

Education through Arts for Arts

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Abstract Throughout the ages, humanity has regarded fine arts as an indispensable means to develop, enrich and strengthen itself and its society and utilized arts, intentionally and unintentionally, to transmit cultural accumulation. The history of civilizations of societies is also the history of arts. The concept of art originates to the existence of humankind and has always existed in the history of the humankind and served him as an ornament, or a medium to distribute a language or a religion, or as an investment area, or was generated for itself. As civilization developed, a new concept of education was generated: the concept of Art Education. The importance of art education stems from the element of creativity. Creativity is explained as a type of talent that is more and more valued and sought after in life because creative behavior is directly associated with development and modernization of societies in every field and profession. Therefore, in order for art education to achieve its goals, the fundamental principle must be designated well. This principle is creation rather than imitation. The concept of art education gained currency after the Industrial Revolution; and the fundamental element of creativity and freedom in arts was regarded as a solution to the problems of mechanization and monotony. Therefore, art was assumed as one of the basic means of training "enlightened people."

Keywords: art education, fine arts, creativity, civilization

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1. Introduction

In review of literature on art education, the most striking thing in foreign publications is the importance placed in creative tendencies in education policies and, subsequently, and diversity of publications on art education. In curriculums of art education courses, the number of weekly hours of art courses is especially high in elementary and secondary education institutions; there is a broad range of textbooks with contents intended to prepare individuals for the future; and, the education is aimed at training good art consumers. To that end, it has become an important art policy to expand the areas of interest and perception of students and each member of society.

As of the second half of the 19th century, increasing interest in art education is observed in industrializing countries. Art education initiative emerges as a solution for dangers for humanity, like the monotony of industrialization, mechanization of people and cultural degeneration, develops in Germany and influences general education structures in several countries. This movement proposes that human, rendered unilateral by the times, can avoid this fate with a creative education. "Creativity is not only an ability in the artistic process involved in the artistic activities related to art education and training, but also is a capability that is based on all aspects of human life and human evolution." [1]

In the years following the World War II, intense debates broke out on art education, especially in Western Europe and the USA. A movement initiated in 1887 in Germany was named as an art education movement in particular that was considered and understood as a reform movement through the general education system. [2] Could art be taught? The debates generated two art education theories: education through arts and education for arts.

2. Education through Arts

Education through arts intends to give a person an adaptive and balanced personality and deals with education-based problems. In this approach, art enters curriculums as a course within the general education system, follows a balanced path between mental and emotional education, recognizes that the age is one of technology and science, and builds art education on a rational basis. Education for arts deals with arts and art problems. It intends to teach plastic arts, and train individuals and the society to appreciate art and evaluate contemporary artistic and cultural data.

Upon discovering himself, humanity discovered how to think and use his mind; from then on, he wanted to dominate first nature, and then, everything. To that end, he used science and arts together. Intelligence and imagination work together in all manmade products in the history of civilization. Hagia Sophia (Istanbul), Süleymaniye Mosque (Istanbul) and Egyptian Pyramids

(Cairo) are among the masterpieces of world heritage and adopted the golden ratio to achieve the desired perfect harmony. Like in numerous examples throughout history, Renaissance artists worked as both artists and scientists and utilized their discoveries in perspective, anatomy, botany and other fields, in mathematics and geometry as important data in obtaining proportionality, balance, and harmony in their own works of art. Arts, like science, aims at recognize, learn, understand, transmit and control the world and the universe.

For the individual, education, both formal and non-formal, is the first means of acquisition from the society. Also, all elements the individual randomly obtains from the socio-cultural environment that give him identity are involved in education. Education initially begins with what we perceive through our senses and ascribe meaning to through our consciousness. This process starts when we are born and as we age and our mind and senses develop, our consciousness is expands and flourishes; subsequently and gradually, learning and cognition are improved.

In order to learn, the individual needs an area of perception to trigger the senses and the skills to utilize in this area. These two elements of learning are the cause and effect of each other. "...as the area expands and deepens, perception is dependently grown and enriched. As perception grows, the area expands, intensifies and extends its scope and increases its efficiency towards the most general and the most generalizable." [3] The sociocultural environment the individual is in, the education he receives, and everything in his inner world and the outer world is within his area of perception. In contemporary society, literature and art's main mission is to add the millions of people to the cultural life and it also depends on connecting them tightly. [4] The information is obtained from the outer world. The skills of perception we need in order to comprehend, make sense of, and utilize what we obtain from the outer world depend on the educational process. As expressed above, the two elements that operate as the cause and effect of each other enrich the accumulation and information and help the individual shape his relationships with the outer world.

