EXPLORING VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE

By

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A CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS
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Abstract

My Capstone Project examined scholarly writings regarding how visual and material culture shapes us, and building on those writings, considers how we might investigate visual and material culture through art-making and viewing. My inquiries included a search for learning materials and curricula that facilitate inquiries about visual and material culture within an art education environment, and creation of my own learning materials. While researching this project, I found many content and image-rich websites of artists, museums, educators, and activists. By utilizing selected information from these resources I have created a central location/website to house materials associated with my topic for use by art educators, and others who are interested. The project includes links to self-created activities and explorations, an ISSUU e-magazine, several Pinterest® boards, a questionnaire and survey, and a link to my
Capstone paper. All these links can be accessed from my website (http://www.invisibleculture.weebly.com).

My Capstone paper accompanying this research project first describes the challenge of examining imagery and its messages, and how we can further investigate images through a curriculum in visual culture art education that includes active participation rather than mere spectatorship. In my literature review I discussed authors who have written about this topic and who support Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) as a component of art education programs of study. I then described my methodology that included my own inquiry-based research into selected examples of visual and material culture. Results of my study included suggested learning activities and explorations that consider some ways that images have been fashioned in advertisements from different cultures, and how such images served as instigators of consumer culture. My Capstone paper concludes with some recommendations and insights about engaging visual and material culture using the learning materials I have created for pre-k through adult learners.
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Introduction

My students know that I have always insisted on the inclusion of a large map of the world in my classroom, irrespective of the subject I may be teaching at the time. A few years ago one of my students was very excited about a map of the world that he recently purchased online for one-cent and wanted to bring to class. When he brought the map in I had him place it onto the wall. The class looked at it very intently and noted that this map was “wrong”, or at least that it wasn’t exactly “right”. Wrong or right, this one-cent map (as we found later to have been printed in China, for the Chinese) placed the continent of Asia, including China, on the left side of the map. Students were puzzled. This was not the way they had been brought up to see the world. They had a different perspective about the world. And as discovered maps are printed differently according to the hemisphere in which they are published and sometimes with time zones and different projections, and placement of heavier land masses in mind. Clearly, the view of perspective presented of the world exhibited on the map contradicted the view of the world that my students were used to seeing.

I raise the topic of perspective in my classes to foster the learning and understanding of how people from diverse places and backgrounds may think and see things differently than we do. Visual culture, which includes images, advertisements, reproductions, artworks, and a whole array of human created visual creations, shapes how we all think about things. I believe that using a curriculum that engages visual and material culture study can help students unpack the layered meanings of imagery that may be found in the media and elsewhere today. In the case presented in the paragraph above, with teacher assistance, my students were able to
understand through viewing a visual construction of culture, a map of the earth, how there may be more than one way to look at something. For me, the potential for development of tolerance and understanding resulting from visual culture study is of utmost importance to students and their communities.

**Statement of the Problem**

Western society has generally become image saturated, over-stimulated, consumer-driven, and body-centered (Stockrocki, 2011). Students are exposed to and heavily influenced by a culture of consumption, proliferated through textbooks, books, television, fashion, magazines, film, the Internet, music, social media and advertising on a daily basis. How is it possible to develop individual core values when societal influences are so greatly skewed towards a culture of consumption? Young people are particularly vulnerable to the subtle messages that are conveyed through images emanating from consumer culture. Like Freedman (2003), I believe that a curriculum that includes the study of visual culture in and through art education has the potential to foster a sense of empowerment and self-identification (so that students have a better idea of who they are and where they fit in the world or how they can come up with alternative models of identification).

**Purpose of the Study, Research Questions, Rationale, and Assumptions**

My purpose in studying and researching the topic exploring visual and material culture was to investigate what has already been written and created in terms of curriculum and teaching materials relating to visual and material culture studies in art education. Based on this research, I created eight visual culture study oriented learning activities/explorations, a survey,
questionnaire, a website, an ISSUU e-magazine, and Pinterest® boards that can serve as resource materials for students and others informed by this approach.

