INVISIBLE AND PERVERSIVE IMAGERY IN THREE ART CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover and explore issues relating to the inclusion and exclusion of 'pervasive' and/or 'invisible' imagery in three secondary art teachers' visual arts programs. The term 'pervasive' refers to visual forms that are prevalent in popular culture. The term 'invisible' refers to visual forms that are not commonly addressed in visual arts programs. Many of the images in both categories attend to such themes as violence, racism, sexism, death, war, and disease — subjects which individuals may consider disturbing, controversial or sensitive.

This descriptive, qualitative study employed a case study design. The researcher conducted audio-taped interviews with participating teachers and collected field notes in relation to in-class activities where appropriate. Further data were collected through casual conversations with teachers, follow-up interviews, photographs of student art work, and sample instructional materials.

This study has indicated that the teachers' general use or non-use of pervasive and invisible imagery is shaped by their values and purposes, and is influenced by their own and their students' responses to specific imagery, their relationships with school administrators, other staff members and students, their individual employment situations, and the approaches they utilize in regards to such imagery.

As a result of the findings, avenues for further research were suggested, and implications for the development and implementation of art instructional resources and working curriculum models that directly address and provide successful teaching strategies relating to the classroom use of pervasive and invisible imagery were made.
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CHAPTER 1

THE STUDY

Introduction

This study was directly influenced by my personal experience with the introduction of disturbing, controversial and sensitive imagery in two art classroom situations. In the following, I will describe the second situation first, as it caused me to reflect more deeply upon the original situation.

The second situation occurred in an art class I taught in 1994, when a small group of teenage art students were assigned to use readily accessible magazine images and newspaper clippings (found in popular publications on a materials shelf in the art room) in combination with other materials to create collages concerning personally and socially relevant issues. In their work, students dealt with a variety of themes relating to environmental concerns, violence, animal welfare, feelings of personal alienation, war and peace issues, and gender representation in the mass media.

Emily [not her real name], a 15 year old student, made a collage which reflected some concerns and questions she had regarding the depiction of female sexuality encountered in advertisements in the magazines she examined. Emily wrapped and taped the collage surface with paper, alluding to the proverbial 'brown paper wrapper' in which much pornography is circulated. On that surface, she glued several photographic images of women, and one drawing of a woman, in various states of undress. The images depict thin, Caucasian women in prone positions with faces obscured or averted, or show only women's torsos with bare or semi-bare breasts. Over the surfaces of those images she glued individual 'ransom note' style letters spelling out the words "PORNOGRAPHY OR ART". Hand-written, on an adhesive label was the text "Warning: Adults Only?".
As Emily worked, she spoke with myself and classmates about the collage, and together we discussed the following questions: Who is/are the maker/s of these advertisements? What products, if any, are these images selling? Why are these depictions of women associated with those particular products? How do we feel when we look at these images? Why have the women been posed in these ways? How and why are certain elements emphasized? What might the facial expressions, physical gestures, and placement within the space of the advertisement tell us about the women portrayed, about the photographer, and about the designer/s of the advertisement? Have we seen these advertisements before? What questions, if any, did we ask ourselves about them? How has the incorporation of these images in Emily’s collage changed our view of the images? Are the images in the advertisements/collage pornographic? Are they artistic? Why or why not? Who do you think is the intended audience for the advertisements? For the collage? How do you think different viewers may respond to the advertisements? To the collage? What would you tell your family, friends, teachers, strangers about the original advertisements? What would you tell them about the collage?

All of the student collages were displayed together on the wall of a corridor in the school. The overtly sensitive works — those that utilized vividly descriptive visuals and/or text relating to sexuality (as in Emily’s collage), violence, and animal abuse for instance — were exhibited above eye-level. Within a few hours of their display, I was approached by an administrator at the school. The administrator requested that Emily’s collage be removed. The administrator offered the following reasons for the request: staff were concerned that because the collage dealt explicitly and graphically with sexual issues, it might offend other teachers, staff members and visiting parents; the collage imagery and topic were not appropriate for younger students to view and discuss without directed guidance; and the topic of pornography was inappropriate for classroom investigation, even within an art education environment. I was then asked to have the student submit a verbal statement.
regarding the reasons for making the collage. Though Emily felt strongly that her work spoke clearly for itself, she consented to write a brief statement:

The main reason why I chose to do a piece on pornography is because, to me, some photographs are considered art, then you compare it to another photograph which looks identical, and that's considered pornography. I don't get it. In art, you see pictures of the human body nude all of the time, the human body is considered art. In pornography and some advertisements, you see pictures of nude bodies of women, but all they are is sex objects. Just by making this piece, I have had so many comments about it. For example, ‘How can you do something like that? You're too young to understand!’; ‘That's great, if people don't accept it, that means they're afraid of life!’; etc. But it's true pornography does clash with art and we should be mature enough to accept it, and somehow learn that it is a part of society, and try to do something about it to change it. Anyone can see these types of photographs in any fashion magazine. That's not a problem. So why should my work be?

Emily's collage was removed from display in the school corridor — essentially censored through deliberate exclusion. This censorship provoked Emily into action that she might not have taken otherwise — she informed me that she would look for an alternative space outside of the confines of the school to display the collage in the near future. She also told me that she feels her collage is the most meaningful artwork she has created in school, and that it is important for people to see her collage and start thinking about the issue of pornography and its relation to images of women in advertisements and in art.

In retrospect, I wonder if I should have ‘learned my lesson’ four years previously when I experienced a similar situation at the same institution. A teenage student had created an excessively graphic three-dimensional representation of a murder mystery complete with cryptic clues and a life-sized body of the decapitated victim. She was very proud of her work and labored intensively to get the colour and texture of the volumes of dried blood
“just right”. The work generated much discussion in the class about the depiction of violence in popular horror movies in relation to real-life violence, special visual effects in movie-making, effective uses of representations of violence and surrounding issues. On the day of a Board of Trustees meeting (which was to take place in my classroom), I was asked by two school administrators to remove or to cover the work, which was displayed with other student work in my art room. I covered it with a sheet.

As in the case of the removal of Emily’s collage from public viewing, I felt I had little choice in my forced participation in the censorship of my student’s artwork. I believe that if I had refused to participate, my job at this self-described “progressive” institution would have been jeopardized. As well, as an art instructor I experienced many conflicting feelings in relation to these incidents, including self-doubt, frustration, embarrassment, and isolation. To date, I feel as though I have ‘two strikes against me’. To avoid the ‘third strike you’re out’ syndrome, I have consciously modified my lesson plans and teaching methods — for instance, I no longer publicly display images that may be interpreted as ‘disturbing’, and at times I feel as though I ‘sneak’ in lessons that deal with confrontational and sensitive issues, and ensure that students take related work home as soon as it has been completed.

In the two examples described above, the student work itself was considered disturbing or controversial; however, the images and ideas which inspired the student work came from easily accessible images from mass media and other forms of popular culture which might also be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive. These are images that students, teachers, parents and school administrators are exposed to and live with on a daily basis.

This study will explore issues relating to the inclusion and exclusion of imagery that may be considered ‘pervasive’ or ‘invisible’ in three secondary school art teachers’ visual arts programs. The term ‘pervasive’ refers to visual forms that are prevalent in popular culture. The term ‘invisible’ refers to visual forms that are not commonly addressed in
visual arts programs. Many of the images in both categories attend to such themes as violence, racism, sexism, sexuality, gender issues and relationships, cultural issues, death, war and disease — subjects which individuals may consider disturbing, controversial or sensitive.

Definition of Terms

Pervasive Imagery — This term refers to visual forms that are prevalent in popular culture. These may include images from magazines or newspapers, comic books, advertisements, graffiti, record and compact disc covers, postcards, posters and moving images, as experienced on television, in films, video games and music videos.

Invisible Imagery — This term refers to visual forms that are not commonly addressed in visual arts programs. Imagery may attend to such themes as violence, racism, women's equality, death, and may include for example, art work by women artists past and present, publicly censored works, images of social protest, and art forms by artists from many cultures.

School Art Imagery — This term refers to visual forms that are readily accessible and often utilized in the classroom. These may include reproductions of fine art exemplars; artworks collected and exhibited in the classroom by teachers or students; artifacts viewed in local museums and galleries; built environment elements; art history and other textbook illustrations; and student work.

Possible Imagery — This term refers to visual forms that may be created by students in response to critical investigations relating to an expanded range of imagery and concerning other artists' means of representation.

Research Question
Given an evolving body of literature in art education, in which theorists have asserted a need for the visible incorporation in general art curricula of imagery from an increased range of sources, in particular pervasive and invisible imagery, and including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive, in what ways are three art educators meeting or not meeting this challenge?

**Subsidiary Questions**

1. What specific pervasive and invisible imagery, including disturbing, controversial and sensitive imagery, do participating teachers incorporate in their programs?
2. What teaching approaches do participating teachers utilize in dealing with pervasive and invisible imagery?
3. What is teacher response to invisible and pervasive imagery in the art classroom?
4. What is student response to invisible and pervasive imagery in the art classroom?
5. What are some problems encountered by participating teachers in relation to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom?
6. What are some successes encountered by participating teachers in relation to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom?

**Assumptions**

1. There are few visible and accessible art curricula which support and provide strategies for the utilization of pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom.
2. Many art educators do not incorporate invisible imagery, (such as art work by women artists past and present, and art work by artists from many cultures) in their visual arts programs, because this imagery is not easily accessible, and there are few instructional materials readily available for art educators.
3. The belief exists that art programs that deal with sensitive issues might cause controversy within the school and with parents of students, which in turn may result in loss of enrollment and ultimately loss of the visual arts program and the teacher's employment.

4. Art teachers may not be aware of strategies for addressing issues related to the incorporation of controversial, disturbing or sensitive imagery in the classroom, because teacher education in art tends to focus on studio production with few in-depth courses in art history and art criticism (Eisner, 1982; Getty Center, 1985).

**Design of the Study**

**Respondents and Setting**

This is a descriptive, qualitative study which employs a case study design. Issues relating to the inclusion and exclusion of imagery that may be considered pervasive or invisible in three secondary school art teachers' visual arts programs are explored. All participating teachers are currently teaching visual art in a west coast Canadian city.

During the initial meeting each teacher participated in an in-depth interview. This data established educational background, teaching experience, supplied information for a teacher profile, and provided information regarding the utilization of pervasive and invisible imagery in their visual art programs. In subsequent meetings, the researcher conducted classroom observations. Following the classroom observation periods, teachers were again interviewed if necessary. The time required of each participant was approximately six to eight hours. This included one two-hour interview, one or two two-hour classroom observation period/s where appropriate, and a follow-up interview.

**Procedures**
The researcher conducted audio-taped interviews with participating teachers. Audio-taped recordings allowed an accurate record of the interviews, as well as permitted the researcher to use direct quotations in the study. The researcher, in the role of non-participant observer, also collected field notes in relation to observations of in-class activities where appropriate. Field notes will be referred to for later analysis and interpretation. Additional data were collected through casual conversations with teachers, photographs of student art work, and samples of instructional materials.

**Format of the Study**

Chapter one has introduced the study, outlined the setting, framework and focus of the study, and the procedures used in data collection. Chapter two will review the literature with particular attention to the contemporary image world in relation to curriculum development. Chapter three will outline the setting and framework of the study, focus of the investigation, the procedures used in data collection, and the selection of participants. Chapters four, five and six will profile each of the three case studies in depth. The final chapter will provide an interpretive account of the data, and will identify implications for further research. Appendices include sample interview questions, examples of pervasive imagery, photocopies of student art work, and sample instructional materials.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

An evolving body of literature in art education points to the exclusion from available and visible art curricula of imagery from the mass media, other forms of popular culture, and of imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial, and / or sensitive. In this literature, theorists have asserted a need for the visible incorporation in general art curricula of imagery from an increased range of sources including contemporary visual forms from popular culture (eg., Chalmers, 1981; Kauppinen, 1987); artwork by women past and present (eg., Collins and Sandell, 1987; Zimmerman, 1990a); imagery by people of many cultures (eg., Congdon, 1989; Wasson, Stuhr, Petrovich-Mwaniki, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990b); and imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive (eg., Blandy and Congdon, 1990; Duncum, 1989; Prakash and Shaman, 1988; Nadaner, 1985).

In order to accommodate this vast amount of imagery, it will be helpful to refer to different image categories as put forth by Nadaner (1985). Nadaner outlined three categories of imagery altogether excluded or not often addressed in the art classroom: invisible, pervasive, and possible imagery. In this study, visual forms most commonly utilized as motivation for student work, or for critical purposes in the classroom have been termed "school art" imagery. Though these categories may overlap, there are essentially four groups of imagery available for discussion and investigation in the art classroom:

1. Invisible Imagery: These are visual forms that are intentionally or unintentionally not addressed in an art education program. These may include imagery which attend to such themes as sexism, women's equality, sexuality, violence, death, war, disease, and racism. Art forms may also include art work by women artists past and present, textiles,
face and body work, publicly censored and/or banned works, images of social protest, and art forms by artists from many cultures.

2. Pervasive Imagery These are visual forms that are prevalent in popular culture. These may include images from popular magazines or comic books, newspapers, print advertisements, billboards, graffiti, record album and compact disc covers, calendars, postcards, posters, body-piercing and pornographic imagery. They may also include moving imagery, as experienced in popular films, television movies, situation comedies, cartoons, video arcade games, and music videos.

3. School Art Imagery These are visual forms that are readily accessible and often utilized in the art education classroom. These may include reproductions of fine art exemplars; artworks collected and exhibited in the classroom by teachers or students; artifacts viewed in local museums and galleries; built environment elements; art history and other textbook illustrations; and student work. These images are typically employed as motivators for studio production, or use in art criticism or art history activities. Some themes suggested in the invisible and pervasive image groups are also implied in many works by well-known artists, and may be found in reproductions or in traditional or contemporary art history texts.

4. Possible Imagery: These are visual forms that may be created by students in response to critical investigations relating to an expanded range of imagery and concerning other artists’ means of representation. These images would function as alternatives to what Efland (1976) termed the “school art style”. Nadaner describes school art style images created by students as having an “excessive preoccupation with materials, holiday art and an aesthetic view restricted to Nineteenth Century European painting and expressionism. Products . . . are typically materialistic [and] conventional” (p. 10).

The willful or unintentional exclusion of invisible, pervasive and possible imagery in much visible art curricula attests to a need for expanded concepts regarding art making and artists’ and students’ concerns in the art classroom. The introduction of pervasive and
invisible imagery would make possible for students the examination of the complexities of meanings, beliefs and values associated with the production and use of various visual forms in our society. In our image-saturated society, it would be valuable for students to understand that visual forms are not simply representations of culture, as Garber (1989) points out, but rather they are "signifying practices which produce meanings and construct images of the world that affect particular ideological representations of the world" (p. 25).

In what follows, I shall present and discuss issues related to the exclusion and inclusion of pervasive and invisible imagery, and imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial and/or sensitive in the art education environment.

**Imagery and Exclusion**

Censorship is a form of control which is exercised through expurgation — the removal of matter thought to be objectionable, seditious or offensive on grounds of obscenity, immorality, as a threat to security, and so on. Censorship of art is a process of restriction of the making and exhibiting of artwork. According to Clapp (1972), reasons for censorship are most often economic, social, political, moral or aesthetic. State and church officials are commonly empowered to censor, but citizen or other groups, individuals, or society as a whole can also act as censors. Matter can be suppressed in whole or in part — from images, books, plays, films, lectures, or other forms of display. Censorship can be practiced through acts of willful or inadvertent exclusion: a shutting out or debarment, an omission or neglect.

Hamblen (1986) states that "a curriculum is a sociopolitical document; it allows access to particular types of knowledge and denies or obscures access to other types" (p. 4). The exclusion of a wide range of visual imagery including pervasive and invisible imagery, and imagery that may be considered controversial, disturbing, and/or sensitive, from general art curricula is an insidious and effective form of censorship. This form of
censorship is exercised both explicitly and implicitly within many educational institutions, including public schools. Imagery that can be characterized as controversial, provocative, confrontational, disturbing, and/or devalued (by virtue of omission) is most often excluded from educational consideration. Themes such as violence, sexism, racism, sexuality, women's equality, death, disease and war and peace issues are not commonplace classroom considerations.

Personal reaction to images alluding to these topics is varied — we may avoid or ignore them, overtly censor them, be fascinated, saddened, alarmed, threatened, disgusted, frightened, uncaring or desensitized. Regardless of our reactions, these images often contain powerful messages — explicit or hidden — that serve to influence and help construct our personal and societal value systems. In order to explore the complex ways in which these images operate socially, historically, politically, economically and interpersonally within our cultures, they should be included in general art curricula for educational consideration.

The scarcity of available art curricula that are responsive to sensitive issues such as sexism, inequity, racism, and social violence may be attributed in part to what Prakash and Shaman (1989) point to as our "natural tendency to avoid the discomfort of reflecting upon the ugliness of our own violent culture" (p. 21). These researchers believe that images that explore these issues by mirroring, confronting, or referring to social concerns should not be censored by art educators. Instead it is up to educators to help learners to become aware of the "ugliness" as well as the beauty within our cultures. Through understanding, Prakash and Shaman conclude, there is hope that potential solutions for the betterment of society will be generated. The study of art that depicts the anxiety, anger, fear, and sorrow that many may feel from the threat of realities such as violence towards and oppression of women and children, is a step towards understanding and action.

Marianna Adams, the Curator of Education for the Florida Museum of Art (1992) echoes the points made by Prakash and Shaman in terms of the role of museum educators:
One of the most significant ways we can prepare children is to help them face and deal with reality. The painful and paradoxical truth is that the world is both beautiful and horrible . . . We can choose to either hide these terrible and wonderful truths from our children or we can support them honestly in their quest to understand the world and the role they will play as citizens. If children practice reasoning and become proficient at facing controversy, as adults they will have the critical skills and experience necessary for life in the twenty-first century (p. 8).

Adams (1992) refers to a literature teacher's definition of "a controversial issue", as that which stirs strong emotions and for which "one might get called up before the Board." She believes that educators should engage students in controversial discussions, even though "the potential for personal, parental and community disturbance is real." She states that "to avoid controversy in education is to avoid active, meaningful learning; it reduces education to propaganda or indoctrination" (p. 1).

Adams refers to The National Art Education Association’s Advisory on “Censorship and the Arts” (1992) which states that freedom of expression is crucial to democracy and that censorship is contrary to democratic principles. The art educator has a duty to ‘confront students with a diversity of art experiences and to enable students to think critically.’ The Advisory concludes with a strong reminder to make students aware of the importance of and the need to protect freedom of expression (p. 2).

Inclusion of Pervasive and Invisible Imagery in the Art Classroom

Researchers have posited a variety of powerful reasons as to why pervasive and invisible imagery should be included in art education programs for critical investigation by students, as motivators for student art making, and in student art work itself. These reasons
are interrelated, and include: Relevance to the lives of young people; development of media awareness; development of tolerance and acceptance of one another; reclamation of lost heritage and the provision of alternative artist role models for students, and; student interest in popular culture.

Relevance to the Lives of Young People

Invisible and pervasive imagery can carry great significance and influence in the lives of children. For instance, children are constantly confronted vicariously with images referring to issues of social violence and oppression in the mass media. Duncum (1989) points out that these issues are eminently relevant to the everyday experiences of most school children. Children directly witness and often participate in violent acts. Schoolyard fights, harassment and classroom misbehavior are prevalent in the school environment. At home, children may experience family violence, in the roles of witness, victim, and/or perpetrator. Duncum describes the situation of many children in Western societies: “They are frequently threatened with deprivation and physical punishment, and all children witness much televised violence, both fictional and real. So common on television — our major communications system — that it might appear that society encourages violence” (p. 252).

Duncum implies that in dealing with imagery of this nature, it would be beneficial for students to be provided with opportunities to examine this very real aspect of their lives. Children need to see and to discuss resistance to violence in action, where it is neither accepted nor celebrated. They need to be guided in confronting the contradictions inherent in our society, which on the one hand condemns, and on the other hand appears to support violence.

As mentioned, television and other contemporary mass-media forms are senders of imagery that is diverse and conveys conflicting messages and ideas. These powerful images serve to shape our emotions, beliefs, and attitudes about how we perceive ourselves and
others. Blandy and Congdon (1990) explored the social and educational ramifications of this perspective with regard to gender representations that could be considered pornographic. The messages received from these images teach that women are generally passive, contented victims who enjoy domination, and are identified by their relationships with men. Manifestation of power for men is depicted through images of violence, subordination, and trivialization of women. Many students have easy access to these kinds of images, and should be provided with opportunities to critically discuss and explore the messages that these images convey in regard to gender identification.

Development of Media Awareness

According to Kauppinen (1987), our continuous willing or unwilling exposure to the contemporary mass-media image can either "... serve us well or ill. The better we understand it and the way it operates, the more control we will have over it and ourselves" (p. 39). Students can become aware of the ways in which images do "operate" within their cultures, gaining greater control over the ways in which they are either directly or indirectly influenced. Duncum (1984) conducted an earlier study in which he found that children actively seek to be influenced: "The view of children that emerges... is as persons with greater discrimination than is generally acknowledged by those who fear the power of contemporary mass media..." (p. 102). Art educators can nurture this discrimination through critical dialogue and analysis in regards to imagery.

David Henry (1993) declares that the role of teachers is to encourage ideas, and "as art teachers, it is our responsibility to help students see how specific ideas are communicated through the manipulation of visual images" (p. 26). He developed an instructional resource for teachers in relation to images created by four artists from diverse cultural backgrounds whose work is directly influenced by popular culture imagery. He says:
Each of these artists has grown up in a society in which the mass media play a central role in citizens’ lives. Their art refers to issues we are very familiar with through the media. Rather than working in traditional art forms, . . . they use the language of the mass media — combining words and images, recontextualizing familiar icons, and incorporating familiar graphic symbols. Their work challenges us to look closely at our lives and our society. In addition, they ask us to think about our relationships to each other — and to see our interconnectedness as peoples (p. 26).

