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## Building the capacity of students in creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills: Aesthetic narrative of Ayigya Township, Ghana

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#### Abstract

The study set out to investigate the environmental aesthetics present in habitual areas, specifically in Ayigya Township, Ashanti Region, focusing on picture-making tendencies for optimal skill development. A total of 346 respondents from various structures were specifically chosen to participate in the study using the Narrative Case Study Design under the qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews, observation, and photographic documentation were used for the data collection. The data were analysed using photographic documentary and qualitative narrative analysis. The findings demonstrated how dispersed aesthetic elements are in everyday life and how this appreciation would have a positive impact on the Senior High School student's capacity for creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills. It is suggested that students develop alternative means of expressing their creativity. The study contends that art teachers must help students to use aesthetics in their environments to develop the tools and materials for their artistic productions.

**Keywords:** aesthetics, Ayigya Township, creative problem solving, critical thinking skills, picture making



### **Public Interest Statement**

The study exposes some creative activities and actions in the Ayigya community in Ashanti region of Ghana. These activities are discussed with the purpose of finding alternative resources for artistic creation to increase the creative and critical abilities of Visual Art students. The study further discusses experiments with these found activities and/or resources in an art studio. Experimented artworks are further placed in a conversation with some students in the classroom through seminars and exhibitions. The findings demonstrate how dispersed aesthetic elements are in everyday life and how this appreciation would have a positive impact on the Senior High School student's capacity for creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills. The study contends that art teachers must help students to use aesthetics in their environments to develop the tools and materials for their artistic productions.

### **1.0 Introduction**

The research explored and documented the aesthetic elements present in and on selected habitable structures in Ayigya Township for building the capacities of students in creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills in Picture Making, a subject studied at the Senior High School level in Ghana. Ayigya happens to be a suburban cum rural community of the Oforikrom Municipal Assembly in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Picture Making, an art practice that covers all artistic endeavours that produce two- and three-dimensional forms to develop creative and vocational skills in our young people, is an elective study area for learners who are reading the Visual Art programme at the Senior High School level in Ghana (CRDD, 2010). The curricula encompass a three-year Senior High Schools (SHS) Visual Art program provided to several SHSs that focus on part of or the complete curriculum. In response to the overarching craft industry and tertiary educational framework into which its graduates would enter, the syllabus is carefully designed for professions with specialized specialities in art. The syllabus notes the important values our students will show an appreciation of the cultural and aesthetic details in Ghanaian art (CRDD, 2010). The influence of picture-making is currently felt in communication, education, and health, as well as in the overall lives of communities. Technology and artistic developments are heavily reliant on picture-making. As a result, picture-making has influenced national socio-economic growth and raised living standards in most advanced economies. The vitality of science, art, and technology combined is essential for Ghana's progress (Asante, 2021).

Towards this end, it is critical to support the development of our young people's artistic talents and abilities so that they can contribute to the growth and significance of Ghanaian art forms as well as by applying them to every aspect of our development work and critically appreciating the environments in which the learners live. This requires education and training of learners in the aesthetics of the environment and fostering creativity based on the learning style of the learner. Most academics have been perplexed by the topic of whether personality matters in learning and education. Such a subject is essentially a jumble of several more detailed questions, each of which demands a lot of language manoeuvres to convince the questioner (De Raad & Schouwenburg, 1996). For one thing, personality is a nebulous term. This implies that wide themes like learner differences and attitude are advocated for, and subjects like scholastic achievement, teaching methods, and active learning preferences are highlighted. The unitary character-derived construct persistence of motives, which has an inherent link to learning and education, has coloured the first few decades of the century. The last three or four decades have seen a rising understanding in the study of personality about fundamental constructions

such as those advocated by behaviourists, cognitivists, and constructivists. Analysing, linking concepts, and forming interconnections across ideas and new information, reflective and unbiased thinking, and the means of transferring knowledge to varying situations are all part of complex and long learning. Taking into account students' processes of knowledge adjustment capabilities in art education, the educator should not only be a knowledge conveyor but also a facilitator, inspiring learners to improve their scholarly and artistic skills (Mensah & Tachie-Menson, 2018). As the Ghanaian Government introduced Computerised School Placement and Selection policy, most of the students being enrolled in the Senior High Schools are a mixed breed of diverse cultures in the classroom. This is to mean the culmination of diverse personalities in the classroom and the burden on limited facilitators for the teaching of Picture Making. As Mensah and Tachie-Menson (2018) noted, the deficiency in the learning of some art courses in the Visual Art curriculum, the learners of the Picture Making syllabus are often plagued with a lack of sufficient studio practical materials, up-to-date reference or teaching aids, etc.

