



3.6 Instruction in artistic methods in social, educational and activist contexts

Artistic processes are taught in a variety of settings: educational, therapeutic and social, as well as in formal adult education programmes. Techniques of visualization, drama, dance, creative writing and acoustic and musical performance are used to structure learning processes, to uncover and depict conflicts or problems, to address issues collectively, to communicate with the outside world and for self-expression.

Artistic processes also play a role in the context of social and political activism, where they serve the aims of → self-empowerment, → self-representation and → intervention in public debates. Analytic engagement with images and texts, quite often drawing on examples from the history or present day of the arts, is used to help people develop → visual literacy, an ability to read images critically. This provides a foundation upon which people can produce other images and texts of their own creation that differ from the depictions found in the mainstream media and the advertisements ubiquitous in public spaces: to design posters and flyers or create theatrical and musical performances in connection, e.g., with demonstrations or interventions in public spaces or in connection with existing images (cf. the alteration of commercial advertising → culture jamming, or performative forms of speech like → radical cheerleading).

Artists are actively involved in all of the areas mentioned above. Here again, we see the links and intersections between the production of art and cultural mediation. Like the teaching of artistic processes in business settings, these intersections are highly controversial. They too give rise to debate about the contradictions between promises of efficacy and artistic autonomy, about the role of artists and art in political and social contexts, and about the instrumentalization of forms developed by the arts in this context.

→ self-empowerment see Glossary

→ self-representation see Glossary

→ intervention see Glossary

→ visual literacy see Glossary

→ culture jamming <http://www.orange-press.com/programm/alle-titel/culture-jamming.html> [16.3.2012]

→ radical cheerleading <http://kreativerstrassenprotest.twoday.net/topics/Radical+Cheerleading> [16.3.2012]