As well, he points out that these images also challenge generally accepted notions about multicultural art:

While each of the artists can be described as ‘other’ (African-American, Eastern European immigrant, Latino, Native American), we are reminded by their work, that we . . . are all ‘other’. While we represent many different historical backgrounds, in the public spaces where we come together today — our museums, schools, parks, malls, and mass media, — we are, in Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds’ words, ‘Living People’, with an ever evolving shared cultural language (p. 26).

Although the main objective of Henry’s visual resource is “to initiate discussion about the nature of art and its role in our lives”, he points to the irony that educators who deal with sensitive issues may have to face, when he also notes that because the images he is presenting portray strong points of views, many teachers may not want to deal with them in fear of how students or parents might respond.

Development of Tolerance and Acceptance

Lampela, in her study A Challenge for Art Education: Including Lesbians and Gays, (1995) also points to obstacles that may face teachers who incorporate sensitive issues and imagery into their programs, in this case information regarding, and imagery by gay and
Lesbian artists. Some of these obstacles are: Adolescents may become uncomfortable, embarrassed or hostile, and some may exhibit homophobic behavior towards other students; teachers may encounter opposition from parents, superintendents, and school board members; there are few instructional materials or visual resources regarding the art of gays and lesbians, and; the teacher must examine her or his own comfort level in addressing issues of sexuality in the classroom. Lampela notes that a teacher’s efforts will be accepted more readily if she has administration support. She also encourages teachers to contact a gay and lesbian centre for additional sources of information about issues related to homosexuality.

Regardless of these obstacles, Lampela proposes that the discipline of art education should meet the two-fold challenge of addressing issues surrounding lesbians and gays in education: acknowledgment of lesbian and gay adolescents, and of gay and lesbian artists. Lampela’s commentary presents several reasons why educators should meet this challenge, resources for obtaining information about lesbian and gay artists, and practical application of this information. She believes that by providing accurate information about specific artists, and access to the art work of lesbian and gay artists, students will be aided in learning to accept differences in people, and will be helped to learn to understand and appreciate the art of lesbians and gays. As well, gay and lesbian students will be provided with role models in art.

Reclamation of Lost Heritage and Provision of Alternative Artist Role Models

The provision of alternative artist role models for students is of great significance to roughly half of the school population — females — and is directly related to the exclusion of women’s achievements in art and in art education curricula.

Over two decades ago, Nochlin (1971) raised a challenging question that may be perceived as central to feminist investigations concerning the role of women in art history:
"Why have there been no great women artists?" Nochlin posits that oppression and discouragement of women in the arts, and in many other areas, is the result of our education — "education understood to include everything that happens to us from the moment we enter this world of meaningful symbols, signs and signals" (p. 150). She acknowledges the achievements of many women artists, and suggests that one reason these artists have not been provided recognition in the past is the ideological nature of institutional structures — which, she infers, serve to subjugate women to the advantage of men.

Similarly, Parker and Pollock (1981) have addressed the positions of women in art by analyzing the structures which purportedly determine and sustain the differences of power and privilege for men and women in art. Their research indicates that equal opportunities have been contradicted in the past by the containment and oppression of women's achievements in art. They state that these constraints have resulted in conditions for non-reception and current art history's silence in regards to women's art.

Other commentators such as Berger (1973) and Chalmers (1978) have suggested alternative approaches for the study of art history, based on sociological and anthropological considerations that concentrate on the reasons "why" groups create art, as opposed to "who" is making art. Such approaches will broaden the perspective on the achievements of women and other groups whose works have been previously excluded in the teaching of art history.

**Student Interest**

Young people's interest in a popular culture that is often created specifically for them can be extreme, and difficult for some educators to understand. In Hoff's study (1982) of comic books in the art classroom, he says that comics are often viewed by adults as "cheap sensationalist trash" (p. 21). He refers to the "less savory characteristics which impressionable young minds are . . . exposed to through the comic book medium", and
details the "extremely . . . graphic and literal . . . disturbing" violence, the "unhealthy glorification of the villain", and the stereotyping of women characters in comic books. He points to the fact that comics are not rated, and it appears that many editors "take full advantage of this lack of outside control; decapitation, mutilation, and assorted other gross deeds or threats are commonplace even in mainstream comic books" (p. 22).

Given all this, he suggests that art teachers should not "blindly dismiss" them:

The encouragement of the visual narrative may open the classroom to new and unusual stimulation, but of course it must be handled by the teacher with a great deal of sensitivity. . . If we are to use the student's interest to enrich their art experience and hopefully to prolong it, we must find a place for the visual narrative in the classroom, and it would be preposterous to . . . exclude the influence of the comic book (p. 23).

A more recent study by Klein (1993) is also concerned with the inclusion of comic imagery in the art class as an attempt to make art education curricula more relevant and reflective of the images produced in popular culture. Klein says that comics are saturated with multicultural and socially relevant content, and as visual media humour, comics have shaped and reinforced generations of attitudes and beliefs about ourselves and others challenging and reflecting cultural norms and values. While the majority of comics have perpetuated stereotypical and rather limited views of women, comics in recent years have begun to challenge these images (p. 60).

Klein presents several reasons why the study and production of visual media humour is important: Female and male students have a great interest in comics; student interest can provide opportunities for comic book production, aesthetics, art history and art criticism experiences; the comic book provides a format for integrating a range of curriculum subject areas; comics are effective for developing drawing skills; comics can help to show connections between different art forms and influences within historical art
movements; and studies of mainstream, feminist and underground cartoonists can help to provide inspiring role models for students. Klein says,

Comics in visual arts curriculum can teach students how to read mass media images for obvious, intended and subliminal messages. Images in magazines with male readership can be contrasted with magazines for purely female readership . . . Social, political and gender issues [can be analyzed] . . . Students can be sensitized to inequities through the study of comics. They may realize that women of colour are rarely seen in comics today and that men are represented more than women. . . The stereotyping of ethnic groups in the visual media may be discussed, and students can learn a great deal about the global portrayal of women through cross-cultural comparisons of images of women in the comics (p. 65).

Approaches to Pervasive and Invisible Imagery in the Art Classroom

Formalist Approaches

Many strategies for art criticism in the art classroom have focused primarily upon neutral formalist elements within the image (Barrett, 1990; Nadaner, 1984). Strategies of this nature make little attempt to place expressive meaning within the larger realms of social, cultural, historical, political, and personal contexts. As Chapman (1978) states, "the analysis of an image is not simply a matter of decoding symbols and noting the observable properties of things" (p. 64).

Though meaning and process are integrally related, deriving meaning through a concentration upon the external, literal and observable elements of an image may be insufficient and inappropriate for examination of the invisible and pervasive imagery addressed in this study. A positivistic approach to art criticism, which tends to be restricted
to the discussion of formal relationships in the work, may depersonalize and de-emphasize the content of the work and its socially constructed meaning (Nadaner, 1984).

Barrett (1990) details the ridiculousness of attempting to address art by such artists as Robert Mapplethorpe, Cindy Sherman or Barbara Kruger through purely formalist criticism strategies, and says,

Some conceptions of criticism practiced and advocated in art education, . . . are inadequate for meeting the challenges of much of the art made today. The art of tomorrow is unknown, but if there is already a gap between school art criticism and professional criticism and the art that it criticizes, that gap will likely widen unless we effect change (p. 93).

He continues,

If we art educators only teach our students to critique their own work and that made by their classmates so that they may improve their art making, or if we only teach aesthetic criticism in restricted Modernist senses, then we are not preparing our future citizens to understand the art of their day and the critical literature about it, nor will we be enabling them to enter the important debates about its moral and societal consequences (p. 96-7).

Congdon (1989) points to the fact that "our schools have a sad history of ignoring the cultural heritage of countless numbers of students" (p. 176). She draws attention to the oppression of cultural groups in relation to language systems and art criticism: "In not availing ourselves of varying world views which influence organizational structures for learning and language systems as they relate to art criticism in educational settings, we fail our students and ourselves" (p. 176). She continues:

Words and phrases about art often point out what is important in a culture . . . We must attend to the varied forms of expression from all individuals from varying culture groups . . . we should make a strong effort to talk about art in many ways, which will help broaden the perspective of us all (p. 179).
In Asaro’s essay on art criticism (1991), he said that teachers who are “reducing art to a simplistic exploratory search or a primer course in technique are giving the public a justification for believing that the arts are frivolous. Art could and should be fun; more importantly, it should also be meaningful to students” (p. 103). He believes that it is the art educator’s responsibility to demonstrate that the arts are a valid, necessary and integral part of our schools and communities. He suggests that the reason art has been devalued in schools is at least partially due to the way teachers have approached and presented it: “Art education, when portrayed as a meaningless appendage to the school curriculum, leads to budget and program cuts. Art educators should instead . . . implement art programs that link art with social criticism” (p. 103). Asaro presents several examples of his own attempts to make linkages between art and social criticism through his association with the group Artists/Teachers Concerned, a grassroots organization dedicated to the dissemination and implementation of socially motivated art work in New York City Public School classrooms. As an art educator, Asaro says that he is

... fully aware of the importance of art in a culture and of the refinement and totality of the human experience that the exposure to and the creating of art offers, but I must ask whose art and for what reasons? The answer is certainly not, as some mainstream educators suggest, to train students to be supporters rather than producers of the arts. By often focusing on the experiences of predominantly Western European artists and art, these educators reduce art to a subject whose content can be taught and systematically measured. There are serious ramifications to this approach in today’s multicultural society. The arts should be used to support and enlighten people rather than alienate them further (p. 106).

Critical Approaches
Guiding response to pervasive and invisible imagery, and imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial, or sensitive is undoubtedly a challenge for art educators. Many art education researchers have advocated critical approaches that would be helpful to art teachers and students in addressing and examining such imagery.

Asaro advocates a sociocritical approach to art criticism and art making in the classroom. He reminds his readers that:

The values associated with traditional Western fine art — or for that matter much of today’s contemporary art — function within the elite world of artists, gallery / museum, critic and collector. This work is often unattainable, incomprehensible and irrelevant to most citizens and most of my students (pp. 106-7).

He believes that art educators should strive to make a connection between traditional and non-traditional art forms and address their relevance, whether positive or negative, to the students they are teaching. He says that criticism of art is also an important skill for students to master,

... but it is social criticism that is vital to the progress of the student ‘at risk’. Students need to be able to decipher the enormous amount of visual and non-verbal messages that they are bombarded with daily through the electronic and print media. They have to be able to decipher the obvious and subtle agenda behind such messages in order to develop their own sense of values and self-identity. It is important for our students to be critical about art, but it is crucial that students be given the opportunity to be social critics through their artmaking (pp. 106-7).

Asaro recognizes the benefits for his own students who have participated in socially critical art experiences:

The subtle and ongoing message communicated through participation in socially critical art activities is that youth can make changes and contribute positively to society through their art. For many of my students, participating in this form of art criticism was the first time they had been officially recognized as contributing
members of the school/community. Students who had gone through school being ignored — or at worst, had only been recognized for doing wrong, or poorly in school — were arousing the interest and consciousness of their peers, parents, teachers and the public. Teachers, parents and other community members who were unsuccessful with these students in conventional ways were surprised at the amount of work and dedication they exhibited. The students became aware of the power in their collective voices by sharing their concerns, hopes and fears and working together as a group (p. 107).

Duncum (1987) also advocates the adoption of a sociocritical approach for the study of popular culture in the classroom, and has suggested a two-stage teaching strategy for art teachers: (a) Teachers and students could attempt to understand the range and complexities of meanings, beliefs, and values associated with the production and use of popular cultural forms in lived experience; and (b) Teachers and students could cite lived experience within a general framework of social theory — and as “an integral part of this study of cultural production in relation to social structure, students should not only study popular culture, but posters, banners, videos, and so forth, produced by the poor, powerless, and unsuccessful who operate from alternative or resistant positions.” (p. 9)

Barrett (1990) would be supportive of an art curriculum that would concentrate on deciphering the meaning of art, as opposed to stressing student judgment of art:

It would not teach that one artifact was necessarily better than another, but that artifacts function in different ways in different settings. Such a concentration on interpretation rather than judgment need not foster rampant relativism concerning values. Interpretation of artworks would include an unmasking of the values, social as well as aesthetic, that artifacts implicitly espouse. Once these values are made explicit, competing values can be argued for intelligently. Individuals can then choose their visual environment more intelligently, carefully, and caringly (p. 99).
Blandy and Congdon (1990) advocate a critical-analysis approach to the study of imagery that concerns issues related to pornography — these issues may be analyzed historically, phenomenologically, and cross-culturally. The researchers declare: “Through such analysis, we will come to understand our own values, attitudes and beliefs as compared and contrasted with the understanding of others. The result may be that individuals may change their behavior in accordance with their new understandings” (p. 14). Given the power of images in contemporary society, the art classroom could become a significant locus of social reconstruction. In the classroom, students can explore and discuss resistance to violence and oppression, and can become aware of the ways in which contemporary mass-media images operate within their cultures, thereby gaining greater control over the ways in which they may be influenced by the images.

In their well-known study, Collins and Sandell (1987) raised the question: What is the best way to incorporate new knowledge of women’s achievements in art into art curricula and instruction? The authors advocate an “issues approach” for the classroom, which would serve to address gender-related issues that might arise as students are introduced to information concerning women’s art achievements. They suggest that these issues may be used to focus and enrich classroom discussion and study. Their study indicates that the avoidance of gender-related issues serves to falsify the context in which women artists have worked, thereby distorting the full significance of women’s art achievements. They suggest that an issues approach will serve to challenge the assumptions that underlie the past exclusion of those achievements.

The goals of an issues approach to the incorporation of new information on women in art include: (a) to provide female students with like-sex role models, increased pride and self-esteem, and discovery of a lost heritage; (b) to provide all students with a more complete, complex, and provocative picture of artistic achievements in our cultures; (c) to prepare students more realistically for art careers; and (d) to stimulate critical thinking in regard to the status and values attached to various art activities in our cultures (p. 13).
Collins and Sandell identify two major "streams" of art from which information on women's achievements in art may be gathered. These are: (a) "Mainstream Art" — determined and identified by art historians, critics, educators, museums and galleries; and (b) "Hiddenstream Art" — women's development of traditional art forms. This tradition has been assigned lower status than mainstream art, as it has been identified with 'feminine' art forms and subjects. Collins and Sandell imply that in order for students to understand "the full range and significance of women's art achievements, they need to review and discuss the work of women in mainstream and hiddenstream art as well as in the convergence of these two traditions in the women's art movement" (pp. 13-14).

Zimmerman (1990) agrees that art educators should follow a pluralistic model for sex equity in art education in which they incorporate an issues-oriented approach to art teaching as advocated by Collins and Sandell. However, she believes that art teachers should adopt a socially-reconstructionist stance, and:

... go beyond this model and have as one of their goals the promotion of a social action position in which they ultimately are able to effect change in their schools and in society as a whole. Art teachers should take responsibility for nourishing their students' thinking processes through introducing a full range of artworks that are examined freely and discussed meaningfully in their classrooms (p. 6).

Zimmerman interprets socially-reconstructionist inquiry as inquiry that challenges and offers alternatives to traditionally understood frameworks and processes. She believes that socially-reconstructionist curricula offer the possibility for students to openly attend to, take action against, and effect change regarding sexism, violence and inequity on a local and global level.

According to Smith (1985), "Exploring events and experiences through visual models helps children to master reality; in the process they often create personal inventions that concentrate and enlarge experience" (p.154). The inclusion of pervasive and invisible imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial, and / or sensitive in the art
curriculum provides students and teachers with alternative visual models. Classroom explorations of those visual models provides students with a legitimate forum for a discourse that they are already engaged in, but is excluded from the art classroom. Candid explorations of such imagery will also provide teachers with the opportunity to enter into that discourse and to offer guidance and support where it is urgently needed.

According to Adams (1992), benefits of controversial issue discussions for children include an increase in student motivation, which results in better attendance in classes where these discussions are taking place. Students are also benefiting from: “an application of learning to their lives, cultivation of higher order thinking skills, and an increase in their tolerance for differences” (p. 2). Also, students tend to develop an increased interest in current events. As well, Adams says that on a deeper level, students who work through the process of coming to terms with an issue may end up shedding their assumptions, look beneath the surface of things, and realize that they have the freedom to make responsible choices.

By addressing this imagery through critical investigations, students will be encouraged to relate diverse visual forms to challenging issues, concerns and understandings that are of profound significance to their own life experiences. Student response to imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive can lead to studio work that is personally and socially relevant, in contrast to conventional studio products often produced in art classrooms. By critically addressing invisible and pervasive imagery, issues such as morality, ethics, socio-cultural conditions, socialization processes, and ways of knowing can be discussed in the classroom. That dialogic experience may then become "possible" imagery as it translates to narrative within students’ own artwork.

Barrett (1990) stated,

Although we can not and should not expect education to solve our social and economic problems, to undo racism, poverty, and a deteriorating environment, we can expect education to contribute to solutions to these problems. We can ask art
educators to graduate students from high school who are able to enjoy a variety of art works, feel passionately, think analytically, and discuss them within their communities (p. 99).

He says that “if this sounds too remote, it is not”, and goes on to describe a situation where the above was accomplished.

Barrett observed the reaction of a dozen high school students, aged eighteen and over, who took part in a guided group visit to a public gallery exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe’s photographs in Cincinnati, Ohio, for the purposes of critical investigation. He contrasted their responses with public reaction to the same exhibit. Reactions from various members of the public included protest both for and against the showing of the work, calls for censorship of the exhibit, vandalism of other public art concerned with issues of sexuality, media discussions related to homophobia and other issues of sexuality, and public outrage and condemnation.

Barrett describes the students’ reactions:

The students all expressed gratitude for the preparatory work they took part in before they saw the exhibition. They all found the exhibition very troubling, especially the explicitly homosexual and sadomasochistic photographs in Mapplethorpe’s X and Z portfolios . . . Regardless, they all wrote that they were glad they went. They all defended the right of the artist to photograph difficult subjects, and their right to see troubling imagery (p. 100).

Barrett said that the statements the students made attested to the students’ abilities to engage in thoughtful and socially beneficial dialogue about art they find difficult. The statements also provided:

evidence that people can reach more and more adequate understandings of art, especially if they engage in thought about art as a community of inquirers. The thought and dialogue of these teenagers is already more mature thinking than the name calling of many of the older citizens of Cincinnati (p. 100).
Research regarding the actual incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery, and imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive in individual visual arts classrooms is slim, but is growing. To ensure this growth, researchers such as Galbraith (1988) advocate that more teachers contribute actively to research. She proposes that art teachers become more informed about current research in art education and assume responsibility for incorporating relevant research findings in classroom instruction. Galbraith suggests that teachers; (a) Act as research subjects; (b) put research into practice; and (c) act as researchers themselves.

Conclusion

On a final note, I present a moving reminder concerning the immense power of disturbing and sensitive images to effect change and facilitate social action by educators on a large scale. In a recent editorial of an issue of the *InSea [International Society for Education Through Art] News* (1994), Grauer describes how a world crisis caused her to re-examine the significance of art education for children in crisis:

The... event was the war in the former Yugoslavia. As disturbing as the images and information about this war were, the impact could be distanced by my lack of personal involvement. Then, at the InSea World Congress... last summer, the displays of children’s art work, and presentations and personal discussions with and by the members of the Croatian delegation led to the unprecedented drafting of a world congress resolution by deeply affected InSEA members: 'The members of InSEA voice concern and call attention to the plight of traumatized refugee children worldwide... As art educators we have the responsibility to respond to this terrible social injustice. Educators and policy makers have the moral obligation to provide children with opportunities to work in the arts so that the healing process that the arts foster can be made possible. InSEA's 2000 members working in over ninety
countries throughout the world urge that all who shape schools and their programs include the arts for all of children, but especially for those who most need the healing that the arts make possible'. This resolution was unanimously passed by the World Council. As educators, we responded to the children's images that did far more than document an impersonal war.

This review has investigated the current state of the literature with regard to the status of pervasive and invisible imagery in art classrooms. The literature addressed has provided a general overview which serves to lay a foundation upon which to base this study. There is little current research on the extent to which pervasive and invisible imagery, including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial, and / or sensitive has actually been incorporated into visual arts programs. Chapters four, five and six present case studies of three art educators who do incorporate such imagery into their art programs. Approaches utilized by individual teachers, teacher and student response, and problems and successes related to the incorporation of such imagery in the classroom will be described.
CHAPTER 3

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

Setting and Selection of Participants

This study took place in three different school districts located in a west coast Canadian city. Three art educators working with senior secondary students in schools of unequal socio-economic level and population size participated in the study. The selection of the three teachers to participate in the study was based on the following criteria: (a) the interest, availability and cooperation of the teachers; (b) the differences in their present teaching situations; and (c) their diverse approaches to the utilization of pervasive and/or invisible imagery in their visual arts programs. Participants were assured that their identities would be kept confidential. Each participant has been given a pseudonym in this study to ensure complete anonymity.

Each participant was asked to provide written consent to participate in this study. They were assured that they had the right to refuse or withdraw consent at any time, and that refusal would not jeopardize them in any way. Written permission to conduct classroom observations of two participating teachers was obtained from one teacher's Principal and District Superintendent of Schools, and from the Executive Director of the other teacher's school. Written permission to photograph and incorporate student art work was obtained from parents of students.

Participants include:

Teacher A, “Melissa”, is currently employed in an inner city public school as a contract teacher while the permanent art teacher is on maternity leave. Melissa told me that she both includes and excludes pervasive imagery in her current visual arts program. I did not visit Melissa's art classes, as her employment situation is tenuous as a contract teacher,
and neither Melissa nor myself wished to potentially jeopardize her employment, given the possibly sensitive nature of this study.

**Teacher B.** “Anne”, is an established art teacher who has worked for several years at a secondary public school. She incorporates pervasive and invisible imagery in her visual arts program as motivation for student art work, for critical investigation by students, and within student work itself.

**Teacher C.** “Tasha”, is a professional artist, and is also employed as a teen art instructor for an independent arts school. I was interested in exploring if, and in what ways, this alternative art school environment might differ from a public school environment in relation to the teacher’s use or non-use of pervasive and invisible imagery. Tasha’s art work deals with issues of social relevance, in particular gender relationships. I was interested in discovering if she explores related issues with students in her art program.