Wooden structures, bequeathed or legacy buildings, and aluminium roofing sheets form the sampled population for the research. Most of the bequeathed or legacy buildings are in conditions that even terrify the idea of it being habitable, with heavily visible cracks in the walls, weathered colour panels with stains from nature, and human efforts as in literal pasting of posters, doodling, scribbling, and mark-making from humans, incessant writing of information such as names and telephone numbers on these walls. These experiences in themselves tend to unconsciously transport themselves into the fabric of the residents whereby, most habitable structures are often in a semblance of death traps. Such material culture is untapped and unadulterated with art-making. The patterns, colour panels of weathered emulsion paints on dilapidated buildings, stained oil paintings on legacy buildings, the creeps and crevices inherent in the walls of some displayed structures, window patches on the window screens by inculcating foreign materials such as rice bags, pieces of cloths, books, etc. to safeguard and prevent the entry of insects, etc. are some interesting cues and ideas that are worthy of exploration. These tangible issues do find their semblance in art-making as elements of art. The Picture Making learner is empirically uncritical with finding art in these spaces of habitude and does not seem to reason with these dictates because of a lack of substantial knowledge of the environment of habitation.

A constant interest to understand and later explore the various techniques employed in the way of life of the residents of Ayigya is important to the study of Picture Making. With Visual Art educators having to teach art courses with limited materials, students have to learn and develop their skills for their vocational practice with scanty and most often theoretical aids with less practical-oriented learning materials. The voluminous rich and expansive artistic virtues accrued over time in environmental spaces, with particular interest to the visible artistic elements in and on habitable structures in Ayigya, are yet to be narrated, archived and explored with tenets of Picture Making Art Studio practising as a guiding force, hence this study. The study was premised on three research questions namely:

1. What are the Environmental Aesthetic elements in Ayigya Township?
2. In what ways can the aesthetic narratives be documented and used as a tool in building Picture Making students' capacities in creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills?
3. What is the importance of environmental aesthetics to the study of Picture Making for Senior High Schools in Ghana?

The purpose of this study was to document the varied dispersed aesthetics in and of Ayigya Township to aid in the efficient learning of Picture Making at the Senior High School level in Ghana and to adversely appreciate learner differences that are often not appreciated with Art education and the making of artworks in Ghana.

The study was confined to the investigation and documentation of aesthetics elements visibly present in and on some habitable buildings in Ayigya and later explored these photographic narratives of the artistic elements in the studio for Picture Making art practice. Geographically, the scope of this study covered the entire Ayigya Town but the focus was skewed towards structures and those whose artistic elements were visibly overwhelming.

## 2.0 Social Constructivist Theory

The study's overarching objective called for a theory that was environmentally and communally inclined which in turn will facilitate the learning by the Picture Making students. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist fathered the social constructivist theory on which the study relied.

