

WCES 2012

## Painting education & artistic evolution

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### Abstract

Art is the most effective way of expressing human emotions. It should also be an excellent application of traditional or technological tools. In our presentation-research we will be focusing on painting, painting education and advanced artistic evolution process in terms of traditional application domains. An immortal painting- masterpiece should be the competent example of an excellent composition and also a perfect example of application. Preparation of painting tubes, choice of pertinent and correct brushes, preparations of palette etc. are all the basic stuffs which provides to create an accomplished painting. An intensive professional experience of painting materials should unfortunately provides a certain maturity. But in art schools or academies during and after the basic art education, an intensive basic painting education is inevitably required in order to provide solid art styles in next academic and professional periods. The purpose of our research is to clarify some educational methods of applications crafts in painting. The first important process is the circumstantiation of all materials and tools and their pertinent uses. After preparing the application stuff and choosing correct materials, the students will be processing on painting application. As a result by the correct methods which require dedicated preparation of palette and all stuffs would supply a very enjoyable working time and also it provides a dominant property in order to create artistic expressions. This essential working discipline acquired by the academic painting education prevents also the lost of time and motivation which could easily indispose us from painting applications. So isn't it effectual in any domain? Isn't the solidity of the achievement is measured by its pre-educational sub construction?

*Keywords:* Art, Conceptual, Creativity, Painting, Talent

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### 1. Introduction

On all over the world, the practical art education and all artistic domains principally have some differences form all other scientific domains. We will be focusing on these differences and also exposing the main characteristics of art and its education. We will be also emphasizing painting education during the academic period and its development in professional-artistic life. Before going over these differences we would better start with the subjective and objective point of views in art creation in the history of humanity.

Art has used to be a personal domain of creation form the very early ages of humanity. Since the prehistoric ages, for example in archaic Greek and Egyptian art, we can observe that the artistic creation has become an educational and artisanal application. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the renaissance art has placed conceptually the human figure at the center of the artistic scene as the center of universe in a very scientific perspective. John Gage confirms that the

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“*Man is the highest and the proper subject of art.*”<sup>1</sup> So could we say even if that approach is not an individual interpretation of that era? That is a questionable subject. But, it is certain that, since especially in today’s contemporary art, artistic creation is treated with an individual point of view. Therefore an art work should be considered as a sum of the artist’s personal experiences and also an independent interpretation of our current life.

Any way, today a qualified art education is the sum of all activities which helps the development of human emotions, aesthetic sensitivity, creative thoughts, conceptual intelligence so artistic competence. These should be also the required and particular characteristics of a student as a candidate/artist. The instructor is responsible for the orientation of the art student’s development which depends also to his/her personal predispositions. “*New directions in art education are essential to meet the need for creative experience and that they must be based upon the natural unfolding and development of artistic abilities.*”<sup>2</sup> The notion of ability is one of the most important differences in art education; the consideration of the personal talents, abilities of the student which makes the art education concerning to the critical judgments rather than determined scientific evaluations.

Professor Schaefer-Simmern believes that “*the artistic activity is natural to man, and that it can be developed in accordance with the awakening and strengthening of one’s own critical judgment.*”<sup>3</sup>

Certainly, an art student has a very precious potential; an art student natively feels and perceives the life in a very different and extraordinary way. That way of feeling and perceiving life works potentially with some personal accomplishments. Art education principally provides the correct, effective and generous use of these personal and mental powers.

On the other hand the personal and instinctive creativity becomes a competent artistic creativity during the school years and after the graduation. Instruction and formation of the personal creativity of art student requires an intellectual accumulation beyond the maturation of aesthetic and plastic sensitivity. Therefore the first years in art education are devoted to a very intensive and solid basic art education in order to provide the full accoutered maturity. The reason why this education has so far depends on individual orientation and the reason why it depends on intensive practices, exercises; many different personal particularities are emerging in art education. Basically, the art student does not only learn the theory and its application. The art student does not also learn only the simple observation, experimentation and all it’s concerning elaborations. The art student learns the observation in terms of meditative contemplation; the experimentation of an art student might become an inventional adventure. The artistic elaboration is based on the transformation of coincidences into compositional regularities. The art student can preview the events in a very original style. So the imagination is the most essential power to apply in art education. Therefore it is different from all other educational domains.