The following research questions guided my investigation

1. How do we encounter and comprehend our consumer-driven visual and material culture? What are the implications of these encounters? Why should we study advertising and mass produced images?

2. What sort of curriculum and materials exist to facilitate the learning about visual and material culture in an art education setting?

3. What materials have yet to be created to assist in the engagement of this topic?

I argued in this research paper that the study of visual and material culture can empower students and adults to make better choices in life. My study has identified current materials and curricular practices that facilitate such goals. Through my own self-published works now available online, I share with fellow art educators and others the importance of this kind of teaching and availability of resource materials.

Education has evolved and this evolution includes art education (UNESCO, 2006). Education in the arts, particularly through a study of visual and material culture and its methods, facilitates awareness of cultural productions and their influences. I believe that continued research and promotion of VCAE (Visual Culture Art Education) will result in its eventual adoption by educators, schools, and school systems. I argue in this research paper that the study of visual and material culture can empower students and adults to make more informed choices in life. My study has identified current materials and curricular art education
practices that facilitate such goals. Through my own self-published works now available online (http://www.invisibleculture.weebly.com), I share with fellow art educators and others the importance of this kind of teaching and availability of resource materials.

**Definition of Terms**

*Material Culture* is a term used to describe the objects produced by human beings, including buildings, structures, monuments, tools, furniture, art and any other physical items created by a society (Blandy & Bolin, 2003). Material culture is the main source of information about the past from which archaeologists can make inferences (http://www.answers.com/topic/material-culture).

*Visual Culture* is anything visually produced, interpreted, or created by humans which has, or is given functional, communicative, and/or aesthetic intent (Barnard, 1998). Visual culture also includes the traditional fine arts, as well as various forms of popular culture (Eisenhauer, 2006). It is also a form of social production or way in which to view and concern oneself with issues of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economics, politics, and community, based on the visual arts being vital to all societies (Freedman, 2003).

*VCAE (Visual Culture Art Education)* is a complex, post-modern pedagogy for teaching visual art. It submerges students in investigation into the overabundance of images taken from everyday life experiences. These images become the source of visual critical thinking exercises (Duncum, 2006, as cited in Pleszkiewicz, 2009).

*Bombardment* is a recurring pronouncement through which subjects and objects are explicitly and implicitly defined through the barrage of media messages (Eisenhauer, 2006).
Culture Jamming is the remaking of commercially produced culture to reveal hidden meanings by appropriating brand logos, billboard ads, commercials, and reconfiguring them to reveal the underlying assumptions and social consequences promoted by these advertisements and in effect “derail” the original message (Darts, 2004). There are three types of Culture Jamming which include (a) commercial, (b) political, and (c) social (http://hiddeninasnapshot.wordpress.com).

Appropriation is the practice of creating a new work by taking a pre-existing image from another context and combining that appropriated image with new ones (http://www.moca.org/pc/viewArtTerm.php?id=2).

**Literature Review**

My review of research and studies of visual and material culture highlights works of scholars who have been writing and researching about visual culture art education for over a dozen years. These include Kevin Tavin, Paul Duncum, Kerry Freedman, Doug Blandy, J. Ulbricht, Nancy Pauly, Pat Stuhr, and others. Much work remains to incorporate visual culture study into k-12 art classroom learning before we can fully appreciate how its inclusion will bring new meaning to the study of art, visual images, and culture. The following themes stood out in my readings about art educators’ approaches to inclusion of visual and material culture study in the k-12 classroom.