Throughout the study the researcher acted as investigator, collecting information through in-depth audio-taped interviews with participating teachers, classroom observations of Teacher B’s and Teacher C’s classes, casual conversations with teachers, photographs of student art work, collection of instructional materials and handouts, and follow-up interviews.

Audio-taped interviews and follow-up interviews were based on open-response questions, and were therefore discovery-oriented, enabling the researcher and the participants to explore issues and to share understandings from a variety of perspectives regarding the use of imagery in visual arts programs. The researcher, in the role of non-participant observer, also took field notes in relation to observation of art class activities in the two classrooms visited. Teacher dialogue with the students, casual student conversation, and student art work was noted.
The framework for the study is based on qualitative case study design as identified by McMillan and Schumacher (1989). These researchers define a case as a particular situation selected by the researcher in which some phenomena will be described by participants' meanings of events and processes (p. 532). A case study design is defined as the one phenomenon the researcher selects to understand in-depth, regardless of the number of settings, social scenes, or participants in a study. The purpose of a case study design is to understand phenomena; because qualitative research designs "investigate behavior as it occurs naturally in noncontrived situations, there is no manipulation of conditions or experience" (p. 36).

The researcher used methods based on ethnographic interview and ethnographic observation. An ethnographic interview is defined as a data collection strategy which uses in-depth interviews with open-response questions to obtain data of participant meanings (p. 535). Ethnographic observation is defined as participant observation of phenomena in naturally occurring situations over a period of time to obtain descriptive field notes. In this study qualitative observations are recorded as transcripts of ethnographic interviews and detailed notes of ethnographic observations. These qualitative descriptions are detailed narrations of people, incidents and processes which serve to emphasize participants' meanings.

In a case study design, a particular case is selected to enable the researcher to gain extended understandings of a broader phenomenon. The detailed descriptions of the events and people studied enable others to understand similar situations and to extend these understandings in subsequent research.

Limitations

The threats to the external validity (the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized to other subjects, conditions or situations) of qualitative studies can limit its
usefulness. Comparability and translatability are two such threats. According to McMillan and Schumacher:

*Comparability* refers to the degree to which the research components . . . are adequately described and defined so that researchers may use the study to extend understandings to other studies focusing on similar topics. *Translatability* refers to the degree to which the researcher uses theoretical frameworks and research strategies that are understood by other researchers in the same or related disciplines. Thus the meaning of the findings can be extended. The lack of comparability or translatability reduces the usefulness of a study to a systematic but idiosyncratic investigation, a limitation to its relevance for future inquiry (p. 194).

**Focus**

The focus of this study was to determine if three art teachers who teach secondary students incorporate or do not incorporate pervasive and/or invisible imagery, including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial, or sensitive in their visual arts programs, and to identify various issues relating to the inclusion of such imagery in the art classroom environment.

There were several issues to be determined: What specific pervasive and invisible imagery participating teachers incorporate or do not incorporate in their art programs; the teaching approaches utilized in dealing with such imagery; individual teacher response to such imagery; teachers' perceptions of individual student response to such imagery; and some problems and successes encountered by participating teachers in relation to the incorporation of such imagery in the classroom.

**Procedures**
Data collection included the following:

1. Teacher Interviews [see Appendix A, p.127]: The open-response interview questions were designed to obtain information in an open-ended fashion about the teachers' teaching experiences and utilization or non-utilization of pervasive and invisible imagery in their visual art programs, and to gain insight into issues surrounding the incorporation or non-incorporation of such imagery. The interviews took place in a mutually convenient location away from the school grounds. The audio-taped interviews were transcribed to allow the researcher to use direct quotations.

2. Direct Classroom Observation: Observations of Teacher B's and Teacher C's classes by the researcher, occurred in participating teachers' art classrooms. Field notes were collected in relation to the observation of in-class activities. As noted previously, I did not visit the classroom of Teacher A, as neither she nor I wished to potentially jeopardize her employment, given the possibly sensitive nature of this study.

   During my observations of Teacher B's and Teacher C's classes, I chose not to discuss this study with students, as the main objective of the observations was to determine Teacher B's and Teacher C's classroom use or non-use of pervasive and invisible imagery. As well, according to The University of British Columbia's Behavioural Sciences Screening Committee For Research and Other Studies Involving Human Subjects, parental consent must be obtained prior to interviewing students, and I did not wish to possibly jeopardize the teacher's employment should parents take issue to the possibly sensitive nature of this study. Student response to pervasive and invisible imagery described in this study was garnered from the teachers' perceptions of their students' responses.

3. Conversations with Participating Teachers: Casual conversations with teachers regarding issues relating to this study took place on the school grounds before and after the classroom observation periods, and by telephone.

4. Pervasive Imagery Examples [see Appendix B, pp.128-137]: Examples of pervasive imagery used by Teacher A for various classroom activities have been
photographed and included. This record allows for illustration of interview discussions, and specific reference regarding image description and interpretation.

5. Photographs of Student Art Work [see Appendix C, pp.138-152]: Samples of student art work from Teacher B's and Teacher C's classes were photographed in situ. This photographic record allows for illustration of interview discussions, and specific reference regarding image description and interpretation. Photographs of Teacher A's students' art work were not taken, as I did not visit her classroom.

6. Sample Instructional Materials [see Appendix D, pp.153-157]: Photocopies of various instructional materials pertinent to this study were provided to the researcher by Teacher A and Teacher B. This record allows for reference to specific lesson plans carried out by the teachers. Teacher C did not use instructional materials pertinent to this study.

Verification of the Data

Data were verified by submitting and discussing individual transcripts of audiotaped interviews to participating teachers. As well, discussions took place with Teacher B and Teacher C regarding my interpretations of class observations, enabling both myself and the individual teachers to verify my observations. Finally, each participant will receive a copy of the completed research for her own records.

This chapter has outlined the setting of the study, the selection of participants, the framework of the study, the focus of the investigation, the procedures used in data collection, and verification of the data. Chapters four, five and six will profile, in depth, each of the three case studies.
CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY A.

Teacher Profile

"Melissa" obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Art Education in 1982, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fine Art and Education in 1984 from an art college on the east coast. She completed her Master of Arts in Art Education in 1990 through the same institution. She has taught art in elementary, junior and secondary schools for approximately fourteen years. Within that time, Melissa also founded and directed an art school for young people in a city on the east coast. Her other teaching experience includes museum education and English as a Second Language (ESL). Melissa is also a visual artist, who exhibited her mixed media paintings and drawings extensively when she lived on the east coast.

Melissa has lived on the west coast for approximately three years. During this time, she has worked as an ESL and/or art teacher for elementary, junior and senior secondary students, as well as adult students in four separate independent schools and institutions. She is currently employed full-time, on contract, in an east-side inner city junior secondary public school as a substitute Art and English teacher while the permanent teacher is on extended maternity leave.

School Environment

The secondary school has an enrollment of approximately 1,600 students from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. This inner city school is located in an economically disadvantaged area of the city.
The school hierarchy consists of the following order: principal, vice principal, department heads, teachers, and students. Each teacher reports to her or his Department Head. Melissa works in both the Art and English Departments, and therefore has two separate Department Heads to report to regarding programming concerns. The same school rules of conduct apply to both departments.

Melissa said that her role within the school hierarchy is “more tenuous” as a substitute teacher, and thus developing and maintaining her relationships with the administration and other teachers is important to her. Future employment opportunities in the school, as well as with other local public schools may depend on her performance as a teacher during her present employment.

Because of the fragile nature of her current position as a contract teacher, I decided that it was best not to conduct classroom observations, as I did not want to jeopardize her employment in any way, given the possibly sensitive nature of some of the subject matter in my study. As well, from my initial conversations with Melissa, I understood that she has rarely incorporated pervasive or invisible imagery, or imagery that she considers overtly disturbing, controversial or sensitive within her visual arts program during the course of the current employment, as she was concerned by the possibility of administration disapproval. Given that, I felt it might be unproductive to conduct classroom observations, and was interested in exploring more thoroughly the reasons as to why she chose to exclude imagery of this nature from her programming.

Class Profile

Melissa teaches Art and English to over three hundred students, and rotates classes on a weekly basis. The comic design unit discussed in this study was implemented to three classes of Grade 8 students, which mostly consisted of young people aged thirteen to fourteen years from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
Melissa says that she enjoys working with the students, and seems to have established lively and genuine relationships with many individuals. Throughout our discussions, she often referred to her students as “my kids”, and demonstrated a keen interest in the lives, feelings, interests and cultures of her students. She finds that her ‘kids’ are “generally very healthy”, even though “they’re terrified to dress differently from each other... and they worry about being ‘cool’ all the time”.

Art Program

Melissa does not have a pre-established fixed curriculum planned for her art program, but rather designs her own projects in relation to such factors as student art development, materials available, and multi-disciplinary concerns. Because she works in both the Art and English departments simultaneously, she says that she is dealing regularly with communications, imagery and language in both teaching areas.

Melissa’s art program is studio based, and she relies on technique-based teaching strategies combined with informal discussion and inquiry to teach drawing, painting, printmaking, mixed media and design skills. Art criticism discussions, art history references, and discussions regarding media awareness usually occur spontaneously in relation to images that serve as motivators for various studio projects and topics evolving from student art work, student conversations, or various paraphernalia that students wear or bring into class, such as t-shirts and magazines.

Melissa does not use formal lesson plans or utilize instructional art teaching resources often. She says: “...at this stage of the game, it’s automatic with me. It’s part of my reservoir. I no longer, after fourteen years of teaching, sit down at night and write out a lesson plan. These units are in me now”.

Pervasive and Invisible Imagery in the Classroom
As noted, in my initial conversations with Melissa, I assumed that she rarely incorporated pervasive imagery, or imagery that she considers overtly disturbing, controversial or sensitive within her visual arts program during the course of the present employment. In a later conversation, Melissa informed me that she was beginning a four-week instructional unit on comic strips and comic book art that would be of interest to my study. She said that she was planning on incorporating imagery in the unit which could be considered disturbing or controversial in light of its depictions of violence, stereotypical representations of male and female characters, and stereotypical representations of race and culture.

This section will explore issues surrounding the utilization of imagery in Melissa’s visual arts programs that might be considered pervasive and/or invisible, as defined in this study. This section will more specifically explore some of the issues surrounding the implementation of a comic design unit to three classes of Grade 8 students. Discussions concerning specific imagery, teaching approaches, teacher response, student response, and problems and successes relating to the use of such imagery as described by Melissa will be presented. Quotes and other information have been derived by this researcher from a sustained audio-taped interview, casual conversations, and a follow-up telephone interview with Melissa. Photocopied images used as visual examples, and photocopied instructional materials relating to the comic design unit were provided by Melissa to myself for the purposes of description and interpretation.

Specific Imagery

When I asked Melissa if she employed imagery from the mass media or from other forms of popular culture in her visual arts program, she replied:
All the time . . . We draw on popular culture quite a bit . . . I don’t think it’s possible to keep popular culture out of the classroom. It’s their culture. I can’t enforce my culture on them. I have to start where they’re at. I have to watch the cartoons they’re watching. I have to watch *Melrose Place*. I have to watch all these horrid things! I need to be aware of what they’re looking at and what appeals to them . . . [it’s] imagery they deal with on a regular basis.

Pervasive imagery utilized by Melissa in her art program is derived from mass media and other forms of popular culture, and include: “stacks of magazines”; print and television advertisements; music videos; game boards; record and compact disc cover art; and comic book art.

For the comic design unit developed by Melissa, images came from popular comic books, newspapers, magazines, popular movies, video games, television cartoons, and fashion — as in images on t-shirts worn by students. This imagery was brought into class by Melissa or the students, and used as motivation for instruction and to provide specific examples to illustrate technical concepts for drawing projects. This imagery was also used for purposes of discussion in relation to various topics brought up in the unit.

Specific examples of comic book imagery kept in a folder which was accessible to students included: The comic book issue *Superman: The Death of Superman*, which was brought in by a student for the purposes of this unit; several photocopied examples of student drawings of super heroes and villains; and various photocopied examples of popular comic book covers including, *The New Mutants, Ghost Rider, Punisher, Youngblood, The Uncanny X-Men, The X-Factor, Spiderman, Batman, The Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, The Fantastic Four, Wolverine, Deathlok, and Mister Meaner*.

Melissa received most of the photocopied images from a personal friend at her request. Her friend drew many of the characters from favorite comic books when he was a teenager and young adult [see Appendix B, pp.128-131]. Comic book cover images were photocopied from his large collection of popular comic books.
These comic book images portray graphic themes of violence, destruction, gore, murder, death, and fear. These themes are illustrated with depictions of: various weapons — such as knives, axes, swords and guns; death imagery — such as skulls, skeletons, tombstones and depictions of the 'living dead'; lots of blood and slime; turbulent battles between super heroes and villains; execution imagery; terrorized facial expressions; and a variety of evil-looking creatures.

In the collection of forty-five photocopied images, super heroes and villains are male, with three exceptions. All male hero and villain characters are depicted as larger than life, with excessively exaggerated musculature, and costume paraphernalia that emphasize physical characteristics and double as weapon repositories. One female villain, “The Mudpack” (© DC Comics), is depicted as smaller than the males surrounding her, also with exaggerated physical properties, and a costume that seems to consist only of form-fitting mud [see Appendix B, p.132]. The other two female characters could be heroines or villains, and again are depicted with exaggerated physical attributes and minimal costuming. Only one female character is shown with weaponry — a sword and a boomerang [see Appendix B, pp.133-134].

Other imagery, not from popular culture, employed in the comic design unit included paintings by Roy Lichtenstein, Albrecht Durer’s figure etchings, and anatomy books which were used to illustrate technical concepts. However, Melissa pointed out “for the most part in this unit, we’ve been dealing almost strictly with [images from] popular culture.”

**Teaching Approaches**

Teaching approaches employed by Melissa in relation to pervasive imagery include discussion, inquiry, debate, and humour. These approaches were used in the comic design
unit to address formal and technical elements in imagery, art historical references, and issues related to media awareness.

In the activity handout [see Appendix D, p.153] on comic design Melissa provided me, students are instructed to create their own hero, and to consider the following options: What makes a hero powerful? What are their weaknesses? What is their past / origins? Do they have an alter ego? Does their costume have a special purpose? Do they have a quest or goal? Do they have special tools or talisman to aid them? What point of time do they exist in? As well, the students are informed that the topics they will be covering in the unit include the history of comic design, figure drawing, facial features, layout, composition, colour, depth, perspective, and lettering. The students also received handouts on one- and two-point perspective, body and head proportion, body movement, shading, and text design.

As is evident from the activity handout description, much discussion took place between Melissa and the students in relation to the formal and technical elements of the imagery. The group of photocopied comic book images created by Melissa's friend were used to illustrate the cartooning process, from rough sketch to finished drawing. All of the comic book images were used to provide examples of various drawing techniques, including perspective, shading, illusion of action and body movement, facial features, background elements, composition, the use of lettering and text, and the differences between artists' styles.

The images were kept in an accessible file and used as reference by the students for their own work:

Students would use these images to help them figure out how to create the illusion of a fist coming out at the viewer, how to show a hand holding something, or how to draw neck muscles. A lot of them wanted to know how to draw abs — that was really important. I would show them the way the artists used different kinds of cross-hatching, and get them to look at what areas of the drawing were solid, which were left open. We looked at perspective, shading, inking, those kind of things...
Here's this massive gun — it being the center of attention — guns, guns, guns a-blazing — the whole bit. But they really wanted to know how to draw those guns.

When dealing with an image that Melissa described as sexist, she approached it through formal means, and did not directly address gender stereotyping:

I actually did not draw direct attention to the figure itself — I pointed out the techniques used and said, 'Look how he's used this line of the ribbon in the background to create a sense of space and to accent the diagonal'. So I didn't do anything about plastic tits, or these hips, or these groin things or anything like that.

When I asked her why she did not approach the topic of sexist representation directly, she said:

Because I didn’t think it was necessary to discuss that. It was obvious. Also their hormones are so searing that they would get on to a bender about this. Whereas if I talked about this like an adult they would [pause] I find that if I discuss this image from an adult point of view, then I find the image becomes less disturbing, or it gives them less opportunity to make it disturbing.

Melissa employed inquiry strategies to generate discussion relating to art criticism and media literacy concerns. Melissa began the comic design unit with her Grade 8 students by examining the newspaper comics. Questions she asked to generate discussion about comic art included:

How does this reflect our culture today? What’s happening in Robotman? Does that have anything to do with your life? What about Cathy? What does that deal with — a single woman who is always worried about being perfect. What does For Better Or Worse deal with? Real-life family problems. What does Family Circus deal with?

Inquiry strategies are also used in other classroom discussions about imagery from popular culture:
We talk about what videos we are watching, what appeals to them about those videos. What commercials we find interesting. Why are you wearing that brand of sneakers? What’s the commercial that goes with that brand of sneakers? Why would you decide to buy that brand over another? These are conversations that happen all of the time in the art room.

During the unit, Melissa used an image to point out possible artist-intended references to art historical images. The image she used for this exercise was from the comic book, Superman: The Death of Superman, which depicted Superman’s death, with Lois Lane holding the dying super hero. Melissa showed the students an image of the death of Christ, in which Mary is cradling Jesus, and discussed and compared similarities, differences and the use of symbolism within the two images.

Melissa said that she is constantly trying to teach her students to be media aware, and that the comic design unit provided her with an ideal context to help students examine representation in light of topics such as violence, sexual stereotyping, racial stereotyping, and concepts of what is good and what is evil.

Topics of this nature are also addressed during casual discussions with students. For example, before her art class, there is a silent reading period where students bring in their own reading material. Much of the material brought in by the students consists of a wide variety of popular magazines. Melissa said she often takes this opportunity to discuss representations of women and men in advertising and other sections of these publications. These conversations with and between students often become what Melissa refers to as “gender battles” over what the boys or girls consider attractive or popular. Melissa says she often tries to make a special point to relate the mass media imagery to the real-life concerns of her students:

[I] have a lot of discussions with girls about what is considered ‘ideal’ feminine beauty. Many of my female students are rejecting the idea that you have to be thin
and beautiful and wear tank tops so your belly-button shows, and all that kind of stuff. They hate that popularity at school is based on how good-looking you are.

Besides encouraging debate amongst the students, Melissa also uses humour as a strategy for dealing with issues that come up in relation to images from popular culture:

We talk a little about pornography, like in music videos. I'll bring up that some of the things are sexist. Most of the time it hasn't occurred to them. But when I bring it up, they'll say, "Yeah, yeah, it's kind of stupid". And I'll say 'Can you imagine [student] over there doing that strut down the hallway?' And they'll all crack up. I bring humour into my media literacy awareness a lot, otherwise, I'll sound like a war-horse or a suffragette, or like I'm lecturing, and they'll turn off. You've got to keep a sense of humour and just go, 'Can you believe this? Can you see me in this get-up?' We laugh about this kind of stuff. It brings it back to a human level.

Teacher Response

Melissa uses "common sense" to determine criteria for introducing, addressing and excluding specific imagery from classroom consideration:

If it's not appropriate to me — and I consider myself fairly open-minded — then I'm pretty sure that their parents are going to feel the same way. If it's something that's really not perverse, that I can bring in that is controversial, I'll say 'Let's discuss this image. I personally find this image offensive. This is why I find this image offensive. Do you agree or disagree with me?' Then it's okay.

Included in the selection of photocopied imagery sent to Melissa by her friend were three images of comic book covers that she felt were not appropriate for use in the classroom, and were excluded from classroom consideration. These included the following: DeathBlow (© Image Comics), which depicts a massive villain-type male character with a bandanna wrapped around his head, holding a huge machine-gun in one hand. A pistol is
held in the other hand, and is pointed at the viewer, having obviously just been fired [see Appendix B, p.135]; *Lobo’s Back* (© DC Comics), which includes the warning, “Strongly Suggested For Mature Readers”, and depicts the posterior of the head and torso of a heavily muscled male whose arm is wrapped in chains, and who is wearing a cut-off jacket that depicts the text “BITE ME FAN BOY” [see Appendix B, p.136]; *The New Mutants: Hellions* (© Marvel Comics), which portrays a giant female character with an evil shadowy mask-like face and accentuated body parts, who is dressed in corseted lingerie and stockings, with a boa wrapped around her neck. Six limp corpse-like male and female figures, wrapped and tied in cords, dangle from her outstretched arm [see Appendix B, p.137].

Melissa described her response to these images:

I had mixed feelings about [*Deathblow*], because it seems so incredibly violent to me. I wouldn’t use [*Lobo’s Back*], because this is a real classic record logo-type image. Also it’s too accessible an image to them — it’s the kind of thing you’d see everywhere. Seeing this guy from behind was too anonymous — it could be any kid in the school. It was too familiar. And to have the Hell’s Angel’s logo with the text ‘Bite Me Fan Boy’ — I didn’t want to see things like ‘Suck me’ showing up in their writing. I felt that this would make it legitimate to swear or to use bad language, and I didn’t want that to become an issue. . . [*The New Mutants: Hellions*] was so horribly sexist — beyond belief — pornographic and misogynous. The idea of this vamp — garter-wearing, faceless, evil, female wench — with all these men and women dangling like puppets, like dead meat, and the new mutants, hellions [pause] I just didn’t like it — I just thought it was very, very inappropriate female imagery. I did not want my boys seeing that. I did not want my girls to have to deal with that as being valid imagery. I didn’t want either of these two images to be seen as valid.
Melissa told me that she brought all the images to the school to show her Department Head, and consequently, the students were aware of the fact that there were some images that Melissa was excluding from the student file. When they asked “Why are you hiding those other ones?” Melissa answered, “Because they’re inappropriate.” Then she put them back on the art room shelf: “But I didn’t say why, because it would have just opened a whole can of worms. I simply felt that it was not appropriate, as a teacher, to show these images to my students.”

When I asked Melissa if she felt that she was censoring herself by excluding these images from classroom consideration, given that these images are so accessible outside of the school environment, she replied:

No, I wouldn’t even have these images around my own daughter. Number one, I don’t think it’s good art. Number two, it’s like that horrible negativism. It’s leaning towards legitimizing abuse. It would show that it’s okay to say these things, or to dress this way, or to take on this attitude. And to me it’s not. Because of my personal morals, I chose not to show these things, and my Department Head backed me completely. He agreed. We actually both laughed about the images when we looked at them together, and said, ‘Can you believe these images? Let’s just ferry these away’.

