Visual Culture: The Economy of the Visual in the Curriculum

Joanna Barbousas
University of New South Wales & Australian Catholic University

This paper arises within an ongoing research project problematising visual culture in art education through a genealogical investigation of the visual. The complexities of visuality and the celebration and inundation of visuals, multiplying through digital and electronic media, question the position of the visual within the ‘excitement of the show and know’ (Smith 2001:1). The mass-produced image and popular culture make images transparent, accessible and attractive whilst digital environments render the image consumable. Properties of the visual are variously admitted and excluded from the curriculum to illustrate and qualify aspects of content by addressing its visual components. The critical framework that is celebrated by advocates of visual culture blur the boundaries between subjects in the curriculum, such as Visual Arts, History, English, and Social Studies (Brown 2002). The smudging of discourse structures conceals ownership and provides for educational reformers to honour the prospects of economic gain in merging and submerging content. It is the intention of this paper to bring to light the political objectives of visual culture in the curriculum and its implications on discipline practice. Focusing in on Martin Jay’s Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought (1994) I will utilize Jay’s reading of a Debordian ‘spectacle’ and a Foucauldian ‘gaze’ to investigate visuality and begin to trace a genealogy of visual culture in art education. In order to canvas the discursive range, emphasising the elasticity of both ‘visual’ and ‘culture’ in the construction of visual culture it is necessary to identify instances when the use of ‘visual’ and ‘culture’ are at variance. A genealogy using Foucauldian methods is concerned with revealing the force and authority of the constitutive discourses of visual culture, as originating outside and beyond discourses of art, and as antagonistic to art education. The paper will examine the economy of visual culture, ‘promising more and more openness, while at the same time its power to communicate concentrated meaning seems to decline’ (Smith 2001:1).

The Gaze and the Spectacle as Visuality

Martin Jay uses the ‘gaze’ and the ‘spectacle’ as two concepts to situate a theoretical investigation of visuality. Jay’s essay, ‘From the Empire of the Gaze to the Society of the Spectacle: Foucault and Debord’ (1994) frames his inquiry into the Foucauldian ‘gaze’ and the Debordian ‘spectacle’ as distinct theoretical instances of visuality.

Visuality in Foucault’s genealogies are exemplified in the vision of the madman, described in Madness and Civilization as a replica to ‘the man of reason’ but without context. As Foucault writes, ‘[T]he madman sees the daylight, the same daylight as the man of reason (both live in the same brightness); but seeing this same daylight, and nothing but this daylight, he sees it as void, as night, as nothing’ (Foucault cited in Jay 1994 :391). Observation and classification of visual attributes become factors for naming madness. Foucault notes, ‘Madness no longer exists except as seen... The science of mental disease, as it would develop in the asylum, would
always be only of the order of observation and classification. It would not be a
dialogue’ (Foucault cited in Jay :391). The formation of order and the quality of the
gaze, was influenced by the dimensions of psychoanalysis, to monitor the visual
classification of symptoms in order to define its marginality. The gaze then is
formed to control ‘the order of things’ (Jay 1994). The visuals in this context work as
control mechanisms to place the individual in the ascribed category, such as
madness, through a process of visual monitoring. Here, visuality is reliant on a code
of assigned social norms, which define a predetermined outcome and result.

Another Foucauldian example of visuality is Bentham’s panopticon. For Foucault the
design of the panoptic space was the necessary nondiscursive event which moved
towards the discursive through the prospect of surveillance. The panopticon, a
circular prison proposed in the 19th century, would allow a warden to watch over all
prisoners at the same time. An individual prisoner is never aware of when the
monitoring takes place, so the power of surveillance becomes a condition of self-
control, as the prisoner’s conduct is always possibly under surveillance. Vision in this
instance is objectified and tied to social control. ‘The gaze that sees is the gaze that
dommates’, Foucault points out. (Foucault cited in Heller 1996 :A9). The visual for
Foucault exists within visibility and invisibility, the physical construction of seeing is a
tool which highlights hidden cultural categories (Jay 1994). The

Questions of this nature position the visual artefact within a cultural inquiry whereby
the artefact becomes subject to social analysis. Foucault attributes the gaze to the
visual transference of social control. The panopticon is a metaphor for invisible
power that is influentially powerful through the surveillance of the gaze. Therefore,
in this instance visuality exists only to highlight power and control over the body. In
this way power formulates a particular kind of visual experience.