**Advocating for Teaching Visual and Material Culture**

Duncum (2002) has been advocating the study of visual culture in art education for over a decade and feels that the diverse ways people deal with visual products of global
capitalism can be explained through VCAE. In explaining such an approach, Freedman (2000) asserted that teaching art from a social perspective includes the study of meaning, context, and with a new definition of and emphasis on critique, and according to Duncum (1999, as cited in Eisenhauer, 2006) can help students gain a more sophisticated understanding of visual culture and everyday aesthetic experience. In a slightly different direction, Bolin and Blandy (2003) have advocated the teaching of material culture which they state is even more appropriate for art education (than just studying visual culture) because it encompasses a broader range of endeavors and has a multi-sensory aspect. Material culture differs from visual culture in that it includes more than just images, but includes interactions with furniture, toys, performance, music, religious studies, cultural anthropology, cemeteries, storytelling, fashion, science, shopping malls, and theme parks (Kingery, 1996, as cited in Carrier, 2005).

Alongside more traditional art education programs, learning about visual culture will result in the ability for students to make better choices, limit misunderstandings, and become empowered (Ulbricht, 2007). In such a curriculum, students are encouraged to engage in conversations about social justice, gender, race, and class, as well as the influence and power of visual culture. Carrier (2005) observed that in a world where the visual has become dominant, art educators are advantaged over other educators. Through the use of a visual culture curriculum, teachers can promote the investigation and appreciation of objects, artifacts, spaces, and expressions from one’s own cultural perspective. Duncum (2005) remarked that this has been a substantial shift for teachers as they have had to learn about such things as television production and audience response, and other current aspects of visual and
material culture. Teachers had not previously considered how the viewer negotiated meaning by linking images with cultural narratives (Pauly, 2003). This too has made the facilitation of this material challenging for all educators especially when dealing with students from many different backgrounds.

A Paradigm Shift

Visual culture study (sometimes expanded to include material culture and popular culture) represents a paradigm shift in k-12 art education theory and practice today. The methods used in VCAE articulate ways of unpacking the nature of visual culture and its impact on our students. Some scholars have recommended encouraging students to examine images coming from everyday experience, in their specific contexts, and then asking questions about the sources, nature, and purposes of such images (Duncum, 2002). Through this type of learning students learn to critique and deconstruct images through art practice, in order to understand how these images function in society (Tavin, 2003). Pauly (2003) argued that students need to be guided in their worlds to become wiser consumers of their culture. Ulbricht (2007) further observed that making connections between material culture and personal interpretation, and learning how this culture shapes our lives, encourages students to be more reflective and empowered to understand the material world. For Duncum “…visual representations are sites of ideological struggle that can be as deplorable as they can be praiseworthy” (Duncum, 2002, p. 8). In his view, the examination of that struggle is rightfully part of the agenda for art education today. The outcome for students through such curriculum will be learning how the culture that bombards us daily can be understood (Eisenhauer, 2006).
Finally, Freedman (2000) called for a focus in art education on more local and global communities and to be less concerned with the technical skills of art and to broaden the domain of art education.

**Construction of Meaning and Democracy**

“The next half century marks key points in continuing trends-the U.S. will become a plurality nation, where the non-Hispanic white population remains the largest single group, but no group is in the majority” (Cooper, 2012, p. A20). Our country is experiencing increasing diversity and this adds to the complexity of understanding our culture and that of others who hold different values. Why should we educate our children to become globally-connected citizens, not just technologically, but morally as well? While human beings all over the world share much in common, we also have many differences. In that the visual arts are vital to all societies and that visual culture continues to expand as a realm of the visual arts (Freedman, 2003), we need to continue to educate our students about the meanings of such imagery, and how it may have different meanings for people other than ourselves.

VCAE advocates argue that in a diverse cultural population, meaning is dependent upon the perspective of the audience. A healthy vital sustainable democracy requires a citizenry that is educated around cultural issues. Teachers are dealing with students from increasingly diverse backgrounds and need to consider the choice of images selected for inclusion in the curriculum (Pauly, 2003). Students from various backgrounds need to be able to identify with others who have similar backgrounds and may look like them. Different
nationalities and ethnic groups, as well as gender and social groups interpret the same images in different ways (Duncum, 2002).

