UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION

A STUDY OF THE PICTURE MAKING COURSE AT UEW AND ITS ALIGNMENT WITH GLOBAL CONTEMPORARY ART TRENDS

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Ruby Tabitha Kumangtum hereby declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: ……..……..

Date: …….....……...

SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Dr Theophilus Kwesi Mensah (Principal Supervisor)

Signature: ……..……..

Date: …….....…

Dr Ebenezer Acquah (Co- Supervisor)

Signature: ……..……..

Date: …….....…

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Ms Teresa Nadia Abugah, for her enormous support and encouragement.

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I express my profound gratitude to Dr Theophilus Mensah for his invaluable guidance and unwavering support throughout this journey. His constructive criticism and insightful advice significantly influenced the quality of this work. I am also grateful to my co-supervisor, Dr Ebenezer Acquah, for his professional guidance and significant contributions. May the Lord continue to bless you both and replenish every effort you have invested.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The University of Education, Winneba is currently a public university in Ghana with the core mandate to train teachers. It holds both the opportunity and responsibility to provide excellent teacher preparation for aspiring visual arts educators. Art is continually evolving, embracing innovative techniques, materials, and concepts that challenge traditional artistic norms. Art practices at UEW do not adequately reflect current world practices, because for over a long period, the school has maintained teaching almost the same techniques and methods of art, giving students a limited view of the art industry. The study adopts a case study design, allowing for a detailed examination of the depth of contemporary art practices among Picture Making students at the Department of Art Education, UEW. Participants of the study included Picture Making Lecturers, alumni and students who had at least completed 300 level of their degree programmes. It was realised that the content of the curriculum largely adopts the mimetic approach. Some lecturers had however made some efforts at chipping in a few contemporary art practices in their teaching instruction. Lecturers cited the operational Picture Making component of the accredited Art Education document and the Senior High School Visual Art curriculum as the factors that had for a very long time limited the Department from adopting contemporary art as an area of study for Picture Making. Through a document review of the Picture Making component of the Art Education accredited programme, it was observed that the curriculum leaned towards mimetic and formalistic theories in art practice. Consequently, the contemporary art genre has no place in the curriculum, creating a gap between the Picture Making classroom and the contemporary world of art. Student participants had very limited knowledge of the contemporary art genre. The findings of this research led to the proposal of a four-phased model for Picture Making instruction, and other strategies for incorporating contemporary art into the Picture Making course. The model combines both traditional and contemporary art methods, bridging the gap between the current Picture Making pedagogy and contemporary art practices. It is recommended that conceptual thinking, critical analysis, and interdisciplinary approaches to art-making should be introduced into Picture Making at UEW to provide students with a broader understanding and engagement in contemporary art.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Change and evolution are constants that shape every aspect of life and society. The earth itself revolves; similarly, change can be seen as humanity's natural way of adapting to its environment. In many fields, people either lead change or adapt to it in order to progress. This process of adaptation demands new strategies and behaviours to remain relevant. Across disciplines such as medicine, education, science, fashion, and the arts, patterns of evolution are evident. As a result of the impact of modern science, advances in transportation, and the globalization of education, communication, business, and employment, change in today's world appears both endemic and dramatic (Brandson et al., 2011). However, Brandson et al. (2011) argue that not everyone readily accepts change, especially when it affects them directly, and that resistance to change within education remains a persistent challenge.

Educational institutions play an important role in facilitating the acquisition and advancement of knowledge, and in bridging the gap between the classroom and the demands of the real world of work. Knowledge in every field grows over time as new discoveries, research, curiosity, and experimentation yield improved understanding and methods. Culture and ways of doing things also evolve, and education serves to guide the discovery, development, and dissemination of such new knowledge. For example, the invention of computers significantly affected education, creating a surge in computer literacy and the establishment of computer training institutions. In the early 2000s, computer classes became highly popular among Ghanaian youth, giving rise to

sayings like “we are in the computer era,” which fueled a rush for digital literacy. Kpessa-Whyte (2022) notes that in Ghana, significant efforts at digitalisation began in the early 2000s (Adu & Dube, 2016), following ICT-related reforms that trace back to the 1980s. As software developers continuously introduce new programmes and updates, educators must also continually expand their knowledge to stay relevant. This necessity for continuous updating is not unique to ICT but applies to all fields, including the arts.

In the visual arts, dramatic evolutions have occurred from the period of cave art through to contemporary art. Although new ideas have at times faced strong resistance, the art world has consistently embraced diverse perspectives and practices. Artists and art movements have expanded the boundaries of art, enriching its scope in academia. In recognition of this diversity, art teaching institutions should remain aligned with the broader art world to avoid producing graduates with a limited, unilateral perspective. Fleischmann et al. (2012) observe that traditional university-based creative arts curricula often fail to sufficiently reflect or respond to contemporary workplace realities. Fundamental to the dynamic art industry is the constant emergence of new art forms, methods, and media. Consequently, art education must strive to produce adaptable, versatile professional teachers.

Recent studies have examined art education and contemporary art practices at Ghanaian universities, particularly the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Research highlights persistent challenges, including large class sizes (Yelkpieri et al., 2012), inadequate infrastructure (Asare et al., 2023), and limited resources (Esseku, 2021). Studies further

suggest the need for curriculum reforms to align more closely with contemporary art practices and the demands of Ghana's new Creative Arts and Design curriculum (Hamza Alhassan et al., 2023). Efforts to integrate indigenous knowledge with contemporary art have also been explored (Kabito, 2010), and the role of environmental aesthetics in enhancing students' creative problem-solving skills has been emphasised (Quaye et al., 2023).

Despite these institutional challenges, contemporary art in Ghana has seen remarkable growth, with KNUST playing a pivotal role in shaping this progress (Nagy & Jordan, 2018). KNUST has become an institution for artists who blend traditional Ghanaian art forms with experimental media and global discourses. Notable alumni like El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama demonstrate how local material practices can achieve international recognition (Nagy & Jordan, 2018; Kwami, 2019). Projects such as blaxTARLINES KUMASI have been instrumental in displaying innovative works and nurturing new artistic voices (Kwami, 2019). Woets (2019) notes that this shift challenges older frameworks, encouraging artists to adopt new media and ideas while remaining connected to cultural roots.

Despite these efforts and studies, there are gaps in merging traditional approaches with the dynamic realities of contemporary art, stressing the need for continuous review and adaptation of art curricula at institutions like UEW.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) is currently one of public universities in Ghana with the core mandate to train teachers. It holds both the opportunity and responsibility to provide excellent teacher preparation for aspiring visual arts educators. Art Education programmes offer certification pathways, enabling students to become skilled professionals in their field. The quality of education these art teachers receive significantly has some influence on youth education. Hanushek (2011) says that two students starting at the same level of achievement can know vastly different amounts at the end of a single academic year due to the teacher to whom they are assigned. Consequently, teacher preparation programmes play a pivotal role in the broader context of education and nation-building by nurturing creativity.

Milbrandt and Milbrandt (2011), cited in Wulandari et al. (2013), list three domains of creativity in art education. The first focuses on a domain change where artistic activity encourages students to think differently and generate new ideas and works. The second involves, self-expression or search for meaning where each student is encouraged to build personal meaning in every activity/target; and third deals with, creative problem solving whereby students can creatively provide many solutions for each problem they face. The field of art education has long been regarded as a fundamental pillar in fostering creativity and artistic expression among aspiring artists. However, concerns persist regarding its ability to keep up with the rapid evolution of contemporary art practices in the real world.

As the art world continues to embrace technological advancements, interdisciplinary approaches, and new forms of expression, a growing gap between traditional art education programmes and the demands of contemporary art practices becomes evident. Some contemporary art professionals echo that art in schools can be out of touch with contemporary art-making practices (Downing et al., 2004). The reception of the art object has changed, and is changing, and with it the pedagogies that surround it, leading back to the fundamental question for artist-teachers: What to teach and how to teach it (Sayers, 2019)?

Classical approaches that prioritize realism, technical proficiency, and devotion to traditional mediums and styles have long formed the foundation of art education in Ghana. Despite being useful for honing artistic abilities, these foundations frequently fail to engage with new art practices. This is echoed by (Bodjawah et al 2019; Seid'ou, 2006) saying,

> "Art education in Ghana has long been shaped by colonial-era traditions with 'hand-and-eye' training that emphasizes European drawing, craft, and realism prioritizing technical skill and traditional media, even as critics question its relevance in contemporary practice (p. 1330)".

Their discussions indicated the necessity to develop a curriculum that enhances the comprehension of the colonial education system, its aims and consequences, emphasising the importance of incorporating diverse media, formats, and critical content that should permeate teaching, learning, and artistic creation at all levels. In recent decades, contemporary art has expanded far beyond conventional practices, incorporating new media, installation, performance, conceptual approaches, and interdisciplinary methods that reflect cultural and contemporary societal discourses.

Despite the evolutions of art that have happened in the contemporary world, many art curricula face constraints of in aligning art practices in schools to real world art practices.

Artistic practices are continually evolving, embracing innovative techniques, materials, and concepts that challenge traditional artistic norms. The issues of contemporary art practices in school settings, and especially in teacher preparation programs is an ongoing debate. Some stakeholders of art education at UEW have shown concern that art educators at the University of Education, Winneba, might not adequately equip art educators with the knowledge and skills needed to keep pace with these dynamic changes in the art world. Others also hold the position that the core mandate of the BA Art Education program at UEW is to train teachers for the basic and senior high schools, and there is no need to into broaden the scope to include certain contemporary art practices. These divergent opinions raise questions about whether future graduates can critically engage with, produce, and teach art, that is relevant to contemporary art dialogues, or whether it is even necessary.

A Picture Making Lecturer of UEW noted that he realised students lacked exposure to many dimension of contemporary art, including performance, prompting him to supervise a performance entitled “Silent” with his long essay students. This was done because of the limiting perception of contemporary art. He utilized the performance to interrogate the environmental and educational institutional contexts, which often suppress creativity. The objective was to articulate a voice within this *silence*, thereby fostering an understanding of the *silence* of contemporary art within our educational framework. The performance contributed to the ongoing debate of contemporary art

and the art education program. Photographs from their exploration are shown in Figures 1a and 1b.

Figure 1a & 1b: Performance Titled “Silence”

Source: Ankyia (2022)

Ignoring current global art trends in art education can lead to a disconnection between classroom instruction and contemporary real-world art practices, thereby limiting students’ exposure to relevant and transformative artistic experiences. At the same time, concerns have been raised globally about contemporary art education marginalizing the development of technical proficiency. Longo (2017), for instance, argues that contemporary visual arts curricula often overlook academic instruction in skill-based drawing and aesthetics, placing students who lack this foundational training at a disadvantage despite increasing emphasis on conceptual approaches. This debate highlights the need for a balanced art education that integrates technical skill development within contemporary artistic practice.

There is limited literature specifically addressing contemporary art practice within the Department of Art Education at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Furthermore, in today's evolving digital landscape, contemporary technology plays a critical role in shaping artistic expression and creative processes; however, challenges remain in effectively incorporating such technologies into the art education curriculum. This raises concerns about whether art educators at UEW are adequately prepared to integrate contemporary technologies into their teaching methodologies and professional practice, potentially widening the gap between students' classroom experiences and the realities of the modern art industry.

Empirical studies conducted at UEW further reveal structural and pedagogical challenges affecting studio-based art education. Boakye-Yiadom (2019), in a study on studio-based art education in Ghanaian universities, identified resource constraints, large class sizes, and limited individualized instruction as major impediments to effective practical training. Similarly, Owusu-Mensah and Ampeh (2017) emphasized the need to revitalize studio art instruction within teacher education at UEW, noting that core areas such as Picture Making require greater emphasis on creativity, experimentation, and critical engagement. These limitations, they argue, restrict innovation and the effective alignment of studio practice with contemporary artistic demands. The lack of innovation in Picture Making also risks weakening the development of a more inclusive and responsive art education framework. In recognition of this disparity, scholars have called for curriculum reform and stronger collaboration between educational institutions and the creative industries to bridge the

gap between historical traditions and present-day artistic developments (Barau, 2015; Chedi, 2015).

Conclusively, the problem identified reflects interconnected gaps within art education at UEW, including limited engagement with contemporary art practices, challenges in integrating digital technologies, and persistent resource and systemic constraints that restrict creativity, experimentation, and critical engagement in studio-based learning. The literature further reveals a scarcity of focused research on contemporary art practice within the Department of Art Education at UEW, alongside ongoing debates regarding the scope and orientation of art teacher education programmes in relation to contemporary professional realities.

This study therefore, sought to investigate the existing divide and potential intersections between Picture Making courses at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), and contemporary art practices. The objective was to propose actionable strategies for bridging the gaps between art education and the realities of the contemporary art world. By doing so, this research aimed to ensure that graduates are not only technically competent but also and creatively responsive to the demands of today's art. The research advocates for the revitalization of the art curriculum at UEW to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in cultivating the creative potential of future artists at the basic and senior high school levels.

1.3 Objectives

1. To analyse the components of UEW Picture Making courses, examining their alignment with contemporary art practices
2. To investigate the methodologies employed in teaching Picture Making at UEW, and their effectiveness in fostering proficiency in the contemporary art discourse
3. To analyse UEW Picture Making students' preparedness to thrive in the evolving landscape of contemporary art
4. To develop evident-based strategies to broaden the scope of Picture Making at UEW, in line with contemporary art trends

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do the courses components of the Picture Making programme at UEW reflect contemporary art practices?
2. What teaching methodologies are employed in Picture Making at UEW, and how do they support student engagement with contemporary art discourse?
3. In what ways are students in Picture Making of UEW equipped to engage with the evolving landscape of contemporary art?
4. What strategies can be developed to broaden the scope of Picture Making at UEW in response to contemporary art trends?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

1. The study examined the structure and pedagogical approaches of Picture Making at UEW in relation to contemporary art practices and discourse. This involved analysis of art materials, methods, themes and teaching strategies employed in Picture Making courses, with particular attention to how these elements reflect current developments in contemporary art. The study considered the extent to which studio practices and learning experiences align with contemporary art discourse, including conceptual exploration, experimentation, and interdisciplinary approaches.
2. It explored the effectiveness of instructional methodologies and curricular content in preparing students to function as practitioners and educators within the evolving landscape of contemporary art. The study investigated how teaching methods and curriculum design support students' development as both creative practitioners and future Art Educators. Emphasis was placed on the relevance of teaching methods used by lecturers in the Picture Making classroom, and on the ability of instructional approaches to foster critical engagement, adaptability to the contemporary art context, and pedagogical competence in response to changing artistic and educational demands.
3. The study analysed the extent to which Picture Making students were equipped with the technical, conceptual, and critical capacities required for contemporary artistic practice. This assessment focused on students' mastery of technical skills, their capacity for conceptual development, and their ability to critically reflect on their own work and that of others

4. It generated evidence-based recommendations for expanding and strengthening the scope of Picture Making in ways that enhanced technical competence and supported contemporary modes of creative expression. These recommendations sought to broaden the scope of Picture Making to include diverse contemporary practices, thereby enhancing students' technical proficiency while supporting innovative, concept-driven, and culturally responsive forms of artistic expression.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is projected to ensure that, Art Education curriculum at UEW remains relevant and aligned with the current practices in the global art industry. It sought to help students connect with the world around them and understand the issues, ideas, and themes that are shaping contemporary culture. It will also enlighten art teachers and students on new and innovative techniques, materials, and technologies. By keeping up with these practices, schools can provide students with opportunities to learn and develop skills that are in demand in the modern art industry. For students interested in pursuing a career in art and art education, being familiar with contemporary practices is essential. The art world is constantly evolving, and having a solid understanding of contemporary trends and movements can give graduates a competitive edge in their teaching profession. This research advocates broadening the current Picture Making scope to align with real-world contemporary art practices. It would therefore enrich the art education experience, empower students to become more informed and versatile artists and better prepare them to contribute meaningfully to current art trends.

1.7 Delimitation

This research analysed the tools, materials, techniques, methods, theories and thematic components of Picture Making courses, and in so doing identified gaps that needed to be filled, taking contemporary art practices into perspective. The research also took into account the experiences of direct stakeholders of the Picture Making component of art education at UEW.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Contemporary Art: It is a category of artistic expression that reflects current ideas, issues, and technologies. It covers diverse styles and media, including digital art, installation, performance, and mixed media, and often broader than traditional boundaries in art making.

Picture Making: A course of study in Art that encompasses painting and other two dimensional art techniques like mosaic, marquetry collage, and pyrography

Traditional Art/Traditional methods of Art: It refers to artistic practices, techniques, and styles that are established in historical, cultural, or educational setting. It typically involves the use of conventional materials such as paint and brush. In Picture Making at UEW, techniques like mosaic and marquetry have been practiced over a longer periods of time, and therefore pass for traditional art. Unlike contemporary art, traditional art often follows established norms and focuses on preserving cultural

1.9 Abbreviations Used

CA - Contemporary Art

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

SHS - Senior High School

UEW - University of Education, Winneba

1.10 Organisation of the Rest of the text

Chapter Two contains review of related literature. It discusses relevant theoretical frameworks and reviews previous scholarly works related to Art Education and contemporary art. Chapter Three outlines the Methodology, which includes the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used in the study. It also addresses ethical considerations and the validity and reliability of the research. Chapter Four is a presentation and discussion of findings. This chapter presents the data collected, analyzes the findings, and discusses them in relation to the research questions and existing literature. Chapter Five covers summary, conclusions, and recommendations. This final chapter summarizes the key findings, draws conclusions based on the objectives of the study, and provides recommendations for policy, practice, and further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

Through an in-depth examination of existing scholarly works and relevant sources, the literature review aims to identify gaps and highlight the significance of the research.

2.1 Evolution of the World of Art

The appreciation of art has been an integral part of human culture for millennia. From prehistoric cave paintings to modern masterpieces, artistic taste has undergone significant transformations throughout history. The way people perceive and value art is shaped by cultural, social, and technological changes that occur over time. Below is an account of how art has evolved through different eras.

Prehistoric (30,000 BC - 2500 BC):

Durband (2021) says that Prehistoric art is ancient products of human creative expression. He further classifies three main forms: petroglyphs (rock carvings), parietal art (cave paintings), and mobiliary art (small portable objects like figurines and sculptures) Prehistoric art was created using various materials such as ochre, charcoal, and minerals for pigments, as well as stone, bone, and wood for sculptures. Art also became more diverse, incorporating a broader range of materials and techniques.

Ancient Egyptian (3,000 BC - 300 AD): Religious beliefs played a significant role

in ancient Egyptian paintings. One common theme depicted in religious scenes was the worship of gods and goddesses. These paintings often portrayed rituals performed by priests and pharaohs, offering scenes, and representations of deities. The tomb of Ramesses VI in the Valley of the Kings showcases religious scenes, including the "Book of Gates" and the "Book of Caverns," which depict the pharaoh's journey through the afterlife (Hornung, 1999). Egyptian paintings are a valuable source of information about the civilization's beliefs, culture, and daily life.

One of the most iconic forms of Egyptian is the statue of the pharaoh. These statues, typically carved from durable materials such as granite or diorite, aimed to immortalize the ruler and convey their divine status. An example of such is the statue the Great Sphinx of Giza, which portrays a lion's body with the head of a pharaoh, believed to represent Pharaoh Khafre. Funerary statues were created in various materials, including wood, limestone, and bronze. The statues depicted individuals in a standardized and idealized manner, often wearing traditional clothing and holding symbolic objects (Hill, 2010).

Greek Classical (500 BC - 300 BC): The consideration of human anatomy began with the Greeks. "The Battle of Issus," attributed to the Greek artist Philoxenus of Eretria, stands out as an illustrious illustration of Greek classical painting According to the ancient Greek historian Pliny the Elder, Philoxenus used a technique known as "foreshortening" in his painting. Objects and figures had the illusion of depth and three-dimensionality through his skillful use of color, composition, and anatomical accuracy. Greek classical achieved a definitive artistic achievement, displaying a profound understanding of aesthetics and the human form. Greek classical achieved

an unparalleled level of idealization, combining naturalism with perfected forms. One of the most iconic examples is the "Spear Bearer" or "Doryphoros" by Polykleitos, which epitomizes the canon of proportions and balanced composition (Barringer, 2001). According to Pomeroy et al. (2018), Greek classical was characterized by a strong emphasis on naturalism and the portrayal of anatomical details. Sculptors meticulously studied the human body, observing its proportions, muscles, and movements in order to create sculptures that were both lifelike and aesthetically pleasing.

Roman Classical (500 BC - 450 AD): Kleiner (2019) postulates that "Roman classical sculpture, influenced by Greek aesthetics, depicted idealized figures and conveyed political power through its grandeur and realistic portrayal of human anatomy.

A practical example of Roman classical painting is "Villa of the Mysteries," which features a series of narrative scenes depicting a mysterious initiation ritual. It is a fresco with vibrant colors and detailed compositions. The most distinct feature of Roman Classical Paintings is the depictions of emotions and gestures.

Byzantine (500 - 1200): Byzantine paintings depicted humans and objects in flatness and lack of perspective. Artists portrayed spiritual messages rather than realistic representations. Ćurčić et al. (2010) says Byzantine art departed from classical ideals, focusing on spiritual concepts through stylized forms. Paintings depicted figures with elongated proportions and expressive eyes, emphasizing spiritual messages over realistic representations (Cormack, 2015). Gold was extensively used for aesthetic reasons and to convey divine light (Garnczarska, 2020). Iconography played a central

role in Byzantine painting and was believed to be windows into the spiritual realm. Peers (2004) opines that Byzantine art was not viewed as mere artistic products but as devotional objects infused with divine presence. The Byzantine was not as prominent as painting. They were mostly in the form of relief panels or small-scale works and were primarily made as decorative elements for architecture.

Celtic, Saxon and Viking Art (600 - 900): Celtic, Saxon, and Viking art from 600-900 CE is renowned for its illuminated manuscripts and intricate metalwork. This period saw the blending of Celtic, Romano-British, and Anglo-Saxon styles (Kendrick, 2023). The art featured geometric patterns, interlacing, spirals, and zoomorphic motifs, often arranged in panels using principles derived from Egyptian and Greek geometry (Hull, 2003). Manuscripts, stone crosses, and metalwork exemplified this artistic tradition (Kendrick, 2023; Laing & Laing, 1992). Animal imagery played a crucial role, adapting pagan Celtic and Germanic traditions for Christian art (Hicks, 1993). The Book of Cerne, a 9th-century Mercian manuscript, demonstrates the complex interplay of text, script, and image, incorporating Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Carolingian, Roman, and Byzantine influences (Conner & Brown, 1996). This art form not only held aesthetic value but also played a significant role in shaping national and cultural identity during the formation of England (Karkov, 2011).

Romanesque (1000 - 1300): It was known for art funded by religious leaders, lack of realism, high relief sculpture, and stained glass. It featured biblical scenes, saints, and moral lessons in high relief sculpture, stained glass, wall paintings, and illuminated manuscripts (Dale & Mitchell, 2004; Stoddard, 1972). This style emerged as Christian power grew in Europe, particularly in Spain (Mann, 2009). Romanesque architecture

was known for thick walls, round arches, and large towers (Fernie, 2014), while painting and sculpture adorned church interiors to demarcate spaces and convey religious narratives (Altet et al., 1998). The art of this period flourished across various media, including mosaics and embroidery (Dodwell, 1993). While often considered the "book of the illiterate," the actual effectiveness of art in religious education for the illiterate population has been debated (Duggan, 1989).

Gothic (1100 - 1500): Gothic art gained recognition for its religious sculptures, stained glass, and unique architecture, characterized by features like pointed arches, flying buttresses, and rose windows. Gothic architecture, flourishing from the 12th to 15th centuries, is characterized by pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and flying buttresses (Bork & Schurr, 2018). These structural innovations enabled taller, more luminous spaces in cathedrals (Lavinia, 2024). Flying buttresses, evolving from beam-type to rampant arches, optimized load distribution (Velilla et al., 2019). Rose windows, a distinctive Gothic feature, exhibit fractal patterns in their design (Samper & Herrera, 2015) and serve as focal points in church facades (Dow, 1957). Buttressing systems, beyond their structural role, provided aesthetic value, new sculptural spaces, and even commercial opportunities (Jordan, 2021).

Renaissance (1400 - 1525): Renaissance, meaning ‘re-birth’ was a revival (re-birth) of classic Greek and Roman aesthetics, biblical and mythological subject matter, and realistic paintings s. As opined by (Stokstad, 2005) the Renaissance was marked by a general renewal of all the arts, an unprecedented attention to the natural world, and a flowering of artistic expression that continues to influence the way we see and interpret the world around us. The era was marked by scientific observation and humanistic ideals, and so painting showcased the idealized human form with inspiration from

classical aesthetics.

Dutch Realism (1600 - 1700): It was known for small-scale works often showing symbolic images and/or daily activities of common people. The concept of boredom serves as a fundamental analytical tool in understanding Dutch realism, revealing how it generates narratives about modern subjects oscillating between alienated boredom and critical engagement (Vanhaelen, 2012). Seventeenth-century Dutch art presents interpretive debates between iconological approaches emphasizing symbolic meanings and allegorical content versus perspectives focusing on empirical observation and painting as craft (Osborne, 1999)

Baroque (1600 - 1700): This era was known for similar themes as the Renaissance but depicted with more movement, color, and drama. In painting, Baroque artists aimed to evoke emotional responses from viewers through dynamic compositions, intense colors, and dramatic contrasts. One of the most renowned Baroque painters is Gian Lorenzo Bernini, known for his dramatic sculptures and his masterpiece, "The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa" (Harris, 2005).

Rococo (1730 - 1800): Rococo art is marked by its "feminine, playful, and somewhat frivolous" nature, representing a departure from the grandeur and severity of the Baroque style that preceded it (Robertson, 2009). Rococo artworks portrayed scenes of leisure, love, and nature, and were created for the enjoyment of the upper classes and the growing middle-class with materialistic values.

Neoclassicism (1770 - 1830): Neoclassical art was marked by its dedication to classical themes and subjects, alongside a strong emphasis on idealized figures and geometric arrangements. Artists strived to communicate values of moral excellence,

heroism, and civic responsibility in their artworks. Subjects were mostly historic and mythological.

Romanticism (1770 - 1850): Romanticism in art was a movement that rejected the rationalism of the Enlightenment and instead emphasized emotion, individuality, and imagination. It sought to capture powerful emotions, explore the sublime, celebrate individualism, and rebel against traditional artistic conventions. Romantic artists aimed to portray the sublime, that which instills awe and a sense of the infinite in the viewer (Vaughan, 1994).

Realism (1855 - 1900): Petersen (2012) explains that Realism as an artistic movement began in France in the 1850s, following the 1848 Revolution. He further posits that Realists rejected Romanticism, which had dominated French literature and art since the late 18th century, revolting against the exotic subject matter and exaggerated emotionalism of the movement**.** Artists sought to portray the world as it truly appeared, devoid of elaborations or individual interpretations. Artists in this movement paid attention to detail, precise representation of light and shadow, and a focus on everyday subjects and activities.

Impressionism (1860 - 1880): Impressionism is an influential art movement that emerged in the late 19th century in France. It is known for its emphasis on capturing the atmosphere and the effects of light and color in outdoor settings. It was a movement characterized by its emphasis on capturing immediate visual impressions, particularly of outdoor scenes and light effects (House, 2004; Brettell et al., 2000) Impressionist artists sought to depict their immediate physical impressions of a scene rather than concentrating on detailed depictions. Impressionist paintings were hence

characterized by loose and visibly broken brush strokes.

Post-Impressionism (1885 - 1905): Post-Impressionism was an influential art movement that emerged in the late 19th century as a reaction against the limitations of Impressionism. It is characterized by the use of vivid colors, bold brushstrokes, and a focus on abstract forms and emotional expression. It was introduced to England by Roger Fry around 1910, who presented it as a universal style rediscovering natural artistic creation (Rose, 2022). Post-Impressionist artists sought to go beyond the surface appearance of things and explore the inner vision and personal interpretation of the world. Post-Impressionism influenced various international modernisms, adapting to local contexts in countries such as India, Nigeria, Japan, and China (Rose, 2022).

Fauvism (1900 - 1907): Fauvism, an influential art movement that emerged in the early 20th century, challenged traditional artistic norms, and piloted a new era of bold colors and daring brushwork. Characterized by its audacious use of intense, non-representational hues, Fauvism represented a radical departure from conventional artistic techniques. emphasized simplified forms and vibrant colors that didn't necessarily represent reality (Firdaus, 2019). It influenced artists from various countries, enabling them to recognize and appreciate their indigenous art forms (Smith, 2002)

Expressionism (1905 - 1933): Expressionism is an art movement that emerged in the early 20th century, particularly in Germany. It sought to convey emotional and psychological experiences, often using distorted and exaggerated forms and brush strokes to express feelings and ideas rather than depicting objective. Encyclopædia

Britannica. (n.d.) posits that expressionism, when artist seeks to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse within a person. The artist accomplishes this aim through distortion, exaggeration, primitivism, and fantasy and through the vivid, jarring, violent, or dynamic application of formal elements. In a broader sense Expressionism is one of the main currents of art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and its qualities of highly subjective, personal, spontaneous self-expression are typical of a wide range of modern artists and art movements (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.).

Cubism (1907 - 1922): Developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, Cubism sought to challenge traditional artistic techniques and perspectives, introducing a new way of perceiving reality through fragmented and geometric forms. Cubism is revolutionary art movement of the early 20th century, emerged as a response to rapid societal changes in France (Antliff et al 2001). It challenged traditional representation through radical formal innovations, including collage and sculptural assemblage (Antliff et al, 2001). The movement was shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces of pre-World War I Paris (Cottington, 1998). Cubism's development involved numerous artists beyond Picasso and Braque, as evidenced by diverse primary sources from 1906 to 1914 (Antliff et al., 2008). The movement's historical study began in earnest in the late 1920s, after its perceived decline (Robbins, 1988). Today, Cubism is recognized as a pivotal force in the evolution of modern art (Braun et al, 2014).

Futurism (1909 - 1930): Known for the depiction of advanced machinery and technology of the time, Futurism, an Italian art movement launched in 1909 by F.T. Marinetti, revolutionized various artistic disciplines with its focus on speed,

dynamism, and modernity (Gori, 2018; Greene, 2014). The movement's political dimension intertwined with nationalism and later merged with Fascism (Conversi, 2009). Futurists explored innovative artistic techniques, including the use of olfaction in poetry and sculpture (Verbeek, 2017). The movement's relationship with technology and the machine world was complex and often contradictory (Versari, 2009). Futurism's influence spread to America between 1909 and 1914, primarily through manifestos and literature before actual artworks were exhibited (Hand, 1981). The movement's centenary in 2009 marked a significant milestone, juxtaposing its forward-looking ethos with its own history (Bortulucce, 2009). Despite its elitist nature and limited popular support, Futurism's concepts were partially absorbed by the fascist movement led by Mussolini (Gori, 2018).