According to Jay, the concept of the gaze in the work of Foucault is governed by the
controlling body that assigns the gaze. Vision is a tool to develop power and control
in turn creating a hierarchy and positioning an authority. As Jay writes, ‘the role of
vision or, more precisely, specific visual regimes, is in constituting cultural categories’
(Jay 1994 :390). Visuality in Foucault’s investigations is constructed out of social
instances, which create a discourse of cultural control. Foucault’s suspicions of finite
truths and ‘conclusive’ outcomes therefore allowed him to examine every aspect of

If Foucault’s analysis of the ‘dominant scopic regime’ magnifies the ‘disciplining and
normalizing’ effect of being the object of the gaze, Guy Debord and the Situationist
International ‘stressed the dangers of being its subject’ (Jay 1994 :416). Unlike
Foucault’s in built power that renders the body docile through implemented rules
and authority, the Situationists were concerned with the seductive qualities of
modern life: a modern life that was, and perhaps continues to be, destructive and
politically iniquitous because it allows the subject to subliminally become the
spectacle (Jay 1994). While modern life produced the subject as spectacle, the
subject could likewise subvert and overturn his/her own social construction and positioning. Jay says as much when he argues that the Situationists, ‘doggedly held out hope for a reversal of the current order in which the participatory Festival would supplant the contemplative Spectacle, and a new and healthier subject would emerge’ (Jay 1994:416).

For the Situationists, visual experiences are perceived as constructs which service the individual, negatively positioning the individual as commodity and fetishistic object of destruction. ‘Insofar as commodities were the visible appearances of social processes whose roots in human production were forgotten or repressed, they were like the idols worshiped in lieu of the invisible God’ (Jay 1994:419). This construction of an illusionary existence of abundance is the key idea in Guy Debord’s 1967, Society of the Spectacle. The Spectacle is explained as overtaking life itself and attributing all experience to mere representation. Through the commodification of all societies, and the excessive accumulation of artefacts, discrete images were composed, ‘detached from life, separated from their original context, and reunited as an autonomous world apart from lived experience’ (Debord cited in Jay 1994:426). For Debord ‘the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images’ (Debord 1982:4). In light of this Debord and the Situationists saw the role of modern artists as exposing ‘artistic communication to the incommunicable’, to critically reflect on the society of the spectacle. The artist, for them, was someone who worked outside of the practice of art as commodity; art as authentic (Kaufmann 1997). The authentic is synonymous with control and hierarchy, it was their intention to challenge the status quo.

Vision for Debord is a function of Western society, constructed to perform and ascribe a sensory spectacle through the visual as commodity. The spectacle is then a product of socio-economic relations created to promote consumption and target the consumer. This mediation discourages the individual from contributing or effecting the environment through experience and ‘production’. For Debord the individual is almost always passively receiving information, directions and intentions. Jay notes that ‘the spectacle in short, is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image. It arrives in its mature form at the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life’ (Debord cited in Jay 1994:427).

For Debord the spectacle reduces experience to a commodity, placing the individual in a passive state. The passivity of commodification, where the viewer/receiver is subjected to the commodity, and the accepted truths which are represented through a proliferation of images, allows the spectacle to exist and flourish, reducing experience to an objectified representation.

