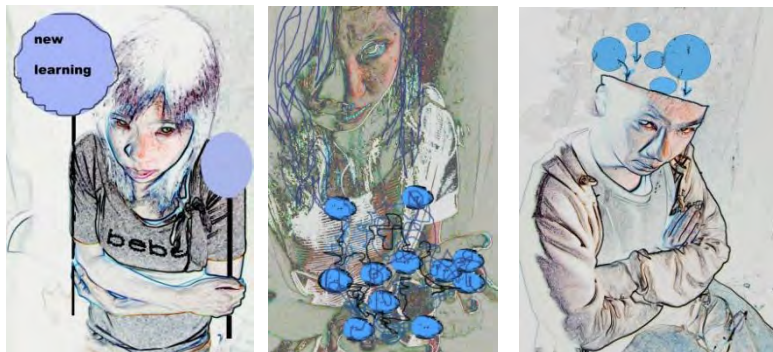


## WHY STUDY VISUAL ARTS?



There are many reasons to study art. Often the first to come to mind are: opportunities for self-exploration and self-expression, the chance to broaden horizons, build mental focus, physical dexterity, reduce stress, and increase personal enjoyment. However, growing research and statistical evidence also prove that the skills established through the study of art assist students in achieving success in their other courses and meeting the demands of the modern world of work.

It is only common sense that, in our image-laden society, Visual Art and Design have become an integral part of every business. However, development in the arts also helps to create well-rounded students with and understanding of varied cultures, strong analytical abilities, and a range of communication and interpersonal skills.

Students in the Visual Arts learn to understand both 'the big picture' and the nuances within it. They learn to meet a variety of challenges by formulating creative solutions and revisions. These are the sorts of perceptions and abilities that employers and post-secondary institutions seek.

In the publication, *Making the Case for Arts Education*, The Ontario Arts Council provides key points and statistics that re-enforce the importance of education in the arts. Some condensed excerpts from the publication are featured below. The entire publication is available for viewing at <http://www.arts.on.ca>.

## THE NEED FOR CREATIVE SKILLS IN THE MODERN WORLD OF WORK

Educators and government recognize the need to help students develop higher-level skills. To function in a world where the amount of information doubles in months and people will change jobs many times during their working years, students need a broader set of skills. To succeed in the workplace and in our changing society, people must develop a strong skills set, including: creativity, problem solving, the ability to communicate in different ways, self-discipline, tolerance and critical thinking.

Employers are looking for people who are creative and who are able to think critically, solve problems, communicate well, conceptualize, make decisions, learn and reason. The sought-after worker is a continuous and highly adaptable learner, and an imaginative thinker who possesses a wide range of higher level thinking skills as demonstrated in the following quotations:

"According to a three-year survey of Canadian university students, graduates and managers in a range of industries, effective organizations need employees who are creative, have visioning ability, and are able to lead. Although these skills are likely to be in high demand in the future, managers reported that they are in short supply in the workforce now."

"In its Employability Skills Profile, the Conference Board of Canada identified the most desirable employment skills in the Canadian workforce. They included the ability to communicate, think, learn for life, work well with others, adapt and be creative."

Arts education can help students develop and reinforce these essential higher level skills.

## THE ROLE OF ARTS EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING IMPORTANT MODERN SKILLS

A growing body of research and decades of practice demonstrate that arts education can help children develop critical higher-level skills and "full intellectual development requires more than traditional literacy and numeracy skills." A survey of primary and junior teachers and administrators conducted for the Ontario Ministry of Education found that arts programs help students learn "in the general program of studies through improving perception, awareness, concentration, uniqueness of thought style, problem-solving, confidence and self-worth, and motivation."

Decades of practice and a growing body of research have documented the links between arts education and the development of these higher level skills. Leaders in the private sector recognize the role of the arts in educating people for the workplace:

"In research conducted by the U.S. Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in 1990 and 1991, employers, students, skills experts and businesses identified the critical competencies, skills and qualities for job performance: creative thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, conceptual ability, reasoning and the ability to learn. The SCANS report also stressed that "SCANS know-how can be learned in the context of the arts." The research demonstrated that study of visual arts, and other artistic disciplines provide situations where students can learn and practise SCANS skills."

"The biggest gap in business's array of tools to improve productivity is creativity. And I think the way to learn creativity is from artists." -Graeme MacDonald, former Northern Telecom executive, president of the Banff Centre

"Don't overlook education in the arts. There has been a tendency for students today to study the hard sciences, business or computers. An arts training will provide the ability to think logically and that's the commodity that is in the shortest supply in business. Business and technology change. What you know now may be a long way removed from what you'll actually be doing. Studying the arts will develop skills that can help you in any career."

- Warren Goldring, Chairman and CEO of AGF Management

"An education in the arts provides people with a competitive advantage when it comes to getting a job."

- Ian Scott, Chief Hiring Officer at William Mercer

"... the basic problem gripping the ... workplace is not interest rates or inflation [but] the crisis of creativity. Ideas ... are what built American business. And it is the arts that build ideas ... Arts education programs can help repair weaknesses in American education and better prepare workers for the twenty-first century ... [T]he skills the arts teach – creative thinking, problem-solving and risk-taking, and teamwork and communications – are precisely the tools the workforce of tomorrow will need." - Richard Gurin, president and CEO of Binney & Smith, Inc.

The creative skills and processes learned through the study of art are a necessary part of an effective, modern education.

### Works Sited

Campbell, Steven and Townshend, Kathryn. "Making the Case for Arts Education". Toronto: Ontario Arts Council, March 1997 .