Dadaism (1915 - 1924): Dada is known for being the first conceptual art movement using found objects. Originating in Zurich in 1916, Dada spread to Berlin, Paris, and New York, challenging traditional art forms and embracing anti-art concepts (Rettberg, 2007). Dadaists employed various techniques, including chance-based collages. The movement's influence extended to performance art, incorporating elements like simultaneous poetry, improvisation, and audience interaction (Gordon, 1974). Although short-lived, Dada's impact on subsequent art movements, such as Surrealism, was significant (Rubin, 1968). Contemporary electronic literature continues to draw inspiration from Dadaist practices, adapting them to new media environments (Rettberg, 2007). Despite its often-perceived nihilistic nature,

Surrealism (1920s - 1930s): Surrealism, emerging from Dada in the early 20th century, was an art movement that explored the unconscious mind and challenged

traditional artistic norms (Rubin, 1968). It encompassed various media, including painting, sculpture, and photography, with artists like Ernst, Dalí, and Magritte creating iconic works (Ades, 1997). Surrealists drew inspiration from occultism, psychoanalysis, and non-Western cultures, particularly African art (Rabinovitch, 2002; Walden, 2021). The movement spread globally, influencing artists in Europe, the Americas, and beyond (Durozoi & Anderson, 2002). Women artists, such as Carrington and Kahlo, played crucial roles in shaping Surrealism, often subverting traditional artistic conventions (Allmer, 2009). Surrealist visual art theory emphasized poetry, lyricism, and automatism (Grant, 2005). The movement's impact extended beyond art, challenging societal norms and exploring the relationship between reality and imagination (Choucha, 1992). It is recognized for the illustration of the subconscious mind and for dreamlike imagery.

Abstract Expressionism (1940s - 1950s): It is an exceptional art genre distinguished for its experimental paintings marked in common by freedom of technique, found in action painting, color field painting, and other non-objective work. Abstract Expressionism is an artistic movement of the mid-20th century comprising diverse styles and techniques and emphasizing especially an artist's liberty to convey attitudes and emotions through nontraditional and usually nonrepresentational means (Singh, 2018). The movement was shaped by contemporary psychological, philosophical, and anthropological discourses (Leja, 1997). Critics Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg played crucial roles in shaping public perception and sparking debates about Abstract Expressionism (Kleeblatt et al., 2008). While initially seen as uniquely American, recent scholarship has explored its global context and influences, including

connections to European, Latin American, and Asian art movements (Marter, 2007). The legacy of Abstract Expressionism continues to inspire critical reexamination and influence contemporary art practices (Landau, 2005).

Pop Art (1950s - 1960s): Pop art first appeared in the United Kingdom and the United States during the mid-to-late 1950s, breaking away from the conventions of traditional fine art. It drew inspiration from popular culture, incorporating imagery like advertisements, comic strips, and everyday mass-produced goods. Characterized by its vibrant colors and bold designs, pop art often took ordinary or kitschy elements of culture and presented them with a twist of irony. Artists frequently employed mechanical reproduction techniques to craft their pieces (Berlin Art Grid, n.d.) Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and James Rosenquist became iconic figures, using commercial imagery and addressing political events of the era (Madoff, 1997; Lobel, 2002). The movement spread globally, influencing art in different countries like Indonesia. Pop Art's emergence marked a shift in art criticism and philosophy, with scholars like Arthur Danto arguing that it signaled the "end of art" as traditionally understood (Danto, 2021). Despite initial skepticism, Pop Art gained recognition as a legitimate artistic movement, even in Soviet Russia, where it was analyzed through a Marxist lens (Yureva et al, 2021).

Op Art (1960s and beyond): Op art is famous for its abstract depiction of illusion through movement, pattern, and hidden images. Op Art, a style of abstract art associated with optical illusions, gained popularity in the 1960s (Houston & Hickey, 2007). It explores geometric shapes, perspectives, and color theory, often using simple primitives like circles and lines in contrasting colors (Inglis & Kaplan, 2012). Op Art's

development was influenced by early 19th-century perceptual research into illusions and illusory movement (Schuler, 2015). Artists like Bridget Riley created vivid dynamic illusions in static pictures, possibly caused by involuntary eye movements (Zanker, 2004). The movement's impact extended to advertising, fashion, and film-making (Houston & Hickey, 2007). Op Art continues to evolve, with modern artists using digital technology to create psychedelic-inspired works (Rubin et al., 2010). The synthesis of science and art in visual perception has influenced apparative, kinetic, and computer-generated art (Schuler, 2015). Op Art's significance in the modern globalized world and its potential for creating new visual art forms continue to be explored (Symotiuk, 2019). This movement led to the contemporary art genre.

Postmodernism (1960s and beyond): Famous for its defiance of modernism's contradictory trends, this artistic movement set high and low art forms, incorporating diverse concepts and boldly departing from conventional artistic norms. Postmodernism in visual art history emerged as a critical response to modernism, challenging established notions of artistic progress and representation (Crowther, 1990; Krauss, 1985). It embraces diverse strategies, including appropriation, pastiche, and institutional critique, while blurring boundaries between high and low art forms (Munson, 2021). Postmodern art theory rejects formalism and linear art history, instead emphasizing multiplicity of meaning and cultural context (Robinson & Burgin, 1986; Axsom, 2019). The movement has sparked debates about the end of art and its relationship to market forces (Crowther, 1990; Wallis, 1992). Postmodern art often engages with religious themes in complex ways, reflecting changing social and political landscapes (Munson, 2021).

Kingdoms and Classical Traditions of African Art (500–1800 CE): With the rise of powerful kingdoms like Ife and Benin, African art took on more defined ceremonial and dynastic roles. Smarthistory (n.d.) observes that, "sculptures and regalia often embodied the spirit of kingship and were used to assert legitimacy and continuity." For example, in the Benin Kingdom, bronze castings commemorated ancestral achievements: "Benin bronzes were part of a system of ancestral memory, embedded in the palace's walls and rituals" (Smarthistory, n.d.). These objects were not simply decorative; they were part of a system of power transmission. "They were activated in ceremonies, where their presence facilitated communication with the ancestors and gods," the authors note. The continent's artistic traditions span diverse media such as sculpture, painting, architecture, textiles, and body art (Gillon, 1985). Major kingdoms like Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, along with wealthy city-states, played significant roles in shaping artistic expressions during this period (Page, 2001). The spread of Islam, Bantu migrations, and the evolution of tribal systems also impacted artistic developments across different regions (Gillon, 1985). While colonial influences are often associated with later periods, earlier imperial histories, including ancient Carthage and Omani imperialism in East Africa, also contributed to the continent's artistic landscape (Rovine, 2019). Recent scholarship has begun to explore more openly the complex relationships between colonial structures and African artistic innovations, expanding our understanding of this dynamic field (Visoná, 2000; Rovine, 2019).

Colonial Interruption and Misrepresentation of African Art (19th–mid-20th Century): During colonization, African art was often removed from its original context

and displayed in Western museums as ethnographic or exotic objects. Peter Probst emphasizes that "the idea of 'African Art' was not indigenous but emerged in Europe during the colonial encounter," and that the term "art" itself often misrepresented these objects' spiritual and societal roles (Probst, 2024). He further critiques the reduction of African creativity into essentialized categories: "What we call African art is not what Africans called it. These were things with lives, voices, and powers, not sculptures in the modern sense."

Postcolonial and Contemporary Movements (1960s–Present): Following independence movements across the continent, African artists began to reclaim traditional aesthetics while pushing into global contemporary discourse. According to ArtRewards (2025), "Contemporary African art is rooted in tradition but often challenges colonial legacies and embraces digital, political, and conceptual media." One artist stated: "We no longer ask whether it is 'African' we ask what it does in the world" (ArtRewards, 2025). The same article highlights that African art today is not bound to form or material: "From ephemeral sand drawings to immersive video installations, African artists lead global conversations on memory, identity, and resilience."

Contemporary (1980s and beyond): Contemporary art has emerged as a distinct, inclusive genre that challenges traditional boundaries and engages audiences in new ways (Smith, 2019). It encompasses a wide array of media, methods, and conceptual approaches, reflecting the multiplicity of contemporary life (Marshall, 2007). The field has evolved to include digital technologies, collaborative practices, and participatory experiences, democratizing artistic expression (Shiva, 2023).

Contemporary art institutions and networks have proliferated globally, shaping discourse and market dynamics (Smith, 2010; Osborne, 2013). The genre emphasizes conceptual skills and cognitive processes, often revealing the artist's thought process more than historical art (Marshall, 2008). Inclusive curatorship has emerged as a means to incorporate diverse perspectives into museums and exhibitions (French, 2020). While defining contemporary art remains challenging, it is characterized by its engagement with current societal issues and its ability to foster meaningful conversations across cultural boundaries (Smith, 2011; Shiva, 2023).

2.2 Contemporary Art Concepts, Theories and Practices

The term contemporary refers to anything that is existing at present. In the context of art, contemporary does not only refer to a particular time or dispensation. Esanu (2012) says that contemporary art has accumulated multiple meanings, becoming a catchall phrase that, depending on the context in which it is used. It may refer to a certain kind of art-making, a particular aesthetic sensibility, an art historical period, a way of exhibiting, a particular department within a museum of art, or even certain habits, tastes, and prices in the higher echelons of the art market. The term is loosely used to denote art made by living artist.

Contemporary art is characterized by its resistance to traditional definitions, with emphasis on conceptual interpretation over material or stylistic constraints (Cazeaux, 2021). It reflects current cultural, spiritual, and social trends, often incorporating technological innovations and digital media (Миронова, 2020). The field has expanded to include diverse practices like installation art and assemblage, challenging

conventional boundaries (Al-Bayat & Abdul-Karim, 2023). While contemporary music struggles with its non-conceptual nature, contemporary visual art has embraced a post-conceptual, generic approach (Barrett, 2021). The term "contemporary" has replaced "modern" and "postmodern" in describing consequential art of our time (Smith, 2002; Smith, 2010). Contemporary art spaces, including museums and galleries, play a crucial role in presenting and contextualizing these works (Gallardo Frías, 2020). Art theories and concepts continue to guide and sustain contemporary art practice, emphasizing interpretation, representation, and expression (Nwombu, 2023).

2.2.1 Contemporary Art as Historical Period

According to Shristi (2021), to understand Contemporary Art, one way could be to scrutinize its place in the historical context of 'art past' and that with the founding of the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, history first saw the term in 1947. Although it is the 90s, most institutions mark as the beginning of Contemporary Art.

Postmodernism is the antecedent that led to contemporary art. Postmodern art came about as a response to the need for change in the art world. It opened the art world to different ideas such as minimalism and conceptual art. (Hinkel, 2016) opines that Postmodern art tends to reject the institutions, methods, terms, and main points of view of modernism and that it questions the collected truth, history, and theory of the different areas of science and arts, and opens up ways to different types of thinking, pluralism, and openness; in essence, postmodernism paved the way for contemporary art. All postmodern art is seen as contemporary. Therefore, to understand

contemporary art, is to understand what was viewed and practiced as art in the modernism era and what differentiates it from postmodern art. Modern and contemporary art are alike in meaning. In general usage, both of which refer to the present and recent past, but as opposed to modernism which characterizes a couple of art movements in the 1860s, contemporary art is credited to the 1970s and to date. Like the postmodern and contemporary artists, modern artists also sought to change certain narratives of art. This led to the "isms" in art history, namely impressionism, postimpressionism, fauvism and Dadaism. Irish Museum of Modern Art (n.d.) affirms that within the context of art history, the term modern art refers to art theory and practice, predominantly in western Europe and north America, from the 1860s to the late 1960s - the period associated with modernism, and that modern art is defined in terms of a linear progression of styles, periods and schools, such as impressionism, cubism and abstract expressionism.

> During the course of the twentieth century, disillusionment with aspects of the modernist enterprise: the impact of industrialization, global war and developments in military technology, resulted in some artists adopting strategies of disruption and subversion, evident in movements such as dada and surrealism. Alternatively, some artists resorted to more personalized and emotional forms of practice, such as the expressionist movements. After World War II, the centre of modernism shifted from Europe to America and was dominated by Abstract Expressionism. Underpinned by a theoretical framework of Formalism, which emphasized form rather than content (Irish Museum of Modern Art, n.d.).

By the postmodern era, art was leaning more towards the George Dickie's definition of art as anything upon which the status of art is conferred. Postmodern covers many art forms, including Pop Art, Conceptual Art, Neo-Expressionism, Feminist Art etc. Conceptual artists sought to change the way we see and experience, prioritizing idea over the material art object. Opposing the conventions of Modern art, artists pushed

out the boundaries of art to include different possibilities. The quest of artists to further push the boundaries of art led to the contemporary art movement. Shristi (2021) argues that it is known to be triggered by the 'Globalisation' effervescence, fizzing at the time of complex social and political conditions of the 20th Century and that post these conditions, there was an iconic shift resulting in avant-garde works by artists. After a crash in the stock market, people began to question the value of material objects.

Unlike previous artistic movements defined by exact and somehow exact stylistic guiding principles, contemporary art does not conform to a particular style, medium, or method. Instead, it incorporates diversity of expressions that can sometime provocative and challenging the prior notions of art.

2.2.2 Contemporary Art as a Genre

The term "contemporary" roughly refers to the present time, but as a genre or movement, it is often used to describe art that engages with present issues, ideas, and technologies. Nonetheless, what truly tells contemporary art apart is its plurality in term of material and content. Contemporary art is an art of everyday life. It is an art of current reality. It exposes people's daily life experiences and transgresses aesthetic rules for more freedom, not for libertinage (Sevanen, 2008). Contemporary art is also characterized by diversity of mediums and artistic practices (Bokumoni et al, 2024). Unlike earlier movements with the modern art movement, which had distinctive aesthetic limits, contemporary art is branded by its multiplicity. Artists today work in a wide range of media, including painting, sculpture, performance, photography, digital art, appropriation and installation.

Contemporary art purposefully rejects such closure in favor of openness, interdisciplinarity, and conceptual flexibility, whereas modernist movements sought coherence through formal standards and stylistic homogeneity (Smith, 2019). This distinction is key since previous research on art education frequently depended on modernist presumptions of technical proficiency and media specificity, which may no longer accurately reflect the realities of contemporary artistic practice.

This freedom to explore diverse styles, materials and form of art allow artists to express themselves freely and artistically, including challenge traditional ideas of art. Many artists today refuse to go by traditional elements of art and principles, as well as traditional compositional style and the aesthetics of the modern art movement and its preceding movements. Contemporary art is characterized by an unprecedented diversity of styles and approaches that fundamentally challenge traditional artistic norms (Hayuk, 2024). This leads to an artistic awakening and original creation. This means that the break with the aesthetic norms of traditional art has somehow opened the way to several forms of art (Shiner, 2001). Therefore, Contemporary Art tends to be assessed thematically and subjectively, drawing on an expanded range of theoretical and practical disciplines (Irish Museum of Modern Art, n.d.).

Few works investigate how such genre features are translated into structured curriculum and studio practice, especially within institutional art education environments, despite the fact that extant scholarship convincingly theorizes this openness and plurality. This disparity is important for Picture Making classes because modern expectations of hybridity, conceptual thinking, and technological experimentation may not mesh well with conventional medium-based education.

As a genre, since it embraces a more open approach to art making and art presentation, it is necessary to ask what contemporary artist have gone about their art, to ascertain somehow, the depth of their practices, and to avoid defining contemporary art in certain parameters. theories and practices in which contemporary art are outlined.

Decolonization: Decolonization is the act or practice of withdrawing from a former colonial idea or infiltration. It is the process of liberating an institution from the cultural or social effects of colonization. One of the key principles contemporary art is founded on is the principle of decolonization, which challenges colonial iconography and epistemologies (Kastrissios, 2023; Sales, 2021). Artists employ various strategies, including appropriation of colonial imagery (Kastrissios, 2023), critical examination of colonial archives (Oliveira, 2016), and exploration of Indigenous conceptions of creative work (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014).

Compared to earlier postcolonial art discourses that primarily emphasized representation and identity, recent decolonial practices foreground process, collaboration, and institutional critique, extending beyond the artwork itself into pedagogical and curatorial structures (Copeland et al., 2020).

Kastrissios (2023) says that contemporary global art empowers Indigenous voices, stimulates conversations, and fosters intercultural dialogue: through collaborative appropriation of seminal or conventionalised colonial artwork, contemporary artists aim to deconstruct colonial belief systems that perpetuate the centrality of "whiteness" in human universality. Decolonial aesthetics aims to liberate aesthesis and embrace relational temporalities (Vázquez, 2016). The term "decolonize" has gained

prominence in art activism, addressing Eurocentrism in museums and structural violence (Copeland et al., 2020). Dobbs (2022) argues that colonization has taken root in Modern and Contemporary Art museums and those museums have tried, and more often than not failed to decolonize via exhibitions. Some initiatives, such as *Decolonize This Place*, confront the "colonial matrix of power" binding white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler violence (Bharucha, 2023). Decolonization in art can be achieved through a cosmopolitan mindset that balances global citizenship with cultural specificity (Van Haute, 2022). These approaches contribute to dismantling oppressive belief systems and fostering intercultural understanding (Kastrissios, 2023).

The literature on art education frequently falls short of exploring how decolonial theories significantly alter studio-based curricula and evaluation procedures, despite this essential impetus. This restriction highlights the need to consider whether Picture Making courses adequately include decolonial thought into methods, resources, and assessment frameworks in addition to thematic content.

Hybridity: Hybridity refers to the state of being mixed or combined, incorporating various fields like biology, culture, and social sciences, where different elements or units blend to form something new. Spielmann (2012) points out that hybridity has become a term commonly used in cultural studies to describe conditions in contact zones where different cultures connect, merge, intersect and eventually transform.

In contrast to earlier art historical models that honored cultural purity and stylistic lineage, hybridity emphasizes exchange, translation, and technological mediation, aligning closely with contemporary digital and transdisciplinary practices.

Spielmann et al. (2006) emphasise that digital media and media forms need to be examined for their incorporation of older techniques, aesthetic strategies and cultural forms. They observe that people need to consider the heritage of analogue technologies as well as the development and use of emergent digital technologies in the arts.

Recent empirical studies in art education suggest that students' engagement with hybrid practices, particularly those combining traditional studio methods with digital tools enhances adaptive thinking and professional readiness (e.g., Bokumoni et al., 2024). However, such findings are rarely mapped onto curriculum structures, leaving questions about alignment between instructional content and contemporary hybrid practice unanswered.

Deconstructionism: Deconstruction theory is embedded in the philosophy of Jacques Derrida. It challenges fixed meanings and unchanging systems in art, and emphasizes the instability and multiple interpretations of meaning, particularly in art. Anushiravani et al (2015) assert that having been always associated with the French theoretician Jacques Derrida, the term 'Deconstruction' happened to become the greatest revolutionary theory proposed in the twentieth century, and that as the term points to, deconstruction theory tends to deny any sort of fixed stable system of predicted rules and meanings in art. Rather, it offers an existing infinity and flexibility in meaning as an inborn entity in the discussion of art interpretation (Anushiravani et al, 2015) It

originated as a critique of structuralism in the 1960s, becoming a literary and artistic methodology by the 1970s (Barsoum, 2021). Deconstructivism emerged in architecture during the 1980s as a radical response to postmodernism, drawing inspiration from Jacques Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction (Younis et al., 2023; Jack Barsoum, 2021). This approach has been applied to various art forms, including dance (Febrianty et al., 2024), visual arts (Kasiyan, 2021), and installations. Deconstructionism in art often involves breaking down established forms, abandoning conventional creation processes, and integrating multiple media (Swasono, 2015). It emphasizes freedom from formal structures, representing innovative and fresh approaches in new media art (Hartadinata et al., 2022). Anushiravani et al (2015) opines that deconstruction focuses on two major points in its applications; the first one deals with the uncertainty of an artistic work as a mean to reveal the self-contradictory and multiplicity of the thematic meanings proposed by both the artist and the audience, and the second point focuses on the underlying ideological dimensions within the artifact. In visual culture, deconstructionism aims to provoke thought and reveal hidden meanings, transforming images into a game of values (Solomatova & Kiev Ukraine Arts, 2021).

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism in contemporary art theory has evolved from an ethnic reform orientation to a more complex discourse addressing cultural diversity, identity politics, and globalization. According to Song (2020), multiculturalism reflects a debate in modern political discourse and political philosophy about how to understand and respond to issues related to cultural diversity based on ethnic, national, and religious divisions. As a result, multiculturalism recognizes and celebrates the coexistence of many cultural groups within a community. It is a mode of thought that

celebrates and promotes cultural variety while fostering tolerance and understanding among individuals of different backgrounds. In this context, artistic expression and appreciation of cultural identity are critical (Al-Zadjali, 2024). While institutional multiculturalism aimed to recognize non-Western artists, it has been criticized for perpetuating binary thinking and exclusion (Petersen, 2012). Scholars argue for a transcultural approach to rethink art history's epistemic foundations (Juneja, 2019) and expand ideas in art history, criticism, and aesthetics (Delacruz, 1996). The global art market has been scrutinized for commodifying racial categories within a neoliberal multicultural context (Kılıç & Petzen, 2013). Connolly (2024) emphasise that in our increasingly interconnected world, it has never been more important to appreciate and understand the rich tapestry of cultures that surround us and that multicultural art projects offer a dynamic and creative pathway to achieve this understanding. In art education, efforts to incorporate multicultural perspectives face challenges in curriculum products and teaching strategies (Delacruz, 1996; Hatton, 2003). Despite these issues, multiculturalism remains a significant area of research in political theory and philosophy, influencing liberal theory and engaging with real-world political struggles (Laden & Owen, 2007).

Relational Aesthetic: Relational aesthetics, a concept introduced by Nicolas Bourriaud in the 1990s, describes contemporary art practices that focus on social interactions and audience participation (Cooper, 2009; Flynn, 2016). This approach has roots in 1960s Minimalism and emphasizes the importance of context and experience in art (Cooper, 2009). Relational art has transformed exhibition-making and audience engagement, as seen in works like Olafur Eliasson's Weather Project (Smith, 2024). While some argue

that relational aesthetics promotes democratic social bonds (Bourriaud, cited in Ross, 2006), others critique this view, drawing on neo-Marxist perspectives (Ross, 2006). The concept has influenced discussions on the relationship between art and aesthetics (Erjavec, n.d.) and has been applied to understanding young people's engagement with contemporary art (Illeris, 2005). Critics have also examined relational aesthetics in the context of neoliberal business practices in the art world (Pennings, 2005). Generally, relational aesthetics has significantly affected contemporary art theory and practice.

Contemporary aesthetics has evolved significantly, moving beyond traditional philosophical boundaries to engage with modern art practices and societal changes. Erjavec (n.d.) highlights three influential theories: Bourriaud's relational aesthetics, Rancière's aesthetic project, and Smith's theory of contemporary art. Ingarden's aesthetic theory remains relevant for analyzing contemporary art due to its open, phenomenological nature (Shevchuk & Shevchuk, 2023). Bychkov (2015) conceptualizes contemporary aesthetics as post-nonclassical, comprising classical metaphysics, non-classical aesthetics, and aesthetic virtualistics.

Affect Theory: Affect theory has emerged as a significant approach in contemporary art criticism and curation, offering new perspectives on representation, mediation, and the ontology of art (Moyano, 2020). It reinvigorates debates about representation by examining affect as both excessive of cognitive processes and as an autonomous entity in mediation (Moyano Ariza, 2020). LeMahieu (2015) posits that affects are that which cause the bodily feelings induced by the encounter with an art object that births change - a 'becoming', and that these feelings belong to the body and are distinct from emotion. These feelings also belong to the object itself in an immanent sense. Affect theory has

also been applied to analyze immaterial artworks and the aesthetic experience of contemporary art (Ilić, 2022). It provides cultural anthropologists with new ways to approach empirical research (Rutherford, 2016) and has been used to explore trauma in art (Biddle, 2005). The intersection of affect theory with art extends beyond traditional representation, engaging with concepts such as the virtual and the fold (Sullivan, 2004), and connects to broader discussions in visual studies and media theory (Matejic, 2013).

New Materialism / Object-Oriented Ontology*:* New Materialism and Object-Oriented Ontology are as influential theories in contemporary art, challenging traditional subjectivity and agency (Apter et al., 2016). These approaches emphasize the materiality of art-making processes and the agency of objects (Kontturi, 2012; Coole & Frost, 2010). Michałowska (2020) says that new materiality encourages rethinking the status of objects of natural origin that surround us in the context of social relations, especially in the perspective of the nature/culture dichotomy. New materialist perspectives suggest that matter plays a crucial role in shaping human experiences and social relationships (Garber, 2019). In contemporary art, this manifests as a focus on the physical properties of artworks and their interactions with viewers (Mills, 2009). Artists explore radical intimacy and performative *objecthood* as expressions of revolt (Moscovitch, 2023). The materiality of artworks extends beyond their physical presence to include their history, provenance, and cultural context (Alaimo, 2014). Furthermore, artworks as physical objects play a central role in shaping the field of contemporary art, influencing institutional practices and professional relationships (Rubio & Silva, 2013).

In Michałowska (2020)'s research, a new materialism can inspire artistic activities in four, at least, aspects. They include:

1. the natural and historical sciences operate on material objects, not only philosophically "ponder" about them, thus the newly materialistic approach can
2. constitute the assemblage for scientific research and art, which is best expressed in the activities of art and science.
3. OOOs refer to animate and inanimate matter, which is traditionally the subject of natural sciences, examining it in relation to natural processes and human activities. The matter of art starts to consist of unintentionally created objects, which then – by the artist's will – are introduced into the artistic space.
4. pointing to the political, economic and natural causes of the natural changes seems to perfectly with the assumptions which are fulfilled by projects broadening social awareness of the role of oceans.

The most common practices of contemporary art are as follows;

Immateriality/ New Media: Immateriality in contemporary art refers to practices that prioritize intangible elements such as concepts, experiences, and sensory perceptions over physical materials.

Reynolds (2024) opines that ephemeral art is a type of contemporary art that is created to exist for a short period of time and often site-specific. It is often referred to as performance art, land art, or installation art. The term "ephemeral" refers to something that is transitory or short-lived; an experience that is meant to be savored in the moment, and once the moment has passed, it exists only in memory (Reynolds, 2024). Immateriality is art prioritises digital art. Adoption of technology in modern art

education is crucial, as seen by the increasing popularity of digital, performance, and time-based media. According to empirical research, students who are exposed to immaterial and digital practices are abler to adapt to modern art ecosystems, including as exhibitions, residencies, and multidisciplinary collaboration (Shiva, 2023). However, there hasn't been enough research done on how these methods correlate with conventional Picture Making course structures.

This approach challenges traditional notions of art as tangible objects, emphasizing ephemeral and conceptual aspects instead. Immateriality is achieved in contemporary art through digital art by creating works that exist solely in digital form, challenging the necessity of a physical presence, performance and sound art that focused on the experience and interaction, leaving behind memories rather than physical artifacts. Som (2020) argues that ephemerality seems at odds with the idea of art-making, as we imagine that a practitioner would desire to preserve what he creates, and that has not always been the case in history.

Figure 2. An ephemeral art made with leaves
Source: Andy Goldsworthy Digital Catalogue: 1983_163.
https://www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk/image/?id=ag_02756

Figure 3. Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi, The Return of the Slaves (2015). Live performance at Elmina Castle
Source: https://yearofthewomen.net/en/magazin/performance-as-life

The above photograph is one of the contemporary art performances by Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi on slavery and immigration. His interest in the subject of slavery and immigration is born out of being a Ghanaian Togolese African and the harsh treatments he had to endure by immigration officers anytime he had to cross borders to Ghana, due to the war in Togo at certain points in time. Another fascinating immaterial contemporary artwork is Reuben's cupid which displayed cupids flying around Brussels airport and engaging with the public. Written and directed by Filip Sterckx 3D Modeling and animation, it emphasized the immateriality by making the flying 3D animations the center of focus with illuminations, while leaving the painting in a darker background.

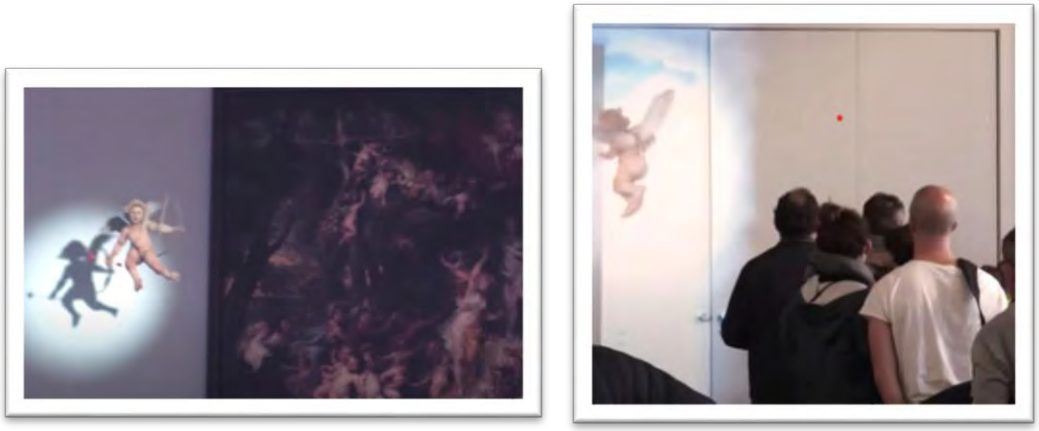

Figure 4a &3b. Rubens Cupid (2020) (screenshot)
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JREE37Q5cNM

Appropriation: Art appropriation deals with influences in the arts that deals with taking an already existing images or pre-existing works by altering it in a way, and re-presenting it to the world in a brand-new context. Appropriation could also imply the use of already existing objects in an art space with an original context provided by the artist. Expressed by Landes (2000), appropriation art borrows images from popular culture, advertising, the mass media, other artists and elsewhere, and incorporates them into new works of art. Often, the artist's technical skills are less important than his conceptual ability to place images in different settings and, thereby, change their meaning. Many museums and art galleries have embraced appropriation artistic practices in recent years in order to transgress the traditional notion of the museum as a cultural depository or a center of research and to establish a creative dialogue with the public, to force the public to think about art (Markellou, 2013). Landes (2000) as "getting the hand out of art and putting the brain in" and appropriation art does. Sherrie Levine appropriated many famous artworks including Marcel Duchamp's fountain. She recreated Duchamp's fountain and titles its 'Buddha' to draw people's attention to the patriarchal dominance in the art community with her work. She recreated her

own version of the work in bronze, which is more valuable than Duchamp's porcelain and this may be closely related to her choice of the title. 'Buddha' (a god). Also noticeable is the shape of works, which looks like the shape the seated Buddha takes on. Buddhism is a religion that focuses on enlightenment and so the work is made to enlighten audience.

Figure 5. A worker looks at 'Fountain' by Marcel Duchamp (R) and 'Fountain (Buddha)' by Sherrie Levine at the Whitechapel gallery in London

Source: https://11eggs.wordpress.com/2010/06/14/fountain-by-marcel-duchamp-and-fountain-buddha-by-sherrie-levine-at-whitechapel-gallery/

Immersive Art: Immersive art is a contemporary form emphasizing participation, interaction, and sensory engagement (López-Rodríguez et al., 2024). It involves artificial environments created through technology, dissolving boundaries between artwork and viewer (Adams & Sloterdijk, 2011). This is a form of creative expression that actively involves and envelopes the observer, often engaging multiple senses to create an all-encompassing experience. This approach transforms viewers from passive observers into active participants, fostering a deeper connection with the artwork. It encourages audience participation, allowing individuals to influence or

alter the artwork in real-time, and incorporates elements like sound, light, and tactile components to stimulate various senses simultaneously. It also transforms physical spaces into experiential environments, often requiring viewers to move through or within the installation and mostly utilizes advanced technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and digital projections to enhance the immersive experience. Shiyang (2022) says that immersive experience is a new type of interaction that integrates culture and technology, and it shows promise for application by combining with multi-panel content to art exhibitions and that it normally obtains surprising effects. Immersive environments can be tools for changing human-centric perspectives and addressing ecological issues (Chepelyk, 2023). Experience design frameworks for immersive exhibitions focus on story, space, technology, and interactivity (Li & Huang, 2023). However, a Heideggerian critique suggests immersive art may either reinforce calculative thinking or provide experiences of wonder (Mäcklin, 2021).

