

Jessica Calderon

04-07-11

Anthropology 1010

Written Presentation

Subculture: Art Students in Salt Lake Community College.

Location: Salt Lake Community College – Taylorsville/Redwood Campus.

The chosen subculture of art students on the Redwood Campus of Salt Lake Community College, incorporates into the student community based on the common experience of college student life.

My visits to study the subculture of Salt Lake Community College art students at the Taylorsville-Redwood Campus weren't too unfamiliar; the ambience of the Administrative Building's third floor seems a bit less formal than other class areas, where different subjects of study are located. The students seem to relax and communicate a bit more, as if enjoying the benefit of the company and experience of fellow classmates. They did not seem rushed or influenced by a need to avoid social contact.

When sitting during one of the figure drawing classes I made the following observations:

The students work during class, which can involve lecture or lab activities. During this time the students work on learning and solving problems that they encounter in order to better the projects that are to be critiqued.

Art students are exposed to what is known as art critiques. This involves each student's artwork to be presented to fellow students and the instructor, who will provide

corrections and suggestions to further improve the work. This appears to be a learning experience that not only teaches the art student at an academic level but rather helps them overcome the challenge that is to deal with good and bad criticism, a skill that artists will require in order to be able to display their artwork to a public audience.

This seems to be a type of problem solving process that is done not only by the art student but, as explained before, parts of this process involve the “community” that is made up by the class.

While sitting in the class it became clear that each one does have rules in order to keep the attention of students towards the instructor and to diminish unnecessary socializing between students. The rules or regulations of this small artistic community are established by the instructor, which in a structural point of view suggests position of authority. Like in other non-art related classes the instructor has a rank that also presents him with the responsibility to act as an educator and a regulator towards the students.

The interaction between the members of the class is not just for socializing purposes. It allows for students to make improvements to their skills, a result of the quid pro quo relationship students have through which they expand and share their knowledge by sharing tips and helping one another.

Upon speaking to one of the informants from this subculture (art students) they expressed just how important it is for an artist to improve their skills constantly by practicing. Constant practice can not only deliver an artist with improved skills but also makes for the creation of that artist’s very own style, the particular characteristics that will make an artist's artwork attractive, maybe even unique to an audience.

As mentioned before, art students come across idiosyncratic knowledge that often originates from fellow students but also the instructors, who are artists themselves and have experience as such. It is part of such imparted knowledge that an artist who wishes to prevail, is one that adapts and fuses the original artistic techniques (drawing, painting, color theory) with the use of modern techniques utilized at the present time (computers, software programs, etc.) That concept applies as a form of adaptation of the past to present and even what will be in the future, the visual arts programs at Salt Lake Community College, a lot of which are located at the Taylorsville Campus. This seems to work in a way that provides a learning experience that combines the original artistic techniques with the innovation of newer tools, keeping a grounded yet up to date learning experience for art students.

Art students like their fellow students coincide in the way they acquire sustenance. Over all it seems the methods of acquiring sustenance depend heavily on the economic situation of the student. Some of them prepare meals to bring from home, some purchase meals within campus and some are able to purchase meals at stores or nearby eating establishments.

It was expressed by the students that it was helpful and of importance to have a variety of choices when it came to meal options.

"It is beneficial to the student's health and life style, to have more options when it comes to meals and snacks. It helps us make better choices about what we eat," said Erin Wright, Graphic Design Major.

The aspect of domestic economy has a heavy effect not only upon how college students feed themselves but also on how they support themselves. Like mentioned before there are different means for a college student to procure their meals and this is a common aspect the art students share with the rest of the college student community. The overall subsistence aspect of this subculture is affected by different factors that take part within the domestic economy aspect itself. There are Art Students who are able to attend school and work at the same time. Others receive assistance from their families, and some live on their own or with roommates and have other expenses. Such factors can dictate on a mixed arrangement of what methods the art student uses to procure their subsistence or living conditions.

Domestic economy is an important aspect of any culture. In the art student community it can reflect through their living expenses onto the school related expenses. “We may have different needs as far as what books we have to buy compared to students who have non artistic majors, although it can depend on the class, some classes require books and the ones that don’t may require other materials like: a tablet for computer related art or paints and other materials for fine art classes,” according to an anonymous Illustration Major.

Art students are distinct from students with other majors mostly because of the materials and artifacts they utilize within their daily scholar activities. Artifacts such as: Paintbrushes, pencils, paints, cameras, etc, allow them to complete their main objective, express themselves and also work following some of their community beliefs.

A strong belief in the artistic community is that of refining skill through practice. Some members of the art community do believe that an artist can be gifted with natural talent, but that if such gift is not acted upon by cultivating the skills it can only get an artist so far.

The art community within Salt Lake Community College portrays strong beliefs that motivate its students to strive to become better artists by cultivating their creativity and skills which in turn helps them integrate into the rest of the student community.

Works Cited:

"Field Notes Study - Observation of Place." Personal interview.

23 Jan. 2011.

"Field Notes Study - Gifts/Beliefs." Personal interview. 27 Jan. 2011.

"Field Notes Study - Community Beliefs." Personal interview. 22 Feb. 2011.

"Field Notes Study - Subsistence." Telephone interview. 8 Mar. 2011.

"Field Notes Study - Domestic Economy." Personal interview. 26 Mar. 2011.

"Field Notes Study - Air Pollution." Personal interview. 06 Feb. 2011.

Bonvillain, Nancy. *Cultural Anthropology*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ:

Pearson Prentice Hall, 2010. Print. Terms used in the presentation can be

found within this (SLCC customized version) textbook.