For Melissa, the ‘line’ between what is acceptable and what is not for classroom consideration in context of the comic design unit, was typified by the image *Deathblow*:

*Deathblow* disturbed me more than the others. The gun is being pointed right at the viewer. There’s something really confrontational about it. I also thought there was a real multicultural vision about it — this guy could be Black, Asian, Puerto Rican — because a lot of my kids wear the handkerchief around their heads like that. He’s no longer like a hero, anti-hero, or villain-type. This is like someone you would encounter in the school, or on the street, or in the neighborhood, because we have a rough neighborhood.
The other comic book images differed because they appeared to Melissa as obviously unreal:

Like that thing just doesn’t exist — we know it’s fantasy, we know something doesn’t have claws like that, doesn’t have teeth like that, doesn’t have a head like that. It’s easy to see that these things are not real. And that’s why the kid’s don’t find them disturbing. The things that look real are the ones that we found disturbing. The other ones are just too close to home. That’s the line.

Even though Melissa felt many of the comic book images that she did use as examples in the classroom were “really violent”, “pretty intense” and “very macabre”, she considered them fairly “tame”, and “not disturbing to the kids”, in comparison with the three images that were excluded.

I asked Melissa to describe imagery that she considers ‘disturbing’, ‘controversial’ and ‘sensitive’. Imagery that Melissa considers disturbing concern rape and neo-Nazi culture, which include depictions of skin-head culture, swastikas, white-supremacist ideas, and representations of the Klu Klux Klan.

Controversial imagery is typified in music videos:

... especially the rap imagery, with the idea that women are sex machines for the man, and that the man is in control, and this is his squeeze on the side. Every now and then, you’ll hear a female rap group. Salt N’ Pepa does one called *He’s a Good Man*, and the lyrics are about what makes a good man. While they’re singing, they’re all gyrating, their legs are spread open in the tub, they’ve got bras and short shorts on. And they’re doing this whole number about what is the responsibility of a black man. So to me, I find that controversial, because how can you be saying that and acting this way . . . Rap used to be about sound and sound poetry, now I find it’s much more about male dominance and power, and racism. It’s losing the power of its language . . . I look at controversy in context to the multicultural societies that I teach.
Sensitive imagery is also "multiculturally based": "It’s how an Asian is shown next to a white person for example. How a Black man is represented. . . . Also the First Nations issue — how they are portrayed." Melissa attempts to address imagery that deals with race and culture in the classroom, but does not "push" discussions about these issues, as: "Multicultural issues and images are very sensitive with the children themselves. They even cringe about these discussions in the classroom. They don’t want to discuss their own prejudice."

Issues that Melissa considers disturbing, controversial and sensitive, she said overlap in popular culture imagery, and can be seen in magazines, music videos, and popular movies.

**Student Response**

Melissa said that the students loved the comic design unit. They liked working with the comic book images, and thought they were "cool". Unlike Melissa, they didn’t seem to be disturbed by the graphic depictions of violence. Instead they used the images as examples to help them create similar images, and to analyze them for composition, "so they, too, can create ultimate gore. Especially the boys. They wanted that idea of power and danger. They want good versus evil. That’s a really important thing for them. They want to know ‘how can I get that across?’"

Melissa found her Grade 8 students demonstrated a "mature" response to comic book imagery that contained exaggerated representations of female body parts. For example, when she showed them an image of the female comic character, ‘Mudpack’, (who is scantily clad in dripping mud), she was slightly concerned that some of her students reactions would be disruptive to the class — "but the kids never said ‘Hey, look at the boobs on this one’ They took it as an artist’s rendition.” She finds her Grade 8 students more mature than her Grade 10 students, and believes that it is because the majority of the
Grade 8’s are not sexually active: “the hormones haven’t hit yet. And ... the fear of AIDS is really phenomenal.”

However, when not involved in an art activity, where the focus is on student work, their hormones do seem to react. Melissa mentioned that during the silent reading period before her class, she often hands out art history books to her Grade 8 students which contain images of nudes. But, she rarely discusses or addresses images of nudes with her students:

Often they will come across a nude. Suddenly there will be about four boys around a book. They’re probably looking at the Venus of Urbino, or a Renoir. I just ignore it and let them leaf through it. They don’t think that I know that these images are in there! I just let them choose what they want to look at. I don’t censor what they look at.

According to Melissa, during the silent reading period, the girls in the class display great interest and involvement when looking at magazine pictures of movie star idols like Keanu Reeves.

In discussions of popular movies and television programs such as The Simpsons, Melrose Place, and Beverly Hills 90210, the students also make it clear to Melissa that they view these shows as fantasy representations that touch on real life concerns, but do not portray the real world in all its complexities. As well, in regard to advertisements and music videos, Melissa believes that her students are becoming increasingly critical of this imagery as they become more aware of product marketing agendas.

Student response to popular culture in the classroom may differ in comparison to student response outside of the classroom context. This point is illustrated by an experience Melissa relayed concerning the showing of the film Rain Man in her Grade 8 English class:

... in that [film] the young brother, who is played by Tom Cruise, his character says ‘fuck’ every second word. I hear that so much in the school, that I didn’t think too
much about it. So I decided to show this to them, because it's a very intelligent movie. As soon as the first time he said 'fuck', all of the kids in the class turned around and looked at me. And I said, 'What?! You haven't heard this before? Don't look at me with big, innocent eyes, I've heard all of you say this. Just watch the movie, and listen to the content'. After that it was fine. In the reports I got back from the kids who were Greek Orthodox or strict Catholic, all of them wrote to me a comment about the swearing and how they felt it wasn't appropriate to be in this movie. Yet they use it all the time themselves!

Problems

Problems regarding the incorporation of pervasive imagery in Melissa’s programs include: Issues related to administration and teacher relationships, which include formal approval of the use of specific imagery, censorship of imagery, and gender issues; age level constraints; consideration of student cultural diversity, and; the scarcity of available and/or accessible resources.

Administration and Teacher Relationships

Melissa confided that she has learned over the years to minimize discussion with administration about sensitive topics: “The rule of teaching in relation to these issues, I hate to say this, is 'what they don’t know, won’t hurt them.' If what I am doing isn’t going to cause too much of a commotion, I just don’t deal with it with administration.”

However, when Melissa is concerned that imagery or topics she incorporates into her programs may cause problems that the administration will hear about from parents or students, she will usually inform her Department Heads about the project, and seek approval regarding the imagery she wants to use, or the topics that she wants to discuss:
If I think there’s a question of if this was discussed it could cause an explosive situation, then I’ll come to them first and say ‘This is what I am using, what do you think? I just thought I would touch base with you’. I do it out of respect, so they’re not caught with their pants down from parents or other teachers, [and] because they do give me so much freedom to design my own curriculum.

Prior to the comic design unit, for example, Melissa went to the Department Head and asked his permission to use the imagery in the classroom. She did not have a formal appointment with him, but met him briefly in the corridor and showed him the images that she wished to use. When I asked her if she felt it was necessary to seek his approval, she replied, “No, it was the wiser part of judgment”. His response to the forty-five photocopied comic book images was generally favorable. However, there were five images that he felt would not or might not be appropriate for classroom consideration. Three of these were the same which Melissa had chosen not to use in the unit — the comic book covers for *Deathblow*, *Lobo’s Back*, and *The New Mutants: Hellions*. During their conversation, he did change his mind about another image he originally deemed inappropriate — ‘Mudpack’ — and explained, “Weelill, she’s covered in mud, I guess it’s okay”. Another image included a stylized depiction of a penis, of which the Department Head said “I don’t know if you should use this one.”

When I asked Melissa what she considered to be the most challenging problem she has encountered in relation to the incorporation of imagery from popular culture in the classroom, she replied:

The censorship from the Department Heads. What they consider appropriate, and what I consider appropriate are sometimes very different things. Most of the time they think that the kids aren’t capable of handling it, and I think they are. I think that I am much closer in touch with the kids and where they are at, and what their cultures are, than the Department Heads, who are usually males, and anywhere from ten to twenty-five years older than me.
The issues of censorship and non-compliance to censorship came up in relation to the image with the depiction of a stylized penis. Even though her Department Head suggested that she not use this for the unit, Melissa did incorporate it:

The students wanted to know how body parts moved, and I had to be really careful giving them these, because in this one, in the movement of how the leg and the hip works, you can see the penis. Even though it barely even looks like a penis, there’s just a little line there, my Department Head said, ‘I don’t know if you should use this one.’ And I did anyway, and the kids didn’t even notice the penis there, because they were concentrating on the legs and the thighs, and how the muscles worked, so they didn’t even mention it.

I asked her if, by using the image, she felt that she was ‘going against’ her Department Head. She answered:

Yes, but I chose to use this image anyway, because I felt that it wouldn’t affect the kids and I was right — it didn’t. . . If he had called me on it, I would have said, ‘Well, I just took the risk’. It probably wouldn’t have been a big deal, he would probably have said, ‘Next time, Melissa, don’t do that.’ I even considered whiting-out the penis, but figured that would have drawn even more attention to it. I decided to leave that little penis there, because I thought, Jesus, it’s not that big a deal — literally!

Another example of adversity between Melissa and her Department Head concerns a difference of opinion regarding the showing of two films in her Grade 8 English class:

I was going to do a comparison between the movies That Was Then, This is Now and Rumble Fish. My Department Head told me I couldn’t show them Rumble Fish because it was inappropriate, because as far as he could remember, ‘Every second word was ‘fuck’ — and I won’t let you show that in the classroom.’ So, I didn’t tell him that I had shown them Rain Man. I said that I don’t have an issue
with the swearing. He made it clear that he did, and refused to let me show the film. I had to accept it.

However, Melissa took this opportunity to employ a rather subversive tactic that allowed her to accomplish some of the original objectives for the project:

But I suggested to my students that they rent it and watch it at home, and told them that the Department Head forbade me from showing it because of the swearing. And I reminded them that he was my boss, and that I was going to respect his opinion this time. They felt quite insulted that he felt that they were not old enough to handle the movie. What surprised me was how many students went out and got the book, then rented the movie. There’s nothing like controversy to motivate students.

Another issue that effects the kinds of imagery and discussions Melissa utilizes in her programs relates to the gender of the administration that she is dealing with. She explained:

The issues that I deal with in the classroom are also affected by whether I’m dealing with a man or a woman, as Department Head or Principal and Vice Principal. Woman are usually much more open-minded. And usually much more in touch with the popular culture of the kids. Guys don’t sit down and watch cartoons with their kids. Guys don’t read the books to kids, or read what their kids are reading. They come home after working their butts off, talk to their wives, watch some t.v., read a book and go to bed. They are not immersed in the culture of children. Women are. It makes a huge difference.

**Student Cultural Diversity**

Another factor that effects the images that Melissa uses and discusses in the classroom concerns the culture or cultures that she is working with. As a former English as
a Second Language instructor for children, young people and adults, she is sensitive to the fact that all of her students do not share the same popular culture images and influences. As well, she is sensitive to what different individuals may not consider appropriate to address in the classroom:

Am I dealing with Iranian women who are wearing the shroud [sic]? Or am I dealing with a second-generation Indo-Canadian woman who is really a western Canadian woman? If I have students fresh from India for example, I'm shocking to them, just me here with my yellow hair, purple glasses, blue eyes, and wearing pants. She said that in comparison to when she was teaching pure ESL, she feels more freedom to incorporate and deal with popular culture imagery in her present employment situation.

**Student Age Level**

Another factor that affects the kinds of images Melissa utilizes in her programs is student age level. The images she used in the comic design unit with her Grade 8 students would differ in the case of younger students in another employment situation:

Obviously, I would never bring many of these comic book images up with Grade 3's or other elementary students. I would bring in ones on a lower level — like *Archie, Snoopy, For Better Or Worse, Fox Trot* . . . The comics they encounter everyday in the newspaper or the Sunday Funnies, like *Dennis the Menace* or *Robotman* . . . There's a big difference between *Fox Trot* and *DeathBlow*!

**Resources**

The final problem area brought up by Melissa in relation to the use of imagery in the classroom concerns the accessibility and availability of resources that help educators to
address imagery from popular culture, and in particular imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive.

When I asked Melissa if she has found helpful curriculum materials which address the use of images from popular culture and / or sensitive issues in the art classroom, she said that she has not. She said that she creates her own resources: “I’ve just done it myself. . . There’s no way that the School Board is going to touch those issues with a ten foot pole, so I’ve had to create my own resources.” Occasionally Melissa discusses some of the imagery and surrounding issues with other teachers — both colleagues in the school and friends who teach elsewhere.

Successes

When I inquired about the successes that Melissa has encountered in relation to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in her programs, she replied:

Successes are when a young girl comes up to me and says, ‘Can you believe that image of that woman? I don’t know any woman like that. Isn’t it amazing how advertising tries to fool us?’ Something like that. When I know that the light bulb has come on, and that they are thinking for themselves. When they can bring their own humour to it. When they can say, ‘Isn’t that absolutely ridiculous?!’ And make a great joke. That’s when I know that these are healthy minds working, who can sort things out and find balance for themselves, and that’s what it’s all about — helping to produce healthy, cognizant minds. And they can think for themselves, without me telling them what’s right and what’s wrong.
CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY B.

Teacher Profile

"Anne" has lived on the west coast for approximately twenty years. She has a Bachelor of Education in Art Education, and has recently received her Master of Arts in Art Education from a west coast university. She has taught art in elementary and junior and senior secondary schools for nineteen years. For the past eight years, she has been established as a full-time art teacher at a secondary public school in a west coast city. In her spare time, Anne also co-runs a combination art gallery, theatre and teahouse in a small west coast town. Some of her responsibilities at the art gallery include coordinating exhibitions and special events, over-seeing the management of the teahouse, and writing and publishing a newsletter for the art gallery.

School Environment

The large secondary school where Anne works is located within a wealthy district of the city. The students come from many different cultural backgrounds and experiences.

The school hierarchy is made up of the principal, vice principal, department heads, teachers and students. The art department offers several courses for interested students, which include Visual Arts, Media, Photography, Woodworking, and Theatre. Anne teaches Visual Arts.

Over the years, Anne has established and nurtured relationships with the administration and her co-workers in which she feels respected and appreciated for the work that she does with her students. That respect and appreciation is evident in the form of
Anne's art room. About one and a half years ago, Anne's former art room was deemed unsafe because it was not 'earthquake-proof'. She was given the opportunity by the principal to work with the architect in designing a new art room which was to be converted from a large, unused room in the basement of the school.

When the architect asked Anne what she wanted, she asked for: lots of natural light; a separate ceramics room with its own sink, and enough space to house two kilns; a giant table with a special surface for clay work; a separate painting area with several easels; lots of storage cupboards; a separate room for art supplies; a loft in which to store student work; lots of display space; lots of counter space and book shelves; a separate area for computer work; a spacious area with eight long tables for student work surfaces; and another sink "the size of a bathtub". The architect complied with her wishes, knocked out most of the basement walls to give the room as much natural light as possible, and built everything else to Anne's specifications.

The art room has two state-of-the-art computers with various computer accessories, a television and video cassette recorder, a video camera, a tape deck for student use, and a telephone that is accessible to both teacher and students. It also contains a library, along two walls, which is stocked with an extensive selection of contemporary art, art history and art education books, and art journals and magazines. The room is highly organized, very tidy and clean. The large tropical plants that Anne has added, in combination with a well-preserved wooden floor, student art work displays and student work in progress give the impression of a warm, inspiring and active studio space.

Class Profile

I observed four hour-long classes on two different occasions. Each class consisted of a combination of Grade 10, 11 and 12 students, all attending on an elective basis. At the time of my observations, each grade level was involved in finishing up end of term projects.
All the Grade 10’s were completing gouache paintings from details of postcard reproductions of well-known art historical paintings. The Grade 11’s were painting detailed clay fantasy figure sculptures. The Grade 12’s were concluding a wide variety of long-term independent projects.

As each class began, students entered the room, found their various projects and immediately went to their individual work spaces and began to work. A student in each class went to the tape deck and put on music. I heard the sound tracks from the movies *Pulp Fiction* and *Star Wars* twice, as well as Santana’s *Abraxas*. Though there were conversations among the students, the room was fairly quiet, and everyone seemed intensely involved in their own projects. They did not appear to exhibit any curiosity about my presence.

For each class Anne took attendance and reminded the students about due dates and various criteria for end of term projects. For the duration of the classes, she was busy making the rounds and touching base with each student. She offered help, technical advice, and encouragement to students. Often, students would quietly line up, and wait in turn to speak with her about technical problems they encountered or to inquire about the properties or location of various art materials.

Judging from the work in progress I observed, as well as from the variety of student art displays, it seems that the majority of students are product-oriented and view the process of art making as a serious pursuit.

Anne has developed a comfortable and easy rapport with the students overall. A few of the students even called her by a nick-name, which she responded to in good spirits. Anne told me she enjoys working with the students, and feels that having classes which combine different grade levels has been a real “bonus”, as the older, more artistically experienced students peer-teach and inspire the younger students by example. She says, “I think it helps to have all three of those grade levels in the room at the same time. If I had separate classes, I think it would be really different.”
Art Program

A handout on general information about Anne's Art Program states:

The Art Program is designed to provide training in the Visual Arts for a great variety of student needs. Art 11 offers introductory experiences and skill development, while specialty and advanced courses explore specific areas of interest in line with the goals of individual students. Sketch books are required in all courses for developing themes, improving drawing skills and collecting ideas. Art History, as it relates to specific work, is included as a required part of all projects and the sketchbook. The objectives of the Art Program are: to develop skills of perception and creativity; to promote interest in and awareness of the Visual Arts; to provide a basis for further study for those who may be considering one of the many careers in Art or related fields.

Anne designs her own visual arts curriculum. The various projects that she develops for students are influenced by such factors as student art development, art history knowledge, concept development, and art making techniques. Students are introduced to a variety of art media with emphasis on the development of personal imagery, self-motivation, familiarity with studio procedures, vocabulary and knowledge of the basic principles of art and design.

Anne utilizes technique-based teaching strategies in combination with formal and informal discussion and inquiry to teach a wide variety of subject areas such as drawing, painting, printmaking, collage and montage, basketry, ceramics, sculpture, fabric design, computer graphics, interior design, mural work, commercial design, video production, film making, and animation.

Her art program is mainly studio-based. However, she does incorporate projects which stress art criticism, art history, and media awareness. Discussions concerning art
history, art criticism, and media literacy formally take place in relation to teacher-designed lesson units. Class discussions regarding these subjects also occur spontaneously in relation to various student projects.

Anne told me that she does not create or rely on formal lesson plans, and does not utilize commercially-produced art teaching resources often. She has a selection of these in the classroom library, which include the journal *Art Education*, the *British Columbia Secondary Curriculum Guide*, and Laura Chapman’s art education instructional series. However, she says “there isn’t a single one of those that I’ve read cover to cover.” In relation to the *British Columbia Secondary Curriculum Guide*, she says that:

I don’t use it at all. I value so highly the creative freedom I have to do what I want in my art classes, and I would just hate to have someone dictate to me what I have to do. Which might mean in some schools, that the students aren’t getting what they need. But this is my career, thank you very much!

Pervasive and Invisible Imagery in the Classroom

Anne employs pervasive imagery, and imagery that is not often incorporated in many art education classrooms in her visual arts programs, including imagery that she considers disturbing, controversial and sensitive, as motivation for student art work, for critical investigation by students, and in the form of student work itself.

When I asked Anne if, in her present employment, she employs imagery that is derived from popular culture and imagery that she considers disturbing, controversial or sensitive in her visual arts programs, she replied:

I would actually have thought that was pretty common. There’s disturbing imagery — imagery that will bring out strong emotions in the kids — then there’s imagery that may be quite common in contemporary art — imagery that you don’t feel that you can bring into the classroom because other people, like the administration might
get the wrong ideas. [For example], in high school, you can’t bring in a nude model, but the Artist For Kids Trust put on an evening ‘Life Drawing’ class for kids that quite a lot of kids went to.

This section will explore issues surrounding the utilization of imagery in Anne’s visual arts programs that may be considered pervasive and / or invisible, as defined in this study. Discussions concerning specific imagery, teaching approaches, teacher response, student response, and problems and successes relating to the use of such imagery will be presented. Quotes and other information have been derived by myself from an in-depth audio-taped interview and casual conversations with Anne, and from classroom observations. Photocopied instructional materials were provided by Anne to myself, and slides of student work were taken by myself for purposes of description and interpretation.

Specific Imagery

Anne employs a wide range of imagery for use in various student projects in her art programs. Images derived from mass media and other forms of popular culture include: print advertisements; t-shirt imagery; newspaper photographs relating to current media events; National Geographic and other popular magazines; comic books; calendars; postcards; posters; and graffiti imagery.

Anne also employs images of visual forms that are often not addressed in many art education programs, and include: art work by women artists past and present, such as paintings by Frieda Kahlo, Kathe Kollwitz, Georgia O’Keeffe, Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, and Sally Swain; art work by people of many cultures, including First Nations artists, such as Norval Morriseau, Bill Reid, Robert Davidson, and George Littlechild; reproductions and videos of work by Canadian artists, such as Norman McLaren and Emily Carr; and postcard reproductions and information about contemporary Canadian artists like Attila Richard Lukacs, received from local galleries; reproductions of art work by other
contemporary artists, such as Lucien Freud, and William Wegman; books and magazines which display imagery of social protest, such as the Berlin Wall Book, and Adbusters; and imagery that Anne considers ‘disturbing’, ‘controversial’, or ‘sensitive’, such as work by Francisco Goya, Egon Schiele, Francis Bacon, the Surrealists, Bosch, Munch, realistically rendered images of nudes, and Benetton clothing company advertisements, which depict images related to AIDS.

Anne referred to the “tons and tons and tons of books” available in the classroom, and says that she is constantly adding to the art room library in order to make it as inclusive as possible. As well, she has created a large collection of laminated postcards, of which she says,

Some of them are pretty controversial, especially the ones that are contemporary. They’re not terribly controversial, but some of them are disturbing and controversial. . . I don’t pick them for that though — to be controversial. I just leave them in because they are interesting. Because they are a part of what’s out there.