Below is an image of an immersive art, where audiences are offered the experience to not only walk into the popular Van Gogh painting titled *Starry Night*, but also be immersed into the art and become part of the art.

Figure 6. The multi-sensory Van Gogh exhibit, called The Lume, created by Australian company Grande Experiences

Source: https://medium.com/@thoughtben/how-to-commission-immersive-experiences-for-arts-and-culture-b021a876aa41

Public Art: Erdmann-Goldoni (2024) says that, urban design is increasingly incorporating modern art into public settings. Contemporary public art plays a significant role in shaping urban spaces, fostering cultural experiences, and contributing to social and economic growth (Erdmann-Goldoni, 2024). It challenges traditional notions of public space, often employing unconventional forms and practices to unsettle, disrupt, and contest place identities (Doherty, 2015). Urban worldwide are increasingly recognizing the manifold advantages of integrating art into their public spaces, not only for its visual appeal, but also for the social and economic advantages it brings. Studies have found that contemporary art in public spaces

expands cultural access, strengthens social bonds, and raises societal awareness. Interactive and temporary artworks particularly influence the use and perception of these spaces, promoting community identification with the environment. Artists have engaged with cities in various ways, from formal commissions to guerrilla street art, addressing issues such as corporate encroachment on public space and global migration (Lovell, 2020). Public art in the Gulf States, for instance, reflects urbanization patterns and acts as a mechanism for strengthening national identity (Mounajjed, 2017).

In contemporary times, public art is not just about erecting monuments in public spaces and painting murals for institution. It could be interactive or immersive, allowing the public to engage with the art, debate about the art, or even be part of the art making process. Altering public spaces with art redefines the utilization of certain spaces, especially in the cases of abandoned and underutilized spaces. Public art also gives ordinary people who would typically not go to galleries, museums and exhibitions opportunities to experiences art, and this is probably one of the most profound essence of contemporary art.

The annual Chale Wote Street Art Festival in Ghana is such example of public art, which brings together art, artist, art enthusiasts and people from all walks of life. At this festival, art is experiences in all form thinkable, including immersive, performance, traditional etc.

Figure 7. Lady engaging with a public art at Chale Wote Street Art Festival

Source: https://aftradvillage.com/destinations/chale-wote-street-art-festival/

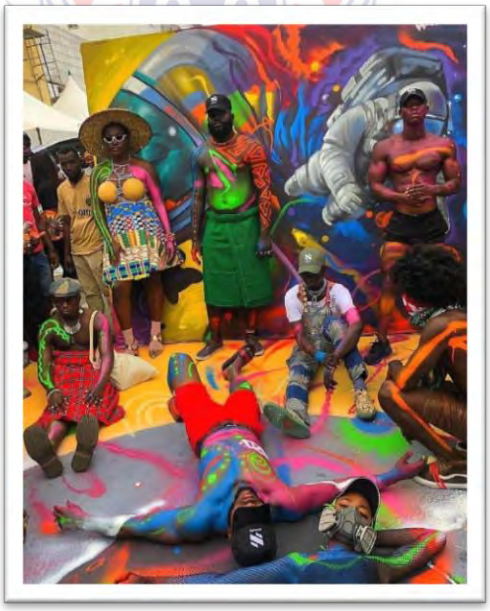

Figure 8. A lend of Painting and Performance at Chale Wote Street Art Fest

Source: https://www.asaaseradio.com/chale-wote-2020-festival-takes-off-in-accra/

Multiplicity of Perspectives: There is no single dominant style or movement in contemporary art, reflecting a pluralistic and decentralized art world. Artists bring diverse perspectives and approaches, emphasizing individuality. The shift from modernism to contemporary art has led to the breakdown of traditional narratives and explanations (Galenson, 2009). The art world has become increasingly global, with non-Western artists participating in a capitalistic market that emphasizes individuality and hybrid inspirations (Venbrux et al., 2005). Artists now focus on place making, world picturing, and connectivity, transcending traditional distinctions of style, medium, and ideology (Smith, 2013). This pluralism has raised questions about the nature of individual style in the post-modern era (Wenninger, 2005). The contemporary art world is characterized by multiple, contemporaneous currents that reflect varied regional shifts from modern to contemporary art (Smith, 2011). This diversity challenges traditional art historical approaches and calls for new viewpoints in accepting and analyzing contemporary artistic practices. Contemporary art challenges traditional art historical approaches, necessitating new perspectives to understand and analyze diverse artistic practices (Şiray, 2022; Hansen, 2022).

Provocative, Questioning and Controversial*:* Contemporary art often employs provocation as a means to stimulate thought and challenge societal norms. Recent ethical-aesthetic theories explore morally provocative art, moving beyond extreme moralism and autonomy to more moderate approaches (Gomes, 2021). Provocative artworks, such as those by Lars von Trier and Andres Serrano, have sparked public outrage and debates (Hjort, 2011). These provocations can protect civil liberties and address representation of marginalized groups in historical archives (Ilieva, 2020; LaPierre, 2019). Some artworks, like Zhu Yu's "Eating People" and Teemu Mäki's

"My Way, a Work in Progress," raise ethical questions about subjectivity and goodness, prompting a pedagogy of provocation in art education (Tavin & Kallio-Tavin, 2014). As digital platforms advance, collaborations between artists and archives continue to expand, informing the mission and practical concerns of cultural heritage institutions (LaPierre, 2019). These provocations in contemporary art serve as catalysts for social and cultural change.

The debate on whether art should be bound by moral standards is not new. Gomes (n.d.) is of the view that even though philosophical views on the moral universe of art have been transforming throughout history, moralism in art dominated for quite a long period and that for many centuries, philosophers, artists, and critics categorically accepted the idea that art can morally influence its audience. In contemporary times, tendencies in the ethical reflections of morality and aesthetics of art has changed.

> The institutional theory of art deconstructed the romantic-modernist myth of art and suggested viewing the artistic sphere as any other social sphere, unable to escape the influence of other fields (e.g. politics and economics). Finally, art institutions themselves started to become more and more welcoming to the mass public. The ethical turn in philosophy of art and art criticism thus was largely the result of a general social turn in the cultural processes (Gomes, p. 224).

Provocation in contemporary do not only raise moral concern but, political, cultural and other diverse forms like anti-Semitic, LGBTQ+ issues, anti-philistine or racist narratives.

Performance art for instance often pushes boundaries and challenges societal norms, raising questions about the limits of artistic expression and the responsibility of artists towards their audiences (Wasli, 2005). Walker (1990) documents controversial British arts and how they were received by the public, the law, and the media from the period

1949-1997. Roberts (n.d.) describes how each decade brought its own battles over art and meaning. In the 1950s, arguments raged over the monument of The Unknown Political Prisoner and the Abstract Expressionist paintings of Richard Green. The 1960s followed with the radical gestures of the Destruction of Art Symposium, where artists used destruction itself as a technique, alongside the scandal of art dealer Robert Frazer's so-called "indecent" drawings. By the 1980s, tensions had intensified and performers were sent to prison for wearing knitted costumes that mimicked naked bodies. A protester lost his life after setting fire to a rubber sculpture of Polaris, and feminist groups launched fierce attacks on degrading images of women. Despite concern surrounding some contemporary artworks, Gomes (n,d,) is of the view that contemporary conflicts around art have already become factors that change the socio-cultural landscape and protests around art push art institutions toward rethinking their approaches to public engagement.

In Ghana, Va-Bene Fiatsi who is referred to as the *crazinist* artist has not been exempted from the debate of the provocative aspect of contemporary art. He often portrays nude performances and advocates for the LGBTQ+ community, whose sexual identities are considered culturally and monaurally wrong in the Ghanaian community.

Figure 9. Performance art by Va-Bene Fiatsi

Source: Biography. (n.d.). crazinisT artisT. https://www.crazinistartist.com/biography/

2.2.3 Section Summary

This section establishes contemporary art as a plural, theory-driven genre characterized by hybridity, decolonization, technological integration, and expanded material practices. While existing literature richly theorizes these concepts, it often stops short of analysing how they are operationalized within formal art curricula. This gap directly informs Objective 1 (analysis of Picture Making course components) and Objective 2 (evaluation of teaching methodologies), while also framing Objective 3 by raising questions about students' preparedness for contemporary, technology-inflected art practice.

2.3 Educational Reforms: Their Importance in the Contemporary Art world

Change is taking place all around, consequently leading to the ever-growing need for educational change. Educational change refers to shifting paradigms within education in order to reform or improve education and educational outcomes. Educational change is most often a result of an awareness of new ideas, new needs, new technology, new perspectives, etc. Globalization, advancements in technology, and developments in research among others are factors that lead to educational reform. Change is an alteration of an organization's environment structure, technology, or people (Robbins et al, 2001; Yanxia, 2008) and the adoption of an innovation, where the goal is to improve outcomes through an alteration of practices (Carlopio, 1998; Yanxia, 2008).

The educational landscape is being transformed by technology, fundamentally changing the methods of teaching, and learning and curriculum design needs to adjust in order to stay in sync with the swift progressions in technology. The rapid advancement of technology has transformed the world and influenced how people interact, work, and learn. This has necessitated curriculum changes to address the development of digital literacy skills in the digital age. Schools and educational institutions have recognized the need to integrate technology across subjects to prepare students for the demands of the digital world (Cavanaugh, 2019). Technological advancements have transformed the way people live, work, and communicate, and as a result, they have a profound impact on curriculum design and delivery (Brown, 2019). The integration of technology into the curriculum offers students new opportunities to engage in authentic, real-world tasks and acquire

essential 21st-century skills (International Society for Technology in Education, 2016). The rapid pace of technological innovation necessitates constant updates to curriculum. Schools must adapt their teaching methods and content to reflect the latest advancements, ensuring students are equipped with relevant skills and knowledge to thrive in a technology-driven society (Warschauer et al, 2010). Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and robotics are reshaping various industries. Schools must incorporate these advancements into the curriculum to prepare students for future careers and to foster digital literacy and adaptability. (Deloitte Insights, 2021). The emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and block chain is transforming various industries and, art and education is no exception. To ensure that students are prepared for the future workforce, curriculum changes are needed to incorporate these emerging technologies and develop relevant skills (Koehler, 2009).

A change in worldview can have a significant impact on education development and reform. Education reflects the prevailing beliefs, values, and goals of society, and when there is a shift in the way people perceive the world and its challenges, it often necessitates a corresponding change in educational content and objectives. Changes in the worldview have led to curriculum revisions that promote inclusivity, multicultural education, and the recognition of diverse identities. Educational institutions have incorporated inclusive literature, culturally responsive teaching practices, and social justice education to foster equity and respect for all (Banks, 2015).

Reforms in education can be sought if an education's system is outdated/ outmoded.

The term "outmoded" refers to something that is no longer fashionable, relevant, or effective due to being outdated or surpassed by newer alternatives. It suggests that a particular idea or practice is no longer in vogue or widely accepted because it is considered old-fashioned, obsolete, or out of date. The term implies that the thing in question has been replaced by more current or advanced versions or methods that are deemed superior or more suitable for contemporary times. In an ever-changing world, anything that remains constant is more likely than not outmoded. An outdated curriculum overlooks advancements in pedagogy and instructional strategies, resulting in ineffective teaching practices and diminished student engagement (Thompson, 2020). Outdated curriculum fails to prepare students for the demands of the modern world, hindering their ability to compete in a rapidly evolving global economy. As society progresses, the knowledge and skills required for success change accordingly, and outdated curricula hamper educational institutions' ability to meet these evolving needs, necessitating curriculum reform (Johnson, 2019). Thompson (2020) says that an outdated curriculum overlooks advancements in pedagogy and instructional strategies, resulting in ineffective teaching practices and diminished student engagement." About the Nigerian curriculum for instance, Surajudeen (2020) said they are vivid remnants of the imperial educational system passed down by the British colonial government sixty years ago. This was a call for reforms in the Nigerian education system and learning outcomes.

Ukpong (2020) considers innovation as an aspect of educational change, which involves the alteration of some aspects of educational programmes, and its basic aim is the renewal of inputs, processes, and products of school organizations. The basic

aim of innovation is the injection of new ideas and technology into the system of schooling as a means of bringing change in the educational system (Nwogu, 2013; Ukpong, 2020). Because it is increasingly difficult to predict what type of businesses will emerge in the job market of the future. Thus, what is required are unique talents, skills, knowledge, the ability to adapt to changes, and creativity (Burner 2018). Education systems today therefore need to prepare learners for a world in which knowledge is continuously being expanded, and in which citizens will need to know how to continuously update their knowledge, and how to 'use' what they know flexibly in a range of different work environments. Educational change in such a context may be seen as an important means of enabling the nation to 'keep up' with other external changes that are taking place worldwide (Wedell, 2009). Fullan (2007) cited in Burner (2018) mentions three dimensions of educational change necessary to achieve 'real change'; when new or revised materials are introduced (curriculum materials or technologies), new teaching approaches, (teaching strategies or activities), changing people's beliefs (assumptions and theories underlying particular policies or programme).

Teaching approaches that are thought to help learners learn and know in different ways will need to be introduced. Teaching materials and methods of assessment will be affected. All of these will somehow need to be linked and connected into a coherent curriculum document and a coherent plan to guide and support the change process (Wedell, 2009). Among those who will be substantially affected by the educational change are teachers. With education systems feeling challenged in having to prepare students for today's fast-changing world, and considerations made for People

everywhere are grappling with how to engage students to develop the knowledge and skills for today and tomorrow's workplace, teachers ought to adjust their views so that they could accept the new teaching and learning ways. Zeng (2005) echoes that Teachers, children, and parents all need to adjust their beliefs as well as their behaviors if they want to satisfy the curriculum. Planning and implementing educational change therefore need to take people's feelings into account. Apart from any potential psychological/emotional threats to peoples' professional (and personal) self-perceptions, the process of 'reculturing' involves developing confidence in new practices and this demands ongoing investment of additional time and energy from participants. Implemented is clearly extremely important (Wedell, 2009).

Teacher education in the arts is crucial for developing art teachers who possess the knowledge, and skills, necessary to engage students in meaningful art experiences. In the field of art, evolution is even more rapid and distinct because the nature of the discipline requires creative power; the power to constantly think and imagine creatively, engage in skillful activities, and birth new ideas. Consequently, the visual arts industry has evolved and expanded into broad areas of possibilities. Educational reform in art teacher education is vital to address the changing landscape of art education. It is crucial to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to nurture students' creativity, critical thinking, and cultural understanding (Smith 2019). Educational strategies must continually evolve to meet the needs of students and prepare them for the future (OECD, 2020). As education undergoes constant change, it is imperative that art teachers are equipped with the tools to navigate these transformations and provide quality instruction to their students Vital to the current landscape of visual art is the use of new technology and improved technology, to make

art more efficient. U.S. Department of Education (2017) considers technology a powerful tool for transforming learning. It says technology can help affirm and advance relationships between educators and students, reinvent our approaches to learning and collaboration, shrink long-standing equity and accessibility gaps, and adapt learning experiences to meet the needs of all learners. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) reechoes this by saying adapting educational strategies, we can leverage technology to enhance learning experiences and provide students with 21st-century skills. Bassey (2020) says the conclusion reached by the Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) during its expert conference on Education, Art, and ICT integration for the Development of Arts Education is that the potential and objectives of ICT in arts education can vary depending on the specific activity. According to the document, ICTs present diverse opportunities in the realm of arts education and aesthetics development. These technologies offer crucial features, such as fostering creativity and self-actualization, facilitating the creation of visual communication objects, enabling the modeling of virtual environments and informational objects, and providing a means to integrate visual, aural, and moving images into communication objects. Artistic activities today are influenced by the new trends propelled by emerging technologies. Research has shown that new technologies have led to artistic innovations either by increasingly altering the content of artistic media or by evolving the creation of new media. “As the technological medium progresses, new art forms emerge” (Samdanis, 2016; Bassey, 2020). Bassey (2020) again infers those emerging technologies have invaded the “Life” of Art in all directions ranging from conceptualization, rendition, exhibition, marketing, consumption, and even conservation as a result of new trend collaborations.

In order to prepare future art educators to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world, educational reform in art teacher education is crucial. The traditional models of art education that focus solely on technical skills and artistic production are no longer sufficient. It is essential to reframe art education as a dynamic discipline that integrates critical thinking, creativity, cultural understanding, and digital literacy. By embracing educational reform, we can empower art teachers to become facilitators of inquiry-based learning, fostering students' artistic expression and nurturing their abilities to think critically and engage with the world through art (Smith, 2022). Every aspect of art across times is necessary for teaching and learning.

To appreciate the need for educational reform in broadening the scope of art in teacher art education at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana, here is a review of the evolution of Art in art education in various other institution across the world.

2.3.1 Section Summary

Section 2.3 argues that rapid technological improvement, changing worldviews, globalization, and changing professional needs in modern art and education necessitate educational reform. The literature highlights how out-of-date curriculum and conventional pedagogies are becoming more and more out of step with the reality of modern artistic practice, especially when it comes to digital technology, interdisciplinarity, and new forms of creative output.

Since the focus on curriculum reform highlights the necessity of critically analyzing the elements of UEW Picture Making courses and determining whether their content reflects contemporary art practices shaped by technology, hybridity, and innovation,

these discussions directly justify the relevance of Objective 1.

Objective 2 is also supported, as the section highlights that educational change extends beyond curriculum content to include teaching methodologies, assessment strategies, and teacher beliefs. The literature highlights the need for pedagogical techniques in modern art education that promote flexibility, creativity, critical thinking, and technology fluency, raising significant concerns regarding the efficacy of current teaching strategies in Picture Making at UEW.

Finally, the section lays a conceptual foundation for Objective 4 by positioning educational reform as a strategic process involving curriculum renewal, pedagogical innovation, and institutional adaptation. The identified gaps between developments in contemporary art practice and slower curriculum transformation points to the need for evidence-based strategies to broaden the scope of Picture Making at UEW in alignment with global contemporary art trends.

2.4 Challenges and Benefits of Contemporary Art in Education

Contemporary art is one of the most criticized art genres in the history of art for a number of reasons, leading to contentions in within not only in the art world, but also in academic art institutions. This is because the acceptance of its impact on what people have known and accepted as art. The confusion with the seeming disappearance of older traditions and ideas in the wake of contemporary art has spilled over into the field of education and has affected the teaching of art in the classroom detrimentally (Leng, 2015). Stinespring (2001) claims people might fall into the trap that contemporary art is against all tradition and everything that comes with it, including craftsmanship,

design and quality. The threat that people might abandon aesthetics and 'serious art of high quality' altogether just so they can fit into the look of contemporary art is very real as many artworks today are selected for their sociopolitical messages and not their aesthetic value (Kamhi, 2003). People often question if certain forms presented in exhibition are actually art, or lazy attempts of presenting ideas. This makes institutions and authorities unwilling to teach it as art in educational institutions. Some contemporary artworks may come off as offensive, controversial and provocative, questioning the moral values teachers are tasked to instill in students. Taking that society has become more open-minded, and people do not know how much open-minded it is going to get over a period of time, educators are more likely to push back on certain contemporary issues, approaches and materials, when the have concern about their legality and morality. These concerns are legitimate because educators have definitely witnessed some contemporary artworks which are provocative and far from what they have been trained to consider as ethical and standard in artistic practice.

> If the function of school in society is to teach respect and obedience to authority, therein lays one of the inherent conflicts between CA and school art. One represents the new, untested, risk-taking unapologetic world-view that is at its core controversial and subversive and on the other hand there is school art that aims to instill docility and respect to authority through supplying a compliant manual workforce (Twardzil et al, 2017, p. 6).

When Duchamp presented a statement piece questioning the art world and the boundaries of art, it was not without opposition. However, several years later, the art world has embraced various art forms, which conflict the general ideas of what art should be according to the traditional notion of art. He questioned the norms of what art is, and who has the authority to determine what the parameters of art is. The Society

of Independent Artists who were having an exhibition at the time offered exhibition spaces for the prices of six dollars. He then went about to test this seemingly democratic criterion by entering the infamous “Fountain”, 1917, an overturned urinal, under the pseudonym R. Mutt. As it turns out, “Fountain” was rejected despite the fact that it had fulfilled the only criteria of the $6 payment (Godfrey, 1998). Today, contemporary art seems to challenge every aspect of traditional painting and sculpture to the point of even challenging why there should be categorizations and characterizations in art. This is brought about by hybridizations of art practice in contemporary times. These values, along with controversial artworks that have been exhibited by artists, further pushing boundaries has given rise to lots of debated, and therefore art Educators who do not subscribe to the idea of contemporary art may avoid teaching it. When in 2019, Maurizio Cattelan presented a duct-taped banana work that went 120,000 dollars at the Art Basel in Miami, which was later eaten by David Datuna, claiming the eating of the banana was a form art, this added to the debate of the appropriateness of certain aspect of the contemporary art. This validates the concerns of sceptics, and excites contemporary art enthusiast. The artwork, which is titled ‘Comedian’, was bought by Justin Sun, the founder of an emerging crypto platform ‘TRON’ at Sotheby’s auction for 6.2 million dollars. According to The Times of India (2024), the high auction price of the work cannot be attributed to a single reason but rather to several factors. One of the most significant is that Cattelan’s piece is an example of conceptual art, a genre in which the idea behind the work takes precedence over its physical appearance. In this case, the banana duct-taped to a wall became a symbol of social commentary on how people perceive art. While many enthusiasts embraced it, others questioned its artistic value.

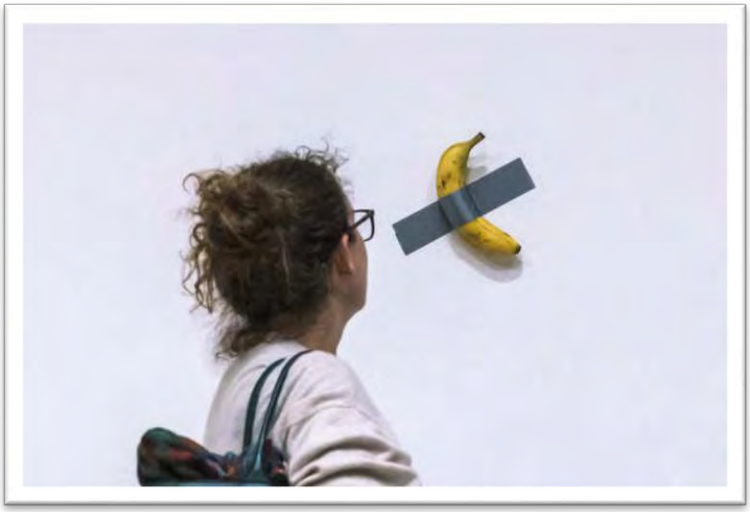

Figure 10. A woman looks at the "Comedian" during an auction preview at Sotheby's

Source://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/115562232.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Ampratwum (2018) says that in Ghana, contemporary art has come under keen scrutiny and many, including artists, have questioned whether it should be considered as art. He narrates that the issue of contemporary art has been a sensitive topic for discussion with many holding the view that it does not, and should not be art. Despite the criticisms, Ghanaians are gradually embracing contemporary art. Considering the concern and perceptions people have when it pertains to contemporary art, probably, the most abiding reason why contemporary art is a must-teach in schools is the fact that this genre despite its controversial approaches has come to stay, and the knowledge and practice of it is necessary for producing well rounded artists, and art teachers.

> What is certain is that the youth are the people now involved in contemporary art making and exhibitions in Ghana and have started making strides internationally with what they produce. These contemporary practices by the youth have come under intense scrutiny from artists and non-artists who have gone through formal education and consider certain materials processes as impure and therefore should not be used for art. That could be where the missing

> link is and perhaps requires more time for better appreciation (Ampratwum, 2018, p. 3).

Another reason for which contemporary art may be contested in Educational institution is the issue of assessment. There are definite inherent cultural biases that are not accounted for in the assessment of art assignments (Atkinson, 2011). Already, assessment of traditional art has been an issue of debated and contention, question the subjectivity of assessment modes. Arguably, traditional art does not pose as much assessment concern as traditional art, since with the traditional art, there is always a certain level of expectation in the end product. Contrarily, with contemporary art, the emphasis not necessarily on the end product, but rather of process, creativity, idea and experimentation. Often times, traditional art puts students in a position where they feel the need to please teachers and receive validation from them, so they try to fit into the standards of their teacher, giving little room for creativity and originality. The nature and ideals of contemporary art has less to do with the rules and teacher expectations, leading to assessment concerns by teachers. Here subjectivity in assessment is even more heightened, giving that contemporary art breaks a lot of traditional rules of art, and needs open-mindedness to ascertain, how much value/grade an artwork possess. Lindstrom (2006) suggests that art assessment must take into consideration the ambiguous and unpredictable outcomes in Contemporary artworks. Gude (2013) suggests that we look beyond product-based assessment frameworks and start articulating project-based assessment models that provide students with tools to make meaning in their own artwork.

2.5 Contemporary Art: Why it is Important in Teacher Art Education in Ghana

In Ghana it is very important that at the very least, tertiary institution introduce contemporary art to students. And this is because globally, contemporary art is being discussed and implemented at the basic levels of education. Curriculum. Much of the current thinking about art curriculums advocate that it be relevant to the lives of the student and their commies and grounded in the realities of contemporary life as well as that of the school (Gude, 2013). In a study by Leng et al (2015), which involved thirteen teachers, ten teachers had introduced contemporary art to their students in school and three had not. Out of the three who had not introduced the contemporary art to students, one said that it is because he had to "follow school SOW (Scheme of Work)". Another said that he did not consider it age appropriate citing that at their young age (Primary Level) they should know about the elements of art and the principles of design before delving into conceptual art, and that maybe at secondary level it will be more suitable. Thulson (2013) asserts that the reasons for which educators are skeptical about contemporary are that as young children, they cannot understand the complex theories in the 21st century and that children should have basic art-making skills before they can make contemporary art. This popular opinion has not deterred educators who appreciate contemporary art from introducing the genre in their classrooms. It is essential to include topics concerning contemporary fine arts in art class (Cole, 1996; Venaläinen, 2012). Contemporary art has rich learning experiences in teaching and learning, and these experiences can be summarized with the concepts with the diagram that follows, sourced from a research by Venäläinen (2012).

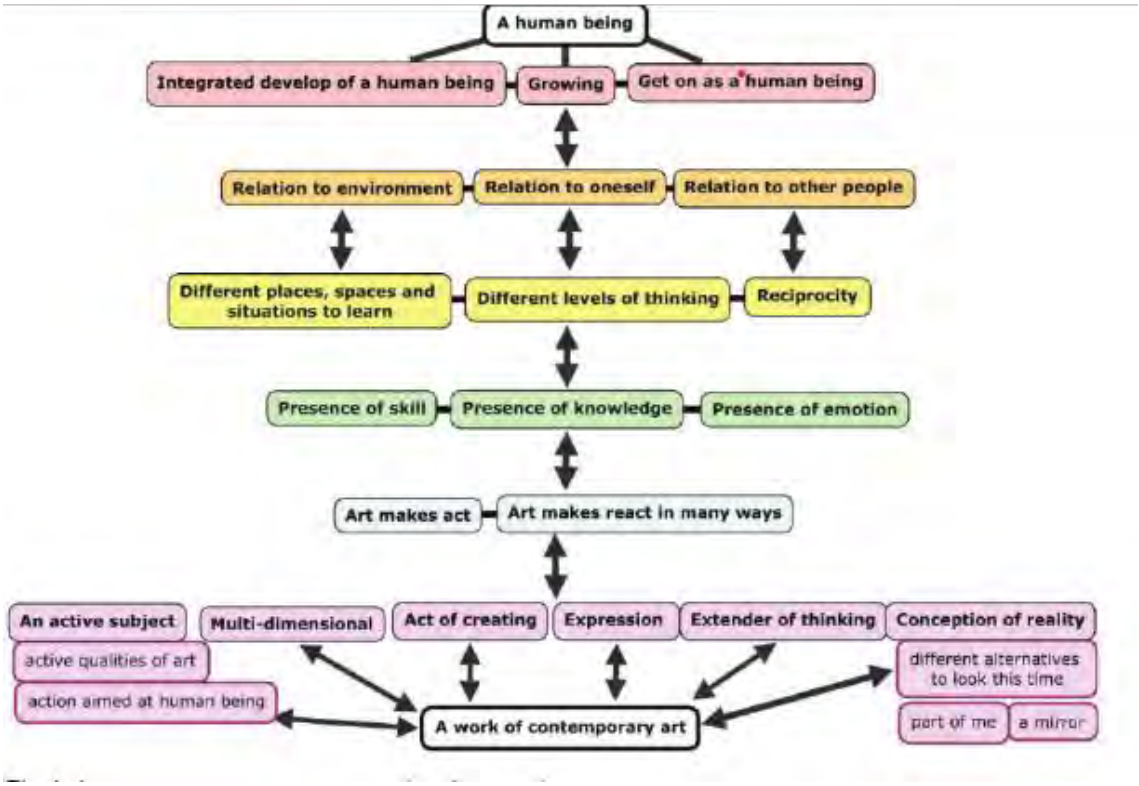

Figure 11. Contemporary art as a learning experience

Source: Venäläinen (2012).

The diagram presents how the human being is able to function in diverse faculties and through integrated human development that comes about through contemporary art engagements. It indicates that contemporary art helps to grow well-rounded human beings by developing their intellect, emotion and creative abilities. The authors validate this by pointing out that Contemporary art education has been shown to positively influence children's creative expression, emotional creativity, and critical thinking skills. This is dues to the fact the contemporary art genre is emphasizes on active subjects, multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary approaches, the process of creating, self-expression, extender of thinking, conception of reality, different way of thinking.

In essence, the practice of contemporary art helps individuals to relate to their environment, to self, and to others.

Contemporary art has been shown to promote critical thinking skills in various educational contexts. Lukaka (2023) says that art education fosters creativity and critical thinking by encouraging expressive and cognitive skills. Studies demonstrate that engaging with contemporary artworks enhances students' ability to analyze, question assumptions, and consider multiple perspectives (Festa, 2013; Raikou, 2016). Leng (2015) confirms that contemporary critical thinking promotes and creativity rather than merely skill based rote learning. In his research, survey responses indicated that teaching contemporary art encourages learner engagement, freedom of expression, empathy, risk taking in art making, and a broader and deeper understanding in art. Also, it fosters higher-order thinking skills by increasing students' abilities in analyzing and evaluating art through art discussions and in creating/making original works of art, and that these skills can be used as a powerful tool that can give voice to children who are so often not given a voice. In design education, systems thinking and interdisciplinary collaboration enhance creativity and critical thinking (Montana-Hoyos & Lemaitre, 2011). The relationship between art and critical thinking extends beyond aesthetic contemplation, preparing individuals to navigate complex societal issues (Buffington, 2007; Da Silva et al., 2024).

