

Voices and Bodies
Calling for Critical
Citizenship through Arts
Education

Andri Savva

Nopi Telemachou

University of Cyprus

The content and context of artistic practices: Viewing, creating and performing



we emphasise the “ process through which students learn to challenge art historical assumptions, the ideologies of institutionalised learning and the spectacle of mass media culture in order to facilitate agency and to develop critical citizenship” (Garoian, 1999)..

The content and context of artistic practices: Viewing, creating and performing

Cypriot Student teachers as well as children of all age groups live in specific settings (place-space) encounter a range of visual images, advertisements, visual technologies, historical sights, monuments, museums and shopping malls. Often these images are connected to political, ideological and economical issues.

Taking into consideration that art is an open concept not relating exclusively to aesthetic contemplation we sought to challenge student teachers' practices by promoting teaching and learning for meaning.

Teaching approaches

- Viewing, observing, reflecting
Making, creating
- Interactive environment- collaboration
- Engagement in active , meaningful activities
- Involvement in a diversity of art disciplines and narratives

Aims

We aimed to

- Lend opportunities to participants to re approach their immediate environment (man-made, natural, social)
- Enable participants to engage the body, space and time through viewing and creating
- Encourage critical reflection on the ways they view and re-present their ideas, images and actions.

Practices and re-presentations

Experiential activities- observation, collection of materials

- Experiential activities emphasizing the engagement of the body based on self exploration.
- Incorporating observation documenting their experiences of their immediate environment
- Taking photographs, collecting materials , exploring their immediate place and space.

Practices and re-presentations



Practices and re-presentations

- For example, they have collected scrub and natural materials extracted from their own habitat... They have taken photographs depicting images of their every day life and human behaviors ...the signs of the materials and their environment e.g. of political flyers, gave the initial ideas. Political parties' flyers enable them to analyze, discuss and refer to provoking, issues and questions linked to their own lives .
- - Who is the decision maker? What does it mean to be part of the majority ? What does it mean to be part of minority?
In many cases we have faced disagreements, conflicts....but as a student teacher reports “this was fascinating, interesting and provoking ,,,,made me think about my self and others”

Reflecting and identifying thematic areas: Collecting , exploring, creating



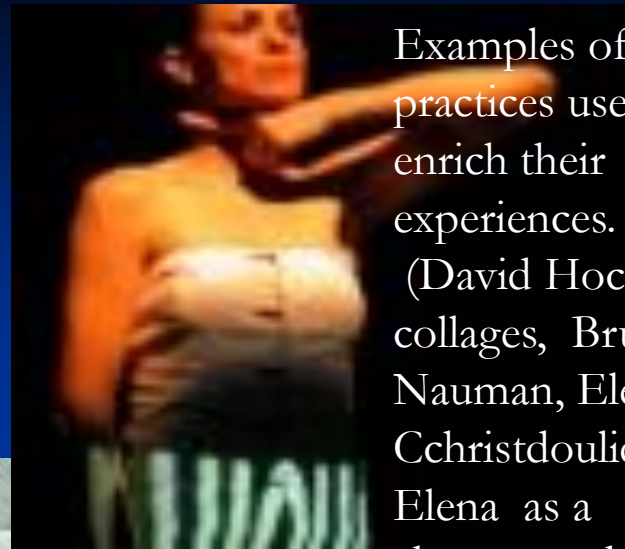
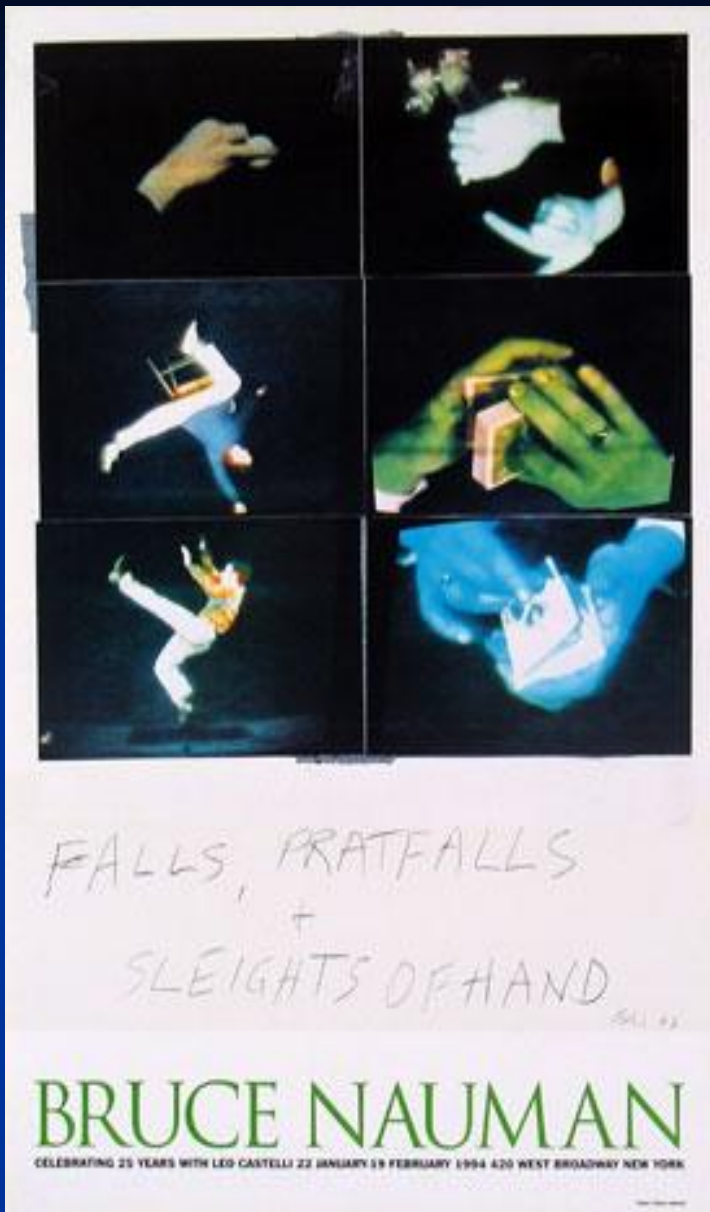
Photographs were recycled and large collages were created. The manipulation of materials and the processes of viewing and representing aspects of their immediate environment let the students to scenarios and unrespectable for us the teachers thematic areas