For both the Situationists and Debord a theory of viewing and spectatorship, is guided through socially constructed vision. The spectacle in turn, is a mechanism of visual control over the sighted population. Governing visuality through repressive means of representation minimizes experiences by using vision as a sensory prison. While Debord’s theories of the spectacle and vision allow us to consider the ‘visual’ control over the individual subject, they fall short because they minimize an idea of
experience by privileging vision. In Jay’s reading of Debord, this privileging of vision is acknowledged but not problematised. Debord’s spectacle, as well as Jay’s analysis of its resultant ‘gaze’, seems to reinforce an idea of ‘ocularcentrism’ that they are trying to overcome.

In Jay’s essay, his examination of the spectacle along with Foucault’s policing eye, and the surveillance of the gaze, indeed reflect upon the denigration of visuality, as in Jay’s title: “The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century Thought”. The two theoretical positions consider visuality to be a social construction, used to acquire value and information about the world we live in. The role of vision is not separated from political intention. The vilification of the gaze and the culmination of the spectacle problematises visuality and questions the authority of vision.

The term ‘visual’ is variously paired up with other terms such as imagery, order, pleasure and culture, to essentially communicate a particular idea. The recurrent placement of the visual to other terms is a ritualistic practice that occurs within different discourses. Other visual combinations such as; visual event, visual experience, visual aide, visual concept seem to situate the term visual as an expression of the accompanied term. In other words, the word visual functions as a construct subject to vision. However visuals/visuality/visualise are words which communicate, more than the eye can see (Smith 1993). Additionally in art education the term is married with literacy and culture. The visual is reduced in meaning to define a concept of vision, which takes away the impact of other generated experiences of the body. The word visual is asked to do more than communicate its own meaning because when it is considered with other terms its own history and theories is questioned and in some instances placed secondary to the other term.

The next section of this paper will consider definitions and accounts of visual culture from within and outside the discourses of art. My intention is to establish a structure from which to investigate visual culture and its effect on art education and the wider curriculum.

The Economy of Visual Culture and the exchange of differing values
Visual culture is constructed from discourses of cultural studies. A working definition will situate my argument regarding visuality as practice, and culture as tactic. Nicholas Mirzoeff an associate professor of art at the State University of New York, contends that an urgent visual crisis arises as society and education are inundated with an excess of visual artefacts made possible by technologies. This crisis is concerned with a cultural extremity rather than a visual problem. It is not evidential that an excess of images propounds a concern of quantity. Why would too many pictures/images create a problem? Perhaps the issue is not the sheer number of produced images, but what we choose to do with them. Mirzoeff (1999) says, the power of images as institutional commodities, embraced by popular culture and supported by the technical attributes of reproduction present questions of ‘strategy’ (:3).
Mirzoeff continues his definition of visual culture by addressing the importance of engaging with visuals as the viewer and the viewed. He states that, ‘the constituent parts of visual culture are, not defined by medium so much as by the interaction between viewer and viewed, which may be termed the visual event’ (Mirzoeff 1999:13). What seems interesting to me is that the term visual seems to be promoted along side other terms like culture, event and display but its intensity and significance is overridden by the importance of social and cultural constructs. Essentially visual culture, as proposed by Mirzoeff, is a blending of disciplines from the historical perspectives of art history and film studies to the characteristics of cultural studies, these help form a critical analysis of popular culture.

Originally restricted to facsimiles of artworks, art education now counts any image/reproduction/simulacra/spectacle as their own. The masterpieces of the academy, and the art history that accompanies them now share the classroom with postmodernism and the artworld. Although the role of the image in art education is imperative to an understanding of the art component of our practice this excess visuality changes discourse and practice.