2.5.1 Section Summary

This section highlights both the challenges and benefits of integrating contemporary art into educational settings. Challenges such as skepticism toward unconventional materials, assessment difficulties, and concerns about morality and aesthetics underscore the tension between traditional art education and contemporary practices. Conversely, the benefits include fostering critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary engagement, and learner-centered approaches, all of which are central to developing well-rounded students capable of navigating the complexities of contemporary art.

Objective 4 is reinforced through the identification of both challenges and opportunities for curriculum improvement. By recognising barriers to teaching contemporary art and leveraging its benefits, this section supports the development of evidence-based strategies aimed at broadening the scope of Picture Making at UEW, ensuring relevance to global contemporary art trends and fostering an adaptive, revolutionary art education program.

2.6 History and Transitions of Art in Art Education Programmes

The evolution of art over time has been intertwined with the development of technology and the shifting demands of society. From traditional methods like painting and sculpting to the inclusion of digital tools, the way artists create and express themselves has undergone significant transformation. Art education has never existed in isolation; it has always responded to broader societal, technological, and cultural forces. This

historical perspective highlights the importance of understanding how educational programs evolve to prepare students for contemporary art practices, directly supporting the objective of analysing program components at UEW. Discussions in this section highlight how art teacher education programs have evolved alongside the shifting purposes of art itself, from craftsmanship to conceptual practice.

Technological advancements and changing societal needs have also redefined what art education encompasses in the 21st century. Digital tools and software have revolutionized traditional art forms, creating new ideas for artistic expression (Hua & Yu, 2024). This modification is visible in how university art programs progressively integrate both digital media and interdisciplinary approaches. Art education standards now incorporate technology as both a teaching tool and an art making medium, with media arts developing as a subset of visual arts (Patton & Buffington, 2016). These innovations are shaping a new generation of art teachers and artists who navigating both physical and digital creative spaces.

Universities are adapting their curricula to better align with contemporary art practices and ubiquitous computing (Jochum, 2019). As a result, contemporary practices such as installation art, digital fabrication, and socially engaged art are gaining prominence in pre-service teacher education programs. This includes the integration of digital platforms, which expand both pedagogical approaches and aesthetic possibilities. Digital art has become an essential element in contemporary education, including practices such as digital painting, 3D modeling, and interactive media (Dzhanaev & Yazici, 2024).

However, these developments are not without challenges. While these changes offer new opportunities for creativity and innovation, challenges remain, including resource scarcity and concerns about the potential loss of traditional skills.

Industrial Influence and Early Motivations: Art education in grew from being a decorative subject for economic and social growth. In the 19th century, it shifted from social display to self-improvement, contributing to middle-class formation and social control (Stankiewicz, 2002). Art education emerged with multiple purposes: developing labor market skills, providing cultural education for the middle class, illustrating moral character, and promoting self-expression (Freedman, 2018). It was positioned between technology and literacy, serving as a means of technical literacy and social management (Stankiewicz, 2003).

Historically, teacher preparation programs in art were shaped by similar industrial imperatives. Drawing was introduced into schools alongside writing and mathematics to equip students with skills deemed essential for industrial participation (Stankiewicz, 2009). Government-supported art education prioritized the development of human capital, aiming to produce skilled workers for manufacturers. The field of art education, therefore, became a conduit for social and economic objectives, deeply influenced by the needs of a rapidly industrializing society

Case Study of Illinois State Normal University (ISNU) and the Arts and Crafts Movement: Art was first introduced in American schools to support industrial competitiveness. Whitford (n.d.) notes that Benjamin Franklin advocated for arts education as early as 1749. Rembrandt Peale, in 1840, promoted art as a visual system

for eye-hand coordination to complement subjects like writing and geography. In Massachusetts, art helped manufacturers develop aesthetically appealing products.

By the mid-20th century, however, the purpose of art education shifted. Eisner (1972) documented a growing belief in the intrinsic value of art ("art-for-art's-sake"). This shift led to curricular reforms emphasizing personal expression and the conceptual understanding of art.

Art education in North America evolved from its origins as an ornamental subject for the upper class to a tool for economic and social development. In the 19th century, it shifted from social display to self-improvement, contributing to middle-class formation and social control (Stankiewicz, 2002). Art education emerged with multiple purposes: developing labor market skills, providing cultural education for the middle class, illustrating moral character, and promoting self-expression (Freedman, 2018). It was positioned between technology and literacy, serving as a means of technical literacy and social management (Stankiewicz, 2003).

Historically, teacher preparation programmes in art were shaped by similar industrial requirements. Drawing was introduced into schools alongside writing and mathematics to equip students with skills deemed essential for industrial participation (Stankiewicz, 2009). Government-supported art education prioritized the development of human capital, aiming to produce skilled workers for manufacturers. This utilitarian approach. placing economic productivity above personal or cultural expression reflected broader educational priorities during the height of industrialization (Henry & Lazzari, 2007).

The field of art education, therefore, became a conduit for social and economic objectives, influenced by the needs of a rapidly industrializing society.

The evolution of art education at specific institutions like Illinois State Normal University (ISNU) offers a microcosm of these broader shifts. Established in 1857 as Illinois' first public institution of higher education, ISNU focused exclusively on teacher preparation, embedding art education within its foundational mission (Freed, 2008). Early instructional practices were shaped by Herbartian pedagogical principles, which emphasized inductive reasoning and visual aids, marking a departure from rote learning (Miller, 2003).

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, ISNU incorporated handicrafts and design into its curriculum, reflecting the global influence of the Arts and Crafts movement. Courses such as Metal Crafts and Crafts for Elementary Schools were introduced, aligning with international ideals of functional beauty in response to industrial mass production. This emphasis on craftsmanship not only reinforced aesthetic values but also responded to societal needs for practical, skill-based training.

However, as Chalmers (1992) observes, the art education discourse at the time also reinforced racial and cultural hierarchies by valorizing Greco-Roman and European artistic traditions while marginalizing non-Western viewpoints. These curricular choices reflected the broader ideological tensions of the period, where progressive aims coexisted with exclusionary narratives.

Throughout the 20th century, themes of creativity and aesthetics continued to dominate discourse in art education (Marché, 2000), while the field at large remained responsive

to intellectual movements and social forces that shaped institutional goals and educational priorities (Stankiewicz, 1991).

France: Academic Hierarchies and Classical Ideals: The history of art education in France is marked by significant institutional developments that both reflected and shaped broader cultural transformations. The Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, established in 1648, set the standard for art creation and education until the mid-19th century, emphasizing classical ideals and hierarchical aesthetics (Shin Sang-cheol, 2012). In 1747, the School of Selected Students was founded to prepare talented young artists for the prestigious French Academy in Rome (Agratina, 2022), reinforcing a system that prized academic excellence and conformity to traditional forms.

Earlier, during the Renaissance, French artists and theorists sought to elevate art from a manual trade to an intellectual discipline. Anfam et al. (1985) note that painting was initially regarded as menial labor. To legitimize it, scientific principles such as anatomy, geometry, and linear perspective were introduced into curricula. These elements aligned artistic training with classical and Renaissance ideals, promoting imitation and idealization of the human figure.

Jean-Jacques Bachelier's Royal Free School of Drawing, established in the 18th century, was notable for its mission to educate the children of craftsmen, bridging social divisions in art training. This institution later became part of the National School of Decorative Arts (Agratina, 2020), further democratizing access to art education.

By the 19th century, however, the rigid structure of academic training had begun to stifle artistic expression, prompting reforms at École des Beaux-Arts. The embrace of impressionism and plein-air painting techniques marked a critical move. Originality, spontaneity, and technical experimentation, such as the alla prima method began to define modernist art education. This transition signaled a broader redefinition of what constituted "valid" art, moving away from the replication of classical ideals toward more individualistic, experiential approaches. The act of painting outdoors, for example, represented a deliberate break from the confines of studio-bound training and a new engagement with nature and perception.

Throughout this period, France served as a model for art education across Europe. Its institutions and philosophies influenced the evolution of curricula and the understanding of art as both a technical and expressive discipline (Saunders & Macdonald, 1971). From codified classicism to modernist innovation, French art education illustrates a historical trajectory in which pedagogy, aesthetics, and social structures were deeply interwoven.

New Zealand: Colonial Influence and Evolving Pedagogy: The history of art education in New Zealand has evolved significantly over the past 140 years, influenced by international trends, colonial legacies, and shifting pedagogical paradigms (Act & Terreni, 2010). Early approaches were highly formalized and teacher-directed, reflecting industrial and utilitarian constraints. According to Smith (1872), drawing instruction began in primary schools with simple blackboard outlines and advanced to model-based and perspective drawing. British-trained art masters, such as those from Kensington, introduced plaster casts of classical sculptures to classrooms in the 1860s

as tools that remained essential to instruction into the 20th century. Art was largely positioned as a teaching aid rather than as a vehicle for personal or cultural expression.

Religious and colonial dynamics also shaped the early development of art education. Missionaries, often hostile to indigenous worldviews, excluded Māori cultural traditions from formal curricula. As a result, early art instruction in New Zealand was aligned with Western ideals and failed to reflect the cultural diversity of the population. However, by the 1960s, educational reforms began to introduce Māori arts and crafts into mainstream schooling**.** The 1989 syllabus marked a further turning point, reflecting modernist ideals and incorporating conceptual frameworks. From the 1990s onward, curriculum reforms began to focus on multiculturalism and contemporary art practices, challenging the earlier dominance of Eurocentric models (Smith, 2009).

In parallel with these cultural shifts, the pedagogical orientation of New Zealand's art education also transformed. Early models gave way to child-centered and developmental approaches, and eventually to socio-cultural models that emphasized context, identity, and meaning-making (Act & Terreni, 2010; Terreni, 2017). The national early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, now integrates visual arts across multiple strands of learning, illustrating the sector's embrace of holistic and culturally responsive teaching (Terreni, 2017).

International influences, such as the Reggio Emilia approach, have further inspired New Zealand educators to re-evaluate their visual arts practices and pedagogical frameworks (Pohio, 2009). Yet, despite these progressive shifts, the field remains marked by diversity in both theory and application. Developmental, progressive, and

psychoanalytical theories continue to shape varied approaches to early childhood art education (Visser, 2005).

This diversity has led to ongoing debates about the epistemological basis and educational value of art in early learning contexts. New Zealand's evolving art education landscape reveals a nation responsive to both global pedagogical innovation and local cultural reclamation. The transition from technical utility to conceptual and cultural exploration represents a significant turning point that continues to unfold in response to changing societal values.

The ideological turn from functionalism to self-expression allowed art education to expand its philosophical and pedagogical base, integrating broader cognitive and affective aims.

The Rise and Decline of Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE): The concept of discipline-based art education (DBAE) came about as a comprehensive approach to teaching art, incorporating art history, criticism, aesthetics, and production (Dobbs, 1992). This model, an extension of the 1965 Penn State Seminar, aimed to redefine art education as a discipline with structured inquiry and curriculum (Lovano-Kerr, 1985). Despite its benefits, the implementation of discipline-based education has faced challenges in practice, with a lag between theory and classroom application (Lovano-Kerr, 1985).

At ISNU for example, Brant (1987) criticized DBAE for its rigid adherence to the traditional fine arts canon, which marginalized contemporary, diverse, and female artists. Despite its initial popularity, DBAE fell out of favour by the late 1990s due to

its exclusivity. To address these limitations, Dr. Linda Fisher proposed integrating technology into art education. Her course, "Technology in Art Education," introduced at Illinois State University in 1997–1998, equipped pre-service teachers with digital tools for creative expression, visual communication, and instruction (Fisher, 2016). This initiative aligned art teacher preparation with evolving technological demands. Fisher's curriculum was tailored to reflect 21st-century competencies, acknowledging that future art educators must be fluent in both traditional media and contemporary technological tools.

To summarise the historical transitions in art education, Al-Amri (2011) sections them in this order: The Design-Manufacture approach (1830s–40s) which was one of the first strategies that focused on reproducing design concepts for application in industry. The Memory Drawing approach came next in 1897. It focused on drawing pictures from memory to improve visual recall. Child-centered models became popular in the middle of the 20th century. Herbert Read (1943) encouraged people to express themselves and appreciate art, while Viktor Lowenfeld (1947) thought art was important for children's growth. These methods put creativity and personal improvement first. Models that focused on discipline came out in the 1960s. Barkan (1962) talked about art history and criticism, Chapman (1969) talked about balancing expressiveness with social awareness, and Eisner (1972) talked about the productive, critical, and cultural sides of art. The DBAE standard, which lasted from the 1980s to 2004, combined production, history, critique, and aesthetics. It then grew to encompass multiculturalism and technology. Other models such as came Arts PROPEL (1985–91) came up, and this model put a lot of focus on making things, seeing them, and thinking about them.

Making and judging were important parts of the UK's National Curriculum. Allison and Figg, among other scholars emphasised perception, cultural context, and student–environment interaction. These transitions show a change from copying to reflecting, which supports both creative expression and critical thinking in art education, in line with the values of contemporary art.

Contemporary Trends in Art Education: Rethinking Art Education for the 21st Century: Art education has traditionally emphasized skill acquisition through media-specific instruction, often rooted in Eurocentric formalism. This approach persists in many postsecondary art programs, emphasizing visual elements and manual skills (Tavin et al., 2007). The proliferation of mass media imagery in the postmodern era necessitates a broader, semiotic approach to visual education that acknowledges the crossover between high and popular culture (Duncum, 1997). However, contemporary scholars such as Kerry Freedman argue for a shift toward Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE), which integrates visual culture, media literacy, and conceptual practice into teacher training. VCAE promotes the idea that future educators must be equipped to navigate an image-saturated, media-complex world, moving beyond traditional fine art media to address culturally and socially embedded visual practices (Freedman, 2025; NCAD, 2023). Kerry Freedman's work on Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) has sparked significant interest in the field of art education (Chalmers, 2005; Dorn, 2005; Goodrich, 2008). VCAE integrates visual culture, media literacy, and conceptual practice into art education, responding to the dominance of visual communication in global culture (Freedman, 2003). This approach represents a shift from traditional studio-based art education towards a more dialogic emphasis, focusing on art as a

socially constructed object (Dorn, 2005). Freedman argues that the pervasiveness of visual images in modern technology necessitates changes in art curriculum (Chalmers, 2005). Her book "Teaching Visual Culture" provides a theoretical basis for developing a curriculum that addresses the complexities of visual culture in contemporary society (Freedman, 2003).

This call for pedagogical transformation is echoed in the works of Elliot Eisner and Maxine Greene, who champion *aesthetic modes of knowing*. Eisner underscores that the arts cultivate perception, imagination, and judgment, which are essential qualities for reflective teaching (Eisner, 1985). Greene (1995) furthers this perspective by framing art as a site of critical and moral inquiry, where teachers and learners engage in acts of world-making. These theoretical foundations support the integration of conceptual, socially engaged, and technologically mediated art forms into teacher education curricula.

Furthermore, arts-informed pedagogies view art not just as content but as methods, supporting teacher identity formation, critical reflection, and professional artistry. These approaches advocate for using artistic processes as epistemological tools, enabling teachers to navigate complex, pluralistic societies with creativity and empathy.

Intermedial and STEAM-Oriented Pedagogies: Contemporary art practices rarely conform to single media boundaries. The idea of intermediality, as explored by Tomšič Amon (2023), proposes that artistic and educational practices should engage across media, combining installation, video, performance, and digital environments to foster

multimodal literacy. This approach has profound implications for art teacher education, challenging curricula to embrace hybrid, experiential, and cross-media projects.

Complementing intermediality is the pedagogical move toward STEAM education, where the arts are embedded within interdisciplinary frameworks that include science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. STEAM promotes project-based learning, collaborative inquiry, and creative problem-solving. While many educational systems are moving in this direction, teacher education programs often remain discipline-isolated, lacking the curriculum flexibility or faculty training necessary to support such interdisciplinary engagement (arXiv; Milara & Orduña, 2022).

Nonetheless, both intermediality and STEAM pedagogies call for curriculum redesigns that empower art educators with tools to integrate conceptual, digital, and collaborative practices into classroom teaching, thereby aligning with 21st-century learner needs.

Comparative Global Models of Contemporary Art Integration in Art Education:

In an era marked by digital transformation and cultural pluralism, the integration of contemporary art practices into teacher education is becoming a critical imperative. Art educators today must navigate a complex visual landscape, encompassing traditional media, new media, conceptual art, performance, and socio-political commentary. This evolution calls for teacher preparation programs that embrace not only technical proficiency but also cultural fluency, interdisciplinarity, and critical pedagogy. To this end, examining international case studies provides valuable insights into how contemporary art is embedded in undergraduate teacher education.

University of Lethbridge, Canada (Merging New Media with Pedagogy): The University of Lethbridge offers a dual degree in Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in New Media or Art and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), which merges studio practice with pedagogical training over a five-year period. This program exemplifies the type of curricular integration necessary for preparing educators to teach contemporary art. Courses in electronic art, narrative design, interactivity, and digital fabrication reflect an engagement with time-based and participatory art forms.

From a theoretical perspective, this model resonates with the Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) framework advocated by Freedman and Stuhr (2004), which emphasizes the importance of preparing learners to decode and create meaning within today's visually saturated culture. The Lethbridge program cultivates both technical skills and critical literacy, preparing future teachers to guide students in analyzing visual narratives and constructing meaning through emerging media.

By incorporating three semesters of supervised teaching practicum, the program ensures that theoretical understanding is reinforced by practical classroom experience, bridging the often-cited gap between university learning and school-based teaching. The program's structure aligns with contemporary pedagogical models that prioritize experiential learning (Dewey, 1938) and studio-thinking frameworks (Hetland et al., 2013) that value inquiry, reflection, and adaptability.

National College of Art & Design, Ireland (Visual Culture in Practice): Though not a traditional B.Ed. programme, the BA (Hons) in Visual Culture at Ireland's National College of Art & Design (NCAD) provides another significant model. It includes

professional practice placements, theory-rich seminars on digital culture, and interdisciplinary modules such as "Materials, Processes & Technology," which spans from traditional craft to 3D printing. This programme exemplifies the contemporary shift in art education towards expanded field practices, as articulated by Rosalind Krauss (1979), where boundaries between disciplines blur and the art object itself becomes mutable. The NCAD model prepares students to engage with both materiality and immateriality, analog and digital, which are a critical balance in today's hybrid art ecosystem.

Incorporating collaborative exhibitions with public cultural institutions further grounds the curriculum in socially engaged practice. Such real-world engagements allow students to explore art's role in public discourse, echoing Claire Bishop's (2012) advocacy for participatory art and critical pedagogy rooted in community and institutional critique. The program fosters in future educators the ability to contextualize art within broader socio-political and cultural frameworks, essential in teaching art as both a form of expression and a tool for critique.

HBK Saar, Germany (Pedagogical Innovation through Media Art): At the Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Saar (HBK Saar), the Kunsterziehung / Media Art & Design (Lehramt) programme offers an exemplary fusion of media arts and teacher training. This state-accredited program includes modules on visual effects, interactive design, lighting installation, and game development, taught within a pedagogical structure. It illustrates a robust response to the challenge of integrating emerging technologies and contemporary media practices into teacher education.

This approach aligns closely with post-medium theories (Krauss, 2000) and relational aesthetics (Bourriaud, 1998), recognizing that media art surpasses traditional categories and often involves interactive, performative, or networked forms. Moreover, the HBK Saar program's attention to curriculum development and teaching methodology demonstrates how such media can be pedagogically framed, not simply as content, but as a form of inquiry and critical engagement.

Incorporating design-thinking and systems-based approaches to curriculum also prepares teacher-candidates for educational environments increasingly shaped by technology and interdisciplinarity. In this way, the program embraces what Elliot Eisner (2002) described as **"**the forms of representation" in artistic knowing, expanding the range of expressive modalities teachers can offer their students.

Proposed Model by Al-Amri (2012): MultiDiscipline Based Art Education:

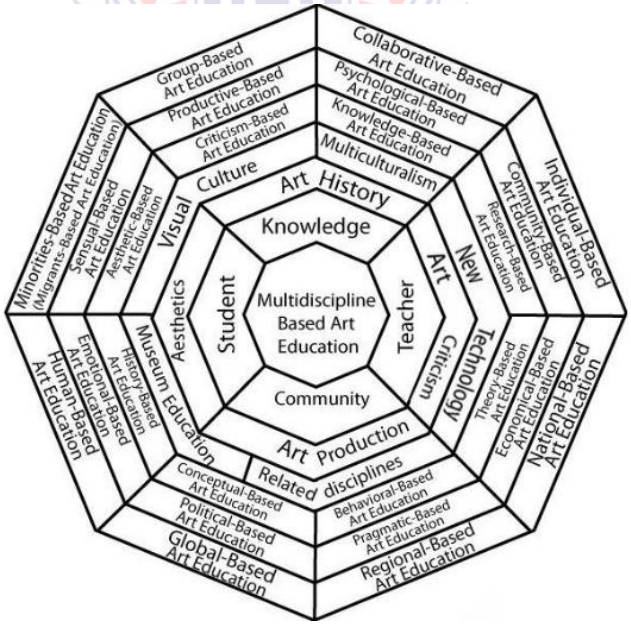

Figure 12: Al-Amri's Proposed Model
Source: Al-Amri (2012)

As shown in Figure 12, this model consists of seven dimensions that represent the core principles for practising art education teaching. Therefore, there are four basic foundations for the art education curriculum, which are: Knowledge, Teacher, Student and Community. In order to teach art today, teachers, art educators and curriculum designers should look at these dimensions in equal measure. Moreover, there are eight core disciplines, which represent the basic disciplines of the first and second generations of the DBAE. These are: Art History, Art Criticism, Aesthetics, Art Production, Visual Culture, Multiculturalism, New Technology, Museum Education, and Related Disciplines. Through a strong relationship between art on the one hand and other disciplines on the other, art educators should make a bridge with other related disciplines and integrate them as core concepts when we teach art education. These are divided into three dimensions. The first dimension includes: Conceptual-Based Art Education, Knowledge-Based Art Education, Research-Based Art Education, Theory-Based Art Education, Behavioural-Based Art Education, Criticism-Based Art Education, Aesthetic-Based Art Education and History- Based Art Education.

The second dimension includes: Pragmatic-Based Art Education, Productive-Based Art Education, Psychological-Based Art Education, Community-Based Art Education, Economical-Based Art Education, Political-Based Art Education, Emotional-Based Art Education and Sensual-Based Art Education. The third dimension includes: Group-Based Art Education, Collaborative-Based Art Education, Individual-Based Art Education, Minorities-Based Art Education (Migrants-Based Art Education), Human-Based Art Education, Global-Based Art Education, Regional- Based Art Education and National-Based Art Education. The consequences of some of the above dimensions in teaching and learning could be.

Belmont University: Belmont University's contemporary art course promises to offer a fascinating overview of the contemporary art world, providing insights into the artists, ideas and trends and broaden students' perspective and deepen their appreciation for the influential and ever-evolving contemporary art discipline. It is stated on the universities website that students who complete the course will gain a better understanding of the contemporary art world, explore the historical roots of contemporary art, and trace. They will understand its evolution from the modernist era to the present day, and examine key themes and debates in contemporary art, such as the role of originality, the impact of multiculturalism and globalization and the relationship between art and politics. The course hopes to lead to developing a keen eye for analyzing and interpreting contemporary artworks, as well as a better understanding of the historical and cultural contexts that influence the contemporary art world, and gained insights into the business of contemporary art, including the role of galleries, museums and art fairs in the global art market. Here is a conceptual diagram of the course contents:

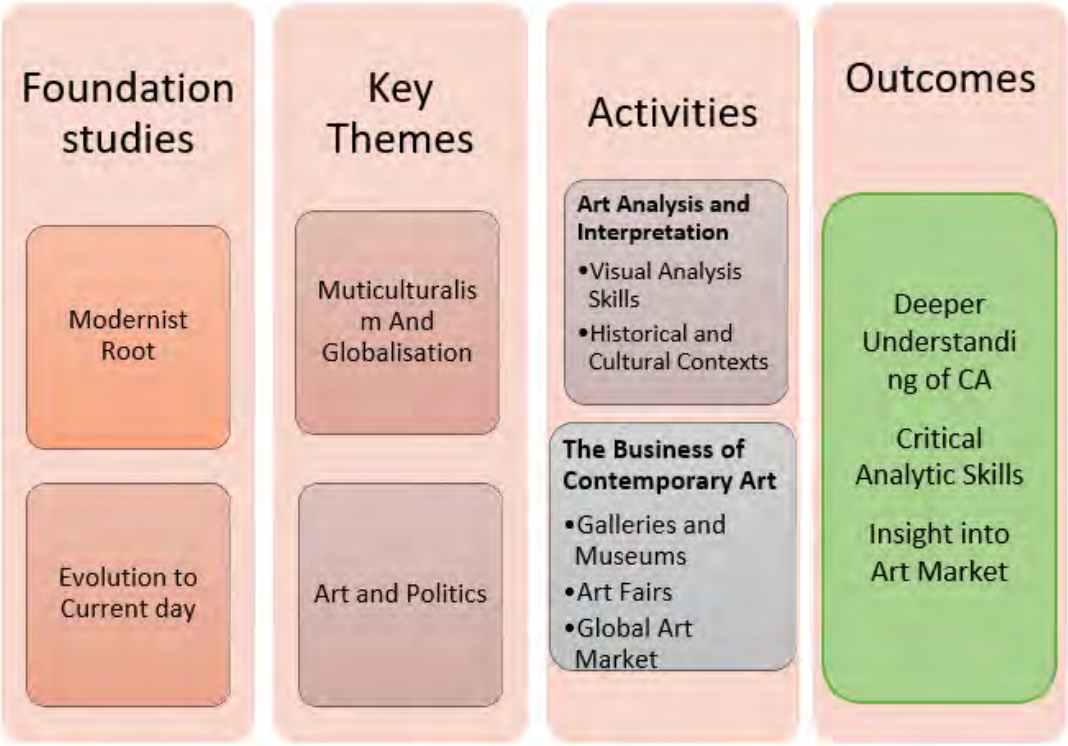

Figure 13. Visual Image extracted from Contemporary Art Content of Belmont University

Source: https://www.belmont.edu/

New York University (NYU) - Department of Art and Art Professions: NYU's curriculum presents a structured approach to multicultural art education, combining theory, critical discussion, and hands-on practice. It covers history, theory, and application. It includes Interactive approaches, hands-on projects and research. Here is a curriculum visual created from extracting the core components of the curriculum as provided by the school, website.

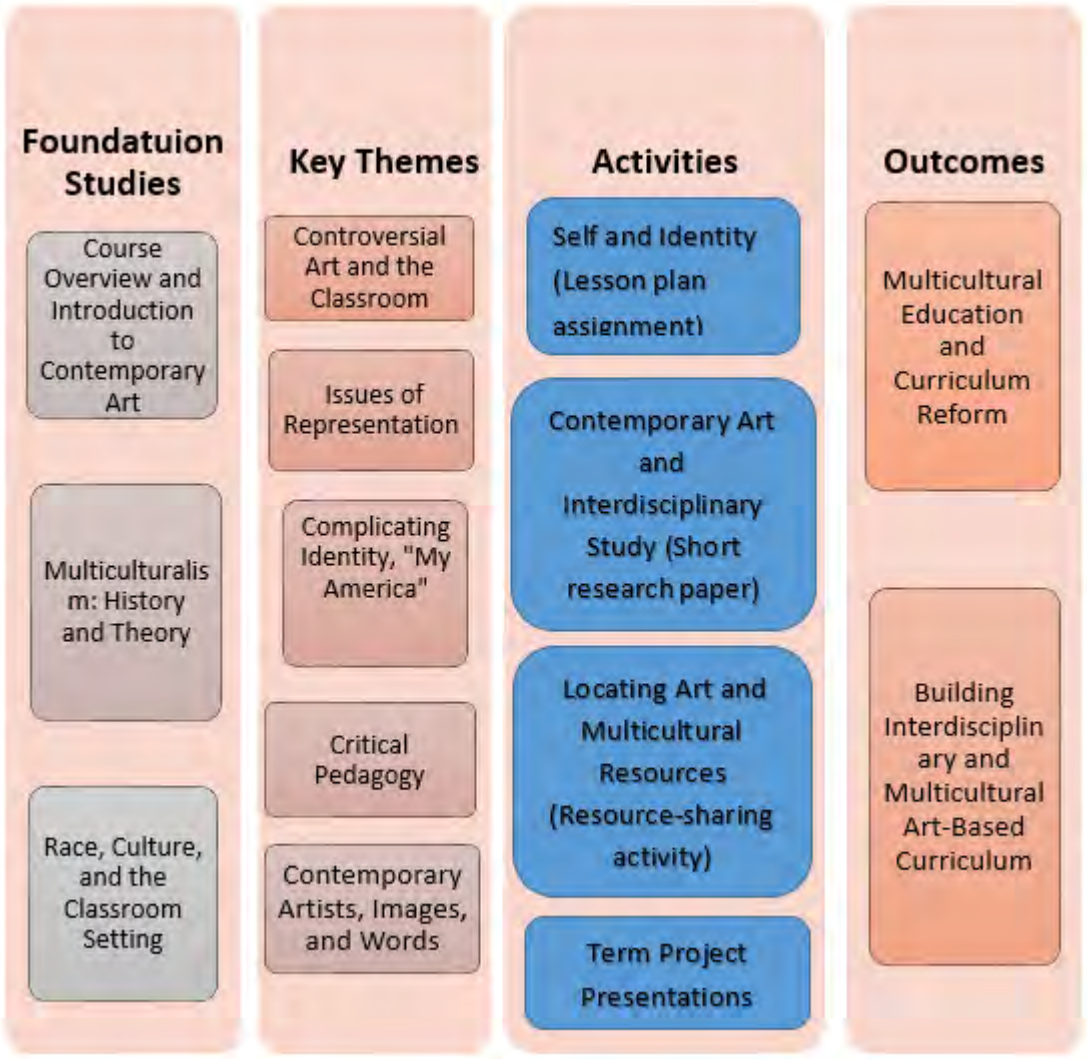

Figure 14. Visual Image extracted from Contemporary Art Content of New York University

Source: https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/

The nature of contemporary art education demands an approach that not only addresses artistic practice but also involves contemporary issues in society. This approach encourages cross-curricular links between art and citizenship education (Kemperl, 2013), explores community-based art practices (Bailey & Desai, 2005), The curriculum outlined in the visual framework offers a model that integrates foundational studies, key thematic explorations, practical activities, and defined outcomes. It is designed to

foster a reflective classroom environment, by emphasizing multicultural education and interdisciplinary collaboration as key components of art instruction. (Lambe, 2011).by engaging with contemporary art, teachers can develop their reflective capacities and link educational theory to practice.

The foundation studies serve as the entry point for students, establishing the theoretical foundations necessary contemporary art knowledge. Topics such as Course Overview and Introduction to Contemporary Art, Multiculturalism: History and Theory, and Race, Culture, and the Classroom Setting provide students with a historical and cultural knowledge of the contemporary art genre.

Building on this foundation, the curriculum introduces several themes that challenge students to think critically and reflectively. Themes such as Controversial Art and the Classroom, Issues of Representation, and Complicating Identity: "My America" encourage students to deal with questions around art, power, and identity. In addition, Critical Pedagogy and Contemporary Artists, Images, and Words allow students to interrogate traditional narratives and explore how art can serve as an avenue for social commentary and educational reform. These themes ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, provocative, and connected to real-world issues.

