



Teaching Art in a Postmodern World: Theories, Teacher Reflections and Interpretive Frameworks

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What is postmodern art and how does it impact on art teaching? For secondary art teachers the transition from modernist art education to postmodernist art education is a challenging journey. Modernism provided a rich source of inspiration for art teaching. Countless art teaching programs from the 1950s to the 1990s were based on the great western canon espousing individualism, creativity, self expression and formalist models of art criticism. However, postmodern theory directs attention away from the formalist properties of art works to the social conditions and structures which shape artistic values. Contemporary art works examine how societies construct power relations especially in respect of class, gender and culture and they often do this using devices such as irony, parody or shock. But are art teachers trained and ready to deal with such issues and how do they introduce them to students? The first section of this book examines the diff e rences between modernist and postmodernist art and art education. The issues are defined in nine key orientations which serve to guide art curriculum planning. In the next section of the book thirteen secondary art teachers from schools in Australia and England reflect on change in their own teaching. Each discusses how they introduce students to contemporary art practice and issues in their senior art classes. The final section of the book presents seven interpretive frameworks to guide students when exploring contemporary art. The interpretive frameworks lead students beyond use of modernist and formalist approaches to consideration of wider social issues when making and responding to art.



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