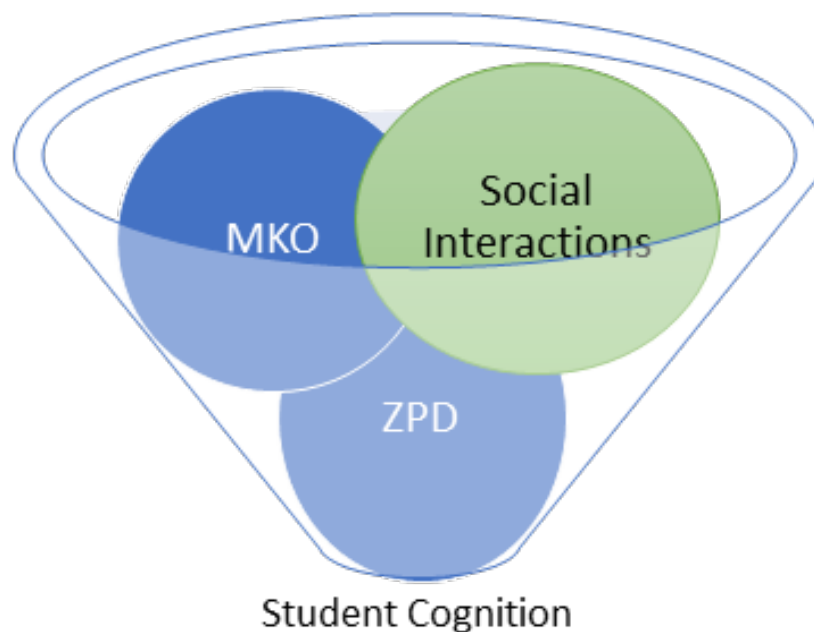


Figure 1: Student Cognition Construct

Vygotsky (1986) continued in the constructive theory as proposed by Piaget but where Piaget's emphasis laid on the inner boost of encouragement in the learner as they accommodate new information with old knowledge Vygotsky emphasized the essence of communal participation in which the learner is situated or interacts (Pope & Blake, 2008). Thus, the learning process is consociationally moderated. Social Development Theory opines that consociationalism postdates development in the learner and that the visible behaviour of a learner in society and an association are affairs or merchandise of cognition and consciousness. Three tenets are explored, and they are the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), Social Interaction (SI) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

*ZPD- the Zone of Proximal Development* is perceived as the difference between the two groups of learners, as defined by their prospective developmental level and by their ability to solve problems independently or in groups, with the teacher acting as a mediator. The gap between the Picture Making

learner's underlying psychological age as well as the level at which he can solve problems with help indicates the proximal zone of development. It is often seen as the next capacity or state just above the Picture Making learner's understanding, the learner is then aided generously in working effectively at this level courtesy of the facilitator or cultural space of engagement.

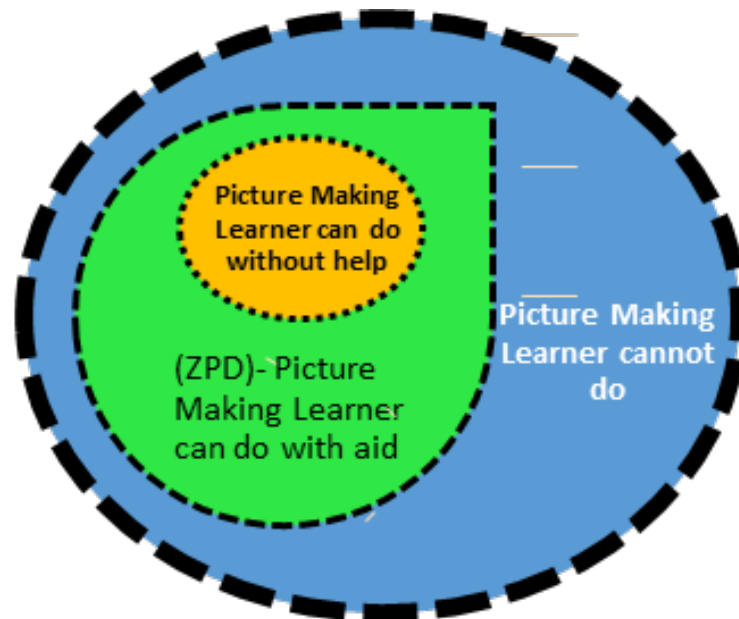


Figure 2: Adaptation of the Zone of Proximal Development; Source: Researchers' Construct, 2022

*MKO- The More Knowledgeable Other-* Vygotsky (1986) referred to anyone or thing whose state of knowledge or understanding level is higher than the learner, in the performance of specific duties, solving problems or tasks as the more knowledgeable other. This individual in discourses is often biased and seen as the coach, facilitator, teacher or older person while in social constructive theory, persons even younger in age than the Picture Making learner, peers or even technological gadgets could be the more knowledgeable other. Vygotsky (1986), opines that culture and social engagements are pillars essential to the conditioning of learning to the individual, in that, as communal as learning is, it is borne out of the analysis of social values, ethics and knowledge (Brown, 2007). In the construction of both emotionally charged representations of reality and cognitive literacy by social constructivists, Brown (2007) points out the importance placed on the essence of social or cultural engagement and collaborative learning. This then stresses the point of learning is a socially mediated construct (Vygotsky, 1986).