Pervasive and invisible imagery is also evident in student art work. The influence of imagery from popular culture is made apparent in student work that features: A giant painted reproduction of the Mona Lisa — which was adapted to serve as a bedspread for the artist, and therefore makes it a popular culture image [see Appendix C, p.138]; a ‘cut-out’ painted reproduction of a realistically rendered Marilyn Monroe [see Appendix C, p.139]; a painting from a ‘borrowed’ comic book image of a male skeletal figure in a crumpled suit and tie, with a cartoon bubble of text which reads “SOMETIMES I CAN FEEL HER”; a blue clay sculptured bust of a human-alien cross-breed creature with tuberous growths coming out of the back of its head [see Appendix C, p.140]; a clay mask of a vampire character with green pupil-less eyes and long, sharp teeth, grinning with obviously evil intent [see Appendix C, p.141]; a painting of a brick wall with graffiti that depicts a bird-like
creature encircled by the text “666 No Fun Love Hate Famous”; and two large-scale exterior graffiti murals created by students.

Other student imagery can be considered disturbing, controversial and sensitive. These include art work which depict themes of isolation, despair, entrapment, and death: A realistically painted representation of a young child pecking out from below a concrete wall, gripping the metal gridded bars in front of her [see Appendix C, p.142]; a black and white painting of a fox, sadly staring through the bars of a cage [see Appendix C, p.143]; a muted painting of an empty swing set [see Appendix C, p.144]; a life-sized papier mache sculpture of a figure encased in a box-like structure; a painting depicting several red figures seeming to undulate together in agony within a flame-filled hell [see Appendix C, p.145]; a painting based on a detail from a sixteenth century terra cotta mosaic entitled *The Lamentation*, in which a woman dressed in red medieval garb is running and screaming; and an installation piece which includes a black and white image of a human who is suspended, puppet-like, from a series of tubes which connect to an intravenous bag full of transparent fluid.

In other work, students are exploring issues of great personal relevance: A startling and powerful painting of a stylized blue monkey holding and protecting its child was created by a student whose mother had recently died [see Appendix C, p.146]; an intricately detailed gouache painting of three Chinese men in traditional costumes was created by a student who was interested in exploring issues of cultural heritage. As well, issues relating to sexuality, sex and reproduction are manifest in many of the students’ work. For example, these issues are depicted in a student mural located inside the school, in which phallic imagery surrounds a center image, which can be seen as either a burning sun, or as an egg surrounded by sperm [see Appendix C, p.147].

*Teaching Approaches*
Anne uses a variety of teaching approaches in relation to incorporating pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom. These include project proposal sheets, student sketchbook projects, art history page projects, and art contests. As well, Anne engages in formal discussions and casual conversations with students in relation to issues that come up in their own work, and in images that she uses as project examples or for student motivation.

Anne provided me with photocopies of instructional handouts that she uses with the students. These handouts serve to illustrate various teaching approaches and projects utilized by Anne in relation to the use of imagery in her art programs. They include the following:

*Project Proposals* [see Appendix D, pp.154-155] — This form provides the student with a formal format in which to detail a specific art project they have designed. Students must outline learning objectives, a description of the proposed project and a time line. They must also include descriptions of: the materials needed; research concerning the images, methods and history of the project; time estimate for project preparation, including practice, experiments, and image development; imagery referenced; and the format of the project. Projects are to be self-evaluated on the following criteria: fulfillment of original intentions; aesthetic success; development of skills with media chosen; finishing details; craftsmanship; work habits; submitted evidence of preparation; and challenge.

*Sketchbooks* — The sketchbook serves as a journal of the student’s development as an artist. Format and contents are determined by the work done by the students. Possibilities for student work and subject matter in the sketchbooks are “endless”. Anne has suggested that the students “draw anything, anytime, anywhere, any way you can think of.” Students must collect articles on art and artists, and illustrate and do a write-up on an artist, art movement and/or technique. Sketchbooks are evaluated on the basis of quality and quantity of work, and should include a variety of drawing techniques, use of colour,
innovative ideas, personal imagery, information pages and articles on art, artists, techniques, and a neat format.

Art History Page [see Appendix D, pp.156-157] — An art history page should include: detailed information about the artist chosen, including influences and anecdotal history; detailed information about the art piece chosen; analysis of the work chosen, including descriptions relating to subject matter, colours used, and elements and principles of design; a critique of the work chosen, including why the student likes or does not like the work, the artist’s motivations, and the meanings and ideas expressed in the work. Anne has listed a number of terms the student might consider using in relation to the art piece. These include: ‘atmosphere’, ‘mood’, ‘anger’, ‘ambiguity’, ‘aggression’, ‘calm’, ‘disturbing’, ‘introspective’, ‘social commentary’, ‘mystery’ and ‘barriers’.

Art Contests — Anne has developed art contests in which she utilizes media imagery, such as print advertisements, cartoon images, art history spoof books, and magazine article illustrations that refer to well-known artwork or art movements. The students have to identify the artist referenced and the title of the specific piece or art movement. Examples include a Calvin and Hobbes comic strip that refers to Cubism, and advertisements that refer to Dali, Vermeer, and Rousseau. If more than one student gets all of the answers correct, the contest is a draw, but, as Anne says: “that’s okay because they learn from that too.” The winners receive Purdy’s chocolates, and the rest of the students receive bonus points for trying. Anne says:

What’s neat is that in my classes, . . . the seniors get really excited about the Christmas contest, and that draws the younger kids into it too. One of my students gave me a book called Great Housewives of Art, which I do a contest with. And the Far Side calendar, Wiener Dog Art, which I also do a contest with. It shows the kids that even these famous cartoonists like Watterson and Larson are very aware of art history.
The main objective of the contest is for students to notice how images are related to each other:

How you might find a contemporary painting, and the figures are posed in such a way that they allude to a classical painting. Or the subject matter might relate back to art historical works. I try to get them to look for that in ads. There are a lot of ads that are set up to be reminiscent of well known works. Like Munch’s *The Scream* is used a lot. And if you don’t know about *The Scream*, you’ve totally missed the point. *Calvin and Hobbes* is another one, with references to Cubism or colour theory. Beetle Bailey even had a reference to Duchamp. A Jaguar ad that referred to Rousseau. CD covers that refer to various artists... I try to steer them away from copying rock band logos and images and things like that, although sometimes it’s neat to look at them and see how they have stolen this from Munch, or other artists. I was looking at a Grateful Dead album the other day and it had Botticelli’s Venus on the cover. So I asked the kids where does this image come from? And they could tell me.

**Teacher Response**

When I asked Anne what imagery she considers ‘disturbing’, ‘controversial’, and ‘sensitive’, she defined each term in relation to completed student images:

Disturbing would be something like the *Blue Monkey* — that to me makes you feel [pause] I could live with that image, but I don’t think a lot of people could. It’s disturbing — it doesn’t make you feel good. *The Blue Monkey* was done from a National Geographic photograph of a real monkey and her baby. It had totally evolved into a very personal image by the end of it. The girl who did it — her mother died last year, and she was the one who had found the body. So this girl has been through a lot, and this image comes from inside of her. I was looking at it
today and seeing that the mother looks so hard and so protective in that way her
arms are wrapped around the baby, and yet the baby is relaxed, unsuspecting and
vulnerable.

Anne said that controversial images are those that are sexually explicit, racist, or
somehow in bad taste:

I had a student who wanted to do a t-shirt that had a photograph of the Rodney King
beating on it, with the caption ‘Homeys Deserve Beats’ [Rodney King was the
victim of a beating by members of the Los Angeles Police Force]. But the
‘homeys’ that he’s talking about are ‘Home Boys’, these kids with the long, baggy
knee pants, and the sneakers undone, and the skateboard, and the caps on
backwards. That’s what a homey is in the high school. It’s not a homosexual . . .
[This is a] kid, who a month ago was a homey himself, but now he thinks he’s too
good . . . I said to him, ‘Look, if you walk down the street in [city] with that on, the
homeys are going to beat you up. And if you walk downtown to . . . Street —
people are going to misunderstand — they’re not going to know what you mean by
‘homeys’ — they’re going to think you mean something else. And that image
won’t do.’ So I let him print it on paper, but I didn’t let him print it on a t-shirt,
because I didn’t want him to wear it. So I would call that controversial art.

Sensitive imagery is typified for Anne by a past student work, which she refers to as
the “penis vase”, and a sculpture that a current student is working on:

[The sculpture] is supposed to be a tree trunk that has turned into a man and a
woman embracing. I don’t know if she just didn’t think it through, but if you look
at it, you will notice some weird things about it that if you point out to her she really
didn’t notice. A rather buxom woman, and where the figures are joined is pretty
explicit. I probably wouldn’t be displaying that one in the hall either — one of
those sensitive kind of things the other teachers would not really understand!
As well, one of her students created a painting on a 4’ x 8’ panel, that Anne also described as ‘sensitive’:

[It had] a green background. There was a desk in the picture. In the front of the picture there was a little nude boy standing facing front. Behind him was a big fat man with big fat hands. It was really well done — not realistic. If I showed it to [a local art college], they would just snap him right up. There was a big, ominous guy behind the little boy at this desk. So you had the feeling that there was this scared little boy in this doctor’s office full of green ooze. It was just a really ominous picture — a very powerful image. He swore it had nothing to do with his life experience. I would call that sensitive. I’m sure it would cause a sensation if it was displayed.

**Student Response**

The students exhibit a variety of responses to pervasive and invisible imagery, and to imagery which may be considered disturbing, sensitive or controversial. Anne describes the individuality of her student’s responses to imagery:

... you find some very perceptive kids, even in Grade 10, who will analyze a piece and see deeper things in it. Whereas other kids will only see it as a pretty picture, or a nice picture, or will say it’s boring — ‘I don’t like it, because it’s boring.’ Then you’ll get other kids who will look at [an image] and think there is something really neat and interesting about it, and other kids who will take it and think it’s easy to reproduce, because they have to do a detail of it. And then you get other kids who will get into it, because they can see [the artist’s] ideas... They come in all ilks.

Anne points out that the students are aware of each other’s images, ideas, and visual references, and that they are simply into their own ‘thing’:
For instance, when [a student] did her pieces, which are very decorative — they don’t have a lot of meaning to them — but she also knows that you’ve got someone like [student], whose stuff is expressively beautiful, they’re very expressive, but they’re certainly not disturbing in any way. But then you’ve got [student], who does very personal, mythical-type imagery. Then there’s another student who does some pretty naive, feminist imagery, which is pretty disturbing, yet pretty naive at the same time. They are all working together, yet working separately at the same time. But they are all aware of each other’s work. So you get this mix in there. All the different aspects of art are all there. Some kids are into commercial art-type images. Others are into super-hero stuff.

Other students’ images, ideas, talent, and visual references can deeply influence peers and teachers:

I wish I could have some students for another year. Some kids come into the program with so much expression. You get someone like [student], who is just constantly expressive, but you wouldn’t call his images disturbing. Yet they are very much about popular culture. He made a serious study of Marilyn Monroe, and playing around with the idea of the Mona Lisa as a giant bedspread. There’s some very sophisticated ideas going on here, more so than he even realizes. He’s extremely knowledgeable. One of my favorite substitutes was saying that she kind of wished that he would turn his talents to ‘real art’, instead of using images. But I don’t think so — I think it’s the way he uses the imagery that is his expression. [This student] does a lot of peer teaching. Students will ask him a lot of questions about teaching.

Some students do not want to deal with imagery that disturbs them. Anne pointed this out in relation to two students’ responses to imagery. One student was working with imagery by a contemporary artist, whose work features images of homosexuality, violence and neo-fascism:
One of my students started doing [an art history] page on Richard Attila Lukacs, but
she found it too disturbing — she couldn’t relate to it, or get into it far enough to
really relate to what it was. Maybe we don’t want to get into it — or deal with it —
holocaust and neo-fascist imagery.

It may be that some students are not comfortable dealing with disturbing issues in
the classroom context. Another student of Anne’s was working with imagery in her own
work which alluded to brutality and sexualized violence towards women. When Anne
spoke of the connection she perceived to the current Paul Bernardo murder trial, the student
eradicated her original image:

One of my students was working on two paintings, and she had a woman’s face
looking out from a tree. There’s a happy version of the tree, with the leaves around
it, worked into images of nude women. In the unhappy version, she had an image of
a woman from the back with her hands bound. I said ‘In this particular time, that
image seems to allude to the Paul Bernardo trial.’ She said, ‘Oh, I’m not following
that.’ Shortly after that discussion that image had been painted out. I wasn’t
censoring her in any way, but that was too much for her. So you can imagine that
something like the Paul Bernardo trial would be [pause] although the kids don’t talk
about it. You don’t hear a word about it at school, but you know they have to be
aware of it — two fourteen year old girls murdered horribly. And yet you know that
they’re all really burying it, or not dealing with it, or something. You know it’s got
to be there, in their thoughts.

However, there are also some students who are intensely interested in exploring
disturbing, controversial and sensitive imagery for its own sake, or because they have the
opportunity to be freely expressive, or simply to shock the viewer:

In the sketch books there is no censorship. Inasmuch as they all know that I’m
going to mark it. I’m sure there is some self-censorship, and then there are others
who will totally overlook that fact and do what they want. Or else, like [student],
who would put things in, because he for one, couldn’t think of censoring himself, and on the other hand, he enjoyed seeing if he could shock, not just me, but some of the other students who looked through his sketchbook. What he said was, ‘Even for the teacher, there’s no holds barred.’ As well, the student who made the gorgeous penis vase, his sketchbook was full of S & M imagery. A lot of explicit sexual imagery.

Problems

Problems regarding the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in Anne’s art programs include issues related to: Public artwork created by students; censorship regarding the display and exhibition of student work; comfort level of teachers and other staff concerning disturbing imagery; possible parental and administration disapproval of imagery; personal safety of students; and the scarcity of available and in-depth resources.

Public Artwork by Students — Three School Murals

The main problem that Anne has experienced concerns other teachers’ reactions to three public school murals created by students — “The Graffiti Mural”, “The Gun Mural”, and “The Robot Man Mural”. All permanent public mural imagery and locations must be approved by the principal prior to the commencement of the work. Interestingly, unlike Anne’s teaching colleagues, the principal and other school administrators did not figure in the controversies regarding the murals.

The Graffiti Mural
The Graffiti Mural consists of three wall panels which in the foreground, depict four or five stereotypical representations of Afro-American boys or young men, with exaggerated head size and facial features. The background imagery is abstract, and includes text which I could not decipher. The artist is a Caucasian male. Approval of the mural imagery and location by the principal was obtained by Anne prior to the initiation of the mural.

Anne described the situation which occurred in relation to this graffiti mural:

I had a controversy over an outside graffiti wall on the other side of the courtyard from my classroom. I had a student who was doing one this year, and the science teacher, who has a view down to that section, took exception, and not because of any of the imagery — because the imagery had been checked out by the principal — and there was, as far as we could tell, nothing offensive on it. She just didn’t like the genre. She said that graffiti art was not good art, and that she didn’t want to have to look at it.

A formal meeting with the Staff Committee was organized, so that teachers could present their views on the mural, and allow Anne an opportunity to defend its completion:

I had to go and make a huge case with the staff committee on that because I couldn’t see stopping the student in the middle of a project and telling him he couldn’t do it anymore when it was okayed by the principal. I don’t care if they paint it out now, but to stop the kid in the middle of it would have been just awful... It was decided that this kid had to be allowed to finish the project, and that we’d review it.

As I understand it, the staff committee did not discuss issues related to the subject matter of the work — its stereotypical representations of Afro-American boys or men as depicted by a Caucasian artist. The staff committee seemed to concentrate solely on discussing and debating the merit of graffiti art.

When it was reviewed, the staff decided that: “... if any more outside murals or murals in the school are to be made, it may not be enough to get the principal’s approval, we might have to take it to a staff committee who would make the decision.” Anne, who told
me that she is not known as a “push-over”, took a strong, emphatic stance on this issue: “I told them, if that’s the case, I will not do any more — there will be no more murals. They just left it at that.”

I asked Anne what the student’s reaction was to the possibility that his work might be painted out eventually because certain staff members did not have a preference for graffiti art. She said,

Well, he was aware of the controversy, but on the other hand... he was a ‘skipper’, can’t be bothered to come to class, not a keener, and I don’t feel that strongly about fighting for him any more, if they want to paint it out. I don’t feel like putting myself out, or putting my relationships with colleagues at risk for someone who can’t be bothered to show up for class.

I was also curious to know if this situation helped the science teacher to understand more about graffiti art by providing a good opportunity for her to examine the reasons why she had an aversion to graffiti imagery. Anne told me:

She was somewhat of an artist herself — she does beautiful charcoal florals, which are part Georgia O’Keeffe and part Kathe Kollwitz — dark and brooding, and very expressive. But she seems to take exception to graffiti art, because she sees it as ‘lower class art.’ I had to explain it to her — that it’s not something that you just go and throw on your walls. That graffiti art has a whole history to it, and a growing history as well. If you look at the old stuff compared to the new stuff, you can see how the styles and techniques are changing. My student was not just doing this — it was the only thing that really interested him — he’d made a thorough study of it: collecting images, knowing the names of different artists, and even being able to say what was different about the work of one artist ten years ago to now. I had to explain to her that graffiti art is a serious art form.

I asked Anne if she felt that her relationship with the science teacher was strained because of this situation: “It was, because this science teacher happens to be one of my
very good friends. We had these radically opposing views at the time, but we’re okay now.”

There is another four-panel graffiti mural on the school grounds, next to the Art Department. The subject matter includes a stereotypical representation of a trial judge pounding a gavel on his desk surface. Another panel depicts the shadowy half-face of a man appearing to be staring angrily out from behind prison bars. The text I could discern included the word “Justice”. Staff members with visual access to the area did not seem to take issue with this mural: “Nobody complained about the other [mural] — the other teachers really don’t care about [that part of the school grounds.] The other teachers in that area didn’t mind — they thought it was neat.” However, this mural did generate a different kind of problem: “The only problem was while they were spraying it, the wind blows, and one teacher’s white van got paint on it. He was really upset. I was not very popular for a while. We washed his car.”

The Gun Mural

Another student mural Anne described as “controversial” was the Gun Mural created about two years ago. This mural was created on a 4’ x 8’ sheet of plywood, and was inspired by an image from a rock album cover:

It was a big hand with a gun, pointing at you. Black and white. We actually had it hung on the stairwell on a slant wall, so when you walked down the stairs, this big hand with a gun was coming out at you. A lot of staff members took exception to that. They said so — they complained. They talked it out amongst each other first, and then it was decided that it had to be taken down. Eventually we had to take it down.

I wondered about the student’s reaction to the removal of the mural. Anne said:
I had to tell him that it had to come down. I think that the student understood that it was a problem with the staff. That the staff didn’t think it was a suitable thing to have in the school. It was okay with him. It had been in the art room for a long time before he took it home. I could see the school’s problem, too.

I asked Anne if she had to have the Gun Mural imagery approved by the principal before it was made. She remarked:

No, it was never a question of whether or not it should have been painted or made, it was a matter of putting it up in a public space in the school — that was the controversy. It wasn’t a question of censoring what the kids were allowed to do, but of censoring the display.

_The Robot Man Mural_

The final mural, painted on a wall outside of the school’s Theatre Department several years ago, is the Robot Man mural. Over the years, the Vice Principal of the school has made it clear to Anne that he has always found it disturbing:

These two kids did this thing that looks sort of like a robot coming through a brick wall. The vice-principal, who is also a drama teacher, said he never liked this thing, he always said that he would prefer nice happy pictures, and not this ominous figure coming through the wall. But he has never asked for it to be taken out. When they do renovations, I think it will go, but it’s been there for many years.

I inquired whether painting over student work was a problem for Anne. She replied that, as a result of these controversies, she encourages students who want to create large work for permanent and temporary public display, to paint murals on plywood or three or four sheets of hardboard. These public pieces can be moved to a different location, or removed, so “if they’re no good, they can just be taken home.” The maintenance department of the school prefers this approach to mural work as well.
Display and Exhibition of Student Art Work

Another problem encountered by Anne concerned the temporary display and exhibition of student work that could be considered disturbing, controversial and / or sensitive. Anne makes very conscious decisions regarding the display of such imagery:

... as far as kids artwork that I display in display cases, or that I hang in the staff room, I probably save the [pause] Knowing that most of the staff think art should be 'pretty', I tend to hang most of the accessible stuff in the staff room. I did hang a sad, disturbing painting of a little fox with big eyes in a cage in there, but sort of off where he stared at you while you're getting your coffee.

Anne pointed out that the location in which artwork is displayed in the school may make a difference in terms of staff response to disturbing imagery: “I saved the other stuff for the showcases in the hall, where some people are more likely to see it as art, rather than decor.”

As seen in the above example, Anne exhibits sensitivity and understanding in relation to staff and other viewers' responses to disturbing imagery. At the same time she does not devalue the student work and chosen subject matter:

Another student did a piece of work that had a big hand on it, giving you the finger. I would just simply not display that, because it would be controversial to the staff. You certainly wouldn't put it up at [a group mall exhibit]. But if that student wanted to put it in the Grad Show, which is a juried show, and if it was chosen, that would be up to the student. And if it was chosen to go up in the Grad Show, or in the classroom, it would be displayed. But I wouldn’t display it in the hall or in the staff room. I mean, who needs it?

Anne is also aware that if she displayed work that was “just too sensitive”, she could possibly be jeopardizing her employment. She points this out in a humorous way:
One year, I had a student do this incredible clay sculpture — a vase, with a lizard coming up it. And the shape of the vase was a perfectly shaped penis. And it was beautiful, the whole piece. But I could never put that on display somewhere — if I did, I would be doing something else now, I’m sure!

The display of student work from the school is also shared with the jurors of the annual Graduation Show, an exhibition held in a local gallery. Last year three practicing artists were chosen by the Graduation Show Committee, which at that time did not include Anne. From the work the jurors chose to exhibit, it was obvious to Anne, and to at least one student, that the jurors were ‘out of touch’ with artwork that reflected or commented on issues that are important to the students:

When they picked the work for the Grad Show last year, the jurors they picked were into ‘nice’, ‘acceptable’ art. One of my students pointed out that ‘they didn’t pick anything that was in the least bit threatening’. And there were plenty of paintings that were fairly threatening. They didn’t choose any of the disturbing pieces that the kids did. I made a suggestion that the next time they pick a jury, could they have someone in there who understands that kids are into melodrama and angst?