The curriculum also incorporates a range of activities. These include the development of a Self and Identity lesson plan, a Contemporary Art and Interdisciplinary Study short research paper, and Locating Art and Multicultural Resources resource-sharing activity. The curriculum climaxes with term project presentations, where students create their learning and share their perspectives.

The ultimate outcomes of this curriculum reflect its commitment to transformative education. Students are guided toward Multicultural Education and Curriculum Reform. Additionally, the curriculum incorporates Interdisciplinary and Multicultural Art-Based Curriculum.

This contemporary art curriculum is a socially engaged educational model, making contemporary art not only a subject of study but also a tool for dialogue, critical thinking, self-expression and empowerment.

Common Threads and Implications: Despite their geographic and structural differences, these three programs share several foundational characteristics that reflect best practices in integrating contemporary art into teacher education:

- **Digital and New Media Integration**: All programme go beyond painting and sculpture to include digital technologies, interactive media, and time-based art, aligning with the current global emphasis on digital literacy.
- **Interdisciplinary, Project-Based Learning**: Each model fosters cross-disciplinary thinking and collaborative problem-solving, critical for 21st-century classrooms.
- **Institutional Partnerships**: Collaborations with museums, galleries, and media labs provide authentic learning contexts, echoing Dewey's (1934) notion of "art as experience" rooted in lived, communal spaces.
- **Critical and Reflective Visual Culture**: Courses in visual culture, theory, and critique prepare teacher-candidates to engage students in conversations about

identity, politics, environment, and media, thus promoting a critical pedagogy of art.

Today, art disciplines along with other disciplines in professional education, general education, liberal arts and other related fields are delineating the knowledge base for art education practices. Major changes have taken place in the content and methods of preparing art teachers as well as in teaching art. In addition, many factors have played a direct or indirect role in shaping current attitudes and approaches to art. Newest directions in art education, such as the use of art museums in education, a multicultural approach to teaching art, visual cultures, new technology and standards for curriculum design and preparing art teachers are all part of leading preparation programmes in teaching art. Models from around the world illustrate innovative paths for embedding contemporary art practices within teacher education. As global educational institutions respond to shifting cultural landscapes, such integrative programs offer adaptable blueprints. They stress the need for art teacher education to embrace contemporary practices, not as an optional enrichment, but as a fundamental aspect of preparing educators for the visual, digital, and ideological complexities of today's world.

This section situates the historical evolution and international transitions of art education within broader social, technological, and pedagogical contexts, highlighting the shift from traditional skill-based approaches to interdisciplinary, digitally mediated, and culturally responsive practices. By reviewing global case studies and contemporary frameworks such as VCAE, STEAM, and relational aesthetics, the section provides a foundation for evaluating how current course components and teaching methodologies in Picture Making at UEW align with contemporary art practices (RQ1, RQ2) and

prepare students to navigate evolving art landscapes (RQ3). These insights underscore the need for curriculum and pedagogy that integrate technology, critical reflection, and cultural literacy, directly informing the subsequent analysis of UEW's program and its responsiveness to contemporary art trends (RQ4)

2.6.1 Section Summary

The history of art education shows that pedagogy has always changed in reaction to cultural, technological, and societal changes. In order to foster industry and social growth, art education was first closely linked to industrial and economic demands, placing a strong emphasis on skill development, craftsmanship, and technical literacy. These goals were reflected in teacher preparation programs, which incorporated design, drawing, and aesthetic principles into curricula to produce capable, useful citizens. Institutions like Illinois State Normal University are prime examples of how early curriculum integrated pedagogical theory with practical abilities, striking a balance between aesthetic development and societal demands. Over time, however, art education expanded beyond utilitarian objectives, embracing child-centered models, memory drawing, and later, discipline-based art education (DBAE), which incorporated production, criticism, aesthetics, and history. These changes show art pedagogy's innately adaptive nature by demonstrating how it has always adapted to outside influences, changing cultural ideals, and new educational ideas.

Technological developments and modern art practices spurred additional pedagogical innovation in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Despite its initial impact, DBAE was criticized for its exclusivity and inability to support a variety of artistic styles. As a result, models that emphasize the integration of technology, multicultural viewpoints,

and conceptual approaches were created, equipping educators to deal with a fast evolving artistic scene. This change is exemplified by frameworks like Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE), intermedial pedagogy, and STEAM-oriented methods, which broaden art education to incorporate media literacy, critical thinking, interdisciplinary cooperation, and socially engaged practices. Global case studies from NYU, HBK Saar, Belmont University, and the University of Lethbridge show how teacher preparation programs can effectively incorporate contemporary art practices into curricula by fusing technical proficiency with reflective inquiry, collaborative learning, and cultural literacy. The changing demands on art instructors, who must prepare students to critically interact with complex visual, social, and technical worlds, are reflected in these curricula.

The need for an all-encompassing, integrated approach to teaching art is further supported by Al-Amri's MultiDiscipline Based Art Education paradigm. The paradigm situates modern art pedagogy as multifaceted by incorporating fundamental components like knowledge, teacher, student, and community with basic disciplines like art history, criticism, aesthetics, production, visual culture, multiculturalism, and new technology. Its emphasis on intellectual, pragmatic, emotional, collaborative, and cultural aspects supports critical thinking, creative expression, and reflective practice, all of which are in line with contemporary educational ideals. These ideas are in line with the goals of this study, which are to investigate how contemporary art practices are incorporated into Ghanaian teacher education programs, evaluate their applicability to student learning, and determine how well-prepared aspiring art instructors are to deal with changing artistic environments.

Art pedagogy is always changing in reaction to societal, technological, and cultural

changes, as seen by the historical and modern paths of art education. A thorough theoretical framework that highlights the integration of various disciplines, including history, criticism, aesthetics, visual culture, multiculturalism, and new technologies across conceptual, pragmatic, and social dimensions can be found in Al-Amri's MultiDiscipline-Based Art Education (2012). This paradigm offers a worldwide viewpoint on how to organize art teacher education to produce practitioners that are holistic, introspective, and critically engaged.

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) addresses a more specific challenge: preparing pre-service art teachers to successfully teach Ghana's basic and senior high school curricula. This program serves as an example of best practices for developing holistic, critically engaged art educators. UEW must make sure that its programs balance fundamental technical skills, conceptual knowledge, and cultural relevance while preparing teachers to satisfy national curriculum standards, in contrast to more expansive international models. As a result, the research and conclusions offered in this study are especially designed to meet the context of UEW, concentrating on how the Picture Making program satisfies the pedagogical and practical requirements of Ghanaian schools while preparing students to traverse modern art practices. This localized emphasis helps connect global frameworks and national educational requirements, necessity for contextually receptive curriculum design in Picture Making.

2.7 Historical Development of Art Education in Ghana: Implications for Picture Making Pedagogy and Technology Integration

In 1887, the British colonial administration in the Gold Coast implemented an art education reform that prioritized the faithful representation of everyday objects, particularly through still-life drawing and painting (Nortey et al., 2021). This approach laid the foundation for what later evolved into Picture Making pedagogy in Ghana, emphasizing observation, imitation, and technical accuracy over experimentation and conceptual exploration. In 1927, Achimota College played a pioneering role in integrating art education into the national educational framework. The institution, which later evolved into the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), began as the College of Technology. Art was conceived largely as a hand-and-eye training activity, involving the copying of shapes and lines to enhance coordination and manual dexterity (Edusei, 2004).

The curriculum during this period focused primarily on mechanical, manual, and ornamental arts, reflecting an educational philosophy that measured artistic value in terms of functionality, craftsmanship, and market utility. Importantly, by 1909, this curriculum had become a specialist training programme for art teachers in the Gold Coast (Nortey et al., 2021, p. 3). Nortey (2021) argues that from the colonial era to present-day Ghana, art practices and instructional approaches have remained largely mechanistic, characterized by limited creativity, material constraints, and adherence to singular visual narratives rooted in colonial traditions. This legacy has had a direct and lasting influence on Picture Making instruction, where representational accuracy and still-life conventions continue to dominate studio practice.

Research by Nortey et al. (2021) on the intellectual legacy of the Gold Coast hand-and-eye curriculum confirms that copying what one sees remains a dominant component of Ghana's art curriculum and pedagogical practice. While there have been notable developments in contemporary Ghanaian art practice, basic and secondary art education largely continues to operate within the still-life paradigm inherited from colonial art education. This persistence suggests a pedagogical imbalance in Picture Making, where traditional studio methods have not been sufficiently recontextualized to reflect contemporary artistic practices and technological advancements.

At the tertiary level, art education is not exempt from this historical influence. Evidence of the colonial curriculum's shadow can be observed in teacher education programmes at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Picture Making instruction at this level remains largely studio-bound and traditional, with limited incorporation of contemporary art practices, adequate infrastructure, or emerging digital technologies. As a result, pre-service art teachers are often trained within pedagogical frameworks that do not fully align with current global trends in visual arts education, which emphasize technology-mediated learning (Freedman, 2003; Sullivan, 2010).

Studies on art education at UEW have highlighted the urgent need for reform in studio practice and infrastructure. Esseku (2020) reports that studio spaces and storage facilities for students' works remain inadequate, with minimal improvements since the Department of Art Education transitioned from a Specialist Teacher Training College in the early 1990s. Studios originally designed for approximately ten students were accommodating over fifty students, thereby limiting effective studio-based instruction. Such overcrowded learning environments further constrain the adoption of innovative

Picture Making pedagogies, particularly those that require digital tools, flexible studio layouts, or blended instructional approaches.

Duku (2012) further observed that lecturers' use of technology was largely limited to liquid crystal display projectors during lectures and telephone communication outside class hours. The study argues that lecturers could have employed a wider range of technological tools, including multimedia presentations, online discussion forums, email platforms, and course websites to enhance students' understanding of art concepts and studio processes. The limited integration of technology into Picture Making instruction therefore represents not only a pedagogical shortfall but also a missed opportunity to deepen conceptual learning and creative exploration, consistent with broader art education literature that advocates for digital engagement in studio practice (Efland, 2002; Freedman, 2003).

Literature specifically addressing the integration of contemporary art practice and technology in Picture Making at UEW remains limited. Adu-Sakyi (2022), however, makes a compelling case for the introduction of virtual reality in the training of Picture Making students. The study argues that virtual reality should take centre stage in art instruction to enable students to cope with the demands of modern artistic practice, rather than relying solely on traditional pictorial drawing methods. Adu-Sakyi reports that only 8% of respondents were familiar with virtual reality tools prior to the intervention, yet students who engaged in virtual reality painting were able to produce compelling aesthetic outcomes across abstract, realistic, and emergent styles, using digital media such as 3D paint and simulated gouache.

Although virtual reality represents only one aspect of contemporary technological innovation in art, Adu-Sakyi's study underlines a broader curricular gap within Picture Making education at the tertiary level, namely, the inadequate integration of digital technologies into studio pedagogy. The study therefore reinforces the need to re-examine Picture Making curricula in Ghanaian universities and to deliberately merge traditional studio practices with contemporary digital tools in order to align art education with current global developments in visual arts pedagogy.

2.7.1 Section Summary

The historical development of art education in Ghana indicates that Art Education pedagogy has largely been shaped by colonial traditions that privilege representational accuracy, imitation, and conventional studio practices, often at the expense of conceptual exploration and digital engagement. This development may not necessarily exclude Picture Making. At the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), these legacies remain evident in the preparation of pre-service art teachers, where infrastructural limitations and limited integration of technology constrain engagement with contemporary art practices. Given UEW's specific responsibility to train teachers for the Basic and Senior High School curricula, this raises important concerns regarding the relevance and alignment of Picture Making pedagogy with current educational and artistic demands. This section therefore justifies the need for a focused investigation into the pedagogy and learning outcomes of Picture Making at UEW, in conformity with changing times

2.8 Theoretical Framework: Theory of Contemporary Art

Contemporary Art Theory, a dynamic and developing framework that critically engages with the practices, discourses, and pedagogies defining art in the twenty-first century, serves as the foundation for this study. Contemporary Art Theory promotes interdisciplinarity, conceptual experimentation, and socio-cultural responsiveness over rigid aesthetic or formalist standards. In recent scholarship, this framework has intersected with theories of decolonisation, hybridity, and relationality, reflecting broader philosophical shifts in how knowledge, culture, and artistic value are understood within global art education. In order to address complex issues like identity, technology, politics, ecology, and global interconnectedness, art today operates across a variety of contexts rather than being restricted to traditional media or institutional spaces.

Arthur Danto, one of the pioneers in this field, famously stated that "the era of art's historical narrative has come to an end," referring to the pluralism and post-historical state of contemporary art (Danto, 1997). He maintained that the ability of contemporary art to convey philosophical and conceptual meaning, rather than style or medium, is what makes it unique. This pluralism aligns with decolonial critiques of Eurocentric art canons, which challenge singular historical narratives and advocate for the recognition of multiple artistic epistemologies, particularly those emerging from non-Western and Indigenous contexts. This idea is consistent with the trend in art education towards critical engagement and meaning-making rather than technical mastery. Therefore, this study examines whether the University of Education, Winneba's (UEW) Picture

Making curriculum appropriately reflects this enlarged understanding of art through the lens of contemporary art theory and its implications for inclusive and context-responsive teacher education.

"Contemporary art is no longer a question of representing the world but of producing and performing it," according to Bishop (2012). With regards to this perspective, art education must teach students how to critically position themselves as artists within a dynamic global culture in addition to teaching them how to create art. Such positioning resonates with critical pedagogy, which emphasises student agency and the interrogation of power relations within educational systems. Comparably, the social aspect of contemporary art is emphasised by Nicolas Bourriaud's idea of relational aesthetics, in which the artwork turns into "a state of encounter" (Bourriaud, 2002). Relational aesthetics supports pedagogical models that prioritise dialogue, collaboration, and community engagement, aligning art education with democratic and participatory learning practices. These viewpoints reinforce the necessity of a curriculum that encourages discussion, experimentation, and social awareness as opposed to memorisation.

In order to determine whether the media, materials, themes, and techniques used in the Picture Making course are in line with current trends, this study will use Contemporary Art Theory as a guide. Additionally, it will assess how well the course's pedagogical approaches equip students to participate actively in contemporary discourse. According to Hans Belting (2003), "art no longer belongs to a stable canon but operates across a network of shifting references," which supports the notion that curricula need to equip students to work in a wider range of artistic contexts and to navigate culturally hybrid

artistic identities.

An investigation into students' preparedness to participate in and contribute to current artistic discussions is supported by contemporary art theory. It enables this study to focus on students' conceptual literacy, critical thinking, and cultural fluency rather than just technical proficiency. By engaging with decolonial and hybrid frameworks, the study focuses on the importance of preparing future art teachers to engage with diverse cultural narratives and to challenge inherited curricular hierarchies. Evidence-based suggestions to broaden the Picture Making curriculum in ways that are pedagogically innovative, culturally relevant, and globally relevant will be further informed by this theoretical framework.

In summary, this research is grounded in contemporary art theory, which permits a critical analysis of curriculum content, teaching strategies, and student outcomes. The "freedom from stylistic constraints" that characterises contemporary art, as suggested by Danto (1997), must be reflected in the training of aspiring art educators. Embedding contemporary art theory alongside decolonisation, hybridity, relational aesthetics, and critical pedagogy supports a transformative model of teacher education that is open to global debates and local realities. The goal of this research is to support a more adaptable and forward-looking model of art education by grounding it in such theoretical understandings.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

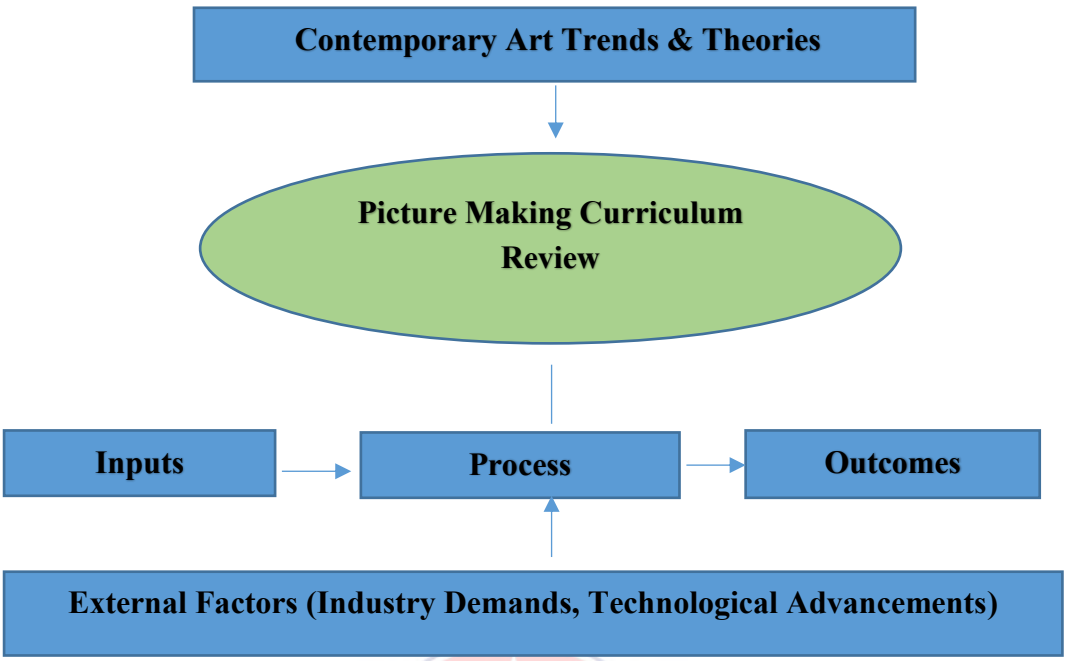

Figure 15. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Researcher's Construct

Explanation of the Conceptual Framework: The conceptual framework illustrates how various interrelated components come together to initiative the review of the Picture Making curriculum. At the core of this framework is the Picture Making Program Review, which serves as the focal point where different inputs, processes, outcomes, and contextual influences converge to inform curriculum development.

Contemporary Art Trends and Theories are positioned at the top of the framework to emphasize their role in shaping the direction of art education today. Developments in global art discourses, emerging artistic movements, and critical theories challenge conventional approaches and introduce new ideas, techniques, and perspectives that

must be reflected in the curriculum. These trends ensure that what is taught remains relevant and responsive to changes in the art world.

Inputs form the foundational resources and structures that support the programme. These include the design of the curriculum itself, the teaching methods adopted by lecturers, and the resources available, such as studios, materials, and digital tools. The quality and appropriateness of these inputs directly affect how well the program aligns with contemporary art practices.

Processes refer to how the inputs are delivered and engaged with. This covers the pedagogical approaches lecturers use in the classroom or studio, and the level of student participation and creative engagement. Effective processes ensure that students can meaningfully interact with the curriculum content, apply critical thinking, and experiment with diverse techniques and ideas.

Outcomes represent the results of the program. These include the competencies graduates develop, the degree to which these skills and knowledge are relevant to current industry demands, and the potential for graduates to contribute to artistic innovation. Outcomes highlight whether the program achieves its intended goals and provide evidence for what aspects of the curriculum may need to be strengthened or redesigned.

External Factors, such as industry demands and technological advancements, act as additions that shape the program's relevance. Changes in the creative industries, including the rise of digital media, interdisciplinary practices, and new market expectations create a need for art education programs to adapt. Technological

developments provide new tools and platforms for creating, presenting, and distributing art, and these must be integrated into teaching and learning.

The inputs, processes, outcomes, and external factors do not function in isolation. instead, they collectively inform and influence the review of the Picture Making curriculum. This ensures that the program remains current, equips graduates with relevant skills, and prepares students to meet the needs of the contemporary art society.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter outlines and explains a selection of methods and procedures employed by the researcher to gather and analyze data to answer the research questions.

3.1 Philosophical Underpinning of Study

The Interpretivist paradigm, which holds that reality is socially constructed and contextually situated rather than fixed and objective, serves as the foundation for this investigation. Interpretivism maintains that interactions between people and their surroundings, which are influenced by social, cultural, and historical contexts are the source of knowledge and meaning (Creswell, 2014).

This philosophical position is in line with this study's objectives, which are to investigate how Picture Making is taught and learnt at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), Department of Art Education and how it fits in with modern art practices. The interpretivist paradigm recognises that there are various realities and points of view within the teaching and learning process and encourages a thorough examination of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations.

Through the use of an interpretivist lens, this study acknowledges that participants and the researcher jointly create understanding through discussion and meaning-making. This method is particularly appropriate for examining the intricacies of art education, as cultural settings, artistic endeavours, and individual interpretations all significantly influence how art is taught and appreciated.

Additionally, this paradigm supports the use of qualitative research techniques like document analysis, interviews, and visual analysis of student artwork. By using these techniques, the researcher can produce thorough insights into the ways that traditional picture-making techniques might overlap or diverge from contemporary art practices. Thus, the interpretivist viewpoint offers a strong basis for spotting gaps, bringing to light presumptions, and proposing curriculum renewal avenues that are considerate of local realities and international art discourses.

This philosophical position aligns with the study's goals, which include identifying gaps and opportunities for curriculum development as well as examining how Picture Making at UEW relates to or differs from contemporary art practices. The study prioritises the voices, viewpoints, and lived experiences of instructors, students, and alumni as crucial sources of insight by establishing the research within an interpretivist paradigm. This guarantees that the results accurately depict the intricate realities of art education in the local institutional and cultural context while providing guidance for practical methods of integrating conventional methods with changing international art practices.

Interpretivism impacts on this research by identifying gaps and opportunities for curriculum development as well as examining how Picture Making at UEW relates to or differs from contemporary art practices. The study prioritises the voices, viewpoints, and lived experiences of instructors, students, and alumni as crucial sources of insight by firmly establishing the research within an interpretivist paradigm. This guarantees that the results accurately depict the intricate realities of art education in the local institutional and cultural context while providing guidance for practical methods of

integrating conventional methods with changing international art practices.

3.2 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. The primary aim of qualitative research is to explore and provide deeper, comprehensive, and detailed descriptions of phenomena using non-numeric data, rather than quantifying and testing hypotheses with numeric data as is the case with quantitative research (Oranga et al., 2023). A qualitative approach was suitable for educational research where the goal is to understand complex social, cultural, and pedagogical contexts through the perspectives of those directly involved.

In the context of this study, the qualitative approach is the most appropriate because the research sought to assess the structure and content of the Picture Making aspect of the Art Education accredited program at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), as well as the methodologies used, their effectiveness, and their alignment with contemporary art practices. These aims required an exploration of multiple viewpoints, including those of lecturers, students, and alumni, to uncover not only what is taught, but also how it is taught and experienced within a specific institutional context.

Because the study concentrated on a detailed analysis of a constrained system, specifically the Picture Making curriculum inside a particular institution (UEW), it was further characterized as a qualitative case study. A case study design is especially useful for finding gaps between curriculum design and contemporary art practice because it allows the researcher to thoroughly examine curriculum intentions, pedagogical practices, and learner outcomes as they naturally occur.

Qualitative research allows for the collection of rich, descriptive data that captures the nuances of teaching and learning experiences, the intentions behind curriculum design, and the challenges faced in aligning traditional approaches with contemporary art discourses. Methods typical of qualitative research, such as semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, enabled the researcher to gather insights that cannot be easily reduced to numbers.

Although they were taken into consideration, alternative qualitative methods like ethnography were judged to be less appropriate for this particular study. While ethnography places a strong emphasis on long-term immersion and the study of cultural practices, the goal of this study was to analyze curriculum structures, pedagogical approaches, and content relevance rather than to create a comprehensive cultural account of the art education community. In order to accomplish the research objectives within a specified timeframe, the case study technique provided a more focused and practical framework.

In a similar vein, a mixed-methods approach was not used since adding quantitative data (such surveys or statistical analysis) would not have significantly improved comprehension of how participants encounter, interpret, and manage curricular gaps. Because qualitative inquiry better captures the concepts associated with "contemporary art practices," students' sense of readiness, and lecturers' pedagogical choices than numerical generalization, the study placed a higher priority on depth than breadth.

Another reason this approach was most suitable is that the study intended to investigate emerging themes and unforeseen findings. Given that art education, especially Picture

Making, is influenced by personal, cultural, and social contexts, a rigid quantitative approach would have limited the ability to capture the subtleties and contradictions inherent in the subject. For example, the way lecturers interpreted "contemporary art practices" and how students perceived their preparedness would not have been meaningfully represented through surveys alone.

Also, qualitative research aligns with interpretivist paradigms, which recognize that knowledge is constructed through interaction and context. This perspective suited the researcher's goal best by situating the curriculum within broader discourses of art, creativity, and global trends. By prioritizing context and meaning, the study aimed to surface insights that could inform evidence-based recommendations for curriculum improvement.

Since the researcher acknowledges that qualitative research requires reflexivity, a conscious effort to recognize how her own perspectives and biases may shape data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Throughout this study, the research process was commited to transparency by detailing the research process and reflecting on their positionality as an insider within the field of art education.

Thus, the qualitative research approach was the most appropriate for this study because it supports an in-depth, contextualised exploration of the Picture Making curriculum's structure, content, teaching methodologies, and outcomes. It enabled the study to shed light on how well the program aligns with contemporary art practices and what changes might enhance its relevance, innovation, and responsiveness.

3.3 Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative exploratory case study design, focusing on the Picture Making aspect of the Art Education accredited program at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). The choice of a case study was guided by the need to produce a rich, contextualized understanding of curriculum structure, content, and teaching methodologies, as viewed through the lens of Contemporary Art Theory, which emphasizes interdisciplinarity, conceptual experimentation, relational aesthetics, and responsiveness to socio-cultural contexts. By examining a single, bounded case, the study allowed for thorough exploration of how the curriculum both reflects and enables engagement with contemporary art practices, pluralism, and critical pedagogy principles.

The case study design is suitable for educational research where the aim is to explore a real-life phenomenon within its natural setting (Hyett et al., 2014). In this instance, the phenomenon scrutinized was the teaching and learning of Picture Making, which occurs within the everyday academic and studio environments of UEW. This means that the researcher gathered insights not just from what is planned or documented, but also from observing and analyzing how the curriculum is enacted and experienced by lecturers and students.

Each research objective was aligned with specific data sources and analytical strategies in accordance with the theoretical framework. For instance, exploring curriculum content involved document analysis to assess whether media, materials, and themes support critical engagement and pluralistic approaches as emphasized by Danto and

Belting. Investigating teaching methodologies employed interviews and observations, analyzed thematically to determine whether pedagogical strategies promote student agency, experimentation, and relational learning consistent with Bishop's and Bourriaud's frameworks.

The strength of the case study method lies in its ability to utilize naturally existing information sources, such as people, their experiences, and the interactions that occur within the boundaries of the case (Karlsson, 2016). Through interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of institutional documents, the researcher data was triangulated, which enhanced the validity and trustworthiness of the findings. This was vital in unpacking the complexities surrounding the alignment or misalignment of the Picture Making curriculum with contemporary art discourses.

This study was explicitly exploratory in nature. Exploratory case studies are valuable when there is limited prior research on the topic or context, as is the situation with the Picture Making course at UEW. While art education has been widely studied, specific investigations into how Ghanaian universities integrate contemporary art practices into traditional studio courses remains scarce. This gap meant that new questions, patterns, or connections were likely to develop through an open-ended, flexible inquiry. As Chopard et al. (2021) emphasize, exploratory case studies probe into what is largely unknown, but must remain guided by clear research objectives that help frame and focus the investigation.

In this research, the guiding purpose was to understand the extent and effectiveness of engagement with contemporary art practices within Picture Making at UEW. This

guiding focus provided direction while allowing room for unexpected insights that informed practical, evidence-based recommendations for curriculum improvement.

The case study design was also appropriate because it fostered holistic understanding. Rather than isolating variables as in experimental or purely quantitative studies, the case study approach recognized that educational contexts were shaped by multiple, interacting factors: institutional culture, lecturer expertise, student expectations, resources, and broader socio-cultural trends. All of these were considered to produce meaningful realistic recommendations and that are contextually grounded.

Lastly, this design supported depth over breadth. Instead of making general claims about all art education programs in Ghana or West Africa, this study sought to generate transferable insights through in-depth description. These findings served as a reference point for similar institutions aiming to update their curricula in response to global developments in contemporary art.

Conclusively, the case study design was the most appropriate for this research because it enabled an exploration of a single program, using multiple sources of evidence to give insights on how well the Picture Making curriculum meets the demands of contemporary art education.

3.4 Population

A population in research refers to the complete set of people, elements, or events that share common characteristics relevant to a particular study, while a sample is a smaller,

selected subset of that population from which data is actually collected (Progress in Transplantation, 2020). For this study, the population comprised of lecturers and students specifically within the Picture Making Unit of the Department of Art Education at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW).

The Picture Making Unit is a specialized focus area within the larger Department of Art Education. It is responsible for delivering theoretical and practical courses that cover diverse methods like painting, drawing, and mixed media practices. The unit plays a central role in shaping students' technical competencies, creative exploration, and conceptual development within the Bachelor of Art Education programme.

The Picture Making Unit as a whole has a staff capacity of about five. While the Department of Art Education's total student population ranges between 1,600 and 1,700 students at any given time, depending on enrolment cycles, batch sizes, and programme continuity, only a segment of this larger population actively enrolls in and progresses through the Picture Making courses during each academic year. Students who opt for Picture Making range between 600 to 750 across all levels (levels 100–400).

Focusing specifically on the Picture Making Unit allowed the research to maintain a clear and manageable scope that aligned directly with the study's objectives. Since the primary aim was to assess the curriculum structure and content, investigate teaching methodologies, evaluate student preparedness, and develop recommendations for curriculum improvement within Picture Making, it was essential to collect data from the exact stakeholders who are engaged with this area of study daily.

Lecturers within the Picture Making Unit hold knowledge about curriculum design, course content, studio practices, assessment standards, and how these aspects relate or fail to relate to trends in contemporary art. Likewise, students enrolled in Picture Making courses are direct recipients of the curriculum and could therefore provide insights about how effectively the teaching methods foster their creativity, technical skills, conceptual depth, and adaptability.

Limiting the population to the Picture Making Unit rather than the entire department helped ensure the findings remained focused relevant. The experiences and perspectives gathered from this population yielded data that directly addressed the research questions, avoiding dilution by unrelated disciplines within the wider department.

Additionally, the Picture Making Unit was an appropriate population because its activities are practical, studio-based, and reflective of how traditional and contemporary art practices intersect in the curriculum. This made it an ideal setting for exploring whether the current curriculum and pedagogical approaches were adequately responding to shifts in global art discourses and industry demands.

Defining the Picture Making Unit at the Department of Art Education, UEW, as the population for this research ensured that the study remained aligned with its purpose. The perspectives of its lecturers and students provided the depth and context necessary to evaluate the program's strengths and weaknesses and generate evidence-based recommendations for improvement.

While the general population for this research was the entire group of lecturers and students within the Department of Art Education at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), the target population for this study was more narrowly defined as the lecturers, current students, and alumni of the Picture Making Unit within the department.

A target population represents individuals who share distinct characteristics that directly relate to the research objectives. As Willie (2023) explained, the target population is carefully identified based on the specific research questions being addressed, similar to how a market survey would focus on a precise consumer group most relevant to a product or service. As mentioned before, in this study, the research questions centred on assessing the structure and content of the Picture Making curriculum, investigating teaching methodologies, evaluating graduate preparedness, and developing practical recommendations for improvement. For these objectives, no other group was as relevant as those who design, deliver, experience, and reflect on Picture Making courses. The target population included three interconnected groups, and these include lecturers, students and alumni.