*SIT- Social Interaction Theory-* The Social Interactionist Theory (SIT) is an explanation of language development emphasizing the role of social interaction between the developing child and linguistically knowledgeable adults. His sociocultural theory declares that social interaction within the family and with knowledgeable members of the community is the primary means by which children acquire behaviours and cognitive processes relevant to their own society (Vygotsky, 1986).

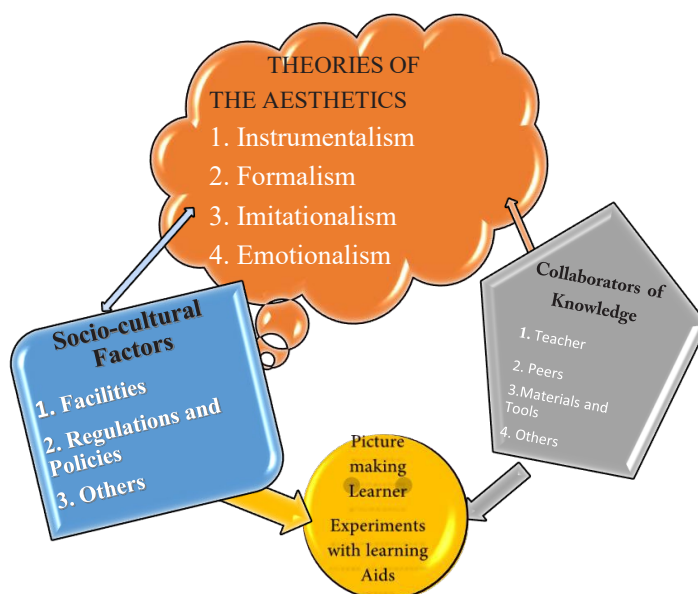


Figure 3- The Cultural Engagements Construct  
 Source: Researchers’ Construct, 2022

2.1 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework as opined by Maxwell (2005) alludes to the anticipations, theories, beliefs and concepts that buttress the research. This often goes in to comment on the perception of the researcher towards the research question in a systematic clear self-evident approach for the reader. Hence the conceptual framework for this study poses the experimentations carried out on the documented aesthetics in various learner differences modes. The conceptual framework explains the interconnections of the mode of elements of environmental aesthetics, the focus of the learner to be able to construct new knowledge within the supplied materials as well as the ingenuity of gaps within knowledge being bridged. As was the approach to which environmental aesthetics were documented, narrated and explored in the researcher’s studio to aid the study of Picture Making at the Senior High School level in Ghana.



Figure 4: The Conceptual framework Construct; Source: Researchers’ Construct 2022

### 3.0 Designs and Methods

#### 3.1 *Research Approach and Research Design*

The study sought to study a natural phenomenon on Environmental Aesthetics in its basic setting, including methods that are human-centred and interactive, data which is occurring as opposed to anticipated data of which its base is open to more interpretations, the qualitative approach research methodology has been applied (Campbell, 2014). Any research project that uses the qualitative technique to analyse data allows the researchers to conduct a critical analysis of the topic being studied and to communicate the findings. This position enables the study's material, facts, and concepts to be presented in a logical and chronological order. Information was also gathered using this strategy for study in libraries, archives, and museums.

The study was a case study (Denscombe, 2007) that involved the residents and structures in Ayigya Zongo in the Ayigya township of Greater Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, to elucidate knowledge and factors experienced regarding the aesthetics of the environment within their habitual spaces (Assalahi, 2015). Also, the study utilized the narrative study design (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) that relies on the discourse with the datum on the episodes and events those individuals or things tell (Chase, 2005). The study relied on various observations of individuals, getting their stories by gathering data through discourses, documenting their experiences individually, and sequentially ordering the sense or concept of their individual experiences.

#### 3.2 *Sampling Design*

The Population for the study is the Ayigya Township in the Kumasi Metropolitan assembly of the Ashanti region in Ghana. The target population for the study was collaborated by selected structures in Ayigya Township. The accessible population for the study is some habitable structures in the Zongo area of the Ayigya Township. As implied, the sample population did comprise the selected structures in the Ayigya Zongo of the Ayigya Township. Purposive sampling was used to single out the structures and activities (Cohen, et al., 2000). This was important to help the researchers select the structures with the appropriate aesthetic interests as well as study participants who had the required knowledge of the phenomenon investigated. A total of 346 respondents from various structures were specifically chosen to participate in the study using the Narrative Case Study Design. 86 window frames, 22 sun-blocking window frames, 14 improvised buildings, 55 distinct colour swashes, 38 recycled doors, 35 different wall cracks, 146 observed activities on the landscape, and 430 varied markings were among the sampled responders.