Students are more apt to come into contact with others of different backgrounds in a school setting. Because of this teachers are in a prime position to facilitate learning among a diverse group of students, which includes discussing the hidden meanings behind what have been termed ‘cool products’ that are marketed to young people (Stokrocki, 2001). Stokrocki explains that people lead designer lives that are fashioned by someone else and that the world’s most powerful drug is the promise of belonging. She thinks teachers need to help students develop positive and artistic ways to respond to advertisers (2001). In order to understand how our consumer driven culture operates and to actively and critically engage it, students need to become literate about their own popular culture.

Visual images teach us how to see, think, and create. Images are identity-making as they broaden the student’s experience and cause them to question who they are. For example, in a curriculum inspired by postcards, Silverman (2007) found that through the making of postcards of place with teachers, they considered how history was recorded, and began to understand that perspective depended upon who was telling the story. Those who viewed these postcards saw a place through someone else’s eyes and were able to enter another person’s time and place. It was necessary to become tolerant of unfamiliar culture by putting oneself in someone else’s shoes (Silverman, 2007).

As art and artifacts take their meaning in relation to place, the learning from specific material culture objects will be different depending upon where they are located and when,
why, and by whom they are studied, or used (Ulbricht, 2007). Learning to discern context can be addressed through the study of sacred objects like Stars of David or Christian crosses and how when they migrate from one culture or social group to another sometimes lose their religious significance (Carrier, 2005). But they can also take on other significance. A utilitarian object in one country could be considered an art piece in another. These types of understandings enable students to attain new perspectives that are many times based on the power of individuals and other cultural groups who may think differently than themselves.

Summary

When we examine art as visual culture, a focus on its cultural meaning rather than simply on its aesthetic value occurs (Freedman, 2000). Understanding the visual culture of others can also teach about how other people think. Understanding others’ perspectives can lead to tolerance. From this perspective a dialogue between social groups, societies, and nations can be initiated. The guiding principles for an art education that addresses this topic need to be focused on the meaning behind relevant images and visual representations of other social groups. The ideal outcome of a curriculum that includes visual culture for students is the understanding of how a wide variety of images and visual cultural productions function. In conclusion, today’s students are influenced by the visual and material culture of the world. It is up to educators to utilize an assortment of images and examples of visual culture in their teaching. Building on this belief, my Capstone research includes creation of visual materials and learning activities that can be used to promote understanding of visual culture both inside and outside of the classroom.
Methodology

My study methods included a literature review of academic discourse about visual culture art education, a search for sources and images that might be used as content in a visual culture study, my own visual inquiries into meanings of such images, and development of learning activities designed with the goal of facilitating the study of visual and material culture. Because there was so much imagery to examine, the challenge became the selection, sorting, organization, and determination of what images would serve as good resource material and practical information to inform learning experiences for an art curriculum that includes explorations into visual and material culture study to expand and extend previous beliefs.

Subject Matter

My study involved examining writings about visual culture art education and searching for visual examples that might be included in visual culture study from a range of sources including photography, artwork, advertising, buildings, accessories, furniture, theme parks, toys, television, clothing, people, food, and technology. I then sorted some of these sources into specific categories and created exploratory learning activities, and a questionnaire and survey. This material is now housed on my website [http://www.invisibleculture.weebly.com](http://www.invisibleculture.weebly.com). All research was conducted via the Internet, books, and scholarly papers retrieved through the University of Florida Libraries. I created and stored materials on my computer using the programs Weebly®, Adobe InDesign®, Pinterest® and Photoshop® as well as Microsoft Word®.
Data Collection Procedures and Instrumentation