During the process of art education; feeling, perceiving, providing the intellectual accumulation, conceptual thinking, designing, interpreting, expressing, synthesizing, criticizing would be the basic verbal activities for the artistic creation. In this process, the intensive exercise and development of these activities are inevitable. By the way, the art student could complete the maturity in order to use the language of art. In different domains of visual arts; painting, sculpture, ceramic, photography, video, cinema, the competent mastery of artistic language, with the same similar aesthetic principals, are required. The contemporary painting requires also a very solid educational and preoperational sub construction.

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<sup>1</sup> John Gage, *Goethe on Art*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, USA, 1980, p. 6

<sup>2</sup> Henry Schaefer - Simmern, foreword by John Dewey, *The Unfolding of Artistic Activity, Its Basis, Processes, and Implications*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, USA, 1948, p. 8

<sup>3</sup> Henry Schaefer - Simmern, foreword by John Dewey, *The Unfolding of Artistic Activity, Its Basis, Processes, and Implications*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, USA, 1948, p. 2

## 2. Basic Art Education & Basic Painting Education

*John Berger says that "Seeing comes before words, the child looks and recognizes before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but word can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. Each evening we see the sun set. We know that the earth is turning away from it. Yet the knowledge, the explanation, never quite fits the sight. The Surrealist painter Magritte commented on this always-present gap between words and seeing in a painting called *The Key of Dreams*."*<sup>4</sup>

Basic art education is devoted consciously to seeing and understanding the nature. This would be a conceptual perceiving and understanding soon (in the last years of art school). But for instance, basic art training propose to learn the basic language of artistic transmission without conceptual dimensions. This basic education should inevitably be the basic sub construction of intellectual suggestions of artistic creation. Basic art education aims to support and educate students who have potentially developed their artistic and creative senses. Generally or departmentally, in all art schools devote the first year on this education. Basic art training encourages students to acquire general theoretical knowledge and practices concerning the plastic elements: point, line, shape, value, form, texture, color and space within the basic plastic principles: harmony, contrast, balance, tension, rhythm, etc. All these notions provide to create pertinent compositions, by the consideration of Gestalt and golden ratio theories. In other words the practices on these basic elements with these basic principles and theories provide the permanent constitution of the main grammar of the artistic language. Learning to use pertinently this artistic language encourages the art students to express deeply themselves and to familiarize patiently themselves with this artistic language.

After an intensive basic art education, from the beginning of second year the students start to learn all painting materials, techniques and its basic applications. Painting application is based on traditional methods. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the painting has been trained from the master painter on the executions of several masterpieces that we can observe in art museums. So the relationship between the master and apprentices almost obtains in today's painting education. We can not denial that every master has a personal and original mature artistic style which is clearly apparent in his/her education. But any how, this appearance of personal style in painting education is a very critic frontier during the training of new potential masters. In other words, the apprentices must not be the copies or loyal successors of their masters. They should become a master who would exceed their masters by their own original ways. In the apprenticing process of art the students must discover their own personal intellectual creativity. This potential would be developed in a very systematic way of experimentation in painting application. But any how, after getting an intensive basic art education of first year, the students must be focused on the practice of their own expressional techniques that they would choose. This period is generally the second year that students must be developed and prepared for the competent use of their artistic languages. Painting and etching are the most important traditional techniques that students choose to express their selves. But the second and third years would be very difficult periods to become skilled and matured in these applications in order to create a personal style of expression.

Preparation of all painting materials; choice of pertinent and correct brushes, preparation of colors and palette etc. are all the basic stuffs which provide to create an accomplished painting. The self discipline about the correct preparation and the effective use of painting materials are constituted in basic painting education. The constitution of this delicate approach is essential in order to provide solid and original art styles for the next academic and

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<sup>4</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin Press, London, England, 1972, p. 7

professional periods. This essential and critical period of maturation known as basic painting education would be the second year and also third year in Fine Arts schools.