#### 3.3 *Data Collection Instruments, Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations*

The field survey was conducted at Ayigya. Because of the specificity and geographical locality within which the indigenous Ayigya citizens reside and also serve as the subject of study, the study area, Ayigya, was defined out of the larger Kumasi Metropolis. During the research, an intentional residency in Ayigya was conducted, as well as a field survey to critically examine the surroundings, the artistic displays in habitable forms on display in the neighbourhood and on the walls of the buildings, and to approach people who seemed knowledgeable about the markings or scribbling to help confirm the details about these symbols found in secondary sources. Direct observations were done (De Clerck, et al., 2011) to appreciate the aesthetic value and critically assess the elements and their detailed patterns. Direct observation of the Ayigya community, working spaces, and residences; taking photographs, and collecting photographs from the Ayigya site were the main instruments for data collection. This method has the benefit of allowing the studied population to be watched in the environment where the technology

is typically utilised. Therefore, direct observation is regarded to have high face validity. During the neighbourhood trips, the researchers used professional cameras in taking some images. Rough pencil sketches were also done on the spot. Structured and unstructured interviews, on-appointment and impromptu, were applied to interview subjects at their business locations, stores, and homes. Three languages were spoken: English, Fante, and Twi. Due to the oral tradition of the Akan, the one-on-one interview method was frequently employed in this study. Therefore, more pertinent information was obtained this way than it would have been if participants had been asked to record their comments on the paper. This approach has also introduced the researchers to people who, without the study, they probably would not have encountered. Additionally, it allowed the researchers to collect additional material to supplement the study by cross-checking the data in some of the documents used in the review of related literature. Some data, particularly the answers to queries, was written down on paper. The local interviewees were homeowners or caregivers. The data gathered were analysed using photographic documentary and qualitative narrative analysis.

#### 4.0 Results and Discussion

The research in this section presents the results and discussion of the data collected from the study. The findings of this research were grounded on observable qualities of structures and activities in the Ayigya Township.

##### 4.1 Elements of Environmental Aesthetics in Ayigya Township



Figure 5: A collapsed wall displaying the building material



Figure 6: Tapping water through pipes un conventionally

Source: *Researchers' Field Study, 2022*

Figure 5 shows a partially collapsed habitable structure which is dangerous to livelihood yet being inhabited. On the other hand, figure 6 displays an extraction of water through pipes inappropriately and un conventionally in the community. Tapping water through ground pipes as a result of the low pressures from Ghana Water Company. These low pressures often result in dry water pipes for weeks, hence the need to tap water from pipes in the community which culminates and infers the anomalies evident in the service distribution of fluctuating water system of the nation. Not to focus on their social plights but to appropriate techniques and the attitude of resiliency employed by these residents to aid the learner make



pictures when one is confounded with wants in the making of arts. These places are spaces of enterprise, creativity and hard work.



Figure 7: Children Drawings



Figure 8: Formalist Colour Scheme

Source: *Researchers' Field Study, 2022*

The iconography in Figure 7 is descriptive of Primitive Tribal Drawings, and kindergarten scribbles and there is this tone of authenticity which is in similitude to these works just as produced by Pablo Picasso, Henry Matisse, etc. when they were influenced by African Art (Güner, 2017; Murrell, 2008; Casely-Hayford, 2013). Güner (2017) opines on how the paintings of both Picasso and Matisse were transformed as they reimagined the human body in the cubic mask-like schematic forms in the 20th Century. Similar mask-like schematic forms studied by both Picasso and Matisse are reflected on the walls of the studied population.