My research and data collection were carried out over a three month period. As I used a visual inquiry-based approach my data was collected primarily from the Internet (Public Domain sites and other sites). I selected images with the goal of retrieving material from diverse cultural groups, material that I thought would be relevant to young people, and topics I wanted to explore in my learning explorations. I archived into Pinterest® boards a variety of visually rich images that would be useful for sources for my pre-designated topics. In that there were infinite online resources from which to choose I had to be highly selective in my search for the types of imagery I wanted to collect. I was also able to annotate each Pinterest® collected image (pins) with information I had amassed. These images also informed my ISSUU e-magazine which I created to offer a variety of visual explorations. The images used in my ISSUU e-magazine were also intended as source images for eight learning activities that appear on my website. From my readings of writings about visual culture study and my examination of websites devoted to visual culture study, artist-sites, and blogs I was able to extract information that I used in the writing of my eight learning activities. I also created a questionnaire for use after viewing a PBS video titled Hunting for Cool (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/). These activities and resources can be accessed at my website’s Explorations page (http://invisibleculture.weebly.com/explorationsactivities.html).

My research questions guided me in my search, material selection for Pinterest®, and text creation for my ISSUU e-magazine and web-based learning activities. The questionnaire
and survey appear in my appendices at the end of this paper as well as on my website. My website served as my main collection receptacle for written information and links. My individual Pinterest® boards were used as an online archive for most of my visual material that I also used in my ISSUU e-magazine and in my Capstone paper.

Data Analysis Procedures

I used my website as a collection repository from which to organize and categorize my data. My data mainly consisted of notes from my readings of scholarly articles written about visual and material culture, and websites and images that I found on the Internet. My analysis occurred in the process of developing resource and primary materials as I organized and sorted information that I had critically reviewed and interpreted. I organized my data into written material much in the form of questions that became the content for my newly created instruments for viewing my research. As mentioned before, these included a website, Pinterest® boards, an ISSUU e-magazine, as well as explorations and activities adaptable for a variety of learning levels, a questionnaire, and a survey. All of these distribution centers interconnect with each other in order to provide easily accessible rich visual content with explanations, resources, and learning activities. They are also adaptable for teachers to use with multiple age groups.

Limitations

Much has been written on the subject of my research, but at present there is not as much curricular material created specifically for educators and students. The challenge was that all of this information was not located in one place so that the process of putting all of the
pieces together into a manageable product was much like the creation of a quilt. I had to be very judicious in my selection of what to choose to read from the abundant reading materials that were available about my topic. I was also hindered by not having a group of students to research and involve in my activities and explorations.

**Results**

My original research goals stated my interest in investigating how we encounter and comprehend visual and material culture through art making and viewing, and how learning activities might be fashioned to include visual culture study. I wanted to find out what sort of curricula and primary materials already exist to use in a curriculum of visual and material in an art education and other settings. I also wanted to find out what materials might be missing and through my research develop educational guides and explorations to assist in teaching about visual and material culture. These explorations include investigations into (a) how our own mass media subtly manipulates meanings through carefully composed imagery, and (b) how there are a variety of strategies for us to examine and respond to mass media advertising through visual culture study activities.

Results of my study include a variety of Pinterest® boards that reflect a range of images collected online and that are organized thematically by topic of inquiry, and my website housing learning activities that I created and that links to all of my other source material (Pinterest® boards and my ISSUU e-publication). My ISSUU publication presents selected topics of inquiry (visual explorations) from this project, along with images and links to source material.
**Pinterest® boards.** I collected a plethora of source images for such investigations using multiple Pinterest® boards. My collected images are organized under the following board names: Visual and Material Culture, Portraits, The Deceptive World of Photo Manipulation, Changing Meaning through Appropriation, Introduction to Culture Jamming, Is it Fine Art or Visual Culture? Our Youth’s Culture, A Different Point of View, Gallery of Visual Culture Imagery, Images for Visual and Material Culture Survey, Interactions with Visual and Material Culture, Advertising and Manipulation, and Artists Inspired by Global Themes. (See Figure 1 to view a screenshot of one of my Pinterest® boards with examples of a wide array of visual and material culture imagery.)