Education covers a process during which the individual, throughout his life, uses or cannot use the information he obtains from educational establishments first and through his own senses later. When we define education as " a process of perceiving the human and human values as a whole, having them perceived, and become aware of and raise awareness of them," [3] we can say that many good, correct, modern values that render life meaningful contain the notion of "beauty" within them. Today, humanity gradually becomes accustomed to living in increasingly ugly and unplanned structures in dull and unpleasant, ugly, polluted environments, remote from nature; and those who wish to change this get no returns on their efforts. However, the search for beauty and the truth underlies education. Plato writes, "...will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason. The happiness of man can be achieved in a world dominated by beauty. Beauty enlightens the paths to the truth." [6]

In the scope of education through arts, it would be possible to correctly teach humanity and ourselves and structure our education system accordingly if could understand humanity, human values and reason for human existence as a whole. The reason for human existence is to render life meaningful for the human. Through educational establishments, art teaches the human his own values and gives meaning to his life. Therefore, art education dealing with the children, adolescents, young and contemporary individuals without alienating them from the era and as the requirement of the age it should give to these people an intensive information regarding the scientific methods on art education while directing them within a wide scope of universal and artistic reality. [2] Art is not only in the shape of paintings, sculptures, ceramics, music and literature; it is all of the methods through which intelligence, conceiving life, recasts life into more beautiful forms. What is important is to not only educate artists but also have the structure to teach the entire society to appreciate art. "So, art education aspires to raise generations according to contemporary and modern comprehension and bring humanity into existence within its own values." [3] The art education given at formal education establishments covers the education of artists; however, the main goal should be to bring up individuals who appreciate art within the society.

People that go through the general education system, in spite of having graduated from a university, complete their education without acquiring a healthy level of art culture or becoming an informed audience member. Therefore, even the educated intelligentsia constitutes a mass that is detached from art, does not need it and cannot evaluate it correctly. If we could see that many of the troubles in our lives stem from the fact that we have not grasped art adequately and art education was given due importance in every field in every period starting from childhood, we would be living in more beautiful cities in more beautiful settlements and environments... Well-educated individuals would value art more... Art would be more prevalent, better known and appreciated in our daily lives. Consequently, Turkey would train more internationally renowned artists in the field of plastic arts, several painting and sculpture museums. Galleries and exhibitions would be organized in many towns and cities. Our schools and buildings would reflect aesthetical values of architecture.

It only becomes possible to understand art and gain artistic awareness by creating environments to feed the educated and uneducated masses and give them areas of perception. The areas of perception that provide our perception skills with the chance to develop are the sociocultural environments and formal education establishments individuals interact in. Unfavorable conditions and problems in education may hinder the individual from improving his perception skills and cause regression in the perception skills of individuals with artistic talents. People capable of achieving this goal are expected to be politicians, administrators, and educators trained in educational establishments correspondent with this perception.

When we evaluate the attitude of our society to art in comparison to other developed societies, we observe that art does not have the necessary importance. The reason our entire society, including politicians and citizens,

teachers and students, the poor and the wealthy, suffers from a misconception in terms of art is the structure, goal and contents of the education system applied. Our society is so underachieved in this context that it seems there is no general understanding of the meaning and description of art. We cannot claim that we approach art education correctly or do anything efficient in this field if people with no education whatsoever get on a stage to sing and are defined as "artists" and gain widespread recognition.

In Turkey, music CD sales and entertainment shows on the television in the recent past, and masses guided to shopping centers reveal that these products are profit-oriented, fleeting, unmemorable, entirely closed to contemporary and modern ideas, and only designed to provide momentary pleasure. Unfortunately, the authority, and critics, writers and advertisers impose this type of products on the society as art for their own profit. In underdeveloped countries, promotion and marketing generally use art for economic or other purposes instead of urging it to create more aesthetic products. The number of top-level administrators in our society who can say "I spit in the face of such sculpture," or "I could paint that" has become significant and worrisome.

3. Education for Arts

The concepts of education and art, which are interconnected, depend on two opposite subjects. Art involves the artist, who creates products, and the art lover, who receives and comprehends art, while education involves the teacher and the student. In both instances, the individual establishes his own view of art and shapes his approach to it within the sociocultural environment he lives, grows and develops in. Art lovers and educators must recognize art, take pleasure in it and demand it in order for art to become a necessity.

All people express their appreciation when they achieve emotional satisfaction from beauty in their environment. However, the aesthetical appreciation of art essentially depends on a process of learning and it becomes necessary to be able to determine whether an object is or is not a piece of art or what artistic value it has in order to reach a conclusion about an artwork. The societal benefit of an individual with artistic values in his area of perception is that the individual, having art in his life, develops his judgment through his appreciation and feel anxious to find more beauty. "The more types of the phenomenon of art penetrate the social structure and the more indispensable a part of the structure it becomes, the more aesthetic concern is generated by the individuals of the structure." [5] While the individual learns to grow aesthetic concern by the aesthetic construction of his area of perception, his perception skills can be developed through new regulations in the educational system. A new structure could let artists and readers and audiences share the aesthetic concerns and must be the basis of both education through arts and education for arts. Differences in appreciation among layers of the social structure might be minimized and lasting artistic values might be created in consensus with contemporary and modern theories of art.