Despite their seeming chaos, the figures 7 and 8 are vital, energetic, efficient and purposeful. Nothing is wasted and no opportunity is missed. The culture of the space is built on the unique knowledge that communities own and use to address the challenges that they face. The student is often met with a lack of availability of art tools and materials for exploration in their vocational skills learning. The figures 7 and 8 are fairly precise and honestly diplomatic in a minimalist genre, as there are limited individuals or subjects at play. The facades of the designs or patterns that include subjects, techniques, marks, colour schemes, etc. are aesthetic properties augmenting the aesthetic experience. The basic structure of composition in these figures is that of spontaneity. These figures substantially place the viewer in a lead within the communal theatre context of aesthetics with the focus on playing between beauty and decay as well as the multiple inequalities that crawl and the visual textual ghosts that haunt these physical spaces of habitation. There are existential issues that arise within the findings. The economic dark times chanced upon the study comments on the narratives within this space as they force residents to appropriate with their beggary rich to make life comfortable for them. In employing the photographic medium to document the aesthetic elements in the Ayigya Township, the visual textual narratives of harsh social documentation on the surfaces of these residential surfaces do comment on the socio-economic-political discourse of the community, not only to focus on art but to delve further deeper into the fabric of their livelihood. This documentation from the study offers an experience of human values in space.

*4.2 Experiment with the narratives for ways learners can develop efficient manipulative, aesthetic, and technical skills using tools and materials to make pictures in the studio*

The study revealed thematic components of appropriation, an element of art-making based on its appropriateness or the borrowing of characters from a known space or dimension into a different space. The study noted the less involvement of characters as known in the minimalist genre of making pictures because varied unrelated elements are brought together to aid the making of pictures. In developing an efficient experiment with the narratives for ways learners could develop manipulative, aesthetic, and technical skills using tools and materials to make pictures in the studio, the study borrowed and merged both the technicalities and rationales expected of the learner by the learning syllabus with the techniques employed by the population of study in their daily activities.



Figure 9: Food Matter



Figure 10: Charcoal Work

*Source: Researchers' Studio Study, 2022*

With the plight of most Picture makers and learners having to be burdened with the lack of physical space in the definition of working studio space, and art materials to make meanings to their creativity, the study observed the equal utilizing of unconventional materials in addressing not similar but challenges relative to the unavailability of required means in the township. Figure 9 and 10 are experiments with food matter and charcoal stains from the local community eatery, “Chop Bar”, and a charcoal trader in the town respectively. The attendants in the Chop Bar were begged to throw the leftovers or residues of food by their customers onto the unstretched canvas given to them by the researchers while the charcoal vendor collaborated with the researchers by working with the canvas as either an apron or a cleaning napkin. The researcher visited the chop bar after two days to collect the material but waited for a fortnight to get the charcoal work. The work in Figure 10 was later left under the mercy of nature to interact with, which later ended up with these patterns. The availability of the proper tools and materials aids and facilitates the learning process but its scarcity should not cripple the learner rather the syllabus asks educators to make use of the provided one suggesting the place of appropriation. In developing practical skills as a learner of Picture Making, the syllabus stipulates those learners be aided in the proper handling and use of the tools and types of equipment for vocational works. There is the need for individual craftsmanship or artisanship on the part of the learner and this is perfected when such a learner efficiently and skillfully handles the materials, tools, pieces of equipment, gadgets, etc. in the accomplishment of specified tasks.

The Picture Maker is called to a place of constant creativity and originality, the learner is encouraged to make new the known or old daily. As little as the difference is, the rationale of Picture

Making appreciates such differences. Figures 11 and 12 show the production processes of a piece of portraiture based on the philosophical idea of representation which is a facet of Picture making. It employs the known nostalgic, conventional, traditional forms and the means to develop practical skills as a Picture Making learner.

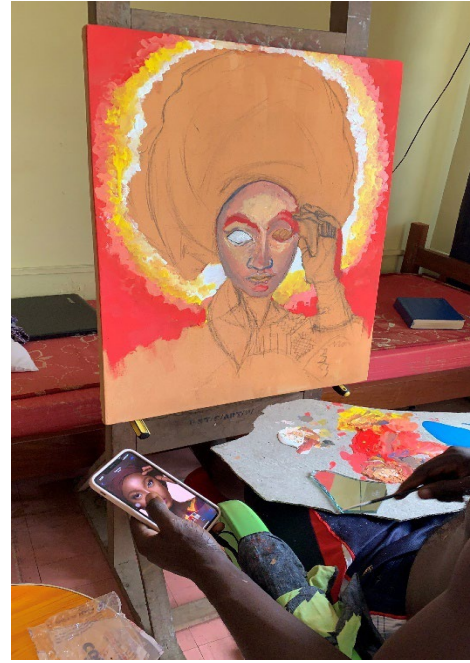


Figure 11: Painting from a Photographed Image    Figure 12: Unfinished Portrait

*Source: Researchers' Studio experiments, 2022*

#### ***4.3 The importance of environmental Aesthetics in the study of Picture Making for Senior High Schools in Ghana***