Anne’s art room, for the most part, seems to be a refuge from the problems that beset the display of controversial work elsewhere in the school. In this room, students are basically free to explore issues and imagery that deal with a wide variety of disturbing, controversial and sensitive themes. As Anne said in relation to a powerful student image about child abuse, “I wouldn’t display it in the hall, but I wish I could have had it in the art room forever”.

Comfort Levels of Teacher and Staff

Another problem Anne alluded to concerns the creation of student work that may seriously challenge her own personal comfort level. This was brought up in relation to
sado-masochistic imagery found in a student’s sketchbook. Anne says this imagery is “pretty disturbing” to her, and that she is not certain what she would do if the student wanted to make an artwork that incorporated S&M imagery.

As well, the comfort levels of other staff — in this case, the school librarians — may serve to dictate the extent of student exposure to certain imagery. Anne alluded to this point in relation to the book *Contemporary American Realism*, “which has a lot of hyper-realistic paintings in all media. It also has some very realistic nudes in it. The school library had decided that it was too realistic for the library, so they donated it to the art room.”

**Parent and Administration Concerns**

Anne has had to censor student work, or at least ask a student to censor his own work, in order to protect her career:

Just this week, there was a student who was doing a silk screen t-shirt, with three frames on it that had people being pushed off cliffs, and shot, and all these things. And it had expressions on it that said, ‘Take that, you motherfucker’, and all this stuff. I said ‘Look, if it was just me, you could do this and it wouldn’t matter, but you’re going to have to tame that language down some or I can’t do it. I just don’t want to be involved in it, because I don’t want you to take it home, and have your parents phone the principal, and have him be at my head’. He mildly modified the worst of the words. And I said, ‘I hope your mother knows my opinion on this, what I’ve said to you about this, and that you don’t go wearing that shirt around and saying where you printed it.’ ” She continued, and said almost in apology, “It wasn’t that important a piece though — it was a silk-screen for a half-term project. It was a ‘fun’ image for him, kind of a joke image.

**Student Safety**
Anne has also had to censor student work in order to protect a student from the possibility of physical harm. In relation to a controversial image that a student wanted to silk-screen on a t-shirt — which included a still from the police video of the Rodney King beating, and the caption “Homeys Deserves Beats” — Anne had to refuse to let the student print it as a t-shirt, but allowed him to print it on paper as an alternative. She said:

I don’t think he really, even yet, understands what the problem was with that image. I don’t know if he’ll ever understand. I think he understood that he was putting himself at risk if he walked down the street wearing that image. I said to him, ‘I don’t want you to become a Jessie Cadman because of something I did or didn’t do.’ — Jessie Cadman was the young man who was beaten and killed for his hat. [This event, in which a white man was killed by blacks, was widely assumed to be a revenge killing for the near-fatal beating of Rodney King, who was black].

Unavailability of Resources

The final problem Anne brought up in relation to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in her art program is the unavailability of quality instructional art education resources which address these images and surrounding issues directly. She states: “I don’t find very many. I think that many school aimed books skirt the issues, or they’ll talk about it, without being too specific.”

Successes

When I asked Anne to share some of the successes that she has encountered in relation to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in her art programs, she replied:
The kids recognize success in each other's work. A big bonus of my program is that the Art 10's and 11's are there with the seniors. The senior projects are always there for them to see. So all the time that my student was doing that picture with that big, ominous doctor and the vulnerable boy, the kids were seeing this evolving, and they knew what kind of person [this student] was. And another student had done four 3' x 4' panels which fit together to make one big screaming face. It was the face of an artist named Henry Rawlins, I think. From a magazine picture, or from an article. His friend had been shot down on the street right in front of him. So there's this big screaming mouth, in oils, on four huge panels. And the kids saw this happening. And they've also seen the Blue Monkey evolve, and other work...

There is lots of 'nice' art happening in the art room, like pretty pictures, good technique, but also this very expressive stuff. And because it's there, they have to take it in and deal with it, and they see that that kind of expression is there. That making art is not just making 'pretty'. Like that blue head on my desk — it's very expressive and personal, yet it's from a Star Wars / Trek image.
CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY C.

Teacher Profile

"Tasha" graduated from the Painting Department of a well-known art college in a west coast city in 1988. She is a professional artist who started exhibiting her paintings approximately ten years ago, when she was twenty years old. Her work is represented by a renowned art gallery located in the city in which she lives.

Tasha says that she always knew she wanted to be an artist and that she has always been attracted to making art about humanity. The subject matter of her paintings mainly concerns highly realistic representations of figures and family portraits. Much of her work incorporates symbolic imagery, and centers around the exploration of gender relationships and gender representation. In order to find her own figure references, she works from photographs that she either takes herself or hires a professional photographer to shoot. At the present time, she is working solely from nude photographs of herself and her partner.

Tasha has been teaching "off and on" for approximately five years, on a part-time basis. Most recently, she has been employed as a Teen Painting and Drawing instructor for an independent visual and performing arts institute for young people.

Tasha told me that she enjoys the challenge and stimulation of working with teenagers, and therefore the program she is currently teaching suits her well:

At first I was teaching younger kids. I didn’t really like that very much. The kids were really sweet, and it was kind of fun to be around them. But it wasn’t very intellectually stimulating or challenging for me at all. I got really bored. I’m not a real children-oriented person. I’ve come to realize that about myself. I don’t want to be a mother. And I also don’t necessarily want to mother other people’s children.
either. I want to be friends to kids, and not have any more responsibility than that. Not that you have to ‘mother’ when you are teaching little kids, but I think you really have to have a nurturing quality about you, or at least be very interested in children. And I’m not. I’ve realized that I am just not.

As Tasha’s art work deals explicitly with issues of social relevance, in particular those which refer to gender representation and gender relationships, I was interested in exploring the ways in which she broaches related issues with students in her art class.

School Environment

The independent art school where Tasha works is a non-profit society which was founded in 1979. According to the school brochure, its main purpose is to provide children, from ages two to eighteen, with the opportunity to study, explore and enjoy art in its varied and diverse forms within a stimulating environment. Other objectives of the school are to increase students’ self-awareness, confidence, and creativity.

Attendance at programs offered by this institution will reach over 23,000 students this year. Along with its regular programming, the school offers individual bursaries based on financial need, free school workshops, and free visual and performing arts outreach programs. The school employs over fifty artists with master classes in several areas and “leading edge programming emphasizing the joy of constructive self-expression to respond to our communities’ challenges.”

Art programs for a variety of age levels include Dance, Theatre, and Visual Arts. The Visual Arts program includes introductory and advanced instruction in Painting and Drawing, Ceramics, Multi-Media Sculpture, Animation, Photography, Architecture, Jewellery and Accessory Design, Movie Making, Printmaking, Fibre Arts, and the cross-cultural program Asian Kingdoms. All courses for teenagers are part of the Teen Pre-
Professional Foundation Program which has been designed to help prepare students for future professional art careers.

When I asked Tasha how she believed this alternative school environment differed from a public school environment, she replied:

I believe that these kids are getting a special kind of education here — and I don’t mean the art — I mean the talk, the understanding, the freedom part of it at this school. I always tell the kids, ‘Treat this place as if you were visiting a friend — be yourself, say what you would say, do what you would do. Don’t limit or censor yourself.’

Tasha feels appreciated and understood by administration and other staff in her role as a teaching artist within this school environment, and says:

I could never teach in a public school, I would get fired. I’m the kind of person who doesn’t like rules imposed on me. I like making up my own rules and curriculum completely and address the issues that are essential to me given my art background, and the fact that I’m dealing with very political issues in my own work and in the classroom. At [this school], I feel that I’m very appreciated and nurtured in what I do, what I teach, and how I teach it.

Class Profile

I observed two two-hour classes on two separate occasions. Both classes consisted of the same basic student group, and were a mix of young people from different cultural backgrounds and experiences. The grade levels of students ranged from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Twelve students were registered in the class at the time of my observations. Ten students were in attendance during the first class I observed. Eight students attended the second class. Tasha explained that enrollment was lower than usual, as the time of year coincided with the students’ final exams and projects in their regular public school classes.
Tasha's art room is shared by many other instructors and classes throughout each week. It is a large room with high ceilings, concrete floors, lots of natural and artificial light, a double sink, and a storage loft which houses a wide variety of donated art supplies and miscellaneous student work. Several long tables have been placed in the center of the room as student work surfaces. Along two walls are wooden easels and an industrial-sized drying rack. Around the room are various storage shelves, cupboards, and carts for art materials such as paper, tempera paint, buckets of pastels and masses of collage materials.

Each visual art program is provided with a locked supply cupboard, which is shared by all of the instructors in the program. Supplies in the teen cupboard include "precious materials", such as acrylic paints, quality paint brushes, exacto knives, glue sticks, inks, a variety of good drawing pencils, conte, charcoal, and complete sets of oil and soft pastels — all "for teens only". In order to keep these materials in good condition, students are not allowed access to the teen cupboard. Individual instructors are provided with a shelf or two in which to store student work in progress, and various resources, such as books and visuals. Instructors usually encourage students to take home work as soon as it has been completed in order to conserve storage space.

It is obvious from its appearance that this room is used for a high volume of students and art projects. Dried paint and other various art materials cover almost every surface. Old and current student art work hang on the walls and from the ceiling. The art room gave me the impression of an extremely active, productive and well-used studio space:

The students appeared relaxed and at home in this environment, and did not show the slightest interest in my presence there. They seemed completely at ease with Tasha, and thoroughly engrossed in her instructions. Once they received the instructions for the new project, each student worked quietly by her or himself. Tasha went from one student to another, providing encouraging suggestions and giving complete and equal attention to each individual's work.
From her energy and enthusiasm, it was evident that Tasha enjoyed working with the students. She told me,

I really like working with older teens . . . I’m teaching mostly older teens, and some younger teens, thirteen and fourteen year olds. They’re great. A lot of them are just starting to make that transition from child to man or woman, or whatever that in-between stage is. They are starting to ask themselves questions, and they’re starting to be confronted with questions in general. They are waking up, and becoming themselves. It’s wonderful to be around them at that time. I’m not that much older than them, and I don’t put myself there as being older than them. I really try to make a very casual atmosphere. I don’t think they get that in many more places and they respond to it really well. I feel really equal and very useful with this age group.

Tasha pointed out that students who enroll in the Teen Pre-Professional Programs at this school usually have a special interest in art making and personal artistic development. From her own experiences, Tasha is aware of personal issues that affect many young people who are striving to become artists, and she uses her class as a means of support for these students:

A lot of my students will be going on to art school. They’re kind of ‘artsy’, for lack of a better word. I’m sure that they may feel a bit like an outcast from general society. This gives me a way to help the kids on an emotional level — to say, ‘Look, there’s an art community that’s out there, that’s really open. As diverse as people are, there’s a place for you in it.’ Being an artist is a calling to a certain extent. An art teacher once said to me, ‘You don’t make yourself an artist — you either are, or you’re not’.

As well, Tasha shows sensitivity and empathy in regards to the lives, feelings, and special stresses of her students:

Quite frankly, the pressures on teenagers nowadays are huge. Sometimes they come into the class at the beginning of the day, and they are so stressed out. They
are more stressed out than teenagers should be. My usual piece of advice is to ‘Go out this weekend, and have some fun, you guys!’ I’m sure their parents would hate me for saying that, but some of them need that. Most of my students tend to be really diligent — I know that they are studying for five hours a night. If it was the opposite — like a kid who never did any work, I’d tell them to get some work done. . . I worry about the kids at that age.

**Art Program**

Tasha teaches Teen Painting and Drawing I/II, which is a combination course for students at both introductory and advanced levels. The class is offered on Sunday afternoons, and runs for two hours. The course description from the school brochure states:

Several short and long term studio projects focus on specific technical and conceptual concerns and encourage development of personal creativity. Drawing and painting skills including colour, composition, line and tone are developed. An assortment of traditional and non-traditional drawing and painting materials are the foundation from which students will express and develop an understanding of the many forms and functions of historical and contemporary art.

This description was written in consultation with the instructors of the course.

The course is divided into three sessions — fall, winter and spring — which span three regular public school terms. Whether or not students enroll in one, two or all three terms depends on the individual. The focus for Session I is on drawing — materials and techniques. The focus for Session II is on both drawing and painting — colour and form. The focus for Session III is on Mixed Media — ideas and concepts.

Tasha designs her own curriculum within the parameters of the format described above. Her program is studio based, and concentrates on helping students to develop
facility with art techniques and materials. Along with technique-based teaching strategies, Tasha combines formal and informal discussion and inquiry to teach drawing, painting and mixed-media skills. She also incorporates art history and art criticism discussions in relation to various images or resources about artists she brings into class, student art gallery visits, studio projects, issues that come up in her students' work or in other student work on display.

Tasha does not create or use formal lesson plans unless she is specifically asked to do so by the administration, which has seldom occurred. As well, she does not possess or use art education instructional resources.

**Pervasive and Invisible Imagery in the Classroom**

In her visual art program, Tasha does incorporate pervasive and invisible imagery, and / or imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive as motivation for student work, for critical investigation by students, and in the form of student work itself.

This section will explore issues surrounding the utilization of imagery in Tasha's visual arts programs that may be considered pervasive and / or invisible, as defined in this study. Discussions concerning specific imagery, teaching approaches, teacher response, student response, and problems and successes relating to the use of such imagery will be presented. Quotes and other information have been derived by myself from an in-depth audio-taped interview and casual conversations with Tasha, and classroom observations. Slides of student work were taken by myself for purposes of description and interpretation.

*Specific Imagery*
In her art program, Tasha employs a range of imagery that is often not addressed in many art education programs. This imagery is utilized in relation to various student projects and for critical investigation by students, and include: Art work by women artists past and present, such as paintings by Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, Emily Carr, Betty Goodwin, Mary Kelly, Mary Pratt, Gentilleschi, and female punk rock musicians; slides of contemporary art work created by herself, and by personal friends who are practicing artists; work that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive created by contemporary artists, such as Eric Fischel, David Hockney, Edward Hopper, and Lucien Freud; contemporary art journals, such as Canadian Art Magazine and Studio Magazine; newspaper articles and art reviews concerning current local and international exhibits; local art gallery visits; and student work, including other student work on current display.

When I asked Tasha about the incorporation of imagery in her art program that is derived from mass media and other forms of popular culture, she said:

I think I structure the class so I don’t leave too much room for that. I mostly get them to use art history as a reference. If they are referencing pop art, then that will come out in their work. It depends on the project. But pop culture imagery does come out in their own work a lot — I don’t think it’s possible to get away from that. Especially in collage work, when we use a lot of magazine and newspaper images.

Some of Tasha’s students’ imagery can be considered disturbing, controversial and sensitive. These include art work which depict such themes as: Depression, illness, pain, and anger — these emotions and states of being are made tangible in non-representational paintings; and death, mortality and violence — these concepts are realized in life-sized paintings, drawings and cut-paper works of skeleton figures [See Appendix C, pp.148-149].

A teen painting and collage display of work by another class used by Tasha to provide inspiration for her own students’ work, also contained art work that may be considered disturbing, controversial and sensitive, and included: A collage that depicts part of a white man’s face, and text that reads “It’s time to forget about the past and start
thinking of stopping racism" [See Appendix C, p.150]; a collage entitled “End War” that contrasts images of peace, protest and war [See Appendix C, p.151]; a non-representational painting on wood with the words “NAZIS”, “RACE” and “INSANITY” [See Appendix C, p.152]; a painting of an androgynous person with a spike embedded in the back of his or her skull, and blood spurting out of the wound; three paintings of figures depicting themes of isolation, emptiness and sadness; and a combination papier mache and painted female figure with heavily accentuated lips, breasts and genitalia.

Teaching Approaches

Tasha uses a variety of teaching approaches in relation to pervasive and invisible imagery, or imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial and / or sensitive in the classroom. These include technique-based strategies for art making, advocacy of physical, mental and emotional involvement in art making, student exposure to the contemporary art world through gallery visitations, and formal and informal discussions with students about issues that come up in their own work and in the imagery of others. She also uses an approach that she termed “winging it.”

The art lessons in the two classes I observed serve to illustrate and contrast two different, yet connected approaches to art making utilized by Tasha — technical proficiency and personal involvement. In the first class observed, the lesson Tasha taught was an introduction to basic colour theory, and imagery of a pervasive or invisible nature was not in evidence. For this project, students performed exercises that served to enrich their knowledge and understandings about colour relationships. They then worked representationally from a traditional still life composed of objects from around the art room, utilizing local and non-local colour schemes. They were instructed to attend to formal considerations, such as line variety, composition and the development of form.
In the second class I observed, three weeks later, the lesson focused on non-representational art. Students were asked to create paintings that “make an intangible concept tangible”, without incorporating recognizable images from the real world. Intangible concepts included human emotions and states of being — such as anger, joy, isolation, pain, ecstasy, love, hatred, illness, depression, violence, jealousy and peace. Many of these themes may be considered disturbing and / or sensitive. The students first made two small mixed-media drawings exploring two separate concepts. Students then chose one concept to work with, and began their acrylic paintings on 4’ x 4’ pieces of cardboard. Some students chose to incorporate materials such as crumpled paper and duct tape. As they worked, they were instructed to “get into it — really feel the emotion as you paint. Let every mark you make and every element you add be a manifestation of that energy.” The final products attested to previous experience with and understanding of basic elements and principles of design. I felt that four paintings which depicted the themes “pain”, “depression”, “anger”, and “illness”, were powerful, sensitive and disturbing renderings of those human states of being.

This advocation to “get into it” is an important element of Tasha's teaching, and evidently comes out of her own experiences as an artist:

I'm constantly over their shoulder telling them ‘You got to be brave, you've got to beat the painting — you can’t let it win.’ I talk to them about getting that kind of fighting spirit that you get before a sporting event. So much for just making a nice little painting because it's pretty. I talk to them about their guts and getting in touch with that feeling that means that you are the winner. That you're in control — that you can do it. It doesn't matter what it turns out like — because you are in control. I can see when that goes on, when that finally happens for some of them. It’s amazing, it's really incredible, the shift that happens in their work.

She is also adamant about her students getting into the work in a physical sense:
I don’t let my kids sit down when they work, unless they’re doing some meticulous stuff. On average I make them stand up when they are painting and drawing. I don’t think they are using their whole body when they are sitting. I want them to understand that they need to use their whole body when they’re making work. Posture is everything when they are working. I tell them that every few minutes they have to get up and look at it and get some perspective. It’s so funny, because at the beginning of all my new sessions, the new kids are all sitting, and the core group that I’ve had for years now are all standing. All the kids say, ‘You’re right, it’s better when you are standing.’

Tasha takes her students to contemporary art galleries and gives them homework assignments to visit galleries. This helps the students to become aware of the contemporary art world in relation to their own communities:

I try to get them to understand that artists are part of a sub-culture. I take them to shows at the [City] Art Gallery. Sometimes I give them homework assignments that they have to go and see a show. The next class I will ask them each a question about it, and I’ll probably know if they went. I tell them to think of it as another form of entertainment. Yes, it costs five bucks to get in, but how much does a movie cost? It’s as exciting as a movie.

Tasha also engages in candid discussions with her students about sensitive imagery, in this case, her own paintings:

I talk to them, when I show them the slides [of my work]. Some of them ask me questions about the work, like, ‘Why are you guys all naked in the pictures?’ I talk to them about the fact that when you take your clothes off — you’re naked too. That’s really what you are. You’re a fleshy body. And they all go ‘whoa’... I also tell them that the technical reason that I don’t clothe my subjects is that I do not want to introduce culture. Clothing is about culture — about a time period. Clothing clearly defines time, culture and status. Especially right now, as a teenager,
if you are not wearing these shoes, this jacket, all that stuff, you are not ‘cool’. So I do not want to put clothing on to determine those things. Although if I do put clothing on, it’s specifically to determine those things.

When directly discussing pervasive and invisible imagery that Tasha or the students may consider disturbing, controversial, or sensitive, Tasha says:

I’m winging it. It’s all coming from myself. It’s what I manage to learn, with the knowledge that these are kids that are coming from a different level from me, and I have to take into consideration what their reality is right now, and that some of them are not ready to hear about certain things. I don’t know what’s going on in their lives — the possibilities are endless . . .

Because Tasha teaches on Sundays, when the school administration is not on the school grounds, she says this provides her with a sense of even more freedom and choice than other instructors may feel in relation to the teaching approaches and imagery used when teaching.

**Teacher Response**

When I asked Tasha what kinds of imagery she considers ‘disturbing’, and / or ‘controversial’, she told me that she felt that much popular culture imagery that used stereotypical representations of women for marketing purposes was “extremely disturbing and controversial” to her, and should generate “much more controversy than it does” with people of different ages, genders and backgrounds:

. . . like in *Cosmopolitan* magazine. I remember when I was sixteen, thinking about what a piece of mind-bending trash this is. I just stopped looking at it. I just thought — I don’t want to know what people wear, how thin these women are, what clothing they’re supposed to be selling. I just don’t care. I don’t want to be told anything. I thought it was so controlling. One of my students brought me another
magazine today and said how he really feels that our images are affected by pop culture. I find those types of magazines incredibly disturbing because I think that the most meek and vulnerable people in our society are attracted to them and believe in that... The danger in that is creating a society of homogenous people where everybody is the same, where everybody strives for the same perception of beauty, of whatever. I also think they're dangerous in terms of eating disorders for girls — anorexia, bulimia... I think there is a certain amount of bravery in accepting yourself for who you are on all levels, including the physical level. Taking your clothes off is sometimes a brave act, and I'm interested in bravery — the kind of bravery that it takes to be yourself. Totally exposed and real: I talk to the kids about that.