Five lecturers currently teach courses within the Picture Making Unit. These individuals are stakeholders because they design course content, select teaching strategies, guide studio practices, and directly influence how well the curriculum reflects contemporary art trends. Their perspectives were necessary for understanding both the intentions and practical realities behind the current curriculum.

Current undergraduate students enrolled on Picture Making courses represent the second target population group. They are direct recipients of the curriculum and its pedagogies. Their experiences provided firsthand insights into whether the courses develop their creativity, technical proficiency, critical thinking, and conceptual.

Alumni, including graduates from the Picture Making Unit ensured that the research captured longer-term outcomes and real-world relevance. The alumni offered reflections on how well their education prepared them for the demands of the contemporary art world, whether they work as practicing artists, art educators, or creative professionals.

Focusing specifically on these stakeholders was appropriate for several reasons. First, Picture Making is unique within the Department of Art Education because it is one of the core Fine Art studio disciplines. It has a distinctive identity and flexibility compared to other art units. The name Picture Making itself allows for a wide range of art techniques, approaches, and media to be explored, including traditional painting, drawing, marquetry, collage, mixed media, digital art practices, and diverse art-making methods. This openness positions Picture Making as an ideal site for testing how well contemporary art practices were being integrated into traditional art curricula.

Secondly, the unit's flexible and technique-rich nature meant that its curriculum has the potential to serve as a bridge between traditional craft and global contemporary art discourses. By selecting this group as the target population, the research probed into how well this potential is realized in practice and what gaps existed.

Thirdly, the combination of lecturers, students, and alumni ensured that the study collected data from multiple vantage points; policy, practice, and outcome. This triangulation strengthened the trustworthiness of findings and ensured that any recommendations for curriculum revision were grounded in a balanced understanding of what the ideal situation of Picture Making is. These selected groups provided the diverse perspectives needed to assess the alignment of Picture Making with contemporary art practices and supported evidence-based recommendations for its continuous improvement.

The accessible population was the portion of the target population that the researcher could realistically reach, interact with, and collect data from within the practical constraints of time, location, and resources. While the target population for this study included all lecturers, current students, and alumni of the Picture Making Unit within the Department of Art Education at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), the accessible population was a more practical subset of these stakeholders who were available and willing to participate during the period of the research. In this study, the accessible population included:

The four lecturers who taught within the Picture Making Unit and were actively involved in curriculum delivery, supervision of student projects, studio instruction, and assessment. These lecturers were physically present on campus during the semester and were directly accessible for interviews and classroom observations.

Current students who were enrolled in Picture Making courses during the academic year in which the research was conducted. This included students at various levels,

typically from third to final year, who had substantial engagement with the Picture Making curriculum and could provide relevant insights into their learning experiences, challenges, and perceptions about how well the program aligned with contemporary art practices.

Alumni who had graduated from the Picture Making Unit within the last five years and were reachable through the department's alumni records, social media groups, or referrals by current lecturers and students. While the broader alumni community extended well beyond five years, limiting the accessible population to more recent graduates ensured that the feedback reflected relatively current curriculum structures and teaching methodologies. Moreover, recent graduates were more likely to be reachable and able to reflect clearly on the transition from their training at UEW to their real-world creative or teaching practice.

Defining this practical subset was crucial because not all members of the larger target population were physically present, reachable, or willing to participate. For example, older alumni were more difficult to trace or had experiences too distant in time to reflect the current state of the Picture Making curriculum. Focusing on this accessible population ensured that the research remained realistic and manageable while still gathering credible, relevant, and diverse perspectives.

The accessible population was therefore not only defined by logistical convenience but also by its strategic relevance to the study's objectives: these individuals were the ones most likely to provide rich, up-to-date, and actionable information that could inform

evidence-based recommendations for aligning Picture Making with contemporary art practices and global creative industry demands.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sampling in research involves selecting a subset of individuals from a larger population to represent the whole, allowing the researcher to draw conclusions that are focused and practical. In this study, sampling was structured using a stratified sampling technique, dividing the accessible population into three primary strata: lecturers, students, and alumni. This reflected the study's aim to gather balanced perspectives from both those who designed and delivered the Picture Making curriculum and those who experienced and responded to it.

Within each stratum, the selection of participants followed the principles of non-probability sampling, specifically a combination of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Non-probability sampling was appropriate for this qualitative case study where the goal was to gather rich, detailed data rather than statistically generalise to a larger population. The sample sizes ten students, three alumni, and four lecturers were deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation, as iterative interviews and focus group discussions continued until no new themes or insights occurred. This approach ensured that the study captured a comprehensive understanding of curriculum experiences and perceptions without unnecessary redundancy.

For the student stratum, the initial sampling process began with convenience sampling. Convenience sampling involved selecting participants who were easily accessible and willing to participate (Simkus, 2023). This method was practical because the researcher needed to quickly identify Picture Making students who had completed at least the 300 level of their degree programme, as these students had accumulated enough experience in the curriculum to provide meaningful reflections. It was assumed that all such students had broadly comparable classroom and studio experiences.

However, during preliminary discussions, it became apparent that many of these students lacked sufficient exposure to contemporary art concepts and practices and therefore were unable to draw clear comparisons between contemporary art and their learning experience in Picture Making. To address this, the researcher applied purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method where participants are intentionally selected because they possess particular characteristics or knowledge relevant to the study's aims.

Specifically, the researcher, with input from Picture Making lecturers, identified students who had demonstrated notable interest in contemporary art, for instance, by producing artworks that reflected contemporary themes, experimenting with unconventional materials, or showing conceptual depth in their projects. This strategy ensured that the selected students could engage meaningfully in focused discussions on how well the curriculum fostered contemporary art practices. Prior to the main study, the interview and focus group protocols were pilot-tested with two students and one lecturer outside of the sample. Feedback from the pilot helped refine questions for

clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives, ensuring that the instruments were capable of eliciting rich, reliable data.

In total, ten (10) students were sampled for the research and divided into two separate focus group discussions. This approach was chosen to facilitate open dialogue, reduce group pressure, and allow each participant to share detailed insights.

For the alumni stratum, three (3) graduates of the Picture Making Unit were sampled purposively and conveniently, based on their exposure to the contemporary art world, and their availability. These alumni were selected because their experiences offered a valuable perspective on how the curriculum prepared, or did not prepare, them for engaging with contemporary art in professional contexts after graduation.

In the lecturer stratum, four (4) lecturers who taught Picture Making courses were sampled purposively. Their inclusion was critical because of their direct involvement in curriculum design, delivery, and assessment. These lecturers provided insights into the pedagogical intentions behind the curriculum, the challenges faced in integrating contemporary art practices, and their professional judgment on what improvements might be needed.

The use of both convenience and purposive sampling ensured that the research included participants who were not only accessible but also knowledgeable and directly relevant to the study objectives. This strategy strengthened the credibility of the data by balancing practical considerations, such as accessibility and willingness to participate, with the need for informed, critical perspectives about the Picture Making curriculum and its alignment with contemporary art.

This multi-step sampling process, combining stratified, convenience, and purposive sampling, ensured that the data collected was rich, diverse, and connected to the study's key questions.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

This study employed three main data collection instruments: unstructured interviews, document review, and observation. Together, these qualitative instruments provided complementary ways of gathering rich, contextualised data aligned with the study's aim of critically assessing the Picture Making curriculum, its teaching methods, and its alignment with contemporary art practices.

3.6.1 Interview

The interview method was vital to this research because it enabled the researcher to engage directly with participants, observing not only what they said but also their verbal cues and non-verbal expressions. For this study, unstructured interviews were used. Unlike structured interviews that rely on predetermined questions, unstructured interviews allowed the researcher to adapt questions spontaneously in response to the flow of conversation. This flexibility was needed for exploring unexpected themes that arose during discussions with lecturers.

Zhang et al. (n.d.) argue that unstructured interviews enable the researcher to have genuine conversations with interviewees, generating follow-up questions based on what participants share. As a result, each interview could produce data with different structures and unique insights, helping the researcher uncover unanticipated perspectives and better understand the interviewees' social realities from their own viewpoints. The open-ended nature of unstructured interviews was suitable for exploring subjective experiences of teaching and learning in the Picture Making environment.

Unstructured interviews also helped reduce the risk of steering responses towards the researcher's own biases or preconceived assumptions. By allowing participants to narrate their experiences freely, this method supported the study's goal of collecting authentic data that reflected the complex realities of how Picture Making was taught, learned, and perceived in relation to contemporary art.

3.6.2 Document Review

Document review was another key instrument for this research. It involved a systematic and critical examination of the Picture Making components. As Rohwer et al. (n.d.) and Hays (2016) explains reviews are essential in education to ensure that academic content remains relevant, effective, and aligned with evolving disciplinary and industry needs.

In this study, document review established what was formally embedded within Picture Making course outlines. It allowed the researcher to trace how the curriculum situated

Picture Making within broader global contemporary art trends. Yuan Law (2022) emphasizes that curriculum innovation in higher education is necessary due to technological, cultural, and socio-economic changes and to respond effectively to industry developments. Reviewing course components helped identify areas where Picture Making fell short in equipping students with the skills and conceptual depth needed to engage with contemporary art practices.

This instrument complemented interviews by comparing what stakeholders said about the Picture Making courses with what was officially documented, highlighting potential gaps between policy and practice.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion

The study used focus group discussions as a research tool to find out how ready Picture Making students are to do well in the changing world of contemporary art. Both current students and graduates of the University of Education, Winneba, who had finished or were still working on the Picture Making degree took part in these talks. This method worked well for finding out how participants felt about their readiness to interact with contemporary art practices since it gave them a chance to think and talk about it together. Participants were able to talk about their experiences, problems, and goals in group conversations. They also compared the skills and information they obtained in school with what is needed in the present art world. The group dynamic also helped other points of view emerge, such as ideas on what the curriculum is missing and what it does well at. By letting participants communicate with each other, the focus group

method got nuanced views that added a lot of value to the research of Observation was employed as a key instrument for data collection in the study, particularly in the analysis of students' artworks. Through direct observation, the researcher was able to examine the visual qualities, techniques, and styles evident in the artworks, paying attention to how these reflected both traditional and contemporary art practices. This method allowed for the identification of recurring themes, levels of technical proficiency, and evidence of creative exploration beyond classroom instruction. By observing the artworks in their natural context, rather than relying solely on students' or lecturers' accounts, the researcher obtained first-hand insights into the practical outcomes of the Picture Making course and the extent to which global contemporary art trends were integrated into students' work.

3.6.4 Observation

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3.7 Data Analysis Methods

This study employed a qualitative data analysis approach, combining thematic analysis and visual analysis to interpret the rich, varied data collected from interviews, document reviews, observations, and students' artworks. These complementary methods ensured that both spoken narratives and creative outputs were examined to address the research objectives.

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a flexible and widely used method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. It is particularly effective for making sense of large volumes of textual data, such as interview transcripts, observation notes, and curriculum documents. In this study, thematic analysis was applied to all data collected from lecturers, students, and alumni, as well as observation notes and institutional curriculum documents.

The process began with familiarisation, where the researcher repeatedly read and reviewed all transcripts, observation notes, and curriculum materials to be immersed in the data and gain an overall understanding of patterns and nuances. During this stage, initial memos and notes were recorded to capture preliminary observations and potential coding ideas.

Initial codes were then systematically generated to highlight significant features of the data relevant to the research objectives, such as lecturers' teaching methods, students'

perceptions of contemporary art, and areas of misalignment in the curriculum. Coding was conducted manually and supported by qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 12), which enabled the organization, retrieval, and comparison of codes across participants and data sources. Codes were carefully labeled to reflect both semantic content (explicitly stated information) and latent meaning (underlying ideas and assumptions).

Next, related codes were grouped into broader themes that captured patterns and relationships within and across participant groups. Theme generation involved iterative review, refinement, and constant comparison between codes, ensuring that each theme accurately represented the data and was distinct from other themes. Themes were also cross-checked against the research objectives and the theoretical framework to maintain conceptual coherence.

To enhance trustworthiness, peer debriefing was conducted, where a colleague reviewed coded data and proposed themes to verify accuracy and reduce researcher bias. Reflective journaling was also maintained throughout the analysis to document the researcher's assumptions and decisions. This systematic approach ensured that the analysis was transparent, replicable, and grounded in the data, providing a credible basis for interpreting findings and making evidence-based recommendations for curriculum development.

3.7.2 Visual Analysis

In addition to analysing spoken and written data, this study incorporated visual analysis to examine the artworks produced by Picture Making students as tangible products of the curriculum. Visual analysis is a qualitative method used to interpret artworks by observing, describing, and analysing their formal qualities, thematic content, techniques, and conceptual depth.

Students' selected artworks, particularly those that lecturers or the students themselves identified as engaging with contemporary art concepts, were reviewed using visual analysis frameworks. These frameworks focused on elements such as medium, material experimentation, compositional choices, subject matter, conceptual layering, and the extent to which the work demonstrated engagement with contemporary art discourses like hybridity, interdisciplinarity, or new media.

This method of analysis helped assess whether the curriculum successfully nurtured creative risk-taking, conceptual thinking, and awareness of global contemporary art trends. It also provided a concrete basis for comparing students' stated understanding of contemporary art (gathered through interviews) with what was actually manifested in their practical studio output.

By combining thematic and visual analysis, the study ensured a strong examination of both the process and product of the Picture Making curriculum. Thematic analysis revealed the curriculum's intended and lived experiences, while visual analysis provided tangible evidence of how these experiences translated into students' creative practice.

3.8 Specific Treatment of Objectives

3.8.1 Objective 1: To analyse the components of the Picture Making course, examining their alignment with contemporary art practices

To address this objective, the study employed a document review as the principal method. This process enabled the researcher to trace the content, scope, and learning outcomes articulated in the Picture Making component of the Art Education curriculum, and to evaluate how these elements aligned with current discourses and practices in contemporary art.

The document review focused on identifying the theoretical underpinnings of the curriculum, the diversity of techniques and media emphasised, and the extent to which contemporary concepts such as interdisciplinarity, conceptual experimentation, and digital practices were inserted in the curriculum. By comparing the stated curriculum goals to trends in global art education and contemporary studio practice, the researcher pinpointed gaps, outdated content, or underdeveloped areas needing revision. This critical review provided an objective baseline for assessing whether the Picture Making curriculum met the creative, conceptual, and professional demands of today's art world.

3.8.2 Objective 2: To investigate the methodologies employed in teaching Picture Making, and their effectiveness in fostering proficiency in the contemporary art discourse

To achieve this objective, the study used a combination of unstructured interviews and classroom observations. Unstructured interviews with Picture Making lecturers allowed for an open exploration of their pedagogical approaches and the rationales behind their teaching strategies. Lecturers described the extent to which they balanced traditional studio training with contemporary art ideas, how they motivated students to experiment, and the challenges they faced in bridging conventional techniques with contemporary art practices.

Complementing the interviews, studio work observations offered direct evidence of how teaching unfolded in practice. The analysis focused on how lecturers facilitated individual and group work, managed critiques, promoted conceptual dialogue, and encouraged innovative material use and technique development. This dual method captured both the intended teaching methods and their actual application, highlighting any disconnects between pedagogical intention and real classroom dynamics. These insights informed the understanding of whether current teaching methodologies effectively cultivated the creativity, critical thinking, and technical flexibility required for contemporary art practice.

3.8.3 Objective 3: To analyse Picture Making students' preparedness to thrive in the evolving landscape of contemporary

This objective was addressed through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and visual analysis of students' artworks. Individual and group interviews with current students explored their perceptions of the curriculum's relevance, their readiness to experiment beyond conventional media, and their confidence in navigating contemporary art spaces. Alumni were also engaged through interviews and FGDs to reflect on the real-world applicability of their training, the adequacy of their conceptual grounding, and how well the curriculum prepared them for professional practice or further studies in the contemporary art field.

Visual analysis of selected student artworks complemented these perspectives by examining the tangible outcomes of the curriculum. Artworks were analysed for conceptual depth, material experimentation, thematic relevance, and evidence of engagement with global contemporary art trends. This combination provided self-reported experiences with analysis of students' actual creative products and ensured an in-depth assessment of the program's effectiveness in preparing graduates for the demands and fluidity of contemporary art practice.

2.8.4 Objective 4: To develop evident-based strategies to broaden the scope of Picture Making at UEW, in line with contemporary art trends

The final objective drew upon a synthesis of findings from all prior objectives and the study's multi-method approach. Insights from the document review established how the curriculum was formally structured, while interviews, FGDs, and classroom observations revealed how it was enacted, experienced, and perceived by key stakeholders. Visual analysis of student artworks provided further evidence of how well conceptual and practical aims translated into creative output.

In addition, the study considered the institutional context, including the availability of studio resources, digital tools, and other infrastructural supports critical for the inclusion of contemporary art practices. By integrating these multiple data streams, the researcher developed targeted, realistic recommendations for curriculum reform. These recommendations were grounded in actual gaps and needs identified through evidence, ensuring they were practical and achievable within UEW's operational and cultural context. The result was a set of context-specific proposals designed to enhance the relevance of Picture Making in alignment with global contemporary art developments.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

To ensure the integrity of the study and the protection of all participants. The following ethical considerations guided the process:

All participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and scope of the

research before their involvement. Their participation was entirely voluntary, and therefore, verbal consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants' identities were protected by ensuring that no names or personally identifiable information appeared in the report. Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any consequences or needing to provide a reason. A letter of introduction was also sent to the Department of Art Education, stating the objectives of the research, in order to seek person to use the accredited programme document of Art Education for the purpose of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

Within this chapter, the results and analysis of the qualitative data have been thoroughly discussed. A discussion of the findings was also included, with consideration given to the findings of prior research as well as the existing literature, when applicable, in order to determine the similarities and differences that existed between this study and the studies that came before it.

4.1 Objective 1: To analyse the components of the Picture Making course, examining their alignment with contemporary art practices

The first objective was to evaluate the curriculum structure and content of the Picture Making component of the Art Education approved programme at UEW, with the goal of determining whether or not it is aligned with modern art practices.

In art education, the process of curriculum design functions as a potent mechanism that significantly influences the pedagogical orientation as well as the professional preparation of aspiring artists and art educators. Additionally, it outlines the philosophical and conceptual boundaries within which students are supposed to develop their creative and intellectual capacities. Not only does it regulate what students are taught, but it also defines the limitations. The demand for curricula that are responsive, inclusive, and future-oriented is becoming progressively more important as the scope

of contemporary art continues to transform. This development is being influenced by global discourses on technology, identity, politics, and social justice. This study took a critical look at the Picture Making component of the Art Education program at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). The purpose of this study was to evaluate the degree to which the Picture Making component aligns with contemporary trends, theoretical frameworks, and the expectations of art practice in the twenty-first century.

The concept that the curriculum is not a neutral or static thing was the foundation upon which the study was based. Rather, the curriculum is a socio-cultural construct that reflects the values, ideologies, and historical paradigms that are rooted inside an educational institution. As a result, this work questioned not just the obvious contents of the Picture Making curriculum, which include its tools, materials, themes, and procedures, but the implicit assumptions about art, learning, and creative agency that are conveyed by these parts. It pays particular emphasis to the degree to which the curriculum provides space for critical engagement with contemporary artistic practices, global perspectives, technology integration, and interdisciplinary creativity.

The study investigated how the curriculum gives preference to certain methods of viewing, making, and understanding art while potentially rejecting others. It does so by drawing on known aesthetic theories such as mimetic (imitationalism), formalist, instrumentalist, and emotionalist paradigms. This analysis made use of a wide variety of academic literature on art education, curriculum theory, and contemporary creative practice in order to bring attention to the philosophical and practical consequences of the current design of the curriculum. In addition, it investigated the ways in which the predominant emphasis on traditional media, representational content, and Eurocentric

art histories may hinder the capacity of students to operate as practitioners in the art world who are critical, adaptable, and cognisant of global issues.

Of critical importance is the fact that the analysis highlighted a number of interconnected areas in which the outcomes of learning appear to be misaligned with contemporary expectations. The limited integration of contemporary technology, the marginalisation of non-Western and Indigenous viewpoints, the absence of thematic focus on current social issues, and the under-representation of collaborative and participatory art forms are some of the issues that are being addressed. The analysis also revealed that there is a lack of engagement with sustainable practices and experimental media, both of which are crucial to the ecological and conceptual issues of contemporary art debate.

It was not the intention of this critique to undercut the basic virtues of the curriculum; in fact, the curriculum's emphasis on skill acquisition, craftsmanship, and classical approaches is widely accepted as being essential for the development of artistic discipline. Instead, the goal was to bring attention to the necessity of expansion and renewal. This includes the incorporation of a variety of theoretical lenses, contemporary methodologies, and inclusive content. This will enable students to not only replicate established norms, but to challenge them, rethink them, and reimagine their role as artists and educators within a global context that is rapidly transforming.

This work adds to continuing discourses about curriculum reform, decolonisation of art education, and the formation of artists who are as socially conscious as they are

technically adept. This was accomplished by conducting a critical evaluation of the existing structure of the Picture Making component at UEW.

By eschewing traditional formalist methods in favor of conceptual inquiry, interdisciplinarity, and critical engagement with context, contemporary art theory presents art practice as dynamic, pluralistic, and socially grounded. According to this theoretical framework, picture making now includes a variety of visual production methods, such as mixed media, digital processes, appropriation, symbolism, and conceptual representation, rather than just traditional drawing and painting approaches. As a result, Picture Making continues to be a crucial area for analyzing how art education programs react to changing concepts of art and artistic activity.

The Art Education programme at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) aims to train high-calibre professional Art Educators capable of delivering quality art education across pre-tertiary and technical institutions in Ghana. The development of students' analytical capabilities, creative competences, research talents, and professional preparation is essential to achieving this goal. Similar skills are highlighted by contemporary art theory, especially critical thinking, visual literacy, cultural interpretation, and the capacity to navigate regional and international artistic discourses. Therefore, it makes sense to conduct a focused research of the UEW Art Education program's Picture Making course in order to assess how these theoretical ideas are integrated in both curricular material and pedagogical practice.

The programme also seeks to produce graduates capable of identifying, designing, and manipulating local resources for teaching and learning, as well as promoting traditional

and contemporary Ghanaian visual symbols in a global market. The reinterpretation of indigenous symbols within modern visual languages is valued by contemporary art theory, which acknowledges the significance of cultural hybridity, identity, and context. In order to understand how Ghanaian visual traditions are incorporated, re-contextualized, or changed in response to current artistic discourse, an examination of the Picture Making course is crucial.

The objective of equipping students with research competencies reinforces the relevance of this study. With artists acting as investigators who use visual methods to investigate social, cultural, and material issues. With contemporary art practice becoming more research-driven, analyzing the Picture Making course sheds light on how students are exposed to critical reflection and research-based art practices, both of which are crucial to the creation of modern art and successful art education.

The programme's emphasis on 21st-century competencies lines up closely with contemporary art theory's focus on adaptability, innovation, and interdisciplinary practice. In this context, the study of the picture-making course is timely and necessary, as it contributes to understanding the relationship between curriculum intentions, contemporary art theory, and the preparation of Art Educators within the UEW Art Education programme.

In the following table, you will find an inventory of the essential components that are covered in the Picture Making section of the authorised Art Education program that is offered at the University of Education, Winneba. The structural priorities of the program are reflected in the categorisation of the content of the curriculum into three

primary categories: materials and tools, techniques and approaches, and thematic subject matter. A glimpse of what is formally emphasised within the curriculum is provided by this inventory, which serves as a fundamental reference for the critical analysis that was to follow. The succeeding sections investigated the educational usefulness of these rules, as well as their cultural assumptions and significance within the larger framework of current art practice and worldwide educational standards. This was accomplished by researching these provisions in detail.

Table 1: Inventory of Items Listed in the Picture Making component of the Art Education Accredited Programme

Picture Making	**Inventory of Items listed in Art Education's programme (UEW)**
Materials and tools	• acrylic and oil paint • water colour, • wood/Veneer • Tesserae (beads, papers, Fabrics • Pastels • Wood burning kit/ soldering iron
Techniques and Methods	• Painting • Collage • Mosaic • Pyrography • Marquetry
Contents	• Figure Painting • Landscape Scenes • Still life • Composition (compositional styles) • Abstract • Imaginative • Murals

4.1.1 Material and Tool Coverage in the Picture Making Curriculum

The operational curriculum for Picture Making at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) provides a foundation that is mostly constructed on conventional art materials and tools. Materials such as acrylic and oil paints, pastels, watercolour, veneer, and equipment such as the wood burning kit and soldering iron provide students with a vital grounding in the fundamental components of studio-based art practices. These features align with a pedagogical emphasis on technical mastery and tactile engagement, both of which are essential to the development of abilities in classical and representational art.

As a result of the incorporation of tesserae (beads, paper, and fabric) into collage and mosaic art, an element of material experimentation is introduced, and the development of compositional abilities, texture manipulation, and surface design is encouraged. Students are encouraged to develop their creative problem-solving skills and material sensitivity through this component of the curriculum, which serves as a bridge between the traditions of craft and fine art.

The fact that students are exposed to techniques regarded as specialist techniques, such as pyrography and marquetry, showcases the programme's dedication to preserving indigenous and specialised artistic techniques. These approaches might give students chances for artistic expression and the growth of their own particular identities within the boundaries of these traditional techniques.

However, my analysis found that the purpose of providing such materials and tools appears narrowly centred on conventional media, with minimal responsiveness to

contemporary artistic contexts. This is despite the fact that the intention of such provision is geared towards the learning of not just skills but also the exploration of creative possibilities. To fully meet the demands of today's art world, the curriculum should ideally balance this traditional focus with an openness to new tools and media. A fundamental pedagogical barrier is presented by the absence of digital tools and technologies in the curriculum, which includes drawing tablets, digital painting software (such as Procreate and Photoshop), image manipulation tools, and design programs. This is particularly problematic in the current era of digital transformation.

It can be deduced from the curriculum that the expected goals for students place an emphasis on the ability to handle materials, demonstrate technical precision, and communicate visually. However, students risk graduating without the digital fluency that is now expected in both the artistic and educational professions if they do not engage with developing media and technical platforms. Therefore, bridging the gap between traditional studio practice and digital innovation is essential. Apart from production, contemporary artists increasingly depend on their capacity to exploit digital possibilities in recording, distribution, and exhibition of their work, and students must be prepared to face this reality in the global art world.

From the point of view of contemporary art, the missing link is the incorporation of both existing and developing technology that define creative activities in the 21st century. With digital installations, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and sustainable materials, contemporary art progressively blurs the boundaries between different disciplines. Students' relevance in global art discourses may be limited if the curriculum does not include interaction with new media art, digital fabrication, or AI-assisted

creativity. This may also limit students' employability in creative industries driven by technological advancements.

Furthermore, there is little proof that the curriculum emphasises sustainable and environmentally friendly techniques that involve the use of recycled or biodegradable materials, which is an area that is becoming more important in global art education. Several studies (Hasio & Crane, 2014; Yeboah et al., 2017; Stendel, 2023) show how including waste products into studio art not only promotes environmental responsibility but also creative and critical thinking. The lack of such strategies reveals a lost opportunity for transdisciplinary and socially conscious education (Yao et al., 2024). Art teachers today are expected to use their pedagogies to respond to climate concerns; the absence of such approaches exposes an unrealised potential.

In conclusion, although the curriculum offers a strong foundation in conventional materials and manual processes, it does not adequately address the ever-evolving needs of contemporary art education. There is an urgent need to modify and broaden the scope of both the material and technological aspects. Doing so would ensure that graduates are prepared to thrive in both traditional studio settings and innovative, technology-driven art spaces. By incorporating digital tools, emerging technology, and sustainable materials into the curriculum, students would be better prepared to meet the demands of artistic, educational, and professional art engagements in a society that is progressively becoming more environmentally sensitive and globally networked.

4.1.2 Techniques and Methods

The equipment and materials available, as well as the techniques and approaches indicated in the Picture Making curriculum, such as painting, collage, mosaic, marquetry, and pyrography, reflect a commitment to keeping traditional, studio-based art-making alive. These frequent teaching approaches help students master basic skills, get better at using their hands, and develop a disciplined attitude towards working with materials and crafts. Adding specialist methods like marquetry and pyrography indicates that traditional studio training still places a high value on accuracy, patience, and mastery of skills.

However, my analysis found that even if these older methods of making art are still valuable in many ways, the visual arts are moving more and more towards new, experimental, and technology-based ways of making art that break down the conventional barriers between media, disciplines, and audiences. It is concerning that the curriculum does not include digital and new media technologies. It does not cover digital painting, video art, digital collage, animation, or immersive technologies like augmented and virtual reality. This is a gap that is not in line with the skills needed in the 21st century.

The current curriculum also limits students' freedom as they become art teachers, artists, and critical thinkers because it only teaches a few techniques. The curriculum encourages students to become craft artists instead of independent creatives by offering them a small set of traditional steps to follow and not enough freedom for originality or self-directed research. What is most important in contemporary art education is that

students come up with their own ideas, pick the correct methods, and choose the right steps to put their ideas into desired contexts. Without exposure to a wider range of techniques like experimental, hybrid, and cross-disciplinary ones, students cannot fully develop the ability to critique art intellectually. This restriction might make them less likely to take risks and start their own investigations, which are all vital for promoting originality, critical thinking, and a sense of ownership over the artistic process.

To nurture learners who can assert their agency and contribute to contemporary artistic discourse, an expanded techniques and methods section that encourages experimental practice and conceptual flexibility is necessary.

4.1.3 Thematic and Content-Based Components

In the UEW Art Education curriculum, the Picture Making component displays a concentration on traditional and formal subject matter, such as still life, landscape scenes, figure drawing, inventive compositions, abstract painting, and murals. Students have the opportunity to engage with a range of genres, which supports technical versatility. The incorporation of murals is particularly laudable since it creates room for projects that are geared towards the public and the community, which aligns with the significance of site-specific and collaborative public art practices.

However, my analysis found that a more in-depth examination reveals that the goals of these subject areas are primarily focused on the development of formal creative abilities and aesthetic fluency, rather than on critical or conceptual engagement. This suggests that while students gain practical skills, they may lack opportunities to interrogate

deeper meanings or respond to complex societal issues. The curriculum, in its current form, does not have a defined thematic framework that aligns with the socio-political, environmental, and cultural discourses dominating the contemporary art landscape. In particular, it does not put forward current global themes such as politics, gender, climate change, post-colonial critique, digital surveillance, and other relevant topics, which are issues that contemporary artists are actively investigating.

The desired learning goals appear to be tightly defined by the ability to generate representational and decorative works, rather than theoretically rigorous or socially meaningful art. This is despite the fact that the existing content fosters technical mastery and stylistic experimentation. One of the most important expectations in 21st-century art education is that students should be able to question or critique the world through their work. However, students are not in a position to do so, despite the fact that education in contemporary art is not just about the acquisition of skills but also about providing a platform for civic involvement, critical thinking, and cultural inquiry.

The absence of thematic guidance and critical frameworks for art-making in the curriculum creates a missing link, when viewed from a contemporary point of view. Without such guidance, there is a risk that learning remains uneven and disconnected from pressing global contexts. It is possible that lecturers have the freedom to choose the topics of their projects; yet, the absence of curricular guidance poses the risk of producing inconsistent learning experiences and may result in art education being less politically charged. If students are also allowed to exercise their independence without being guided by a specific theme, they may miss out on opportunities to engage with

socially conscious art practices, which are a defining characteristic of current visual culture.

