Socially Engaged Art Education
Pratt Institute
A Timeline of Socially Engaged Art

- 1910s: Constructivists (Russia)
- 1910-20s: Futurists (Italy)
- 1930s: Dada (Zurich/Paris)
- 1950-60s: Fluxus (US/International)
- 1960s-70s: Feminist Performance Art (International)
- 1980s-90s: Activist + Community Arts Movement
- 2000s-Today: Social Practice Art
Artworld Terms/Concepts

- Relational Aesthetics (Nicholas Bourriaud)
- Connective/Dialogic Art (Grant Kester/Suzi Gablik)
- Participatory Art (Claire Bishop, others)
- Public Practice (Suzanne Lacey)
- Socially Engaged Art (Nato Thompson, others)
- Social Practice (Pablo Helguera)
Nikolai Evreinov, Storming of the Winter Palace, 1917
Fortunato Depero, Skyscrapers and Tunnels (Gratticieli e tunnel), 1930

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni

First Public Performance using intonorumori 1914
Hugo Ball, Dada performance in Switzerland

First International Dada Fair in Berlin 1920

Marcel Duchamp, Fountain
Judy Chicago, Immolation IV from the Women and Smoke Series, 1972,

Martha Rosler

Lygia Clark
Do women have to be naked to get into U.S. museums?

Less than 3% of the artists in the Met. Museum are women, but 83% of the nudes are female.

Statistics from modern art galleries, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2004

Guerrilla Girls

General Idea

Suzanne Lacey, The Roof is on Fire

Lucy Lippard
Open Field
Walker Art Center
Queens Museum
Queens College Social Practice
Relational Aesthetics

Artist

Art Object

Audience

Artwork

Participant

Collaborator

Project

Situation
Community-Based Education

Environmental education
Place-based education
Project-based learning
Civic Education
Service Learning
Work-Based Learning
What the Research Tell us...

- 95 percent of students (ages thirteen to nineteen) said opportunities for more real world learning would improve their school.
- 71 percent said that it would improve their school a great deal
- 92 percent of adults (including teachers) favored emphasizing real world learning in schools including work study, community service, and vocational courses.
- 64 percent of adults strongly advocated emphasizing real world learning.
- 70 of teachers strongly advocated emphasizing real world learning.

SOURCE: Coalition for Community Schools
CHARACTERISTIC 1: Meaningful Content—From Research to Practice

WE KNOW THAT...

Communities provide a natural context for learning

Content should be meaningful and relevant

Using knowledge promotes retention and transfer

So Community-Based Learning Strategies...

communities as the source and focus of learning

Builds on students’ prior knowledge and issues they care about

Encourages coherent investigative and problem-solving skills, which complement and refine standards-based skills
Example:
Media Education Model

Source:
Global Action Project
Participation in Social Practice

- Nominal participation: where a viewer consumes art passively
- Directed participation: where a viewer is instructed to finish a piece of art
- Creative participation in which a viewer adds something to the art
- Collaborative participation: viewer is involved in both developing the structure and content.

Source: Pablo Helguera, Education for Socially Engaged Art
Public Pedagogy

- Learning outside of school
  - The Public Sphere (Jurgen Habermas)
- Public Opinion, Public Discourse
- Popular Public Pedagogies
- Critical Public Pedagogy
  - Jennifer Sandlin and Henry Giroux
- Public Art Pedagogy
- Hybrid Spaces
- Funds of Knowledge (Gonzalez)
Aesthetic Evangelism

- Ethical/Moral Issues
- Grant Kester
- Authorial power + privilege
- Moment of transference
- Artists positioned as social workers or what he calls “trans-historical shamans”:

Thomas Hirschhorn, Spectre of Evaluation, 2010
Research Issues

- Do socially engaged art practices improve learning with and through visual art?
- What is the relationship to civic engagement, how can we assess its validity?
- How do issues of privilege and power impact the intention and scope of socially engaged works?
- What pressures are institutions placing on artists to adopt these ideas/practices?
Research Findings

- IMPACT: There are some links to improvements in social awareness, media literacy, civic participation
- ACCESS: Most projects are only available to middle-upper class white youth in urban/suburban areas
- TIME: Many projects are short-lived due to funding constraints and logistics
- USABILITY: Many teachers express hesitation in adopting b/c of time and logistical issues, little to no curricular resources and misconception about what’s involved in using community based settings
Guy Debord’s Society of the Spectacle told through interpretive dance!

authentic social life has been replaced with its representation.

THE SPECTACLE IS NOT A COLLECTION OF IMAGES, RATHER, IT IS A RELATION BETWEEN PEOPLE THAT IS MEDIATED BY IMAGES.

in a world which really is post-truth, the true is a moment of the false.

The history of social life can be understood as the decline of being into having, and having into merely appearing.

Waves of enthusiasm for a given product results in “moments of fervent exaltation similar to the ecstatics of the convulsions and miracles of the old religious fetishism.”

The spectacle prevents individuals from realizing that the society of spectacle is only a moment in history, one that can be overturned by revolution.

Performance as Research