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Significance of visual perception in education of art history

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Abstract

Education of art history is that, one of the most important factors provides to sustain and increase to level of cultural awareness and aesthetic of communities. Besides being in departments of art history, it support and nourish to some departments of arts as a theoretical and complementary course. Art history as a discipline, the adoption to the present day, had developed a serious academic sense. In this process, education of art history has been studied to give in many ways to be more efficient teaching and to provide permanent learning. Academicians of art history, has endeavored to go beyond classical education with techniques such as the experimental approach and on-site observation of the works of art and architecture. In this study, it firstly focused on the changing and developing methods in education of art history from beginning to present and then the significance of visual perception was discussed with an applied teaching method to consolidate the theoretical knowledge in this education.

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1. Introduction

Art history is an academic discipline researches to evaluation and stylistic context of objects of art that man has created through the ages. It primarily involved with art types called “visual art” or “plastic art” such as paintings, sculpture, architecture, etc (Mülayim, 1983). It aimed to classify them in the framework of a method. It appeared in Germany in the 19th century as an academic discipline. However art history was mentioned by antique philosophers like Plato, Plinius and later Vasari, etc (Sözen & Tanyeli, 1994). Wölfflin, Panofsky, and Gombrich are most important art historians who influenced the literature of the 20th century.

Education is a process that provides development, socializing, and acquiring specific behaviors and outcomes in human life (Artut, 2002). Education of art history attaches great importance to provide understanding of art and artist, the impact of social and technological changes on artworks and artists. At the same time, this education has played to essential role on artists and artworks, that are cultural values, are recognized and sustained. By becoming as an academic discipline, an education program was formed to train qualified people in this field. In addition, art history can be seen as a complementary course in different art education, because it has significant role in development of aesthetics values and perception, in creative thinking, in increasing the cultural awareness.

The education of art history has been taught with various methods like explanation, discussion, observation, and experimental approach. Today they aren't separately so efficient in education, because of the increasing knowledge accumulation, the changes in socio-cultural and technological conditions. This has caused to search to new teaching

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methods. The aim of the study is to develop a new teaching method different from classic methods in education of art history, to provide permanent learning for the students with this method, and to help them to be active and creative. Furthermore, determining the efficient and complementary contribution of different fields of this new method of teaching art history is among the main objectives of the study. With these goals and objectives, first of all, teaching methods in education of art history and the significance of visual perception were conceptually studied; then the new practical method “the draft drawings of the artwork seen” that applied for visual perception to be cognitive activity and the students to actively use their visual perceptions, was explained; and then measurements of their success were examined. In the result, visual perception played an active role and efficient, permanent learning provided, a new teaching model was tried to be developed in the field of art history.

2. The Teaching Methods in Education of Art History

Education of art history is an important field that should provide cultural sustainability and wealth, has a complementary role in various academic fields. Different teaching methods have been applied in this education since 19th century. Both in art history and different art disciplines, education of art history can be seen. In all fields, education of art history has been applied through different or similar methods. In the programs of these fields, the aim of course of art history determines the teaching methods. The name of the courses such as “History of Art, History of Interior Design and Furniture, History of Art and Architecture, History of Textile, History of Civilization” refers to the differences and similarities in programs.

The main aims of education of art history are to transfer of the information, to teach the students the style, artists and artworks formed in different periods and civilizations, to bring the student cultural awareness and perception, to develop the students’ creativity. This education will provide an accumulation to recognize, learn and choose to arts (Kırışođlu, 2005). The most widespread teaching method is the explanation and presentation method in education of art history. Within a chronological order, definitions of artworks and art periods are explained in this method. So students use audio and visual perceptions, it can be efficient. However student is generally passive and memorizes names, dates and details. Another one is research method that is more efficient because students take attention. Students should be directed with open-ended questions. The combination of the other art disciplines (practice, art criticism, and aesthetics) and art history is another method. The teachers use the artworks (generally the similar copies / reproductions) to motivate the students to find their art styles or the themes. They are active in their learning, but it is not easy to apply in all lectures (Yolcu, 2004; Ggebakan, 2011).

The observation-field trip method is important in the education of art history. In the trips of museums and historical places, the artworks are actively, efficiently learned by direct seeing, hearing, studying, applying and even by experiencing. Thus more exciting and permanent learning occurred (Buyurgan ve Buyurgan, 2007; Ggebakan, 2011). Therefore, art history became a practical study to students joined with their emotions, perceptions, comments and solutions (Kırışođlu, 2005). However it is not possible to go to see artworks in all places of world. Making discussion and comparison is suggested method, because student is more active (Kırışođlu, 2005). The education of art history would be useful by taking the students attention at the peak and with efficient applied method (Rouve, 1973; Kırışođlu, 2005).

In education of art history, all of these methods don’t separately provide sufficient and efficient teaching and play a complementary role of the programs. New methods must be developed and tools should be used. Students must be active in these new methods. A teaching method depends on the visual perception as a cognitive activity will be so significant and provide complementary contribution.

3. Significance of Visual Perception in Education

Perception is the process of attaining information and understanding of effects of environment through sense organs and nervous system in the brain (Gngr, 2005). It is one of the most important concepts used to be able to put a person into an aesthetic and intellectual field (Alp, 2009). According to the German-born, film and art theorist Rudolf Arnheim, who mostly known with his works on perceptual psychology; the sense of sight is the most

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