**ISSUU e-magazine.** This image-rich publication presents in book form a variety of questions about and explorations of visual and material culture. For the design of this magazine I taught myself the basics of Adobe InDesign® and used my own aesthetic sensibilities that included a DIY approach to graphic layout and design of each of my ISSUU pages. I used a collage and layering style with juxtapositions to create quilt-like, colorful, and textural layouts. This ISSUU e-magazine is accessible at [http://invisibleculture.weebly.com/issuu-magazine.htm](http://invisibleculture.weebly.com/issuu-magazine.htm).

(See Figure 2 to view a screenshot of an example of one of the pages from my ISSUU e-magazine.) Topics in my ISSUU e-magazine included the following: What is Visual and Material Culture? How does our Visual Culture Experience Shape Who we Are? How do we Interact with Visual Culture? How does Advertising Manipulate? How do we Consume? How can we Tell the Difference between what is Real, or Not? Using Culture Jamming for Change,
Learning activities housed on my website. I also created eight learning activities for visual culture study. These activities are accessible from my website that also provides links to all of my source material, and other products created for this study (http://invisibleculture.weebly.com/explorationsactivities.html).

My eight learning activities address the following topics: Hunting for Cool, Self-Portraits, Visual Culture Survey, Logo Looking and Ad Analysis, The Deceptive World of Photo Manipulation, Changing Meaning through Appropriation, Culture Jamming for Change, and Fine Art or Visual Culture? The following sections present some of the themes conveyed in the learning activities I have developed.

Appropriation, Photo Manipulation, and Propaganda

We need to look carefully at photos and images in advertisements in publications and on billboards. With the advent of such software programs as Photoshop®, appropriation of imagery using techniques like photo manipulation and photomontage are not only common place and easier to create, but the resulting images are highly believable. I was surprised to learn about the ways certain images have been subtly changed and then published in credible media in order to sway public opinion. Because of the use of modern technology we need to be more vigilant than ever when viewing imagery in all media and constructing its meaning. This is an important reason for facilitating investigations into the meanings of imagery in visual and popular culture with students today. (See Figure 3 to view a screenshot of my Pinterest® board.
of images where meanings have been changed through appropriation.) Young people and youth culture itself are affected by the way they interpret media and visual imagery that may or may not be manipulated. (See Figure 4 to view a screenshot of my Pinterest® board that shows images relating to youth’s culture today.) Propaganda in the form of altered and appropriated photographs runs rampant in our society today and readily promotes stereotyping. Confronting those stereotypes with students is rightfully the business of education.

You can’t get Away from our Consumer Culture but you can Engage it Knowingly

Everywhere we go we are bombarded with visual and material culture in the form of advertisements, and other product forms of consumerism. We are tempted daily to consume and because of what we see in the media we are lead to believe not only that this is the way of our culture and how we should lead our lives, but that by consuming whatever is being hocked at the moment somehow our lives will be greatly enhanced, irrespective of the costs involved or the questionable messages and meanings implied. However, through learning about, and participation in an educational strategy known as Culture Jamming, we learn that we do indeed have choices. Logos and advertisements hold lots of power. Whether we care to admit it or not, certain corporate entities do control our tastes and we may not even realize that we have other choices, and need to learn to exercise them if we are to maintain a democratic society. Inquiries about where something comes from and who manufactured it need to be made. Images are not always what they appear to be, some images express inaccurate and questionable information and realities may be skewed through images. (See Figure 5 to view a screenshot of a page from my ISSUU e-magazine that questions how we can tell if something is real, or not.)
Organizations and individuals who utilize these culture jams reveal the rampant practice of misrepresentation in advertising and hold corporations accountable. Organizations like Adbusters and Negativland work to change the way corporations yield power through the use of creative practices that utilize imagery and art media in the form of advertising or as political or playful imagery (Adbusters, 2013). (See Figure 6 to view a screenshot of a page from my ISSUU e-magazine that presents examples of Culture Jamming and links to sites about this topic.)