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## POINTS TO PONDER

Visual Arts have existed almost as long as humans have and today education in The Arts is seen as a vital aspect of a rapidly changing business marketplace and culture. Many insights have been offered, regarding our subject area. Consider the following musings:

## ART, SKILLS and WORK



"I believe that creativity will be the currency of the 21st century." – *Gerald Gordon, Ph.D., President/CEO, Economic Development Authority*

"Arts education aids students in skills needed in the workplace: flexibility, the ability to solve problems and communicate, the ability to learn new skills, to be creative and innovative, and to strive for excellence."  
– *Joseph M. Calahan, Director of Cooperate Communications, Xerox Corporation*

"GE hires a lot of engineers. We want young people who can do more than add up a string of numbers and write a coherent sentence. They must be able to solve problems, communicate ideas and be sensitive to the world around them. Participation in the arts is one of the best ways to develop these abilities." – *Clifford V. Smith, President of the General Electric Foundation*

"Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things. And the reason they were able to do that was that they've had more experiences or they have thought more about their experiences than other people. Unfortunately, that's too rare a commodity. A lot of people in our industry haven't had very diverse experiences. So they don't have lots of dots to connect, and they end up with very linear solution without a broad perspective on the problem. The broader one's understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have." – *Steve Jobs*

"A broad education in the arts helps give children a better understanding of their world...We need students who are culturally literate as well as math and science literate." – *Paul Ostergard, Vice President, Citicorp*

"How can we turn our back on an endeavor which increases our children's cultural intelligence, heightens individual sensitivity and deepens our collective sense of humanity? I suggest to you that we cannot." – *Alec Baldwin*

"Man is unique not because he does science, and he is unique not because he does art, but because science and art equally are expressions of his marvelous plasticity of mind." – *Jacob Bronowski, scientist*

"I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way - things I had no words for." - *Georgia O'Keeffe*

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." – *Albert Einstein*

Art, Culture and Community



"The arts are the best insurance policy a city can take on itself." –*Woody Dumas, former Mayor of Baton Rouge*"

Politicians don't bring people together. Artists do." –*Richard Daley, Former Mayor of Chicago*

"Pyramids, cathedrals, and rockets exist not because of geometry, theories of structures, or thermodynamics, but because they were first a picture-- literally a vision--in the minds of those who built them. Society is where it is today because people had the perception; the images and the imagination; the creativity that the Arts provide, to make the world the place we live in today." –*Eugene Ferguson, Historian*

"The innovative cities of the coming age will develop a creative union of technology, arts and civics." –*Sir Peter Hall*

"Aeschylus and Plato are remembered today long after the triumphs of Imperial Athens are gone. Dante outlived the ambitions of thirteenth century Florence. Goethe stands serenely above the politics of Germany, and I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over cities, we too will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit." –*John F. Kennedy*

"The creative arts are the measure and reflection of our civilization. They offer many children an opportunity to see life with a larger perspective...The moral values we treasure are reflected in the beauty and truth that is emotionally transmitted through the arts. The arts say something about us to future generations." –*Ann P. Kahn*

"I picked up a camera because it was my choice of weapons against what I hated most about the universe: racism, intolerance, poverty." –*Gordon Parks*

"The arts are not a frill. The arts are a response to our individuality and our nature, and help to shape our identity. What is there that can transcend deep difference and stubborn divisions? The arts. They have a wonderful universality. Art has the potential to unify. It can speak in many languages without a translator. The arts do not discriminate. The arts can lift us up." – *Barbara Jordan*

". . . the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey; indeed, we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our humanity. We value them for themselves, and because we do, we believe knowing and practicing them is fundamental to the healthy development of our children's minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization - ours included - the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term 'education.' We know from long experience that no one can claim to be truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in the arts." –*U.S. National Standards for Arts Education*

## Art, Self and Soul



"Art is the freedom to be yourself." –Kahelu

"Art is not so much expressing oneself, as it is discovering oneself." ([Anawanitia](#))

"There is something of the essence of creative expression that informs and transcends all its manifestations – and when you touch it – magic!" -Annie Bevan

"My contribution to the world is my ability to draw. I will draw as much as I can for as many people as I can for as long as I can. Drawing is still basically the same as it has been since prehistoric times. It brings together man and the world. It lives through magic." -Keith Haring

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." - Pablo Picasso

"The muscularity in my paintings is only an expression of the spirit within." - Arnold Friberg

"I work in a meditative manner. My visual language is pulled from my unconscious and I express in my work what I cannot express with words." Pat Gentenaar-Torley

"Think of art as a way of connecting, of sharing your insights with others." -Nita Leland

"Painting is the grandchild of nature. It relates to God." - Rembrandt

"...I am only trying to do what I can't." - Lucien Freud

"At the end of your brush is the tip of your soul." - Andrew Hamilton

"He who works with his hands is a laborer. He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist." - St. Francis of Assisi

"To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and having evoked it in oneself, then by means of movements, lines, colors, sounds, or forms expressed through words, so to convey this so that others may experience the same feeling - this is the activity of art." -Leo Tolstoy

"Art is the thrilling spark which beats death - that's all." - Brett Whitely

**"The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude."** - Friedrich Nietzsche

**"Art is the daughter of freedom"** - Friedrich Schiller

"The camera always points both ways. In expressing your subject, you also express yourself." -Freeman Patterson

"Painting is a means of sel-enlightenment." – John Olsen

"What can be shown, cannot be said." -Ludwig Wittgenstein

"Where the hand goes, the eye follows; where the eye goes the mind follows; where the mind goes, the heart follows, and thus is born expression." -Sanskrit writing

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." - Pablo Picasso

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