the classroom and observe the visual images in the space around, record these real images with the use of digital tools such as cellphones or cameras. These digital images will later be combined with hand drawn pictures.

The theme and concept for the creation is important, so before creating, I hope students can carefully observe things around in their city lives. Only with consciousness and thoughts will they be able to further think of the form they will like to perform. Every student has different thoughts and arrangement of ideas. Some associate with visual images in thinking, others attempt to create unique atmosphere of the city, and still others reflect the unreasonable phenomenon in the city through their works.



Figure 6. Art work by TSAI, CHENG-TA

During the process of creating, students need to learn to have an overall arrangement between digital images and hand-drawn pictures, which is a part that often leads great differences in the final grading. According to Eisner (2002), one of the elements students can learn from art is “the rightness of fit.” Some works may lose tension due to the improper arrangement. For instance, sometimes students may have their hand-drawn pictures, which tend to be more subjective, occupy most part of the picture, causing the digital image of the real space to become simply the background of the image. When this happens, the teacher will ask students to pay attention to the harmony between the two or have a better balance of lines and colors between hand-drawn pictures and digital images. Sometimes, as digital images are of high resolution, their combination with may appear to be awkward if the hand-drawn pictures are not exquisite enough. Therefore, the form and fineness of the picture should all be put into considerations when students are creating their works.

To conclude, the works students created all reflect how they think of the real space. Each piece represents their knowledge and viewpoints toward the city space.

During the process, seeds of creativity may be planted as the teacher walks out of the classroom to explore the city space and environment with the students, and together we constantly re-explore different phases of the real space. Therefore, neither the doors of the classroom nor the wall of the campus should be the limit to students’ learning. It is through natural environment as well as the real space of human activities that enables the creation and appreciation in art education to take shape and enhances students’ art literacy through practicing in the real space in life.

References

- Castells, M. (2011). *The rise of the network society: The information age: Economy, society, and culture* (Vol. 1). John Wiley & Sons.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: GP Putnam's Sons.
- Eisner, E.W. (1989). *Educating artistic vision*. Reston, VA: The National Art Education Association.

Eisner, E. W. (2002). What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education. *Journal of curriculum and supervision*, 18(1), 4-16.

Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class, and how it is transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*.

Jacobs, J. (1984). *Cities and the wealth of nations*. Random House.



*This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution - Share
Equal 3.0 Unported. To view a copy of this license, visit:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>*