Scholars such as Milbrandt (2002), Tremblay (2013), and Lawton (2021) have advocated for the incorporation of social justice and civic engagement themes into art curricula for a considerable time. They argue that the inclusion of such content not only increases relevance and student engagement but also positions art as a transformative tool within society. The curriculum that I evaluated, however, offered students very little to no formal motivation to investigate such scopes. The accredited document does not contain any representation of topics that are frequently considered to be basic to contemporary art.

In addition, there is not enough emphasis placed on interdisciplinary, project-based, or collaborative practices within the curriculum. According to Blatt-Gross (2019) and Diamond (2004), contemporary pedagogy promotes the use of group projects, community participation, and multimedia installations as means of fostering cooperative learning, social accountability, and experiential knowledge. The curriculum that is now being used does not appear to be able to accommodate these techniques, nor does it appear to support the introduction of art forms that are interactive or participatory. This limits students' exposure to real-world contexts where art and community intersect. It is possible that students will be deprived of the opportunity to create non-traditional ways of visual storytelling and public involvement if they are not exposed to installation art, performance, and other time-based media.

In addition to critical issues, theorists such as Gude (2007) and Bresler et al. (2008) advocate for the expansion of art education to incorporate the critique of visual culture, mass media, and digital imagery. They believe that these areas are essential not only for assisting students in comprehending how to create art but also for teaching them how to decipher visual messages, analyse cultural representations, and question widely accepted narratives. The curriculum currently offered in Picture Making aligns more with formalist traditions than with critical cultural literacy.

In conclusion, although the topics described offer a strong foundation for the development of foundational artistic skills, the curriculum needs to be rethought in order to accommodate the critical, conceptual, and interdisciplinary requirements of contemporary art. A more deliberate integration of these dimensions would bridge the gap between skill acquisition and critical engagement. A strategy that is more avant-garde should include the following:

1. Thematic modules in which modern themes such as identity, power, environment, and technology form the focus of the lessons.
2. Art projects that involve community participation and collaboration, critical theory, and analysis of visual culture.
3. Student-led topic inquiry, enabling ownership of ideas.

The Picture Making program would not only continue to be relevant if these elements were incorporated into the curriculum but would also empower students to develop their critical thinking skills, visual communication abilities, and the capacity to become culturally responsive educators and artists.

4.1.4 Objectivity and Inclusiveness

There is a significant constraint in the breadth and diversity of artistic traditions, ideologies, and cultural narratives that are represented in the Picture Making curriculum at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). The curriculum tends to represent a narrow, Western-influenced framework that prioritises conventional studio practices and Eurocentric aesthetics, despite the fact that it provides a solid basis in traditional art-making processes. This concentration, while beneficial in terms of grounding technical proficiency, unwittingly promotes a hierarchical art historical perspective that risks marginalising the vast variety of artistic forms that are emerging from non-Western, Indigenous, feminist, and postcolonial contexts.

In my study, I found that the curriculum's primary purpose appears to be the development of practical proficiency and visual literacy ingrained in classical art education paradigms. These aims remain crucial pedagogical goals, but they are not sufficient when compared to the broader mission of contemporary art education, which is to cultivate critical engagement, cultural awareness, and interdisciplinary thinking. A broader inclusion of diverse art histories would better reflect the complexity of today's artistic landscape. In its current configuration, the curriculum does not contain any conscious measures to ensure diversity and balance, and as a result, reproduces biases that are inherent in conventional canons of art.

Such bias is not unusual in art education. Studies (for example, Desai, 2010; Congdon et al., 2008) have demonstrated that many art programs still place an emphasis on Western art movements dominated by men, such as the Renaissance, Impressionism,

and Modernism, while failing to adequately represent art forms that are Indigenous to Africa, Asia, and the diaspora, as well as the accomplishments of women artists. The idea that certain forms of art are more "important" or "unquestionable" is reinforced by these representational imbalances, which shape students' understanding of art history and practice in a limited and exclusive way.

Strong technical skills and respect for formal aesthetics are the outcomes expected for students trained under such a program, but these come at the cost of critical cultural literacy and global awareness. Students risk graduating with a narrow perspective if clear efforts are not made to diversify the curriculum. This would leave them unprepared to navigate the heterogeneity and interconnectedness of contemporary art. To avoid this, the curriculum must intentionally expand its cultural and ideological scope.

Additionally, it appears that the curriculum does not provide adequate opportunities for students to critically examine the principles behind image-making. There is little evidence of systematic opportunities to explore how art reflects, critiques, or sustains power structures, identity politics, or cultural hegemony. This lack is likely due to the curriculum's traditional focus on craft over concept. The curriculum notably lacks interdisciplinary, digital, and global frameworks, which is a significant gap from a contemporary art perspective. Gude (2007) and Stuhr (2003) argue that art education should not only develop students' technical skills but also provide avenues for them to question dominant visual cultures, examine alternative narratives, and consider their own positions in the world.

In light of these gaps, concrete steps are needed to make the curriculum more representative and reflexive. The Picture Making curriculum needs a reform that includes:

1. The intentional incorporation of diverse cultural art forms, both historical and contemporary, with particular emphasis on contributions from African, Indigenous, feminist, diasporic, and postcolonial artists.
2. Contemporary and digital practices such as digital painting, installation, AI art, mixed media, and performance that reflect global trends.
3. Thematic integration of social justice, environmental ethics, and globalisation to support socially relevant creativity.
4. Teaching strategies that encourage student agency, collaborative meaning-making, and critical engagement with current events and mass media.

Achieving objectivity in art education is not simply about delivering content neutrally; it requires a curriculum that is intentional and reflective. The Picture Making component at UEW has the potential to better represent the range of human creativity and to empower students to become critically engaged artists, educators, and cultural thinkers in today's world.

4.1.5 Relevance and Theoretical Impact

An analysis of the relevance and impact of the Picture Making curriculum at UEW found that its underlying conceptual framework is implicitly anchored in two prevalent aesthetic theories: imitationalism (mimetic theory) and formalism. This was discovered

through an evaluation of the curriculum's relevance and influence. These theoretical orientations, which have influenced creative production and interpretation over the course of several centuries, continue to have an impact on the content of the curriculum as well as the direction that it takes in terms of pedagogy. All of the themes that are prioritised in the curriculum are directly reflective of the mimetic and formalist traditions that are prevalent in art education. These include still life, figure drawing, landscape scenes, and abstract compositions. Taking into consideration this theoretical orientation, it appears that the curriculum continues to place a high importance on the portrayal of reality and aesthetic structure as the major means by which meaning is acquired through visual art.

According to Gebauer et al. (1996), the principles of mimetic theory, which have their origins in the ancient philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, state that art should either copy or depict the external reality. One way in which this attitude is reflected in the current curriculum is through the focus placed on representational subjects, in particular figure drawing, landscape drawing, and still life drawing. These types of art are designed to help students improve their observational abilities and strengthen their technical correctness, both of which are goals that continue to be at the core of many traditional art programs. This emphasis on mimetic is intended to cultivate students' talents to depict the visible world with fidelity and expertise. It is congruent with historical art education practices, particularly those that were influenced by the realist traditions of the 19th century. These traditions posed a challenge to the idealism of academics and transferred the attention to everyday life and natural environs (Dede, 2022; Simashenkov, 2024). According to Palaver (2024), realism, both as a style and

as a philosophy, provides opportunity for social critique, historical recording, and manifestations of human experience. Truthfulness, authenticity, and cultural reflection are all encouraged through the curriculum by teaching students how to capture the visual reality of their surroundings. Mimetic techniques, on the other hand, may restrict students' ability to explore modes of art making that are more conceptual, symbolic, or non-representational, despite the fact that they provide students with technically rigorous approaches. It is possible that a purely mimetic orientation does not adequately prepare students for the various demands that are present in the art world in modern circumstances, when visual narratives are becoming more digital, abstract, and ideologically complex.

As articulated by Rimkus (2022) and Seidel (2019), the inclusion of abstract and compositional content in the curriculum is significant because it indicates an additional connection with formalist theory. This theory places emphasis on visual aspects such as line, shape, colour, and space than it does on narrative or representational content. Students are given the opportunity to develop a sense of balance, harmony, contrast, and other design concepts when they are encouraged to investigate the aesthetic and structural elements of art through this perspective. Formalist training seeks to cultivate in students an appreciation for visual organisation and workmanship, independent of thematic or socio-political consequences. This is the goal of formalist instruction. Formalism encourages introspective and experimental encounters with materials and techniques, particularly in works of art that are not representational, such as abstract painting, collage, or mosaic. The result is that pupils are equipped with aesthetic discernment as well as control over compositional elements. However, critics of

formalism claim that the focus of formalism is on autonomous aesthetics, which neglects the larger contexts in which art is made and experienced (Everett, 2004; Tekiner, 2006). Contemporary art, on the other hand, frequently challenges the idea that art is self-contained or apolitical by being critical, contextual, and interdisciplinary in nature throughout its production. Therefore, relying solely on formalism risks narrowing the students' capacity for critical or socially responsive art practices.

Students who are trained solely under mimetic and formalist paradigms may possess good technical foundations and visual acuity; yet, they may have little exposure to critical ideas, interdisciplinary thinking, and conceptual art practices. In light of the fact that contemporary art education actively relies on instrumentalism, which sees art as a vehicle for social change, and emotionalism, which places an emphasis on expressive and psychological content, these divergences are especially notable.

Representation, formal investigation, social function, and emotional resonance are the four theories that are frequently incorporated into contemporary activities, which frequently result in the development of hybrid techniques. The inability of the current curriculum to incorporate both instrumentalist and emotionalist points of view hinders its capacity to adequately prepare students for the conceptual and socially involved aspects of art that 21st century educational demands. To address this, more deliberate theoretical integration is required to link practical skills with critical thinking and cultural commentary.

Another glaring omission is that the curriculum does not include any clear theoretical training. Students do not receive a systematic introduction to aesthetic ideologies,

critical art theories, or reflective inquiry, all of which are crucial for the development of intellectually independent artists and educators. When learners do not have access to such a foundation, they may approach the process of creating art as if it is merely a technical or stylistic activity.

Towards a curriculum that is more relevant and has a bigger impact, it is essential to adhere to the following in order to improve the theoretical effect as well as the relevance of the Picture Making curriculum:

1. The integration of instrumentalist and emotionalist frameworks should be accomplished through projects that are socially themed, expressive, and narrative in nature.
2. Include art theory, visual culture studies, and aesthetics as formal components of the instruction that students receive in their academic programme.
3. Include case studies of contemporary artists who work in a variety of paradigms, including mimetic, formalist, emotive, and activist.
4. Create a space for practices that are critical, collaborative, and interdisciplinary, with an emphasis on the role that art plays in providing solutions to problems that are encountered in the real world.

By broadening the theoretical scope and embracing a variety of aesthetic values, the curriculum for Picture Making has the potential to develop into a more dynamic, reflexive, and globally relevant curriculum. Such a curriculum will not only cultivate skilled image-makers, but it will also cultivate critical thinkers, cultural commentators, and change agents in the arts and education sectors. This alignment would ensure that

graduates are equipped not just as practitioners but as active contributors to contemporary art discourses.

4.1.6 Gaps in Learning Outcomes

Students are provided with a solid foundation in technical skills, classical media, and formalist aesthetics through the Picture Making curriculum at UEW. This curriculum is based on a conventional approach to art education. An investigation, on the other hand, reveals significant deficiencies in its educational outputs, particularly when compared to the requirements of contemporary art practices, the expectations of globalised culture, and the theoretical heterogeneity that is currently influencing art education all over the world.

Restricted exposure to global and non-Western Art traditions: Traditional Western art techniques and canonical subject matter, such as still life, figure drawing, landscape, and abstract compositions, are given special attention in the curriculum. These techniques and subject matter are predominantly anchored in European art traditions. Specifically, the purpose of these requirements is to inculcate both aesthetic sensitivity and technical skill. It is anticipated of students that they will be able to mimic visual reality and master formal aspects. Having said that, it is possible that they will leave the program with a limited understanding of what makes art, thus ignoring the variety and depth of activities from throughout the world. As a result of the lack of an organised interaction with non-Western, Indigenous, or African art histories, students' cultural literacy is severely limited. This kind of exclusion hinders students' ability to produce

work that is culturally sensitive, globally relevant, and reflective of a variety of voices in today's art environment, which is more globalised. The incorporation of global art movements, such as African visual traditions, would significantly improve the ability to connect with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Insufficient consideration of contemporary social issues and conceptual depth: While the curriculum includes a variety of formal genres, it lacks clearly defined themes for art-making that align with present-day social, political, and environmental issues. Students develop craft-based skills but may not cultivate critical thinking, social awareness, or the ability to use art as a tool for commentary and advocacy. The absence of contemporary themes, such as gender, mental health, and postcolonial critique, limits students' ability to engage with real-world issues through art. This gap undermines the role that art plays as a medium for cultural critique and reform (Milbrandt, 2002; Lawton, 2021). It is possible that students will view art as decorative rather than as something activist, reflective, or intellectual if they are not exposed to these distinct discourses

Deficiencies in Collaborative, Interdisciplinary, and Participatory Practice: There are large-scale formats included in the curriculum, such as murals, which may encourage collaborative participation. There is, however, no systematic emphasis placed on learning through collaboration or through project-based learning. It is possible for students to become skilled solo producers, but they may lack experience working in teams, interacting with audiences, or establishing initiatives that include social participation. Collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and participation are extremely important to the success of contemporary art. The development of essential soft skills

such as communication, empathy, and adaptability is supported by these approaches, which also contribute to the production of work that resonates with the public. According to Watkins (2019) and Singh (2024), a curriculum that does not provide students with the opportunity to participate in practices such as installation art, performance, community-based projects, and new media collaborations results in students missing out on the opportunity to work across sectors and interact with a variety of communities. Strengthening this area would cultivate well-rounded graduates capable of collective practice and broader impact.

Digital and Technological Systems Deficiencies: Acrylic, oil, pastels, pyrography, and collage are some of the manual media that are emphasised in the curriculum. Digital tools and platforms are not mentioned at any point. Despite the fact that students acquire expertise in traditional media, they are not adequately equipped for the digital realities that are present in the current art world. The lack of digital literacy, which includes the use of programs such as Photoshop, Procreate, and Illustrator, as well as techniques such as digital drawing, video art, virtual reality and augmented reality, and online curating, results in a significant divergence from the way art is created, distributed, and consumed in the contemporary period. It is detrimental to students' employability, flexibility, and competitiveness to exclude artificial intelligence and new technologies from their educational experiences (Barry, 2004; Dzhanaev & Yazici, 2024; Li et al., 2022). This is especially true in an era in which these technologies are altering creative practice. Integrating digital competencies would bridge this gap and enhance students' relevance in modern creative industries.

Disregard for Environmentally Responsible and Sustainable Practices: The curriculum makes use of conventional resources and does not place any attention on the impact on the environment or on sustainability. Students develop material handling skills, but may lack awareness of environmental responsibility in art-making. There is no integration of recycled, low-impact, or found materials, which are widely promoted in contemporary art education for their ecological, economic, and creative benefits (Yeboah et al., 2017; Hasio & Crane, 2014; Stendel, 2023). A squandered chance to relate art to climate ethics and sustainable development goals is represented by the failure to instill environmental consciousness in students.

Imbalance in Theory and Deficiencies in Conceptualisation: Mimetic and formalist methods are the theoretical foundations of the curriculum, which places an emphasis on compositional competence and realism. Despite the fact that students are trained to have high visual accuracy and creative skills, they have a limited understanding of the purpose of art. Instrumentalism, which views art as a weapon for social change, and emotionalism, which views art as a personal and emotional expression, are both fundamental to contemporary art discussions; yet, there is only a modest assimilation of both of these concepts. The production of art that is expressive, politically engaged, and emotionally resonant is facilitated by these particular frameworks. The absence of these theories hinders the students' capacity to create work that critiques, transforms, or profoundly connects with audiences. Furthermore, there is no formal instruction in visual culture theory, critical aesthetics, or contemporary philosophy of art, which leaves students without the tools necessary to analyse visual messages or question

cultural ideologies. A balanced theoretical foundation would equip students with the reflective skills needed to navigate complex artistic discourses.

While the existing Picture Making curriculum at UEW does a good job of laying a solid basis in traditional media and classical techniques, it does not adequately prepare students for the conceptual, technological, environmental, and collaborative demands that are present in the art industry today. To fill in these shortcomings, the curriculum needs to be updated by the following:

1. Including perspectives from throughout the world and non-Western cultures
2. Introducing information that is intellectual and very relevant to societal issues
3. Placing an emphasis on digital and multimedia forms of artistic expression
4. Promoting cooperative efforts, environmental responsibility, and involvement in the community
5. Integrating a variety of aesthetic ideas, such as instrumentalism and emotionalism, among others

Such revisions would ensure that the next generation of artists are not only skilled but critically aware, adaptable, and capable of using art to respond to a changing world.

4.1.7 Section Summary

The analysis shows that the University of Education, Winneba's Picture Making program anchored on conventional studio-based methods, emphasizing formal visual abilities, technical proficiency, and material management. The curriculum's concentration on traditional mediums, specialized techniques, and traditional genres

including still life, figure drawing, landscape, and abstraction are all obvious strengths. These components give pupils a strong foundation in compositional control, visual precision, and craftsmanship.

The conventional approaches and the requirements of contemporary art education are shown to be at odds. There is little use of instrumentalist, emotionalist, conceptual, or socially involved frameworks in the curriculum, which is based on mimetic and formalist aesthetic ideas. Because of this, students may receive training that makes them adept at creating images, but they may not be adequately for cultural commentary, and conceptual innovation.

There is also lack of digital and emerging technologies, little focus on environmentally conscious and sustainable practices, limited exposure to international and non-Western art traditions, and a lack of organized interaction with current social, political, and cultural themes are some of the main drawbacks noted. Additionally, the curriculum offers few chances for interdisciplinary, collaborative, and interactive practices, all of which are essential in today's educational and artistic contexts.

In essence, the curriculum successfully preserves traditional art-making knowledge and technical discipline, but does not adequately reflect the conceptual, technological, theoretical, and socio-cultural realities shaping 21st-century art.

4.2 Objective 2: To investigate the methodologies employed in teaching Picture Making, and their effectiveness in fostering proficiency in the contemporary art discourse

The investigation examined the teaching practices within the Department of Art Education at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), scrutinising the alignment, or lack thereof, of current pedagogical methods with global trends in contemporary art education.

The analysis is informed by seven themes that represent systemic, conceptual, and structural problems influencing the instruction of Picture Making. These themes expound the essence of instructional techniques, together with their philosophical foundations, societal constraints, and consequences for students' progression as artists and intellectuals in the contemporary era.

The first theme, Pedagogical Stagnation and the Fragmented Integration of Contemporary Art Practices, highlights the disjunction between conventional educational models and the avant-garde essence of contemporary art.

The second theme, Creativity as Technical Reproduction and the Decline in Conceptual Advancement, emphasises that artistic work is evaluated more for precision and technical skill than for conceptual development or creative originality.

The third issue, Conflict Between Global Contemporary Art Discourses and Local Pedagogy, underlines the cultural and philosophical difficulties between global creative practices and localised educational frameworks.

The fourth theme, The Absence of Critical Discourse: De-Theorization and Superficial Thinking in Studio Practice, highlights the lack of reflective and theoretical engagement within the studio environment. Critical thought, analysis, and contextual discourse are insufficiently emphasised, resulting in superficial artistic outputs without conceptual depth and socio-cultural critique.

Curricular obstacles in incorporating contemporary art into visual composition reveal the constraints intrinsic to the curriculum design. The inflexibility of the syllabus, along with restrictive evaluation criteria, obstructs the integration of contemporary issues, interdisciplinary exploration, and diverse creative forms in Picture Making education.

Structural and Resource Deficiencies in Contemporary Arts Education illuminate the infrastructural and logistical obstacles confronting both instructors and students. Constraints in technical resources, learning environments, and professional development opportunities hinder an atmosphere that is unfavourable for the pedagogical advances required by contemporary art.

Lastly, the theme “Conceptualising a Revamped, Inclusive, and Forward-Looking Contemporary Art Education” suggests avenues for improvement. It emphasises the need for a more democratic, inclusive, and contextually pertinent curriculum that enables students to investigate, analyse, and engage with the dynamic discourse of contemporary art, not just as technicians but as intellectuals, creators, and cultural agents.

4.2.1 Pedagogical Stagnation and Fragmented Integration of Contemporary Art

Examining the responses revealed a curricular model in Picture Making education mostly limited by conventional, skill-oriented, and imitative approaches. Although different approaches are used by individual lecturers, the general framework is mostly shaped by conventional pedagogies that stress procedural repetition and technical demonstration instead of exploratory, student-centred, or interactive learning. This educational inertia forced an epistemological debate on students' notable incongruence with the diverse interpretation of contemporary education.

Respondents named lectures and demonstrations as the main teaching strategies, which they felt are limited by rigid course sequencing and so operate as channels of static knowledge rather than means of interpretive or dialogue-oriented inquiry.

One respondent on the other hand revealed that, in 2018, lecturers had a discussion on the subject of including contemporary art practices in the teaching and learning of Picture Making. He claimed that before then, Picture Making maintained focus on observational and technical skills, which centered on realism. They therefore reached a conclusion that even though in document, the Picture Making component of the Art Education accredited progaramme did not make in much room for contemporary art, they (the lecturers) would inculcate some elements of contemporary art. Their informal cohesive decision led this respondent to introduction conceptual thinking, leading to more experimental and student oriented instruction. He explained:

> An enhancement has occurred. The time in which teachers instructed students to depict a market scene or a seated individual has passed. Prior to proceeding, I instruct students to provide an artist statement that encompass all essential

elements and philosophies of painting, including your source of inspiration, the influence of that inspiration on the materials, the impact of the materials on the technique, and the synthesis of these components in the creation of their final work. Thus, even if it is a mark, it encompasses a multitude of concepts beyond mere colour emphasis (Respondent 1)

These assertions prompted an enquiry into the specific aspects of contemporary art utilised in his latest instruction of Picture Making. The interview transcripts referenced some aspects of contemporary art trends. These included:

Community Engagement: He described his utilisation of community engagement in his instructional methods. He recounted supervising a student from his figure drawing class to interact with the Kojo Bedu community of Winneba, facilitating conversations and requesting them to pose for drawing sessions. The results of her art surpassed mere aesthetics, serving as a representation of the subject matter, the interactions experienced, and her perceptions of human nature. The subsequent photographs were submitted by a participant as an exemplar of such portrait paintings.

Figure 16a & b. Critical Realism works by Picture Making Students

Source: Photographed by the Researcher

Technology and AI usage: Respondents referenced the use of technology, such as phones and computers, as well as the application of AI tools in students' work. These were utilised to develop and generate images for painting. Consequently, these tools were mostly utilised as instruments to achieve a specific outcome, with the final product being traditional artworks such as canvas paintings, pyrography, and marquetry. One participant, however, referenced an incident in which students amalgamated AI-generated and printed pieces with traditional painting techniques using brushes.

These responses indicated a profound concern among lecturers regarding contemporary art and Picture Making. They, however, attributed the limitations on their interaction with modern art in Picture Making to curriculum constraints.

Respondent 1 stressed the curriculum's rigidity and its dogmatic approach across several teaching levels. Painting courses follow a linear development, therefore limiting possibilities for multidisciplinary integration and experimentation. While such sequencing might improve skill development, it also reduces student autonomy and limits the conceptual flexibility required for contemporary art-making. The rare usage of slide presentations is more likely to be a technique for information distribution than an indicator of a deep engagement with digital culture.

Respondent 2 criticised the curriculum for following "Western values," arguing that the teaching goals still centre on their reproduction rather than challenging accepted artworks. The Picture Making curriculum's reasoning is that teacher preparation must match basic and senior high school curricula, so reflecting a utilitarian perspective

stressing conformity over originality. Although this stance is almost reasonable, it upholds a hierarchy of content that excludes important artistic discourses and techniques.

Respondent 3 offered more complexity. Though demonstration-based teaching is rather common in Picture Making, it falls short in responding to new teaching guidelines that give inclusivity, digital literacy, and emotional development first priority. Although aesthetically pleasing, this approach serves as a one-way transaction and is insufficient for supporting either culturally sensitive teaching or diverse learning. The absence of tailored training and restricted use of technology, including newly developed tools like artificial intelligence, indicates that the epistemological framework of the curriculum is both outdated and disconnected from present art practice.

Respondent 4 presented another viewpoint, nevertheless. Though in limited or uneven forms, reports of project-based, problem-based, and experiential learning paradigms abound. Students are occasionally urged to interact with contemporary art through well-chosen experiences and to research materials and methods. The respondent's usage of the words "to some extent," "traces," and "familiar with" points to contemporary aspects not being systematically included in the curriculum. Oftentimes, what faculty members consider as innovation falls short of conventional wisdom. It seems that breaking standards is seen more as performative than as real.

Their stories taken together revealed a divided system. One side presents a dominant model marked by formalism and skillful exposition. On the other hand, there are few

efforts in educational innovation, practical exercises, and quick exchanges with international approaches. The conflict between these two remains unresolved.

What is shown thus is not only a need for curricular change but also a more reflective redefining of goals. Contemporary art education calls for a curriculum that fosters critical thinking, embraces uncertainty, and develops visual, digital, emotional, and cultural abilities among other qualities. If the Picture Making program keeps its emphasis on mastery instead of meaning, it runs the risk of turning out graduates capable of duplication but lacking in critical authorship and imagination.

4.2.2 Creativity as Technical Reproduction and the Decline in Conceptuality

Though one respondent mentioned earlier that he considered conceptual thinking in his instructional approach, most of the responses showed a concern that the Picture Making program's creative output is narrowly interpreted as technical mastery, thereby restricting conceptual freedom or alternative thought. While contemporary art education expects risk-taking, thematic research, and material investigation to produce creativity, the studied curriculum seems to stress replication and skill execution, thereby reducing creativity to a basic function of mimetic fidelity.

Respondent 1 reflected on this conflict by pointing out that whereas those with intellectual or creative capacity but lacking formal skills find it difficult to get validation, the instructional paradigm promotes students with natural technical aptitude. Operating on a deficit paradigm, the curriculum holds that artistic ability should be

demonstrated by observable technique rather than by conceptual intention or reflective process. Especially for students whose strengths lie in conception rather than execution, this paradigm ignores the variety of creative identities and closes chances for experimentation. He also recognised that the varied materials in the Dry Media styles course have, over the years, enabled students without proficiency in painting to uncover their potential in alternative artistic styles.

The data reflected this emphasis on "skills demonstration" all around. Often forsaking personal expression or critical interaction, the Picture Making learning environment depends on technical imitation, copying individuals, landscapes, and still life compositions. Fundamentally conservative, the approach described gives 19th-century academic studio procedures top priority over those of the 21st century.

Respondent 3 underlined the lack of pedagogies that take emotional intelligence, social context, or cultural variety into account, thus intensifying the critique. The focus on performance and standardised outcomes stunts the development of internal cognitive and emotional resources necessary for contemporary innovation. The relevancy of the curriculum's creative instruction is threatened by its omission of sociopolitical consciousness, intersectionality, and digital hybridity in a global art setting.

As Respondent 4 noted, even the meagre efforts towards theme inquiry are limited by traditional education. While occasionally students are allowed to "transcend the norm," the boundaries of this inquiry remain vague and constrained. The mentioned acts of deviance are considered remarkable rather than expected. As such, creativity becomes an anomaly rather than a basic teaching tool. Students adopt a fixed view of art and its

possibilities when innovation is seen as a deviation from normativity rather than as a natural feature of artistic evolution.

The lack of current references and necessary frameworks included in the curriculum aggravates this situation. There is no indication of curricular attention on conceptual approaches including research-based practice, performativity, or interactive art, all of which are essential to contemporary discourse. Students are trained to follow rather than to question and challenge.

Education must move from task-oriented instruction to inquiry-based learning if it is to encourage real creativity. It must help students become critical thinkers and active global citizens, rather than simple copycats.

2.2.3 Conflict between Global Contemporary Art Discourses and Local Pedagogy

The views of participants together pointed to a structural and philosophical difference between the demands of global contemporary art education and the Picture Making curriculum. While contemporary art pedagogy is transdisciplinary, socially conscious, and technologically flexible, the teaching strategies described here are constrained, skill-oriented, and based on the conventional Western canon. This indicates a serious crisis: the curriculum does not prepare students for critical participation in global artistic expression or reflect its current state.

Respondent 2 clearly pointed out that the curriculum's persistent prevalence of "Western tenets" indicates an overindulgence in canonical models rather than an active

engagement with worldwide practices. These models, which are supposed to be fundamental for producing future teachers within a set curriculum, expose a tension between institutional goals and artistic value in their ongoing existence. Clearly, the program gives curricular congruence with local educational institutions top priority over engagement with international aesthetic and pedagogical trends. Although this kind of alignment meets utilitarian needs, it compromises the development of teachers or artists equipped to interact with contemporary visual culture.

Respondent 3's mention of limited inclusion of new media and digital literacies emphasised the same reflective attitude. Contemporary art practice is distinguished by interaction, cross-platform production, and the use of digital resources. The data, however, show that these modalities are either absent or very rarely used. Furthermore, the absence of teaching in AI tools, data aesthetics, and algorithmic art production reflects a larger pedagogical deficit that ignores not only present technologies but also the questions they raise about authorship and agency.

Another fundamental issue in global education debate is similarly under-addressed: pedagogical equity. Respondent 3 noted that the prevailing approach is “one-size-fits-all,” with little regard for students' cognitive, emotional, or cultural differences. Students from various socioeconomic backgrounds have limited space or evidence of inclusive curricula embracing non-Western art or artistic traditions. This compromises the democratising goals of contemporary art, which aims to distribute power and raise underprivileged voices.

Respondent 4, who highlighted indications of project-based and experiential techniques showing that students are at times allowed space to explore ideas, interact with contemporary works, and deviate from predefined paradigms, provided a more hopeful, though constrained, counter-narrative. Still, this is presented as a departure rather than the norm. The respondent's narrative repeatedly uses the term "to some extent," which denotes a disjointed and fragmented integration of contemporary practices. Global art exposure remains passive viewing or referencing works rather than active participation in the discourses it reflects.

These realisations go beyond mere lack of material or technique to include an inability to rethink the purpose of art education in a globalised environment. Through research, activism, technology, and hybridity, contemporary art defines itself not just by what is created but also by how and why it is created. Students will remain on the fringes of world events armed with technical skills but bereft of critical action until the curriculum covers these scopes structurally rather than randomly.

The program must change its teaching philosophy to match global pedagogical norms by stressing open-ended inquiry over imitation. Without such change, the curriculum runs the risk of being not only out of date but also irrelevant to the global artistic scene.

4.2.4 De-Theorization and Superficial Thinking in Studio Practice

The findings indicate a pedagogical deficiency in the incorporation of critical thinking and theoretical discourse in studio-based training. Although criticality is fundamental

to contemporary art practice, the Picture Making curriculum prioritizes practical execution above intellectual involvement. This approach cultivates an environment of uncritical production, wherein students may excel in technical methods yet lack depth in their critical engagement with art.