A Different Point of View: Advertising in other Countries

Examining the advertising of other nations, societies, and social groups allowed me to learn how those who live in non-Western cultures are also bombarded by the products of consumer media. (See Figure 7 to view a screenshot of a page from my ISSUU e-magazine with links to examples of ads from other countries and Figure 8 screenshot of my Pinterest® board of pictures of these ads from other parts of the world.) It would have never occurred to me that in Muslim countries there would be an ad for a beauty contest for the most beautiful eyes. I also found a positive ad for Jihad in our own country, and ads for other product uses that were different than what is commonly acceptable in Western culture. I discovered that we may have more in common with others across the globe as they are subjected to the same alteration of photos in their advertising as we are in ours. Naturally, these ads are targeted at the populations of the particular countries whose populations maintain specific traditions. I did note that much of this advertising was also written in English, and was designed by agencies across the world, leading me to conclude that the ads are also being read by English speakers.
who either reside in or are connected to these societies and countries. Through my research I concluded that some developing countries may have very little advertising, at least advertising that is widely accessible to other parts of the world, presumably because their populations are not as large of a consumer group as their wealthier counterparts. Because of this, the demand for global products in these countries may be less. Conversely, countries like China and India are now preparing for greater presence upon the global advertising stage (Seshadri, 2010).

**Final Thoughts**

A common sentiment expressed in my readings was that visual culture study is important for students to unpack the meaning of images in order to find what lies behind them. Investigations into meanings, methods, and purposes of images including advertising in our own society, as well as those of other societies will help consumers of all ages facilitate our visual and material culture as participants. In turn this inquiry will help students make more critically informed choices in their lives. Additionally there is something to be learned by studying the artwork of culturally diverse people and societies. Visual Culture advocates argue that such study will create more discriminate citizens, and students who are self-reflective learners who engage in higher order thinking and are investigators of their own culture.

My research adds to the resources and strategies for studying visual and material culture through art viewing and making. (See Figure 9 to view a screenshot of a page from my ISSUU e-magazine that shows examples of images and objects of visual and material culture.) Though the information I studied and assembled, especially scholarly articles and books on this topic were important and informative, it now becomes a question of how to prepare teachers to
design a curriculum that effectively engages with visual and cultural imagery. Burkhart (2006) suggested that the material culture studied in a classroom should include integration, prior knowledge, analysis, contextualization, socio-historical cultural perspectives, production, utility and symbolism, and cultural impact. I similarly recommend the integration of resources and learning activities involving visual and material culture into art, social studies, and humanities curriculum in order to understand and confront the meanings of what we encounter each day. My website, Pinterest® boards, ISSUU e-magazine, and the other products of my research provide a point of reference for educators, students, and those interested in investigating the many facets of our visual and material culture. My learning activities and resources pose questions that involve the study of visual and material culture. I am happy to report that since creating my Pinterest® boards, over 140 of my pins have been repined. I hope that my learning activities housed on my website and my e-magazine are similarly useful to others wishing to include visual culture studies in their own teaching.
Figures

Figure 1. Screenshot of my Pinterest® boards.
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Figure 2. Screenshot of a page from my ISSUU e-magazine, Invisible Culture.
Figure 3. Screenshot of my Pinterest® board, Changing Meaning through Appropriation.
**Figure 4.** Screenshot of my Pinterest® board, Our Youth’s Culture.
EXPLORING VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE

How do we tell the difference between what is real, or not?

When we view an ad on television, the Internet, or in a magazine, we wonder if what we are seeing is the real thing. With the advent of computer software manipulation programs, it is hard to tell.

The photos on the opposite page represent both photoshopped and handmade images using fruits, vegetables, and other themes.