The focus of formalism on elements and principles of design in art education curriculum developments overlapped with scientific advancements (Freedman, 2001). Freedman’s argument is that:

Formalism focuses on the analysis of physical and perceptual characteristics of art objects and involves the reduction of form to elements (such as line, shape and colour) and principles (such as rhythm, balance and unity) of design. (Freedman, 2001: 36)

She further argues that formalism and formalistic elements ‘facilitate an analysis of what is contained within a work of art, they actually condition the way students approach art’ (Freedman, 2001: 36). The strength of formalism arises from those very same characteristics of formalism that irritate visual culture. Formalism, structures the components of a theory, idea, or subject to be understood as terms and elements that underpin a structure. It is because formalism perceived by teachers as specific and apolitical, that it survives. Art is a difficult and demanding thing to teach and study. Formalism gives students and teachers a simple, easily remembered and portable rule to apply when talking and writing about art.

Formalism gives you something to say in all subjects in the curriculum. Freedman argues that formalistic elements assume a finality to an analyses of an idea, object or subject and can limit the acquisition of knowledge and meaning of more intricate and culturally determined attributes (Freedman, 2001). However any model of inquiry and principles and elements that underpin knowledge are considered in the curriculum with clear pedagogical connections.

The use of visuals in the curriculum is determined by the supported discipline and discourse. In other words the manner in which a visual artifact is considered, conceptualised, integrated and formalised is determined by, in the case of education, the curriculum area. Therefore, visual artefacts are not privileged or licensed by the visual arts, more correctly visuality is perhaps magnified and intended to be more explicitly linked to discourse practice. Visuals, images, visual
aides assist in teaching practice but the conceptual components of visuality are addressed as practice in art education. The suggestion that visual culture will assist in critical thinking of visual material is not new to educators in the visual arts and the wider curriculum. Advocates of visual culture in art education support proposals to replace examples of artworks with examples of shopping centres, theme parks and television. These proposals misconstrue the effects of visual engagement in art education and propose an all purpose utility of visual artefacts not constrained by subject areas.

Knowledge boundaries exist to define practice and to distinguish between differing values and information. In other words the artifact does not define the practice but the discourse from which it is being inspected and interrogated. For example, Rembrandt's 

Rembrandt's 'Bathsheba' (1654) is an artwork built on a code of practice specific to the discourse of art. Nevertheless this is not to say that the artifact has not been appropriated and examined in other discourses. In 1991 the Medical Benefits Fund of Australia (MBF) used Rembrandt's Bathsheba in their 'breast health public relations campaign', which aimed to raise awareness of the importance of screening mammograms for women over forty (Moodie Website :2). The significance is that, an artifact is defined by the discourse it is representing and it is the discipline of art and education that influences and defines art education as a discourse.

A Genealogical Inquiry of Visual Culture in Art Education

A genealogy, using Foucauldian methods principally investigates historical origins of powerful institutions in order to analyse discourses which claim to be 'universal and eternal' (Danaher, et al 2000 :24). The purpose of history, guided by genealogy...seeks to make visible all of those discontinuities that cross us' (Foucault 1977 :162).

Discourses for Foucault are agencies of power, which designate authority and permit construction and reproduction. In mapping out a discursive field, a genealogy will 'trace where particular instances of discourse have occurred, to make connections between these instances, and to bring them together to identify a particular discursive formation' (Danaher, et al 2000 :33). ‘To follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations - or conversely, the complete reversals - the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations...’ (Foucault 1977 :146).

These ‘accidental’ moments, appearances and discontinuities are an essential component of exposing a discourse and the authoritative power it assigns. These historical aspects play a significant role in my pilot study in which I begin to count and tally the moments where appearances, discontinuities and accidents attribute power and authority to the term visual culture.

In the next section of this paper a genealogical investigation of the term visual culture in art education will be introduced. A genealogy assists in uncovering relationships between truth, knowledge and power. A Foucauldian approach positions the past to exist within the representational framework of the present
Genealogy must define even those instances where they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealised’ (Foucault 1995:140). Foucault was not interested in ‘pure’ historical knowledge, in fact he opposed any notion of purity for it indicated a disconnection to the actual event(s). The notion of ‘purity’ and ‘truth’ are for Foucault, concepts which indicate utopian finites. The historical methodologies that Foucault supports, is a sensitivity and awareness of particularities of given historical events and the structure which hold the prospects of identity (Gutting 1990).