Tasha’s own paintings often focus on and comment on concepts related to contemporary issues of body image for both women and men, by using the physical forms of both herself and her partner. She says:

Someone said to me once in terms of my own work, ‘You are using yourself and your partner, and you are both thin and attractive’, and bla bla bla. I didn’t ask for this body. I know who I am, and what I do, and why I look like this, and it doesn’t have to do with mass culture. I understand the question, and I think it’s a valid question to a certain extent, but also, am I supposed to be victimized for who I am? No, of course not. I actually don’t enhance [my subjects] in my work. I don’t consciously try to change things. I don’t make my breasts bigger, or my partner’s penis bigger... I have never done any work that is disrespectful to any human being. I may be commenting on disrespect by using our figures to represent certain issues, but I’m not being disrespectful to either [my partner, the male figure in my work] or myself. He’s aware of the implications. We are part of the youth community, the whole Generation X, if you want to call it that. The world is a really
different place now. I’m really interested in changing things through very quiet, underlying, persuasive images.

On the topic of incorporating art work by women artists, and artwork about women created by women in her art program, Tasha says:

I try to bring in as many female artists as possible. We’ve got to start doing it. It’s already started, and I feel as a teacher it’s part of my responsibility that I have to take very seriously, especially considering that the majority of our students are female.

Sensitive imagery for Tasha is imagery that deals with nudity and sexuality. She considers her own art to be ‘sensitive imagery’. In her paintings, she works consciously and conscientiously with the “very political” image of the nude figure:

Using the nude figure in painting is loaded with issues . . . Some of the paintings [I create] obviously have to do with the Fall, the Garden, and the whole Adam and Eve thing. I do a lot of reinterpreting of that whole story and all of the issues around that. I am dealing with nudity as a sign of both empowerment to be free of anything that is about societal control, and two, to be able to feel and to be vulnerable. . . Working with the nude is so political and sensitive. I know that I teeter on the line of political correctness. I trust myself, I know that I am not abusing anyone . . . I’m perfectly willing to expose myself . . . I’m very aware of what I’m doing. I ask my partner before each photo shoot, ‘Do you want to do this, are you comfortable with this?’ . . . He loves it. He’s such an out-going person. He is so comfortable in his own skin, with his own body. I’ve learned a lot from him about that. Girls and women are generally not comfortable with their own bodies — picking out every flaw, getting neurotic about every flaw — as if there are flaws. Are there really any physical flaws? Of course, not — it’s a body.

As well, sensitive imagery for Tasha may be concerned with death and mortality:
Like today I did a lesson about painting to music, and I brought in some girl punk rock bands, including Courtney Love. All of the kids knew her music, and they’re very aware of Kurt Cobain’s suicide [Kurt Cobain was Courtney Love’s husband]. Lots of sexual and death imagery in the lyrics and in the kids’ work. There is an aspect of the two in all great works of art, I would have to say.

Tasha also described her students’ skeleton figures as ‘sensitive’ imagery:

I use the skeleton sometimes in the class because it is such an interesting object to draw. It’s about our own mortality. Again, it is us. We are skeletons. Underneath the flesh there it is. The kids get a charge out of it, because some of them at first go ‘ooooh, that’s creepy’ — then they get past that and do these incredibly sensitive and powerful works about death, body image and mortality.

**Student Response**

Tasha’s students exhibit a variety of responses to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery, and to imagery which may be considered disturbing, sensitive or controversial in the classroom. She described some of her student’s responses to a slide show of some of her paintings which incorporate nude figures:

Some of the kids I can see a little bit of shock in their facial expressions ... Of course for these kids, for some of them it might even be a first exposure to the nude figure. I think it’s a fortunate thing if that’s the case, that it’s in the form of art, rather than a porno film or porno magazine.

When showing her work to students, she is concerned that they might be intimidated by the super-realistic painting style she employs. She says:

... I try not to focus on my stuff. Because my work is very realistic, and because a lot of the kids at that age level are interested in realism, and some kids are struggling with it. I don’t want to intimidate them, or make them feel, ‘Oh, I can’t do work like
that!'. So, I'll show them a little bit. [There was only one class] that I did the full slide show for. If they ask, I'll be happy to show them. I'll show all the students the cards [which depict her paintings, and are produced by the galleries which represent her work], though, so they get a little bit of a sense of my work.

When I asked her if she thinks the students understand the issues that she deals with in her work, she replied:

They kind of do. The older kids definitely do, and we can get into some interesting conversations. When I do say some of this stuff to them, then they will be able to understand it, and they will ask me further questions and make further comments. I think some of the younger kids may understand, but it's all a little bit too much for them. Although I think it's great — some of the kids I've had with me for a number of years — and it's really neat watching them go from fourteen to sixteen. What a huge change. To see them go from being nervous and shy to becoming outgoing kids:

One student's response to imagery that Tasha considered sexist and exclusive presented a challenging opportunity for discussion about the representation of women in art and in art history. She described the situation:

In one of my early classes, I was talking about sexism and art history and how women have just been completely overlooked, and I got quite into it. And I was being careful though, because again I was worried about the fact these are kids who may have never heard of feminism and they really may take what I say in an odd way. So I was really trying to be careful and very, very clear, and explaining and explaining what I meant. Still, at the end, when I asked if they had any questions, one student put up her hand and asked, 'Do you hate men? It sounds to me like you hate men.' I said that I don't, in fact I love some men, and I hate some men, and I love some women, and hate some, too. Then I said that women have been done a great injustice historically. I talked to her a little bit about where that idea
was coming from for her, in terms of the pop culture idea of feminism. She was quite angry at me. She had a lot of anger in her voice when she asked me that question. I was kind of startled by it, but it was good in that I’m glad that she felt comfortable enough to ask me, and I’m glad that I was able to talk to her about it.

I asked Tasha if she finds that challenging issues related to sexuality and representations of women manifest in her students’ work:

Yes, I do. I did a project where the kids had to use an art historical reference. A lot of the kids used some kind of nude image, or at least a figurative image in their work, that had some kind of sexual quality to it. I haven’t given much thought to this, but I think perhaps that children and teenagers are attracted to sexual imagery, but may not see it so much as sexual, but as powerful. Like one student chose to work with a tiny little detail of a larger painting of a horse and chariot. It was quite sexual because of the horse and the placement of the figure. Another student used a painting of a nude, with all these phallic columns and arches. I think there is a natural attraction to these powerful images. Someone who is sexually confident, who is fully aware of or at least fully comfortable with their own sexuality is vital. It’s vital to how we feel about ourselves, and to what we are able to put out.

Tasha pointed out that she noticed that the males and females in her class tend to deal with imagery from popular culture, and imagery that refers to sensitive, disturbing or controversial issues differently in their own work:

I do notice a gender difference in their own work. Some of the girls tend to deal with more sensitive emotional issues and response in their work. The boys’ work seems to be more bold, in-your-face, right there, right-at-you, ‘cool’ kind of stuff. They almost seem to be more affected by pop culture in terms of where they’re getting their imagery from. The girls, it seems to me, like, if I’m giving them an art historical reference choice, they will look and look and find something so hidden. The boys will use something so obvious and immediate.
Some students are dealing with and responding to issues of great personal relevance when they incorporate imagery from popular culture, or imagery that others may consider disturbing or controversial in their own art work. According to Tasha, one student appeared to reveal “some very disturbing things about himself”:

I did a self-portrait project where the assignment was that the kids had to bring something out about themselves, some emotional thing, some social or political ideology they held. We talked all about that kind of stuff in relation to portraiture. One kid did a quite frightening image, which really worried me — a drawing that included a gun to his own head, with drugs and stuff floating around it. I was worried about whether or not he was involved in a youth gang or something. I took him aside and talked to him after class, and I just said, basically, ‘I’m a little worried about the imagery that you’ve used. I don’t know what it means, you don’t have to tell me what it means if you don’t want to, but if you’re in trouble of any kind, you can come to me and I will help you. If you are afraid to talk to anybody else, then you can come to me, I won’t flip out, and I will help you. If you’re involved in a gang, or with drugs and stuff, think about it, because that’s death.’ He was kind of embarrassed and said no, he wasn’t involved in that kind of stuff. At the last class, he came up to me, and said something really incredible for him: ‘You are a really great teacher, and I just want to thank you for everything you did for me.’ That’s really huge coming from him. I still worry about that kid a bit.

Problems

Tasha has had to deal with “very few problems” concerning the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery, or imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial and / or sensitive in her art programs. Some of the problems that she has had to attend to include: Difficulty in finding resources that depict imagery from a wide range of sources;
self-censorship of imagery that she wishes to incorporate; and possible parental and administration disapproval of imagery.

Resources

Tasha has had difficulty accessing visual resources that she wishes to use in the classroom. For example, she said that there is hardly any imagery by women artists, or imagery by people from many cultures available in the school library. She has only a minimal school budget to purchase class supplies, and her tight personal budget makes these extra purchases impossible. As well, there are other practicalities; she leads such a busy life, it is difficult for her to take the time to search for alternative imagery at other libraries. Also, she does not always have access to a car, and “dragging heavy books around on a Sunday afternoon” is not an option for her, given that she does not wish to store valuable resources at the school. She does not have her own storage locker there, and she is concerned that they may be stolen, or “borrowed”.

Parent and Administration Concerns

Another problem concerns possible negative parental and administration reaction to the showing of her paintings in the classroom. She explains:

Usually on the first day of class I tell my students about myself and my work and where I exhibit. I show them invitation cards, so they can get some sort of perspective on who this teacher is. I don’t want to feed into the whole ‘trust me, I’m an artist’ thing. I want them to question everything. Here’s the proof. One of the kids requested that I show them my work. I was thinking, gee, I hope they don’t go home and say, ‘Oh, mom or dad, my teacher was showing me all those nudes.’ And then getting a call from [the Executive Director of the school], who says,
‘Alright, what are you doing?’ I guess there’s always the potential of some kid being offended and going home and complaining. Sometimes I do feel a little worried, because I don’t know how the parents would feel about their kids seeing these figures... Most of the paintings I show them have genitalia in them.

**Student Boundaries**

The final problem that Tasha mentioned is related to her sensitivity towards the individual boundaries of her students, and concerns her self-censorship of the use of some imagery and issues in the classroom:

I’m careful about the imagery I use and the issues I deal with when I realize that I’m dealing with people that are younger than myself, and therefore they may take it or something I say about it in the wrong way because of their youth or inexperience, and so my censorship mostly depends mostly on that... I think that I respect the kids, and that they come from different family settings, so I try not to do anything that is going to upset any of them, or that will endanger them emotionally or otherwise. But I try to challenge them... Because I really don’t care if I get fired. Because I do the job mostly because I love the ability to be with these kids. If they fired me because they didn’t like the way I taught, what I taught, the images the students come up with, or the images I use when I teach, I could live with that, but I couldn’t live with teaching by somebody else’s rules.

**Successes**

When I asked Tasha to share some of the successes that she has encountered in relation to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in her art programs, she replied:
The kids are the successes. Just watching them develop . . . It’s exciting, because towards the end of the session, I see that kids are thinking that, ‘Maybe I want to get involved in art.’ At the end of the session I ask, ‘Who thought at first that art was about making pretty pictures?’ Most of the hands go up. Then I ask, ‘Who still thinks that?’ No hands. Then they say that art is about self-expression, personal discovery, it’s about issues that are important, issues that they are interested in. They have a really basic understanding that art is about something. That is great. That is all I need to teach them. If I don’t teach them anything else, I’ll be happy.
Chapter 7

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction

The research question posed in this study was: Given an evolving body of literature in art education, in which theorists have asserted a need for the visible incorporation in general art curricula of imagery from an increased range of sources, in particular pervasive and invisible imagery, and including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive, in what ways are three art educators meeting or not meeting this challenge?

Subsidiary questions were: 1. What specific pervasive and invisible imagery do participating teachers incorporate in their programs? 2. What teaching approaches do participating teachers utilize in dealing with such imagery? 3. What is teacher response to such imagery in the classroom? 4. What is student response to such imagery in the classroom? 5. What are some problems encountered by participating teachers in relation to the incorporation of such in the classroom? 6. What are some successes encountered by participating teachers in relation to the incorporation of such imagery in the classroom?

Thus far, the three cases were profiled, and specific imagery utilized by individual teachers, their approaches, responses, perceptions of student responses, and problems and successes in relation to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery were identified and described.

In this chapter I will endeavor to answer the research question and the subsidiary questions by comparing and contrasting the various ways in which participating teachers deal with pervasive and invisible imagery in their classrooms, and will reflect upon various issues that were identified in relation to the inclusion and exclusion of pervasive and
invisible imagery in their visual art programs. Reflections on the results of the study and subsequent implications for further research and development of instructional materials will conclude the chapter.

**Pervasive and Invisible Imagery in the Classroom**

**Specific Imagery**

All three teachers incorporate imagery from the mass media or from other forms of popular culture in their visual arts programs. Each of the teachers made reference to the difficulty they would experience in keeping popular culture imagery out of the classroom. Both Melissa and Anne provide opportunities for students to work with such imagery in relation to classroom projects, and encourage self-generated research regarding current popular culture imagery of interest to their students. Tasha, in contrast, said that she does not “leave too much room” for student use of mass media imagery, and implied that she prefers them to use “art history” imagery as references for their own work.

Both Melissa and Anne make reference to, and provide student access to popular culture imagery from such sources as popular magazines, print and television advertisements, music videos, record and compact disc cover art, comic book art, newspaper images, popular movies, fashion, calendars, postcards, posters, and graffiti imagery. This imagery is often brought into class by the teachers or students, and used for motivation for student work, to provide specific examples for instruction, and for purposes of critical investigation in relation to various studio projects.

Both Anne and Tasha employ invisible imagery — imagery that is often not addressed in many art education programs: art work by women artists past and present, art work by people of many cultures, art work by contemporary artists, and imagery that they personally consider disturbing, controversial, or sensitive. This imagery is used as
motivation for student work, to provide specific examples for instruction, and for critical investigation by students.

Melissa did not allude to using imagery from the sources mentioned above, with the exception of the incorporation of imagery that she personally considers disturbing, controversial, and sensitive in relation to the comic book imagery which she uses in her comic design unit. Invisible imagery in Melissa’s case also refers to imagery that she excludes from classroom consideration.

**Teaching Approaches**

Each of the participating teachers’ visual arts programs is primarily studio based. However, each teacher does incorporate art history experiences, either in relation to studio projects, or as in Anne’s case, for the sake of art history learning itself. Each teacher provides formal opportunities or takes advantage of impromptu opportunities that allow students to critically investigate pervasive and/or invisible imagery, including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive, independent of studio projects or art history learning.

None of the teachers have accessed professionally produced art instructional materials to help provide them with alternative approaches to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom. This is due in part to the inaccessibility and low availability of such resources. Instead, they each have developed their own approaches to the use of such imagery in their programs.

The participating teachers each employ a combination of formalist and sociocritical teaching approaches in relation to the use of pervasive and/or invisible imagery in the classroom. Formalist approaches are used with specific imagery examples for the instruction of technical elements and to address formal considerations employed by various artists, including the students themselves. Critical approaches the teachers have in common
include directed and casual discussion and inquiry strategies applied in relation to imagery that is used as motivators for student work, for purposes of critical investigation in relation to various topics brought up in studio projects, and for critical investigation by students independent of studio projects.

Along with the approaches mentioned above, Melissa finds that spontaneous good-natured debate and humour with students have been successful in dealing with pervasive imagery in the classroom. Melissa recognizes that this approach often helps students to garner new perspectives regarding mass media imagery they are already familiar with but may not previously had the opportunity to critically examine.

Though Melissa does provide students with opportunities to critically examine pervasive imagery, in our discussions regarding the comic design unit, she demonstrated a concentration on the formal elements of most of the imagery in order to provide students with techniques that might enable them to create their own comic characters. She tended not to directly address overtly challenging issues with the students, as discussions concerning these issues would most likely have disturbed the established classroom calm. The imagery that she chose not to directly address depicted gender stereotypes of female comic characters, racial stereotypes of male comic characters, male genitalia, homophobic text, and images that alluded to extreme and realistic violence.

Anne has developed a variety of projects which allow her students to make their own choices and connections, with minimal teacher interference, in relation to imagery they are interested in exploring or creating. These include independent project proposals, student sketch book projects, art history page projects, and art contests. In these projects, many students choose to work with pervasive and/or invisible imagery including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive.

Student use of such imagery is likely due in large part to Anne’s provision of resources which make this imagery available and easily accessible to students in her classroom. As well, Anne has made it clear to the students that these projects are
essentially open-ended in terms of the imagery they wish to examine or create. For example, in relation to the art history page, students are allowed to choose to profile any artist they would like to discover more about, and in the sketchbook project, students are instructed to “draw anything, anytime, anywhere, any way you can think of.”

Along with both formal and critical approaches to imagery in her program, Tasha advocates students’ physical, mental and emotional involvement in art making, and provides students with exposure to the contemporary art world by sharing her own experiences as an artist, assigning homework for local gallery visits and making contemporary imagery resources available to her students.

In contrast with Anne and Melissa, the approaches that Tasha uses in relation to pervasive and invisible imagery are directly influenced by her own experiences as a practicing artist whose work is concerned with issues of social relevance. As well, as an artist, she understands that she is perceived by many of her students as an artist role model. Another difference is that because Tasha teaches on the weekend, when school administrators are not on site, she feels that she has more freedom than other instructors may have in relation to the teaching approaches and imagery she incorporates in her classroom.

Teacher Response

As expected, each of the participating teachers provided different responses to imagery that they personally found disturbing, controversial or sensitive.

Melissa was the only teacher who told me that she had purposefully excluded certain images from classroom consideration. Melissa was clear about her criteria for excluding imagery that she considered “over the top”. She uses her “common sense” to determine whether or not an image will be appropriate for classroom use, and said that if she
feels an image is inappropriate, she can be quite certain that her students’ parents and the school administration will agree.

In the comic design unit, Melissa was able to identify a line between what’s acceptable and what is not — in this case the violent and sexist images that could be representations of “real” life as opposed to obvious depictions of fantasy, were “just too close to home”. As well, Melissa implied that the act of incorporating imagery for classroom consideration tends to “validate” it as “art”, and therefore may legitimize the content of the work in the minds of her students. In relation to the three comic book cover images described in Chapter Four which she did not incorporate in the unit, she said that she does not consider those images to be “good art”, and would not have them around her own daughter.

For Melissa, her comic design unit is not the place to provide a forum for the investigation of images that she has determined are too disturbing or controversial for classroom consideration. Melissa does not consider this deliberate exclusion of imagery as an act of censorship on her part. She simply does not want to have to expose her students to those particular images in the art room environment. As well, she does not want to upset the established balance in her classroom — which she has worked hard to attain, or alter the proven lesson plan on comic design by opening “a whole can of worms” with her students.

Other imagery that Melissa considers disturbing concerns depictions alluding to rape and white supremacist culture. Controversial imagery is embodied in popular culture forms which portray or attempt to deconstruct conceptions of societal power structures. Sensitive imagery for Melissa is imagery that deals with some aspects of race and culture. Melissa pointed out that these issues overlap in mass media imagery, such as on television, in magazines, music videos and popular movies.

Anne provides many opportunities for her students to create art work that is meaningful and personally relevant to them, and consequently they often create work that Anne considers disturbing, controversial and sensitive. For Anne, disturbing imagery is
manifest in student imagery that elicits a deeply felt personal response — one that “doesn’t make you feel good”. Controversial imagery for Anne is often student imagery that is sexually explicit, racist, or somehow in “bad taste”. Student imagery that she described as sensitive commonly dealt with such issues as sexuality, fear, isolation, illness and child abuse.

Tasha feels that imagery that employs sexist, stereotypical representations of women in order to sell products is extremely disturbing and controversial. As well, she feels that if these images are encountered non-critically by students, they impart ambiguous messages to both boys and girls regarding gender representation, respect for women, and concepts of body image and sexuality. To help counter these kinds of mass media messages, Tasha tries to incorporate alternative images created by women about women in her art class, and engage her students in candid discussions concerning the representation of women in popular culture.

Sensitive imagery for Tasha, as for Anne, is imagery that is concerned with nudity and sexuality. As well, Tasha identifies sensitive imagery as also concerned with powerful issues of death and mortality.

**Student Response**

Intense interest in comic book imagery helped the students to respond to Melissa’s comic design unit. Student attendance was high during the unit, studio projects were completed enthusiastically, and the majority of students participated in both formal and casual discussions regarding comic imagery.

According to Melissa, most students were familiar with the comic book characters utilized in the unit, and she found that they were not nearly as disturbed by the graphic depictions of violence in the comic book images as she was. Instead, most of the students thought the images were ‘cool’, and were primarily interested in studying them in order to
be able to produce similar technical and compositional effects. Melissa observed that the boys seemed particularly interested in learning how to create “ultimate gore” and depictions of power and danger.

As well, to Melissa’s surprise, the students also exhibited “mature” responses to the comic book imagery that contained exaggerated and sexualized representations of female and male characters. Melissa attributes this response in part to her formalist approaches with this imagery, which she feels enabled her students to accept the images as “artist’s renditions”, a concept which the students seemed to respond to seriously within the comic design unit.

Melissa said that her students knew that the comic book characters were “not from the real world”, and that in order to understand their response to the imagery, teachers need to look at the images from the students’ perspective, in which the majority of students relate to these characters as familiar fantasy figures — unreal creatures, super heroes and villains, created by artists purely for the sake of entertainment.

Anne’s students are exposed more often to pervasive and invisible imagery, including imagery that can be considered disturbing, controversial and sensitive in the classroom environment than Melissa’s or Tasha’s students are. The reasons for this include: The independent projects Anne has developed allow for a wide range of student choice in use of imagery; Anne’s classroom is made up of a mixture of Grade 10’s, 11’s and 12’s who are all producing a variety of work which serves to influence and inspire one another; and Anne provides an enormous resource base of pervasive, invisible, and typical school art images that students can easily access.

Student response to pervasive and invisible imagery in Anne’s classroom is varied. Some students are not interested in referencing popular culture imagery in their work, and prefer to study and work with Western fine art exemplars. Some students are uncomfortable in dealing with imagery and issues that they find disturbing or sensitive. Other students are intensely interested in exploring issues and images that have profound
personal relevance to their own lives. Still other students appear to be solely interested in exploring disturbing and controversial issues for their own sake in their work and in the art of others.