Music and movement



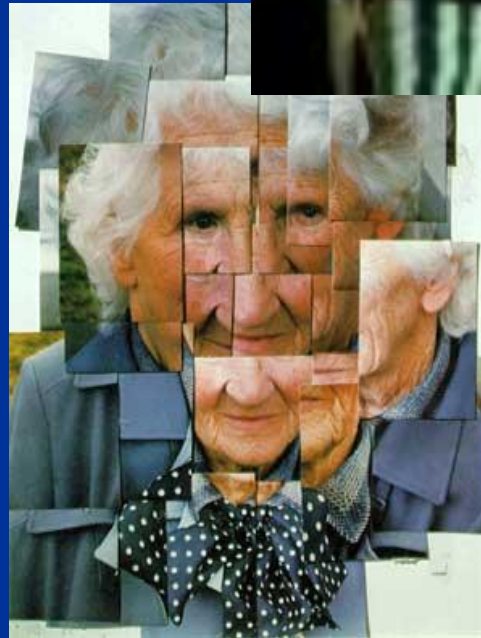




Examples of practices used to enrich their experiences.

(David Hockney collages, Bruce Nauman, Elena Cchristdoulidou)

Elena as a choreographer and dance teacher collaborated with a group of teachers emphasizing the use of body in representing scenarios written by student teachers.



Practices and re-presentations

Reflecting and identifying thematic areas

Materials collected such as natural materials, political, scruple materials, photos depicting social behaviors of students and university teachers, life styles, the everyday life in various places of the immediate environment such as the library, the cafeteria, the lecture rooms...gave opportunities for critical reflection

“.....what they do is bombarding us with what they sell...Do they show me in this way their support to democracy and free expression...Do they offer support, do they really care about me and this place? “

Student teacher reflection

Practices: Communication



Practices: Majorities and Minorities in Religion and politics



Practices: communication



Perform a role is like perform part of what you live in every day life. Our faces are living masks...we want to be happy ..we wear the mask of happiness ...in most cases we represent the self we would like to be. In our contemporary world we are still wearing a mask even when we use our mobile phones, sending an sms. (student teacher)



Conclusions

Did we allow students to explore their immediate environment? Did we allow them to expose their views and empathize with others?

Did we enrich the challenging topics identified by students?

Did we provide to students opportunities to be engaged in meaningful activities and communication?

Did we provide an interactive environment in addressing the complexity of arts ?

Did we provide opportunities for critical reflection?

Students' reflections

- The photographs taken, materials collected, the sounds around us gave me the opportunity to understand that these icons have an impact on how I behave and act. They also gave me ideas for creating art....lots of ideas
- We dealt with conflicts, emotions, prejudice, felt suspicious and at the same time satisfied and happy. But all these helped me to learn about my self and others

- It was about thinking and acting, expressing your point of view along with others, discovering that your individual concerns are not only personal but are also shared by other people
- ...I haven't been asked to draw a flower or make a clay pot... as I was expected, but to expose myself....I was asked to be a minority among majority ...

- After positioning I was thinking of that bird, a construction made by political flyers...I am a member of a students political partybut .i have never questioned political parties decisions and I have never thought that our actions may have such an impact on students lives..

Although I still belong to the same political party I have learned to listen to the others and act by observing and questioning, I have also learned how important is to show your concerns about the place and the people around you.