Art Education is OUR Education

By the people. For the people. With the people. In the public square.

Arguments for the benefits of art education focus on the benefits to young people when they have access to a range of art education experiences, both in and outside of school. What would it mean to imagine art education as a **public good**? Working from our position(s) as young people, artists, and future public school art teachers, we offer these propositions for what art education is and what it can be:

1. **Art is for everybody**, you don’t need to be “good” at art to make art. Every student in every grade level in every public school should have equal access to art education.

2. Art education **pushes** us to create and grow outside of our comfort zones. We can learn to be okay with vulnerability.

3. Art education gives young people **access to spaces** we are not necessarily familiar with. Creating **inclusive spaces and institutions** helps everyone involved cross social, cultural, and class barriers.

4. Art education makes spaces where people can **come together** and express ourselves across differences. Together we can **challenge institutional norms** and **oppressive structures**, such as social and economic segregation and gentrification.

5. Social material is artistic material. Art education draws from personal and cultural **experiences** and the everyday to create critical conversations & connections.

6. Art education **shifts the balance of power** in conversations between individuals and groups based on differences (age, gender, race, sexuality, ability, etc.).

7. Art education **raises the question “why”**, evoking curiosity in the mind and creating spaces where people look to expand their knowledge on a topic or call attention to things that may be hidden or censored by the dominant discourse.

8. Art education encourages people to work **within our communities** with each other to acknowledge issues that affect us (directly or indirectly) and then to act to create change around our school, neighborhood, and/or city.

9. Art education gives young people **opportunities to collaborate and communicate** with our peers. This allows for friendships to be established that can evolve into professional networks and bonds.

10. Funding **art education for ALL** will require a redistribution of resources. Money from larger structures (wealthy taxpayers, the military, and corporations) can be directed away from the private and into the public sector.

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References