The study observed simultaneously that environmental aesthetics and the making of pictures were two sides of a coin in Art. These two sides engage in casual or rambling conversations about the space they make and simultaneously situate themselves respectfully. The making of pictures borrows its elements or narratives for its construction from the environment and its selection or choice of elements artistically handpicked. Aesthetics primarily has been concerned with how the arts, and specifically different notions of beauty in nature are understood by humans on the platform of sensual and cognitive engagements. The arts, to some, are appreciated best as an institution of culture that is autonomous and self-referential that calls for the disinterested body and are always segregated from its cultural origin or any functional use. This, to some, is coupled with fine art where no concrete recognizable form or image is projected unto the mind of the viewer but the viewer is rather guided through the borders of the seemingly unidentified form to make, participate, or experience realities not forced but rather carved by the viewer as they experience the said work of art. These debates are often seen within the works of most Contemporary, Modernist such as Dada, Minimalist, Conceptual, and Avant Garde artists (Greenberger, et al., 2022). As noted by Greenberger et al. (2020), contemporary artists and Picture Makers have challenged conventions by introducing everyday and familiar techniques and materials, avoiding conventional notions of art making, audience experiences, and even the mode of exhibiting these works. The aesthetics of the environment, to a larger extent, coordinates the narratives woven

by picture makers as it bestows itself into the very fabric of works created. The environment is often conventionally seen as surroundings but such understandings are both elusive and complex, excluding the human entity in its dealings. Berleant (2002) agrees with environmental artists that it is important to include in the physical setting of their artistic productions, the cultural, spiritual, and emotional setting into the physical setting.

The aesthetic theory (Graham, 2005) manages and tutors the human understanding of the arts, as the arts illustrate and demonstrate the value of aesthetics. The portals for learning Picture Making in the studio are through the body and specifically the senses. The brain of humans is naturally fashioned to interpret, record, keep track of, or archive encounters met by the body to make meanings for human endeavours. There is also an inherent authority within the human body that allows it to make connections to new data even as they seek newer trajectories to knowledge acquisition and this authority interprets sensual codes for human reactions or experiences, an example is the withdrawal of the hand after it has been pricked by a sharp object as it experiences pain. A massive plethora of information, motivation, and visual imagery is synchronously communicated to the learner by the environment through the approaches of repetition, dynamic variations, formalization, exaggeration and surprise. As the human body transports itself through the environment, the spatial relationship of biodiversity towards each other notes experiences worth remaking, documenting, or archiving for posterity, and even though the human mind is fashioned to perform such tasks, one finds a disconnect of actually transferring such experiences to other interested bodies vividly and accurately without biases with the mind so a better medium as aided by the Picture Making Syllabus is proposed for learners. The Picture Making syllabus perks up with aspects of designs which are elements of arts that are disposed of indiscriminately and promiscuously in the aesthetics of the environment through lines in the walk or water pathways, colour in the light shades, shapes in objects, the smell in the taste or aroma emanating from kitchen homes or just heat from the wet parks after a rain downpour, texture in the wall surface or temperature and sound from children's playground/ market space or dialogues. The environment further awakens sensual responses and interacts visually and with conceptual perceptions as they guide the curiosity, actions, and imaginations that bolster the irreplaceable role the arts play in learning and a holistic sense of well-being.