The same techniques are used in the photo manipulation of models for ads. The final product may not even resemble the original when these techniques are applied.

View a time lapse video of a photo retouch, The Deceptive World of Photo Retouching at digitallybeautiful.blogspot.com

See my activity The Deceptive World of Photo Manipulation at http://www.flickr.com/photos/14837847@N03/3479594685/

To see full images of resources, on the next page in one place see our Pinterest Board The Deceptive World of Photo Manipulation.

See my activity Changing Meaning Through Appropriation at http://www.flickr.com/photos/14837847@N03/3479594685/

See my activity Dog Walking Through Appropriation at http://www.flickr.com/photos/14837847@N03/3479594685/

"Body Alteration" Photography http://www.issuu.com/sajmelphotography

"I am more 2" Manpower Experts http://www.colorba.com/ad-

"Cucumber Shave" Curving http://www.scribd.com/sai-


"Rasara Alteration" Photography http://www.issuu.com/

"Truth You Fade Away with Every Foot" Photography http://www.illustratedimagery.com

"Apple with Orange" Photography http://www.issuu.com/

"Ad for Toy" Phantom Toy Store Photography http://www.colorba.com/ad-

"Dog Walker" Photography http://www.issuu.com/

"Ad for Newspaper" Peace Center Photography http://www.illustratedimagery.com

Figure 5. Screenshot of a page from my ISSUU e-magazine, Invisible Culture.
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Appendix A:

Exploring Visual and Material Culture

Questionnaire

Activity I

Questionnaire for use following the viewing of the first episode of the Merchants of Cool (February 27, 2001) YouTube® video Hunting for Cool (10:04) accessible at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/view/

1. What is popular now?

2. How many TVs do you have in your home and how often are they in use?

3. What is your favorite TV show? Favorite film?

4. What sorts of activities do you use your computer, iPad, cell phone, or other personal electronic devices for?

5. What trends do you and your friends follow?

6. Do you think you are a trendsetter?
Appendix B:

Exploring Visual and Material Culture

Survey

Activity III

Survey – Examining Visual and Material Culture. (See Figure 10 to view a screenshot of my Pinterest® board of images used for the survey.)


Images without letters are accessible at Pinterest® Board Images for Visual and Material Culture Survey http://www.pinterest.com/ellensgoldberg/images-for-visual-and-material-culture-survey/

1. Which images given in this survey make you want to take a second look, and why?

2. In what ways do any of these images have universal appeal?

3. Which images show you something that you have never thought about? Explain.

4. Which images are most unbelievable to you, and why?

5. Which images make you think about gender (male/female) and gender stereotypes, and why?

6. Which images give you some insight into other cultures, and why?
7. Do you know any of the stories behind any of these images? If yes, please explain.

8. Which images are most familiar to you, and why?

9. Make up and write a caption here for one of the images. Please label the caption with the image’s letter.
Author Biography

Throughout my adult life I have worked in multiple realms of the art, design, music, and education fields. I have held positions as a commercial product designer, museum educator, curator, marketing and public relations specialist, and primary, secondary, college, and community art and design faculty member/facilitator. Additionally, I have been an entrepreneur and prize winning practicing artist and craftsperson. My education in the arts consists of a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Syracuse University, as well as time spent at The Penland School of Crafts, NC, study with renowned artists, and courses at other universities and colleges in design, art, and history. My other career path has included the teaching of Judaism and holocaust in my community in adult enrichment programs, synagogues, and religious schools. My education in this field consists of (a) studies and certifications in a two-year program at the Florence Melton Mini-School of the Hebrew University, (b) graduate level seminars and institutes at the Center for Israel Education (Emory University, Atlanta, GA) and the Holocaust Museum of St. Petersburg, FL, (c) studies at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem, and (d) university-level courses taken through Siegal College of Cleveland, OH. Currently I am a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in Art Education at the University of Florida.