To begin my investigation, I researched articles that examined visual culture in art education. I systematically chose to limit my search to five journals that were available to me in the University library. The journals: Australian Art Education (AAE); an Australian publication, interested in philosophical and historical material as well as research studies. Studies in Art Education (Studies); A North American publication, inviting work which explores theoretical and practical aspects of art criticism, artistic growth, curriculum and learning, program evaluation, and interdisciplinary authorship. Journal of Aesthetic Education (JAE); An American publication, concerned with clarifying issues of aesthetics and public policy, including problems of cultural administration and the character of cultural services. Visual Arts Research (VAR); encourages educational, historical, philosophical and psychological perspectives, and Journal of Art and Design Education (JADE); A British publication specifically addressing art and design issues in education. The publications, ranging from 1993 to 2002 will be reported on.

My sample is the literature of the field; by using specific research databases I searched the term ‘visual culture’ as keyword, and ‘visual culture’ in the title. The detailed results revealed both title and abstract of the publication and although some papers did not use the term visual culture in the title, the abstract revealed that the debates and ideas were highlighted in the abstract. However, the title of a publication positions the theoretical voice and structures a kind of authority to the concept presented. Therefore, the title brings forward the debate and positions an authority. For this reason, I have chosen to focus on the appearance of visual culture in the title of the publications. The results of the search are shown in Figure 1. A total of 15 papers identify visual culture as part of the title, 13 of these were divided between two journals. 7 of which were published in Studies and 6 in AAE. The significance of this is many fold. Studies, first published in 1959, is the seminal publication of the field. It is a peer-reviewed journal and has a significant professional representation governing the publication. AAE, was first established in the 1970’s, it is the only research journal of the field in Australia. The dominance of Studies as the key publication representing research into aspects of visual culture, formulates a pragmatic application of the ideas to the field. Various the journal publishes articles, which address specific concerns into the usage and/or application of ideas and concepts in the practice of art education. The other two papers were published in JAE. Additionally, figure 1 shows that there were no papers published on visual culture in art education in Visual Arts Research (VAR) between 1993 and 2002. Interestingly the journal emphasises current research, specifically doctoral students engaging with theoretical issues. Therefore, catering to authors who have recently completed research studies. However, there is a declaration for future
publication by Paul Duncum. Furthermore, JADE, also had no papers published with on visual culture.

Figure 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Australian Art Education</th>
<th>Studies in Art Education</th>
<th>Visual Arts Research</th>
<th>Journal of Aesthetic Education</th>
<th>Journal of Art and Design Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Michael Parsons. Art and Culture, Visual and Verbal Thinking: Where are the Bridges? 18(1). In this title the term ‘visual culture’ is reversed

Figure 2 shows that, visual culture as a term first appeared in Studies in 1994, authored by Kerry Freedman. 12 of 15 papers were published between 1997 and 2002 with Paul Duncum and Kerry Freedman noted for their frequency. 5 of 15 papers, are authored by Duncum and 6 of 15 by Freedman. Whilst I am identifying the author(s), A Foucaudian approach would not allow me to address the person as such, only ‘to the name that marks a particular discourse and authorises them to circulate within a society’ (Danaher, et al 2000 :154). Therefore the author functions to chart the changing status of the subject.

For this reason I have chosen to include all of the papers written by Freedman and Duncum, published in these journals, investigating visual culture even if not directly presented in the title. Due to the frequency of their publications on visual culture their work needs to be addressed. Kerry Freedman’s paper Social Perspectives on Art Education in the U.S.: Teaching Visual Culture in a Democracy (2000) proposes a way of including and applying visual culture as a ‘thing to do’ in the classroom for a better experience. In a sense the emphasis is on how we can emancipate the individual in the modern world through using contemporary images of popular culture.