As many of the values that give meaning to life feature the concept of "beauty," education through arts implies sociocultural environments, which provides the individual

cultural and artistic activities he can enjoy within his area of perception and transmits aesthetic concern and human values. Therefore, the individual demands better, more beautiful things and his perspective of the world, events and the future changes and develops. A healthy and organized urban structure that incorporates artwork into life, museums, art galleries, concert halls, and everything else that enters the individual's area of perception maintains knowledge of arts and renders it cognizable. In an age when means of communication are rapidly advanced, correct designation of artistic environments out of the school will help improve learning and artistic awareness.

Information can be learned through education; in education for arts, which means education of the artists, only people with sufficient knowledge can scrutinize the concept of art. According to theories proposed after the Enlightenment based on intelligence as the only criterion, a work of art is only measured by its aesthetic qualities. Today, aesthetics is no longer an abstract notion. First of all, based on contemporary and modern theories of art, two key features of an artistic product must be comprehended and taught by educators in order for it to be regarded as a work of art:

It must be unique, new and original in quality, and

It must transmit a message through aesthetic concern.

The prerequisite of education of artists is to help the educated obtain technical skills. However, art, in general, does not imply only technical skills, which is a misconception in our society. Therefore, anyone who paints or plays the violin is not an artist. What matters is the product. An artist stands out with his work. For instance, what makes Tchaikovsky great is *Swan Lake*. What made Van Gogh globally famous were his paintings *Sunflowers* and *The Potato Eaters*. What made Sinan the Architect universal and permanent was Süleymaniye Mosque... We see in museums that currently exhibit the examples of European art that there have been many artists with works in museums that lived in the same periods. However, for instance, Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* sets him apart from his contemporaries. Products have value when technique and aesthetic are combined with the artist's creative power and generate a unique, new and original work. The important thing is not the person who creates work but the work itself.

In this context, educators of artists must be well read in the basic intellectual characteristics and visual qualities of art, as well as distinctive techniques of artists. Under an educator believes only technical information suffices to train an artist, no matter how masterful the work is, it cannot be regarded as a universal work of art according to contemporary and modern theories of art. The individual becomes limited and barren in his creative potential when trained in the methods of an educator who cannot realize technical skill is only an instrument in art making and does not understand what creative thinking means. Talent and necessity are the two basic guides in art education. To bring train creative individuals rather than those who will only transmit or adapt, the basis of art education should be how the knowledge of arts must be employed.

Art educator himself is expected to adopt art as a lifestyle and include it in his life. An educator who has not gotten into the habit of visiting museums or going to concerts and only gives advice cannot direct his students

to become good artists or, if not, good art lovers. Today's art education establishments are filled with examples of academicians that serve as lecturers, criticize the public for not taking an interest in art exhibitions but do not even need to go to a concert themselves. On the other hand, insensible efforts of parents who take their children from instrument lessons to sports lessons for a better education but have not incorporated art into their lives will probably be inadequate. A research study shows that England, in spite of having the same population as Turkey and being the motherland of soccer, has more soccer fans that go to the theater than Turkey. As art occupies a greater place in the perception areas of individuals, educated groups are introduced to theater and arts at very early ages and recognize the importance of art in their lives. More importantly than the difficulties or shortcomings Turkey suffers in bringing up individuals that can observe and enjoy art in their lives, the country needs art educators and administrators who can produce solutions.

The main goal of art education is to overcome misplaced artistic acquisitions and aesthetic inclinations and obtain correct artistic information. In other words, aesthetic qualities of an artistic product must be recognized for it to be regarded as a work of art. Thereafter, educators and artists are needed who can determine whether or not a product is a work of art according to contemporary and modern theories by thinking and using reason.

4. Methodology

Based on the data obtained in research on the subject, this paper collects and analyzes data from various resources, interprets and discusses the results and reaches conclusions.

5. Results and Discussion

In sight of all the elements discussed in the paper, the important point to be considered in terms of Turkey is the fact that administrators lacking in art culture cannot comprehend the function of art, the only subject and target of which is humanity; they want to employ it to serve specific policies, opinions or beliefs, and prevent its development and popularization. By definition, art must be instructive, educational, directive, and constructive; in our society, art cannot function properly and it becomes more difficult the individual, within his constricted area and limited skills of perception, to realize himself. The solution is to adopt an education that observes contemporary and modern theories of art from a universal perspective. Moreover, the initial condition prior to formal education is to provide the individual with areas of perception where he can improve his aesthetic appreciation in daily life.

Universal history of arts reveals that changes and transitions in the definition, scope, and values of art reflect on art education as well. This paper intends to provide a new perspective on art education across the world and in Turkey.

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