#### ***4.4 Students views on some implementation gaps to enhance creativity in art making in schools***

As part of addressing implementation gaps, the researchers conducted series of seminars in Kumasi Senior High Technical School to enhance the level of critical thinking and problem-solving skills as encountered by students. Plate 12 depicts one of the researchers conducting one of the numerous seminars presented. The students were taken through numerous modes of art exhibition that defeat conventional notions of art exhibition. The session was very interactive. Students did share exhibiting techniques they have encountered in spaces they have visited. Plate 13 has one student caught up with the myriad of elements evident in the work. Due to the discussions, the suitability of certain materials germane to art making were argued by the students of which an interrogation ensued between students and the work of art as captured in Plate 13. However, before the exhibition some students did not believe in the suitability of unconventional materials and tools such as soups, grounded powders, scrapers, etc. could be used in the creation of artworks. At the end of the exposition and the experiences encountered in viewing the produced works, there was clear understanding and admiration in the students as captured in Plate 14. One student remarked, among several other views that *“Apart from the ingenuity in executing such works, there is also the reduction in the cost of executing practical works since the materials and techniques for the execution are locally sourced and less expensive”*. Also, another student asked,

*“Why is it that there has not been any available learning material to help them know the suitability of some materials in art making so as to rid them of the labour of fruitless experiments”*. The works were displayed as innovative ideas and ingenious work of experiment which made the class more interactive.



Figure 12: Researcher with students  
the artwork

Plate 13: Close up with the work

Plate 14: Students with

### Conclusion

The learning of Picture Making with all its rationales and aims is pinned only on the actual holistic appreciation of the environment. The Environment as a repository of creativity and knowledge is minutely appreciated. Learners and facilitators of Picture Making can value the enormous wealth of teaching and learning aids embedded in the spaces the human body finds itself within the space of time. The Picture Making syllabus calls for the development of practical, perceptual, vocational, and aesthetical skills, so it is the sole responsibility of the learner to develop an artistic signature as and when there are demonstrations. The absence of adequate and available tools and materials to the Picture Making learner should not be a hindrance but rather an asset worthy of investigation. Environmental aesthetics appreciation is the awareness and appreciation of natural or artificial beauty in and around the spaces visited by the human body, which goes beyond Visual art and other expressive arts under performance art. After collecting and analyzing the data for the study, a few recommendations were of concern to the researchers on the adequate and constructive learning of Picture making. It is recommended that learners should make good use of their artistic senses at every point in their human endeavours. They should, as artists, be conversant of interacting with spaces they visit and should be conscious of their interactions with such spaces. Also, they should make use of the tools and materials available to them and find alternative unconventional materials, tools, and ways of displaying, making, or exhibiting their ideas or creativity when they are hosted by a series of challenges. In addition, all educational stakeholders should come on board in the collaborative and effective learning of Picture Making in the Senior High Schools in Ghana. Stakeholders should make the learning of Picture Making pleasant to all and sundry by setting up community-based exhibitions. Further research could be conducted on behaviourism as an effect on the learning of Picture Making in the Senior High Schools while another study could measure the effects of environmental aesthetics on the learning of any of the visual art elective courses.

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### **Disclaimer Statement**

This work is part of an MPhil thesis of Francis Nii Quaye submitted to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for the award of an MPhil degree in African Art and Culture in the Department of Painting and Sculpture supervised by Prof. Steve Kquofi.

### **Biographies**

Mr. Francis Nii Quaye is an MPhil graduate who studied Art Education in the Department of Educational Innovations in Science and Technology, Faculty of Educational Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. His areas of expertise are in Environmental Aesthetics, Painting, and Art Education.

Prof. Steve Kquofi is an Associate Professor in African Art and Culture in the Department of Educational Innovations in Science and Technology, Faculty of Educational Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. His areas of expertise are varied and include Cultural Anthropology, History of Art, Socio-Cultural Practices, and Environmental Aesthetics. His topmost research is employing art aesthetics in environmental protection in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Dickson Adom is a researcher in the pluridisciplinary fields of Place Identity History, African Art, Art Installations, and Cultural Anthropology for Biodiversity Conservation, Recycled Art, Environmental Sustainability, and Heritage Sites Conservation. He is a senior member in the Department of Educational Innovations in Science and Technology, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. He is an expert in the use of traditional knowledge systems and community engagement strategies in rural communities.

### **Authorship and Level of Contribution**

Francis Nii Quaye conceived the research idea and led the research team on this project, taking the lead in the planning, execution, data collection and writing of the paper. Steve Kquofi supervised the project, partook in the data collection, execution of the project and the final writing of the paper. Dickson Adom contributed to the final writing of the paper and gave substantial contributions during the execution of the project.

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