### 3. Advanced Painting Education & Individual Creativity

Advanced painting education and individual creativity is developed generally in the last years of art schools. Before and during the graduation project, in last years, the students in their paintings do not only present the sum of all they have learned in previous years, they should also prove the qualifications in their conceptual approaches. In terms of artistic transmissions the instinctive human emotions of the art student should be refined within aesthetic sensitivity, creative thoughts and conceptual intelligence. After the technical maturation in painting, which would also be developed in hall life, an intellectual accumulation is required in order to be qualified in concept development. *“From the 1980s on, the influence of conceptualism has affected art schools all over the world. Many schools have erased the boundaries between disciplines, as the supremacy of the expression of a concept in this post-Duchampian epoch rides across all material means-photography, video, painting, drawing, sculpture, or any of them and more joined in an installation.”*<sup>5</sup>

In advanced painting education, the students must determinate their own interests and also the problems about their interests. Then they have to propose their own solutions to these problems, by the exploration of their individual creativities. The qualification in conceptual approaches and the qualification in personal creativity are required in order to be original, unique, and permanent. It is also required in order not to stay as an average and as a copy of other great masters. In advanced painting education, the instructor is responsible form the orientation of the art students’ intellectual development which would be apparent conceptually in their works. The evidence and pertinence of the conceptual approach must be presented by simple, unique, and refined interventions of art student.

### 4. After School Artistic Evolution in Painting Application

In art, the learning and development phases continue during the hall life. So, we might hear many times that: *“Life is short, art is long”*<sup>6</sup>. According to this context, the art school years must only be the beginning of all the learning and development processes in the artist’s life. In every new painting, the artist discovers every time new techniques and new ideas. While the artist focuses on this new discoveries, some coincidences unexpected appears, and this coincidences supply new methods and new solutions. And this process in the phase of skilling encourages the artistic creation as an incessant, excitement full adventure. Professor Henry Schaefer – Simmern describes the contemporary painter as: *“they try for new discoveries in art by playful experimentalizing with line, mass, colors, planes.”*<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, some of the artists in history are known with their styles that they have explored particularly after their art school periods, but some are known with their styles that they have developed particularly by the help of their academic education. Any way, it is certain that, the unique creation of the contemporary painter artist inevitably depends to today’s socio-politic events, newest technological developments, and all the actual circumstances. So, all the traces of our era are so clearly apparent, in the contemporary painting.

<sup>5</sup> Steven Henry Madoff, *Art School (Propositions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century)*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Canada, 2009, p. ix

<sup>6</sup> *Art is long and life is short* The Latin proverb *ars longa, vita brevis* derives from a saying of the Greek physician Hippocrates.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Schaefer - Simmern, foreword by John Dewey, *The Unfolding of Artistic Activity, Its Basis, Processes, and Implications*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, USA, 1948, p. xiv (after preface)

## 5. Conclusion

As a result, in painting education, as a kind of a very particular operative domain, from apprenticeship to mastery, all educational levels and professional experiences should be usefully internalized in order to have a permanent and a strong progression for next phases. That is the case to become a competent contemporary painter-artist. Art school education, which is just a beginning of artistic experiences, primarily consider the art student's precious potential of feeling and perceiving the life in a very different way. Art education should correctly orientate and restrain this potentially mental power of artist/candidate. The solid basic art education provides seeing, contemplating and understanding the basic structure of nature by skilling in the use of plastic language of art. From the second year on the constitution of a delicate and perfect use of painting materials is essentially required in order to provide solid and original art styles for the next academic and professional periods. During the last years of art education, the students prove the sum of their experiences by graduation project or projects which include essentially the oral presentation of their conceptual approaches. In their projects, the intellectual refinement with creative solutions is also required. The development processes in artistic creation continue during the whole life. But in order to be original, unique, and permanent contemporary artist, every of a new art work must be a new discovery. The artistic creation is the meeting point of miraculous coincidences. The mission of the artist is to transform these coincidences into the restrained visual forms that irradiate the people and the civilization.

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