Student response to discussion regarding pervasive and invisible imagery in Tasha's art program takes the form of further conversations leading to new understandings regarding issues they may not normally discuss. Tasha pointed out that her students' responses to imagery change and grow as they age. She believes that with extended exposure to critical discussion concerning pervasive and invisible imagery, and increased opportunities to incorporate a wide range of imagery in their own art work, students' understandings of the meanings and uses of imagery expand.

She also noticed a gender difference in regards to the imagery they incorporate in their own work. She says that the boys tend to use and respond to obvious and immediate popular culture references in their work, while the girls tend to utilize sensitive, emotional and obscure issues in their work. As well, she said that many of her students, regardless of gender, deal with and reveal issues of deep personal relevance when they incorporate imagery from popular culture, or imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive in their own work.

Problems

All three teachers have had to deal with problems regarding the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery, including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive in their art programs. These problems include: issues related to administration and teacher relationships — censorship of imagery, formal approval of the use of specific imagery, possible parental and administration disapproval of imagery, and gender issues; consideration of student diversity; comfort level of teachers; personal safety
of students; scarcity of available and/or accessible resources; and individual employment factors.

**Issues Related to Administration and Teacher Relationships**

When incorporating imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive, each teacher has had to deal with problems related to administration and teacher relationships.

In her current teaching situation, Melissa has learned to minimize discussions with administration and other teachers about the issues and images she chooses to address in her programs. However, when she is concerned that these issues or images are going to cause problems with students or parents, she will inform and/or seek permission from her Department Heads before she incorporates them in her programs. On occasion, her Department Heads have not permitted Melissa to address certain images or various topics, which she finds quite frustrating. She says that what they consider appropriate and what she considers appropriate are often very different things. She attributes this difference to the large age gap between the administration and students, as opposed to her own age difference with the students. As well, she points to the fact that most administrators at her school are men, who she feels are often out of touch with the interests and popular culture of students, as they may not spend as much time with young people as women may.

Though Melissa feels that she often ends up making concessions to the administration in terms of the imagery and surrounding issues that she would like to incorporate in her classes, she also views the process of seeking approval of imagery as “the wiser part of judgment”, and a showing of respect for the school structure.

The main problem that Anne has experienced concerns other teachers’ responses to and their attempted censorship of public mural imagery created by students. Though student mural imagery and locations must be approved by the principal prior to the
commencement of the work, this process did not help to stifle the controversy that three student murals generated with the staff members in the school.

One teacher took issue with the use of graffiti imagery in a mural in progress that could be seen from her classroom location. She strongly felt that graffiti imagery was not "good art", and did not want to have to be exposed to it on a daily basis. A formal Staff Committee meeting was organized to provide teachers with an opportunity to present their views on the mural, and to allow Anne to defend its completion. The committee suggested that principal approval of mural imagery may not be sufficient, and wanted to be included in the approval process for future public murals. Anne made it clear that she would not initiate other student murals if that was the case. No general consensus was reached. Because of the reaction of staff members to the mural, Anne said that her relationships with certain staff were strained for the duration of the problem.

Two other public murals generated controversy with staff members as well. One mural depicted a giant gun pointed at the viewer. Staff members complained vigorously as a group, and eventually the mural was removed. The other mural depicted an ominous figure that the vice principal felt was disturbing. He has made known over time that he would prefer for it to be painted over. To date, it remains intact. Anne pointed out that the issue of censorship in regards to the student murals was never one of censoring an individual student’s right to create particular imagery, but was instead an issue of censoring the public display of that imagery.

Interestingly, there is another school mural which surprised Anne because it has not caused controversy with staff members or parents. It concerns stylized and colourful landscape imagery which Anne pointed out can easily be recognized as a visual metaphor for sexual reproduction, in light of the overtly phallic, vaginal, and sperm and egg imagery. She believes that because the style of the mural is highly decorative and colourful, people do not tend to respond to it as disturbing or controversial.
These controversies have served to influence the choices that Anne makes in terms of the temporary display and exhibition of student work. She has consciously established different areas of the school in which to display various kinds of student work. For example, she rarely displays imagery that may be perceived as disturbing, controversial or sensitive in the staff room or in the main corridors of the school. Instead, she tends to display more challenging work in her art room, or in a special display case on the wall just outside of the art room. These display choices are made by Anne out of sensitivity for other staff, administration and parent responses to imagery, and also because she is unwilling to jeopardize her employment.

To protect her career, Anne also felt she had to ask a student to censor his work by curbing some text that she considered obscene in a t-shirt image he was creating. She was concerned that his parents might be disturbed by the text and would inform the principal, who would then "be at her head".

Tasha as well has been concerned with the possibility of ramifications in regards to parent and administration response to the imagery that she incorporates in her art program. She said that she sometimes feels "a little worried" that a student may be offended by certain imagery, and complain to her or his parents who would then complain to administration. She believes that the potential of this chain of events could possibly jeopardize her employment or at least cause an uncomfortable situation for her.

**Consideration of Student Diversity**

Both Melissa and Tasha found that student diversity was a factor in how they addressed or modified the use of imagery in their programs. These teachers felt that age level and student readiness contributed to their decisions in terms of what imagery they would incorporate, and the ways in which they would broach discussions concerning the imagery. Neither of these teachers felt comfortable with addressing imagery that they
personally considered too disturbing, controversial, or sensitive for young students in elementary grades.

Melissa stated that many of her students come from culturally diverse backgrounds and experiences. She feels that some self-censorship of imagery and related issues is necessary in order to demonstrate sensitivity to what individual students may find shocking or upsetting because of their cultural or religious beliefs.

Comfort Level of Teachers

Another problem suggested by Anne concerns the creation of student work that may seriously challenge her own personal comfort level in terms of her willingness to deal with particular imagery in the classroom. This came up in relation to sado-masochistic imagery that Anne found in a student sketch book project. Anne essentially ignored this imagery, but was not sure how she would react if the student wanted to pursue S&M imagery in other projects.

Personal Safety of Students

Anne has noted that she was forced to modify or censor one student's work in order to protect him from possible physical harm that might have occurred if he publicly wore a potentially inflammatory t-shirt image he designed. Anne solved the problem by refusing to allow him to print the image as a t-shirt, but provided an alternative by allowing him to print it on paper.

Scarcity of Available and Accessible Resources
Each teacher noted that there are few available in-depth professionally produced art instructional resources that directly address issues and approaches related to the incorporation of pervasive and/or invisible imagery, including imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive in the art classroom.

Though Melissa and Anne said that they seldom use art education instructional materials outside of what they have personally developed over the years, and Tasha said that she does not use art education instructional materials, each teacher expressed interest in accessing educational materials that directly address the issues they have explored in this study.

Each teacher also said that books, films and poster reproductions which depict imagery seldom utilized in the art classroom, such as art work by a variety of past and contemporary women artists, and art work by people of many cultures, are either difficult to find or access, or too expensive to purchase given the small budget teachers have for extraneous supplies.

*Employment Factors*

Each of the teachers' employment situations contributes to the occurrence of the problems mentioned above, and the impact those problems have on the individual teachers' lives.

For example, Tasha said that she has "very few problems" concerning the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in her visual arts program. This may be attributed to several factors. First, she works in an independent and alternative school of whose mandate it is to encourage students to explore issues and to create images that are of relevance to their lives. Second, she teaches on the weekend, when no school administrators are present to stifle her teaching subjects or approaches. Third, she teaches part-time and has a relatively small student enrollment, which is made up of students who are usually
seriously involved in art making and learning. Fourth, she seldom displays her students' art work in the school. Last, teaching is not a financial necessity for her, but is a personal choice — therefore she feels that she has "nothing to lose" if she is fired because the administration or parents take issue with her teaching methods or subjects.

In contrast, Melissa depends on teaching jobs in order to secure a living. Melissa said that because she is substitute teaching, her employment situation is fairly precarious, and her performance during the job may impact on subsequent employment possibilities at her current school and in other schools. In this sense, she has a lot at stake, and feels that she must be careful in regards to the specific imagery she incorporates, and the issues that she broaches in her visual art program and in other programs she teaches. Controversy and disturbance could 'rock the boat', resulting in loss of essential employment for Melissa.

Anne has not had to be seriously concerned about job security issues. She has worked for several years at the same institution, and has established strong bonds and relationships with various staff members, including the principal, whom she referred to as a 'sweetheart'. She feels quite supported and appreciated in her role within the school, and receives positive feedback from administration and other teachers regularly. The problems she has encountered to date have not caused insurmountable damage to her relationships with staff, students, or parents, and have not forced her to significantly alter her art program.

**Successes**

All three teachers have attested to success with the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery, including disturbing, controversial, and sensitive imagery in the classroom. The images created by both Anne's and Tasha's students described in this study verify that success in tangible form. The incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery enables and encourages each of the participating teachers' students to come to
clearer understandings about the diverse functions and purposes of a wide range of imagery and make informed decisions regarding the use of imagery within their own work.

With the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery, each teacher has recognized increased student awareness and growth in their conceptions of the definitions of art. They have witnessed transformations in many students who originally thought that the role of art was simply decorative — the creation of 'nice' and 'pretty' pictures or other art forms. Once students are exposed to increased definitions of and ideas about the art forms of many people and cultures through discussion, inquiry, study and exposure to a wide variety of imagery, the teachers have noticed that students develop much deeper understandings concerning the reasons why humans create art. As well, student art work itself tends to become more expressive, personally relevant and exploratory, and most students exhibit enhanced media awareness skills.

**Implications for Further Research**

This study of three teachers' perspectives regarding the use of pervasive and invisible imagery in their art education classrooms suggests some avenues for further research. This study has indicated that the teachers' general use or non-use of pervasive and invisible imagery is shaped by their values and purposes, and is influenced by their own and their students' responses to specific imagery, their relationships with school administration, other staff members and students, their individual employment situations, and the approaches they utilize in regards to such imagery. As this study is necessarily limited in scope, further research is necessary to determine how more art teachers include, exclude and / or deal with the challenges of incorporating pervasive and invisible imagery in their visual art programs.

Further research would also be valuable to discover if teachers would use and benefit from professionally produced art instructional resources and working curriculum
models that directly address and provide successful teaching approaches and strategies in relation to a wide range of specific imagery. That imagery could include particular examples of popular culture imagery, imagery created by women and by people of many cultures, disturbing, controversial and sensitive imagery such as publicly banned and/or censored art work, pornographic imagery, images of social protest and so on.

Further research is also necessary to determine if art teacher in-services would be helpful for art teachers in order to provide a forum for the discussion and sharing of personally developed resources and approaches to pervasive and invisible imagery, and the problems and successes teachers may have encountered in relation to the incorporation or exclusion of such imagery in their programs. Finally, it would be interesting to explore the ramifications for art teachers of open discussion of the issues addressed in this study with school administration and other staff members.

Conclusion

Though necessarily limited in scope, this research provides deeper understandings of three art teachers', their students', and school administrators' responses, teaching approaches, and some problems and successes related to the use of invisible and pervasive imagery, and imagery that is considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive in the teachers' art programs. These teachers' perspectives provide valuable insights with respect to issues that many art educators may have to confront in relation to the inclusion or exclusion of such imagery in their programs.

This research has helped me to understand that I am not isolated as an art educator who has experienced difficulties and successes relating to the inclusion of pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom. As well, this research has helped to clarify and emphasize the importance of addressing pervasive and invisible imagery, and imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive in my own visual art programs.
As seen in this study, there exists possible and serious ramifications for public school teachers and school administrators regarding the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom. Art programs that deal with sensitive imagery and issues might cause controversy within the school and with parents of students, which in turn may result in jeopardy of teachers' employment, and possible loss of enrollment due to parental disapproval. This in turn may ultimately result in the loss of the school's visual arts program altogether.

Given this possible scenario, much art curricula suppresses the inclusion of pervasive and invisible imagery, in particular imagery that may be considered disturbing, controversial or sensitive. However, censorship — the willful or inadvertent act of excluding, shutting out, or neglecting sensitive issues and imagery is not the solution. The British writer, Holbrook Jackson (1874 - 1948), said that "fear of corrupting the mind of the younger generation is the loftiest form of cowardice" (p. 36). I believe that the solution lies in our responsibility as art educators to openly confront and go beyond our own fears and discomfort in addressing sensitive issues and imagery in the classroom. By openly discussing our responses to these issues and imagery with students, school administrators, other teachers, and parents, there is hope that deeper understandings regarding the personal and societal relevance of these issues and images will be generated.

However, art educators need to be provided with tools that help to ensure success in addressing sensitive and controversial imagery and issues in the classroom context, and with school administrators and parents. As seen, the participants in this study have pointed to a lack of visible and accessible art curricula and professionally produced art instructional materials which directly support and provide strategies and approaches for the utilization of pervasive and invisible imagery in the classroom. I believe that this dearth of available, accessible and proven resources contributes significantly to difficulties faced by teachers in actually incorporating such imagery, broaching discussions with administrators and parents, and providing rationales for the inclusion of such imagery.
I advocate the development of art curricula and art instructional resources that directly address the difficulties inherent in meeting the challenges of the classroom incorporation of invisible and pervasive imagery. A critical-reflective approach to art criticism inquiry would help to alleviate these difficulties. A fundamental assumption of critical-reflection is that human life can and should be improved. Critical reflection is a tool for critical understanding of fundamental interests, values, assumptions and implications for human and social action (Aoki, 1978). Its major purpose is to arrive at an understanding about what should be. This understanding emerges through a progressive clarification of issues, ideas and values suggested by the subject — in this case, the image under investigation. The process combines reflection and action. The underlying assumptions, ideologies, values, motivations, and perspectives that the viewer derives from interpretations of the image are explored and reflected upon, and implications for social action are suggested. Critical reflective inquiry is socially reconstructionist — it is inquiry that challenges and offers alternatives to traditionally understood frameworks and processes.

A critical-reflective approach to inquiry hinges on the art educator's ability to include, rather than exclude, disturbing, controversial and sensitive imagery from the invisible and pervasive realms of the image world. In order to analyze messages conveyed and garnered from such images, it is valuable to study the images and their creators from within the contexts of their own time, experience, and culture. Simultaneously, the observer / respondent must also understand any response as placed within the framework of one’s own cultural consciousness. It is through becoming aware of multiple contexts, including personal contexts, that an image can be analyzed in terms of the ways in which it remains influential. Through a critical-reflective approach to inquiry, students will be encouraged to relate diverse visual forms to challenging issues, concerns and understandings that are of profound significance to their own life experiences.

Finally, as seen, each participant's art program is primarily studio-based. In the case of Teacher A and Teacher B, this may be due in part to the fact that teacher education in
art tends to focus on studio production with few in-depth courses in art history and art criticism (Eisner, 1982; Getty Center, 1985), courses in which the issues raised in this study could be addressed. Pre-service and in-service art teacher training should directly address the issues pointed to in this study, and thus contribute to the development of successful strategies and approaches relating to the incorporation of pervasive and invisible imagery, and sensitive and controversial issues in the classroom.

The understandings generated by this study should prove useful and instructive to art education researchers, art instructors, art curriculum developers and school administrators. Further research could contribute to the creation of art education curricula that are more relevant and reflective of the many image worlds that as individuals we create, share and have yet to discover.
REFERENCES


Aoki, T. (1978). Toward curriculum research in a new key. In James Victoria and Elizabeth J. Sacca (Eds.), Presentations on art education research: Phenomenological description, 1 (2), 47 - 69, Published by Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.


Censorship and the Arts. (1992). NAEA Advisory, Adopted by the National Art Education Association Board of Directors, Motion #17, September 1991.


APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you employ imagery that is derived from mass media or from other forms of popular culture in your visual arts programs? Why or why not?
2. What specific images have you employed?
3. In what ways have you utilized this imagery?
4. What kinds of imagery do you consider ‘disturbing’, ‘controversial’, ‘sensitive’? How do you think those parameters differ and/or overlap?
5. Have you employed imagery that could be considered ‘disturbing’, ‘controversial’, or ‘sensitive’ in your visual arts programs? Why or why not?
6. What specific images have you employed?
7. In what ways have you utilized this imagery?
8. What is student response to the utilization of the above mentioned images in the art classroom? How does this differ among individual students?
9. What teaching approaches have you utilized in dealing with imagery from popular culture or with images that you consider to be of a sensitive nature?
10. Have you found helpful curriculum materials which address the use of images from popular culture and/or sensitive issues in the art classroom?
11. Are those resources readily accessible?
12. Have you created your own resources?
13. What are some problems you have encountered in relation to the incorporation of imagery from popular culture and / or with imagery of a disturbing, controversial, or sensitive nature in the classroom?
14. What are some successes you have encountered?
APPENDIX B

PERVASIVE IMAGERY EXAMPLES
APPENDIX C

STUDENT ART WORK
It is time to forget about the past and start thinking of stopping racism.
APPENDIX D

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
WE WILL BE LOOKING AT:
- The History of Comic Design
- Figure Drawing
- Facial Features
- Layout
- Composition
- COLOUR
- Depth and Perspective
- Lettering

WE WILL BE WORKING IN POSTER SIZE 18'x 23' INCHES.
YOU CAN CHOOSE EITHER 1) A COVER PAGE
2) AN INSIDE ACTION PAGE

THE MATERIALS WE WILL BE USING ARE: GRAPHITE PENCIL
BLACK INK
CHINESE BRUSHES
MARKERS
COLOURED PENCILS
MAYFAIR PAPER

YOU WILL CREATE YOUR OWN HERO. CONSIDER THESE OPTIONS:

- WHAT MAKES THEM POWERFUL?
- WHAT ARE THEIR WEAKNESSES?
- WHAT IS THEIR PAST/ORIGIN?
- DO THEY HAVE AN ALTER EGO?
- DOES THEIR COSTUME HAVE A SPECIAL PURPOSE?
- DO THEY HAVE A QUEST OR GOAL?
- DO THEY HAVE SPECIAL TOOLS/TAILISMS TO AID THEM?
- WHAT POINT OF TIME DO THEY EXIST IN?
A) LEARNING OBJECTIVES: I want to learn to

B) DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT: (Sketch idea(s) and format(s) on back; give dimensions)
   a) Materials:
   b) Research: images, methods, history. (10/75 marks for work submitted with project)
   c) Preparation: practice, experiments, image development. (10/75 marks for work submitted with project)
   d) Imagery: picture(s) or sculpture(s) of what?
   e) Format: # items, size(s).

C) TIME LINE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Periods</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Main Project i)</td>
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<td>ii)</td>
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<td>iii)</td>
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<td>iv)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Finishing (matting, mounting, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

HAND IN PROJECTS, PREPARATION WORK AND RESEARCH IN A NEAT AND APPROPRIATE FOLDER FOR 2D WORK OR DISPLAY (ASK) FOR 3D WORK. ALL 2D WORK MUST BE MATTED. CONSIDER MATTING TO A STANDARD FRAME SIZE (ASK).
PROJECT EVALUATION
This sheet is to be completed and handed in with your project.

A) Project description


B) Evaluate and comment on each item as it applies to your project.

1) Fulfillment of original intentions.

2) Aesthetic success (are you pleased with the results?)

3) Handling of chosen medium, development of skills

4) Finishing details (matting, mounting, presentation)

5) Craftsmanship (quality and care throughout)

6) Work habits (effective use of class time, extra time, studio management)

7) Submitted evidence of research

8) Submitted evidence of preparation

9) Challenge

MARK: A B C+ C- D E

TEACHER

5 4 3 2 1 0 USE ONLY

For mark as % see Mark Tables.

LEVEL COURSES: A MAJOR PROJECT IS WORTH 60% OF THE TERM MARK.
LEVEL COURSES: EACH MINOR PROJECT IS WORTH 30% OF THE TERM MARK.
ART HISTORY PAGES

For art history pages in your sketch book please use note form in a neat format and in neat printing or writing. Make sure what you write can be understood by a reader other than yourself. For full credit a hand drawn facsimile about 1/4 of the area of the page, at least partially coloured or with a colour bar, is required.

A. List artist's: name, dates of birth and death, nationality and/or domicile, period, group and/or style, contemporaries, influences, anecdotal history.

B. Give title of work, date, size and medium.

C. Analysis:
   1) Where or what is the focal point? How do you know it is the focal point?
   2) Describe the colours used and how they are used.
   3) Describe the use of pattern and texture.
   4) Describe the use of line, form, space, etc.
   5) Describe the subject matter.
   6) What else can you describe in this piece?

D. Critique:
   1) What makes this piece memorable or not?
   2) What might have motivated the artist to do this piece?
   3) What do you like or dislike about it?
   4) What meanings or ideas do you think are expressed?

E. Term you might use:
   line
   shape
   form
   focus
   texture
   colour
   space
   balance
   contrast
   emphasis
   rhythm
   pattern
   movement
   symbol
   variety
   echoing shapes
   negative space
   unity
   foreground
   background
   atmosphere
   mood
   anger
   ambiguity
   aggression
   calm
   beauty
   disturbing
   introspective
   social commentary
   mystery
   soft edge
   hard edge
   golden section
   composition
   vectors
   barriers
Art History Page Suggestions for the Sketchbook: Some Names You Should Get to Know.

Abstract
Art Nouveau
Bacon
Blake
Braque
Carmicheal, Gr. of 7
Carr
Cassatt
Cezanne
Chagall
Cubism
Dada
Dali
Daumier
De Kooning
Donatello
Duchamp
Escher
Expressionism
Fafard
Falck
Fauves
Futurism
Gauguin
Goya
Harris, Gr. of 7
Hockney
Impressionism
Jackson, Gr. of 7
Johnston, Gr. of 7+1
Kandinsky
Klee
Leonardo
Lismer, Gr. of 7
MacDonald, Gr. of 7
Magritte
Manet
Marc
Matisse
McLaren, NFB
Michelangelo
Miro
Modigliani
Mondrian
Monet
Moore
Morisot
Munch
Nolde
O'Keefe
Op Art
Picasso
Pointilism
Pollock
Pop Art
Post-Impressionism
Raphael
Rembrandt
Renoir
Rousseau
Seurat
Shadbolt
Singer-Sargent
Surrealism
Thompson, Gr. of 7
Toulouse-Lautrec
Turner
Van Gogh
Varley, Gr. of 7
Whistler
Wyeth

For Starters.....