Desk Graffiti as Art, Archive or Collective Knowledge Sharing: A Case Study of Schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Authors : Behailu Bezabih Ayele

Abstract : Illustrative expressions in art education and in overall learning are being given increasing attention in the transmission of knowledge. The objective of this paper, therefore, is to present an analysis of graffiti on school desks-a way of smuggling knowledge on the edge of classroom education and learning. The methodological approach focuses on the systematic collection and selection of desk graffiti. Four schools are chosen to reflect socioeconomic status and gender composition. The analysis focused on the categorization of graffiti by genre. This was followed by an analysis of the style, intensity as well as content of the messages in terms of overall social impacts. The paper grounds the analysis by reviewing the literature on modern education and art education in the Ethiopian context, as well as the place of desk graffiti. The findings generally show that the school desks and the school environment, by and large, have managed to serve as vessels through which formal and informal knowledge is acquired, transmitted, engrained into the students and transformed into messages by the students. The desks have also apparently served as a springboard to maximize the interfaces between several ideas and disciplines and communications. However, the very fact that the desks serve as massive channels of expression and knowledge transmission also points to a lack of breadth availability of channels of expression, perhaps confounding the ability of classrooms as means of outlet of expression and documentation for the students. This points to the need for efforts in education policy and funding of artistic endeavors for young students.

Keywords : artistic expression, desk graffiti, education, school children, Ethiopia
Conference Title : ICVPAE 2024 : International Conference on Visual and Performing Arts Education
Conference Location : Miami, United States
Conference Dates : March 11-12, 2024