Paul Duncum’s paper Visual Culture: Developments, Definitions, and Directions for Art Education (2001), defines visual culture within emerging fields and disciplines. Visual culture for Duncum ‘is usually thought to be composed of two closely related elements: a focus on ways of seeing, often referred to as ‘visuality’; and an expanded
range of visual artefacts that lie beyond the art institution’ (:104). Duncum suggests that curriculum changes are necessary to include visual culture in order to ‘examine how images function within and across different societies at different times’ (Duncum 2001 :107).

Visual culture currently promulgated by Freedman and Duncum as the ‘new art education’ are represented as advocates of visual culture. This method of counting and tallying data allows me to trace the term, visual culture and construct a preliminary ‘genealogical map’. The immediacy of this investigation pinpoints instances when the appearance of the concept becomes familiar and develops a collective intellectual representation.

Figure 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Australian Art Education</th>
<th>Studies in Art Education</th>
<th>Visual Arts Research</th>
<th>Journal of Aesthetic Education</th>
<th>Journal of Art and Design Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>•M.P.*</td>
<td>•K.F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>•P.D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>•K.F</td>
<td>•P.D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>•K.F</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>•K.F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>•K.F &amp; J.W</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>•K.F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>•C.C &amp; K.C</td>
<td>•P.D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>•P.T</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Michael Parsons. Art and Culture, Visual and Verbal Thinking: Where are the Bridges? 18(1). In this title the term ‘visual culture’ is reversed.

Key
C.C – Chan Crouch  K.C – Kaye Crouch  N.T – Neilson Thomas
P.D – Paul Duncum  K.F – Kerry Freedman  J.W – John Wood
M.P – Michael Parsons  P.T – Paul Taylor

It is argued that visual culture is democratic and inclusive, responds to context and resists formalism, is relevant to students and values the ordinary and the everyday, includes the media, new technologies and the internet. Visual culture demands a complete renovation of the practices of art education to comply with a set of strict regulations, including the prescription of the fine arts, expunging discourses of the creative and expressive. Announcing that art must complement visual culture will not produce the desire for a complete revolution, for the ‘paradigm shift’ to visual
culture. Curriculum change is complex and contested. Teacher belief produces a remarkable tenacity when it concerns an individual’s identity and practice. Belief is not burdened by contestation and contradiction. Belief tolerates heterogeneity, inconsistency and is its own truth. One legacy of the past decade of educational reform is the rationalisation of subjects and content in the curriculum. School subjects petition for curriculum status as a subject on the grounds of their distinction. Distinction does not arise from technology, student relevance, or the use of the media – three of the nominated reasons for visual culture. All school subjects utilise technologies, address student relevance and devise content from the media.

In conclusion, the proposals for visual culture have been launched to suggest a new and innovative position of the visual in education and art education. A genealogical investigation of visual culture could uncover and unveil power struggles that illustrate authority within the field of art education. Usage is subtended by force, weight and value, or, in Foucauldian terms power/knowledge. The complexities of visuality and the theoretical positions that situate currency are conveniently absent from the publications of visual culture in art education. The declared innovation is only relevant to the assigned author, which further highlights Foucault’s power/knowledge. Furthermore, testing, measurement, assessment, standards, accountability and outcomes dominate yet this neo-behaviourism requires something to measure and formalism gives you that something to measure. Visual culture will not destroy formalism because formalism is entrenched and embedded in the power of standards. This paper has introduced a project concerned with problematising visual culture in art education. It is an issue, which cannot be resolved in an instance, instead the opening up of this investigation will situate ideas of visuality in art education to be more than an experience attributed to visual culture, and its representations. I have exposed visuality as a multi-layered construct in need of reassessment within our field and the wider curriculum. The propositions presented in this paper questions the validity of visual culture in art education and examines the underlying intentions of its inclusion.

References