Respondents widely agree that the curriculum's structure inadequately facilitates conceptual development. Respondent 1 notes that the theoretical substance inherent in studio practice is limited and frequently diminished to superficial activities, such as artist statements or rudimentary reports. These brief instances of verbal or written expression function primarily as administrative checks rather than authentic venues for conceptual exploration. The studio, rather than serving as a laboratory for contemplation, primarily operates as a venue for demonstration and reproduction.

Respondent 2 highlights the ideological ramifications of this model, observing that instruction is excessively regulated by rigid expectations, commonly termed as “canons.” Students, cognizant of these expectations, frequently engage in mimicry instead of exploration. This not only limits critical participation but also supplants uniqueness with planned conformity. In such a system, creativity is not fostered; it is managed by the educator. Consequently, the student's ability to participate in artistic reasoning, critical discourse, or theoretical contextualisation is considerably diminished.

The issue is intensified by a deficiency of time and space, both physical and educational, for contemplation. Respondent 3 notes the limits of time-sensitive projects and the insufficiency of the studio environment. These settings inhibit the gradual,

iterative nature of critical inquiry, favouring efficiency and output over the process itself. Thus, critical thinking is not only weak but also systematically marginalised.

Respondent 4 emphasises the lack of a culture of critique within the program. Opportunities for peer review, group discourse, or organised reflection are either absent or incidental. Critique, which should function as a dialogic arena for meaning-making and ideological exploration, is frequently neglected or relegated to theoretical classes that are wholly distinct from studio practice. This fragmentation relegates theory to a mere supplement, instead of incorporating it as an essential element of artistic creation.

The lack of critical discourse carries significant ramifications. In the absence of tools for interpretation, analysis, and critique, students become estranged from the cultural and intellectual frameworks that underpin contemporary art. They may create visually proficient works, although they lack the terminology, frameworks, or confidence to situate their profession within broader discourses. These viewpoints expose a fundamental contradiction: the curriculum aims to cultivate educators and professionals capable of functioning in dynamic creative environments, yet it denies them the essential conceptual and critical thinking underpinnings required for such adaptation. Unless critical thinking is fundamentally included into studio practice via embedded theory, coordinated critique, and reflective practice, the curriculum will persist in generating technicians instead of thinkers.

4.2.5 Curricular obstacles in integrating Contemporary Art into Pedagogy

A primary concern expressed by respondents pertains to the inflexibility of the curriculum, which acts as a structural barrier to incorporating the experimental and dynamic requirements of contemporary art. The analysis indicates that the majority of educators function within a paradigm that emphasises established learning objectives, skill-oriented implementation, and evaluative measures that afford less opportunity for personal expression or risk-taking, characteristics inherent to contemporary art production.

Respondent 1 observes that the curriculum is very prescriptive, with course outlines tailored for technical skill development rather than for the conceptual and philosophical explorations that contemporary art frequently demands. Educators are tasked with preparing students for specified outputs, such as paintings or drawings that adhere to established styles, so restricting opportunities for experimentation or unconventional techniques. The outcome is a classroom atmosphere that prioritises artistic replication above innovation and theoretical inquiry.

Respondent 2 highlights the institutional culture of adherence to established standards and evaluative techniques. Educators recognise alternative pedagogies and artistic movements but frequently feel obligated to adhere to stringent rules, particularly as many students are being prepared to teach at the primary or secondary levels, where the curriculum remains similarly traditional. The nature of evaluation, which prioritises proficiency in particular media and techniques, limits the pedagogical flexibility that instructors could otherwise utilise.

Furthermore, Respondent 3 highlights the internal conflict experienced by educators, torn between adherence to conventional standards and exploring unfamiliar contemporary domains. This tension frequently results in ambivalence that obstructs creativity. Respondent 4 emphasises this dilemma, highlighting that time limitations, workload, and the substantial number of students hinder the integration of reflective, conceptual, or process-oriented learning methodologies. Consequently, educators adhere to established, historically validated approaches despite acknowledging their shortcomings.

Respondent 3 highlights a significant systemic disjunction between the development of educational policy and its execution in the classroom. Although contemporary art themes are incorporated into updated pre-tertiary curricula (e.g., the merging of 2D and 3D thinking), a lot of educators lack the preparedness to comprehend or implement these modifications. Corresponding training or orientation, resulting in confusion or resistance at the classroom level, has not accompanied the transition from discipline-specific instruction to integrated artistic thinking.

Respondent 2 reflects this disconnection by noting a fragmentation of vision within the arts education community. Although individual educators may possess progressive ideas, the lack of collaborative venues for co-designing curricula stifles innovation. A deficiency in communication and unified guidance perpetuates inaction, even among individuals keen to advance educational frontiers.

Collectively, these results indicate a prevailing pedagogical inertia embedded in curriculum design, assessment standards, and teacher preparation. Although certain

current influences are recognised, especially during critique sessions and project work, they tend to be peripheral rather than fundamental to the curriculum. Significant curricular adjustments are essential to effectively integrate pedagogy with the developing modalities of contemporary art.

4.2.6 Structural and resource deficiencies in Contemporary Arts Education

The investigation identifies infrastructural and systemic difficulties, including curriculum rigidity, that impede educators' capacity to adapt to contemporary creative practices. These issues encompass restricted access to technology, substandard studio facilities, inadequate internet connectivity, and insufficient support networks for instructors and students alike.

Respondent 4 highlights the technological disparity, indicating that unpredictable energy and poor internet access hinder the effective integration of digital instruments, which are crucial in numerous contemporary art forms. Even when instructors are inclined to embrace new techniques, the physical and technological environment is not favourable. The issue is exacerbated by insufficient institutional support for professional development; workshops, training in new media, and interdisciplinary teaching methods are infrequently provided, resulting in educators being inadequately prepared to adapt to the field’s evolution.

Inclusivity represents an additional structural challenge. Respondent 4 highlights the inadequate provisions for students with disabilities. The lack of interpreters and suitable

pedagogical modifications effectively precludes these learners from fully engaging in picture making classes. Such limits undermine the inclusive objective of contemporary art, which frequently aims to prioritise marginalised voices and diverse forms.

In conclusion, although certain restrictions are conceptual and curricular, numerous others are logistical and institutional. In the absence of structural transformation, enhanced resources, professional development, inclusive learning settings, and curriculum coherence across educational tiers, the objectives of contemporary art education will remain unattainable.

4.2.7 Conceptualising a revamped and inclusive Contemporary Art Education

The suggestions provided by respondents emphasise the necessity for a thorough overhaul of the curriculum and institution to synchronise art education with local cultural insights and the evolving requirements of global contemporary art. Respondents call for a reevaluation of educational frameworks that broadens the concept of art beyond traditional technical standards to include varied mediums, interdisciplinary methods, and critical theoretical discourse.

A persistent proposal underscores the necessity for curricular adaptability. Educators advocate for a shift from inflexible, skill-focused frameworks to models that enable students to investigate diverse resources and techniques. This vision promotes the use of digital resources, open-ended projects, and a decrease in prescriptive guidelines to enable students to develop their own aesthetic and intellectual languages. Respondents

contend that these alterations would enable contemporary art practices, which intrinsically oppose consumerism and rigid structure, to thrive by emphasising individual expression and experimentation.

Moreover, there is a significant focus on reorganising the trajectory of art education from the foundational levels. Recommendations emphasise that reform should initiate at the pre-tertiary level, where the foundations of creative thought are initially established. Early exposure to a varied curriculum that amalgamates classic and contemporary methods will more effectively equip students for the exigencies of higher education and the dynamic nature of art.

Participants also emphasise the necessity for enhanced professional development and infrastructural assistance. It is advised that UEW allocate resources towards ongoing educator training, facility enhancements, and technological integration to foster an atmosphere supportive of contemporary art practices. It is proposed to establish platforms for collaborative discourse among educators and practitioners to bridge the gap between theoretical innovation and classroom application. These strategies would promote technical skill with current tools and foster an adaptive teaching ethos sensitive to social and technological change.

Ultimately, the ideas underscore a significant ideological transition towards the democratisation of art education. This entails contesting colonial and canonical mandates by integrating indigenous viewpoints and many artistic traditions. In doing so, UEW would establish itself as a promoter of critical, culturally grounded forms of expression that resonate on both local and worldwide levels. The path forward

necessitates the reorganisation of the curriculum into a dynamic, inclusive structure that values critical thinking and individual autonomy while confronting systematic injustices and resource shortages.

These recommendations indicate a reformed contemporary art pedagogy that transcends conventional constraints. The proposed framework aims to address external technical and market demands while redefining art education as a catalyst for cultural development and critical inquiry.

4.2.8 Skill-Based Education and Limited Conceptual Creative Opportunity

The responses indicate an educational paradigm that associates creativity with execution, rather than with ideation, transformation, or contemplation. A consistent trend is evident throughout all four accounts: students in the Picture Making program are indoctrinated into a stringent, technique-centric milieu that prioritises the demonstration of visual proficiency over conceptual autonomy. The outcome is an educational environment that constrains both the definition and manifestation of creativity.

Respondent 1 recognises the system's favouritism towards "natural talent" as a means of exclusion. This perspective regards creativity as an inherent quality, seen in brushwork or figuration, rather than developed through critical analysis or experimentation. Individuals who fail to satisfy this narrowly specified technical criterion become imperceptible inside the educational setting. What is a curriculum that fosters diverse forms of expression rather than perpetuating a hierarchy of abilities?

The program restricts creative engagement by prioritising technical competence as the primary criterion for artistic excellence.

The curriculum's instructional framework, as stated by the same respondent, favours mimetic repetition. Students emulate still life, portraits, and other classical forms in manners that indicate proficiency in style rather than innovation. Conceptual cognition, if it exists, is merely accidental. Assignments may necessitate the expression of visual intent; yet, these instances of verbal reflection are sporadic and inadequately integrated. The overarching educational approach fails to foster critical analysis, reflective interpretation, or thematic risk-taking, which are essential to contemporary artistic production.

Respondent 2's nuanced argument recognises that creativity is not wholly lacking. Nonetheless, this study reveals a perception of unactualised potential. The existing system, although able to enable a certain level of creative output, fails to establish the conditions required for profound engagement. The response recontextualises the discourse through a cultural perspective, asserting that creativity in African art traditions has always been expressive, intuitive, and rooted in quotidian experiences, qualities that current global practices likewise aspire to incorporate. The irony is that the Ghanaian environment, by adopting imported formalist paradigms, diminishes its own rich creative legacy.

Their advocacy for re-indigenising the curriculum is substantial. It transitions the discourse from instructional methodology to the acquisition of cultural knowledge. Creativity, from this perspective, exceeds the mere production of original visuals; it

involves empowering the student to articulate the essence of art, its context, and its audience. The lack of different materials and procedures is both a technical and a cultural deficiency.

Respondent 3 defines the effect of instructional rigidity on learner autonomy. By mandating particular techniques and combinations, educators constrain students' expressive range. Pedagogical authority is not distributed but enforced. This method contradicts the principles of contemporary education, which prioritise learner autonomy, exploratory inquiry, and experimentation. These constraints, although sometimes beneficial for teaching, function as ideological limitations rather than developmental supports. The student is instructed to function within a defined framework rather than to question or explore beyond these limits.

Respondent 4's critique discloses the performative aspect of claims on learner-centred education. Notwithstanding institutional rhetoric, practical implementation continues to be lecturer-centred. Formulaic assignment design and prescriptive outcomes inhibit creativity. Students generate proficient work but lack the linguistic and analytical tools necessary to contextualise or scrutinise their decisions. The lack of critique exacerbates this problem. In the absence of conducive environments for peer and self-assessment, artistic development becomes stagnant.

The misuse of technology is very concerning. Some respondents noted that students utilise AI technologies autonomously, lacking critical literacy. This indicates both a pedagogical deficiency and a potential opportunity. Instead of incorporating digital literacy into the curriculum as a vital and innovative resource, technology is regarded

as needless or even disruptive. This neglect results in a significant inadequacy in equipping students for the intellectual and practical demands of global creative production, where digital hybridity has become core rather than marginal.

The existing approaches under investigation seem fundamentally unable to equip students with the varied innovation required in the contemporary art world. Creativity is regarded as an aesthetic artefact instead of a process involving intellectual, cultural, and emotional interaction. Conceptual thought is in opposition to the system rather than as a result of it. To alter this dynamic, pedagogy must be redefined, and not merely in relation to tools or material, but in terms of the values it upholds: open-endedness, plurality, and experimentation, as opposed to closure, hierarchy, and prescription.

4.2.9 Diminished Autonomy and Stifled Expression in Studio Pedagogy

The lack of student voice and autonomy in the Picture Making curriculum signifies a flaw in its educational model. Although institutional discourse frequently emphasises learner-centeredness, the accounts of respondents indicate a studio setting in which the learner's influence is neither operationally integrated nor culturally appreciated. In the Picture Making framework, students are regarded not as pioneers of novel ideas, but as doers of predetermined studio goals. The studio consequently transforms into an environment of conformity instead of discourse, creation rather than contemplation.

Respondent 1 observes that students are “requested to discuss their work,” although this solicitation is inconsistent and shallow. Expression is restricted solely to the limited

scope of technical critique; there is seldom indication of organised opportunities for students to articulate the parameters of their involvement, to scrutinise their creative choices, or to negotiate the philosophical aspects of their activity. Critique sessions are instructor-led and lack the necessary in-depth discussion for cultivating artistic voices among students. Students normally in these sessions provide explanations instead of generating meaning.

Respondent 4 articulates worry regarding the authority wielded by lecturers over both content and methodology. The instance of a lecturer pre-determining standards of composition proves a knowledge hierarchy where students' perspectives are regulated by the institutional framework. Even in environments that seemingly promote creativity, it is constrained by a framework of permission rather than active engagement. The phrase, “we decide what the students should do,” articulated by a participant, indicates a paternalistic framework that regards learners as passive recipients instead of active creators of information.

Respondent 3's criticism of the "restriction" imposed by the suggested tools and procedures shows that even material choices are limited. The student is prevented from pursuing other options or developing a unique visual lexicon by this rigid approach. Containment is one pedagogical framework that incorporates individual deviations into consistent results. Curriculum regulations override the individual's voice.

Respondent 2 adds a key cultural element to the discussion by advocating for a curriculum that encourages students to "explore their inner selves" and rethink art using frameworks that are relatable to their context. In addition to being a form of self-

expression, student autonomy is viewed as a cultural and conscious right. In this context, autonomy refers to the ability to define one's behaviour in relation to their surroundings, identity, and history. Respondent 2's argument for a curriculum whose frameworks are culturally aligned is valid for reasons of helping students with their cultural identity awareness. In this context, the contemporary art classroom becomes a place where students create meaning and also absorb knowledge.

Additionally, the incorrect use of technology as shown by Respondent 4 exposes the educational difference between autonomy and support. Students use artificial intelligence tools not as means of enhancing their autonomy but rather as substitutes for the insufficient direction the system provides. In the absence of a curriculum that effectively incorporates digital literacy, students use technology to replace critical thinking instead of collaborating creatively. This is not an indication of autonomy, but rather of inadequate instruction.

The denial of autonomy and voice is not a side issue; rather, it is a fundamental aspect of pedagogy. Sovereignty is the precondition for critical practice, and voice is the essence of authorship in the context of contemporary art education. If both are not encouraged in the curriculum, the result is artists who can perform but cannot contribute significantly to society. Restoring student voice requires not only changing instructional strategies but also reorganising the classroom so that students can direct the conversation.

4.2.10 Section Summary

Creativity within the programme is predominantly framed as technical reproduction rather than as conceptual inquiry, experimentation, or critical reflection. Students are rewarded for mimetic accuracy and formal proficiency, while ideation, emotional intelligence, sociopolitical awareness, and cultural critique are marginalised.

Although contemporary art is inherently interdisciplinary, socially engaged, and technologically driven, the curriculum remains aligned with Western canonical models and utilitarian teacher-preparation goals. Digital literacy, new media, artificial intelligence, and participatory practices are either absent or inadequately integrated, leaving students underprepared for contemporary creative economies and global artistic conversations.

The findings further expose a critical lack of theoretical grounding and structured critical discourse within studio practice. Theory is treated as peripheral, critique is inconsistent or instructor-dominated, and opportunities for reflective inquiry are limited by time constraints, assessment structures, and studio culture. This de-theorisation reduces studio practice to technical execution.

Structural and institutional barriers also contribute to these pedagogical shortcomings. Inadequate infrastructure, unreliable technology, limited professional development, and insufficient support for inclusive education restrict educators' capacity to innovate. Curriculum rigidity, assessment pressures, and misalignment between policy reforms and classroom implementation are also major contributors to the current Picture Making shortfalls.

Finally, the suppression of student voice and autonomy are also key areas to be worked on. The studio operates as a site of compliance rather than dialogue, with students positioned as executors of predefined outcomes instead of authors of meaning. Limited opportunities for critique, constrained material choices, and authoritarian instructional models undermine learner agency.

4.3 Objective 3: To analyse Picture Making students' preparedness to thrive in the evolving landscape of contemporary

To evaluate the extent to which the Picture Making curriculum at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), prepared graduates for active engagement in the contemporary art field, group discussions were conducted with three selected cohorts of participants.

The first group comprised randomly selected final-year undergraduate students enrolled in the Picture Making programme. This group provided a foundational perspective on how students nearing graduation conceptualised contemporary art and how they related it to their training. However, it was discovered that this group was not well informed on contemporary art trends, which led to constituting another group.

The second group involved students who, despite being undergraduates, actively explored creative practices beyond traditional techniques and attended contemporary art exhibitions; this cohort offered insights into how individual initiative and external exposure supplemented or compensated for curricular limitations. It was also realised

that the second group, who were selected based on their personal contemporary art endeavours, were only inspired by works of successful Ghanaian contemporary artists but lacked depth in the theoretical aspects of contemporary art. They therefore could not contribute to very deep conversations on contemporary art.

The third group consisted of alumni who had progressed beyond undergraduate training to complete a Master's degree in Art Education. They were chosen to provide a longitudinal perspective on how well the foundational training in Picture Making supported deeper engagement with contemporary art discourse and practice after graduation.

The analysis is discussed in five themes were generated based on the consistency of their emergence across the groups, capturing the strengths, gaps, and rigidities present in the current curriculum. These findings shed light on the relationship between technical mastery, conceptual development, technological adaptability, and professional readiness in the context of contemporary art education at UEW.

4.3.1 Strong Technical Foundations but Persistent Conceptual Gaps

All three groups demonstrated strong knowledge of classic painting techniques and studio operations. Students felt confident in their ability to draw, paint, and produce high-quality work; skills that had long been emphasised in the Picture Making curriculum. However, this technical competence often overshadowed conceptual understanding, especially when it came to discussing key theories, contemporary movements, and the broader cultural and political factors that shape art today.

For instance, the first group only vaguely placed contemporary art in a historical context and struggled to explain what distinguished it from previous forms of art beyond style. They frequently equated any departure from realism with being 'contemporary,' displaying a limited understanding of the complex ideas that underpin current practice.

The second group's experiences confirmed this gap. They recognised that contemporary art might involve unconventional materials, unusual objects, and narratives about social and political issues, but indicated that most of what they knew came from self-directed learning rather than formal instruction.

The alumni group echoed this gap. Although their postgraduate study provided them with more research opportunities, many still described contemporary art as "breaking away" from established rules, lacking the depth required to critically engage with its evolving discourses. This demonstrated that, while the programme succeeded in teaching technical skills, it did not consistently develop students' ability to situate their work within critical, theoretical, or transdisciplinary frameworks.

4.3.2 Student Agency Limited by Curricular Rigidity

All groups discussed how the rigid structure of the current curriculum constrained students' creative freedom. Participants expressed that the Picture Making curriculum was too prescriptive and focused heavily on repetitive studio practice and mastery of traditional media. They commonly used terms like "boxed," "narrow," and "restrictive" to describe their experience.

The second group stood out for using their own initiative to go beyond what was formally taught. They experimented with new materials, mixed media, installations, and performance-based works. They explained that this exploration was driven by informal learning and peer influence, not institutional encouragement. Below is a photograph of solo exhibition exhibit presented by a participant in the second stratum from his portfolio.

Figure 17: Exhibit by a Self-Directed Student

Source: Participant's Exhibit (2024)

Participants cited the Level 400 Independent Studies in Art course as one of the only spaces that allowed for experimentation and self-expression. However, students and graduates agreed that this limited freedom could not compensate for the rigidity of the core curriculum from Levels 100 to 300, which remained heavily skill-focused and risk-averse. This narrow approach inhibited students from exploring new ideas, collaborating across disciplines, and engaging with the diverse practices that define the global contemporary art scene.

The alumni group confirmed that this rigidity persisted beyond graduation, with many having to "unlearn and re-learn" to adapt to the contemporary art world. One respondent said, "In the real world, you're supposed to break boundaries, but here, they teach you to stay inside them."

4.3.3 Limited Integration of Digital Media and Technological Tools

A critical gap identified by all groups was the limited integration of digital tools and new media in the Picture Making programme. While some students used basic digital software like Photoshop to prepare reference materials for painting, they rarely viewed technology as an artistic medium in its own right. Advanced digital practices such as digital painting, animation, video art, virtual or augmented reality, projection mapping, or NFT art were almost entirely absent from formal instruction.

Both current students and alumni stressed that in today's art world, digital literacy was non-negotiable. The second group, for example, revealed that they discovered the relevance of digital media only through personal curiosity or visits to contemporary exhibitions. The third group confirmed that many alumni had to teach themselves new technologies after graduation to stay relevant, often with no formal support or mentorship.

This lack of structured exposure placed less resourceful or less tech-savvy students at a disadvantage, widening the readiness gap within graduating cohorts. It also risked producing graduates who might struggle to connect their traditional skills to the rapidly expanding opportunities in digital, virtual, and hybrid art spaces.

4.3.4 Entrepreneurial Blind Spots and Professional Disconnection

Alongside technological gaps, students across all groups highlighted a notable lack of entrepreneurial training and real-world career preparation. While the curriculum equipped students with painting and studio skills, it largely neglected to teach them how to translate these skills into viable professional pathways.

Participants noted that they rarely received structured guidance on building networks, collaborating with galleries, marketing themselves online, or navigating new markets like NFTs. Alumni shared that many had to improvise professional strategies long after graduation, often through trial and error.

This professional disconnection, the alumni claimed, was partly due to the absence of modules on arts management, portfolio development, grant writing, and weak links between professional artists and the Department of Art Education. They emphasised that these areas determined whether graduates could sustain themselves in a competitive art market. As one master's degree holder put it, "We learned how to paint beautifully, but nobody taught us how to sell that painting, tell its story, or get it into the right spaces."

Combined with the earlier points on curricular rigidity and shallow conceptual depth, this shortfall created a situation where technically skilled graduates were well trained to produce art but not adequately prepared to thrive in the professional systems that sustain contemporary practice.

4.3.5 Informal Learning and External Exposure as Compensatory Forces

One positive note that emerged from the discussions was the role of informal learning and self-driven exposure in bridging these gaps. Students, especially in the second group, described how visits to local galleries, contemporary exhibitions, and online platforms expanded their understanding of what art could be.

They spoke about discovering artists like El Anatsui and Ibrahim Mahama, whose works transform everyday materials into large-scale installations with profound socio-political commentary. Such exposure challenged their training in realism and inspired them to think beyond traditional painting.

However, this compensatory learning was inconsistent and uneven. Students who lacked the motivation, resources, or connections to seek out these experiences remained limited by the formal curriculum's narrow scope, perpetuating unequal levels of preparedness across graduating cohorts.

In conclusion, ideally, students who complete all courses in the Picture Making programme should graduate with far more than just technical mastery of painting and conventional studio skills. A well-rounded contemporary art education must ensure that students graduate with a solid conceptual foundation that enables them to critically position their work within broader global discourses. This means students should be able not only to produce aesthetically pleasing works but also to express the ideas, contexts, and theoretical frameworks that inform their creative choices.

A contemporary Picture Making curriculum should instill in students the confidence to experiment boldly with a diverse range of materials, techniques, and interdisciplinary

approaches. Instead of restricting artistic practice to conventional painting genres such as portraiture or landscape, the ideal programme would encourage students to push boundaries, explore installation, performance, assemblage, and other modes that characterise contemporary art today.

Expertise with digital and new media tools is equally essential. Graduates should feel comfortable navigating digital painting, animation, video art, projection mapping, or even platforms like NFTs. These skills are no longer optional; they shape how art is produced, distributed, and experienced across the world.

Equally important is the acquisition of practical entrepreneurial and professional competencies. A comprehensive Picture Making programme should expose students to portfolio development, branding, marketing, networking, and strategies for navigating galleries, residencies, and the global art market. These skills empower graduates not only to make art but also to sustain independent practice in competitive creative industries.

Finally, an ideal curriculum must ensure that students engage meaningfully with real-world contexts throughout their training. This includes opportunities for exhibitions, community-based projects, collaborations, and interactions with established artists and curators. Such exposure helps students situate their practice within relevant cultural and professional networks, bridging the gap between classroom learning and the demands of contemporary artistic practice.

In contrast, as the analysis showed, the current Picture Making curriculum at UEW fell short of this ideal in significant ways. While students developed strong technical skills,

they often lacked the conceptual depth, technological literacy, entrepreneurial mindset, and real-world exposure needed to thrive in the contemporary art world. Addressing these gaps is critical if graduates are to confidently position themselves within local and international creative spaces.

4.4.6 Interactions with Picture Making Students and Their Artworks

Picture Making artworks works at UEW show are a series of realistic paintings done in both dry and wet media. These works show birds, people, landscapes, and still life scenes. The collection's main trait is that students are skilled technically and follow formalist rules by paying close attention to detail, making things look real, and keeping the composition balanced.

The paintings show that Picture Making students are intentionally skilled with both dry media (such tesserae for mosaic, veneer for marquetry and coloured pencils) and wet media (like watercolours, acrylics, and oils). The dry medium works show how precise the lines, value gradation, and texture are. For example, while drawing birds, subtle hatching and tone variation bring out the delicate feathers and soft anatomical shapes with lifelike accuracy. The landscapes also illustrate how to create depth and light in the atmosphere by carefully changing the tones, which shows that students know how to use chiaroscuro and linear perspective.

Students have been able to show a good level of mastery of blending, layering, and transparency in wet media compositions, especially those made with acrylics and watercolours. The way paint flows in pictures catches subtle skin tones. The

watercolour still life paintings, for example, show a sensitivity to the physical aspects of objects like glass and flowers. The colours are carefully chosen and the light is reflected in a way that makes the colours stand out. When working with wet medium, brushwork have been used to show not only what something looks like, but also its texture, volume, and how it fits into space.

Thematically, the works are very similar to the traditions of realism and naturalism. Birds are seen either in natural movements or standing still. Not only are these works technically precise, but they are also put together in ways that draw attention to the beauty and symmetry of the body. Portraits show how unique someone is by showing how their face is shaped and how their skin feels. This method puts likeness and anatomical precision first, which is similar to how classical art did academic portraiture.

Landscapes, though representational, also function as studies in light and mood. The way trees are shaped, the way distant mountains are layered, and the way water bodies reflect light are all done with such accuracy that it shows that student artists spent a lot of time observing and rendering. A few go into the emotional distortions and Impressionisms. But the majority stay connected to the real world and focus on truth above mood.

The still life paintings are similar to the ways of composition in the Renaissance. The formalist commitment is very clear here: things are positioned with purposefully logical spacing, and the viewer's attention is drawn through inferred diagonal, triangular, and other compositional forms, with deliberately distributed visual weight.

The underlying formalist discipline is what ties this collection together beyond its subject matter and medium. Students' attention to proportion, shape, tonal modelling,

and spatial depth shows that they have had traditional academic instruction or are at least paying tribute to that heritage. These works don't have much abstraction or intellectual disruption. Instead, they focus on the natural beauty of form, the value of representational skill, and the necessity of visual truth.

The Picture Making collection has more than just easel paintings; it also includes mural works that were made to fit the places are put up. Most of these murals are site-specific, meaning they were made with an understanding of how people use the locations they are in and what they do there every day. For example, a mural in the Physical Education department shows themes of mobility, health, and sports. The pictures are based on the sports that take place in the department, showing people running, jumping, and stretching. These visual stories do two things: they make the space more interesting and help people understand what it is and what it is for.

The mural paintings are different from the studio works, in that, they are not as realistic. Instead, they are painted in simple geometric shapes with lesser range of values and flat colours. This makes it easier to see from a distance and fits with the visual rhythm of the architectural spaces. Using bold lines and little shading makes objects look clearer. These murals have a strong sense of design and composition, but their execution focusses more on making them easy to read and making sure they fit with the theme than on being very realistic. This shows that students thought carefully about how to adapt their style to the situation and audience.

The Independent Studies in Art course works illustrate that students are purposefully experimental with mixed media techniques by imaginatively combining different dry and wet materials. These works show experimentation and personal expression, which

is different from the formalist restraint shown in the earlier pieces. In a single piece of art, graphite, charcoal, coloured pencils, ink, acrylics, and fabrics are commonly stacked or placed next to each other, showing contrast and differentiated textures. Students mix many types of media to create their own unique visual languages, which serves both aesthetic and symbolic objectives.

The results are varied and rich, from abstract pieces to semi-representational works that show signs of observational drawing. Some works use dry media to define structure and line, while wet media provide fluidity, mood, or spontaneity. Using techniques like impasto, collage, or staining to make textured surfaces adds both visual and tactile interest. This dual approach to problem-solving gets students to think about how medium and meaning come together. Some of the projects from the Independent Studies in Picture Making course use interdisciplinary approaches, borrowing techniques from other visual art arears to combine traditional skills with contemporary ones. This helps both technical and conceptual growth.

The body of works by Picture Making students is a powerful proof of how important it is to hone technical skills. The larger art world accepts experimental media, conceptual frameworks, and intermedia techniques. These pieces, on the other hand, show realism based on discipline and craft. Students made a coherent yet varied body of works using both dry and wet media. These works embrace the visual world in all its tactile, optical, and compositional richness.

When students were asked about their studio work, especially the art they did for school their school assignments, it was revealed that a strong interest lies in the materials used and the physical qualities of their work. The majority were excited about how the

texture, surface contact, layering techniques, and visual effects of mixing dry and wet material worked. This focus on the physical and material aspects of making art shows that students are more aware of and appreciative of how different media work and interact. For these students, the choice of materials was often based on more than just convenience or tradition. They were also curious and wanted to get certain visual or textural results. This focus is encouraging, as material literacy is a key component of artistic development and provides a foundation for more sophisticated studio experimentation.

The interviews however also showed that students weren't very interested in bigger artistic issues. Their reviews were positive about the media and formal aspects, but most of them did not really consider other key features like the meanings behind the work, how the audience reacted, the symbolism, and the cultural context. A small number of students explained why they picked certain images or compositions or how their work connected to personal, social, or academic topics. This was quite exclusive to the Independent Studies course works. This narrow range of criticism showed that while technical and material skills are being honed, the interpretive and analytical parts of generating art may need more focused attention. Encouraging students to go beyond surface level critique to reflect on meaning, context, and impact would expand their overall artistic practice and motivate them to align their works more closely with contemporary approaches that value both process and critical thought. The following are photographs of students' work to give a glimpse of the art culture of Picture Making at UEW.

Figure 18a,b,c & d:Still-life and Realistic wet media works by Picture Making Students

Source; Photographed by the Researcher

Figure 19a,b & c. Dry nedia works (Pyrography and Marquetry) by Picture Making Students

Source; Photographed by the Researcher

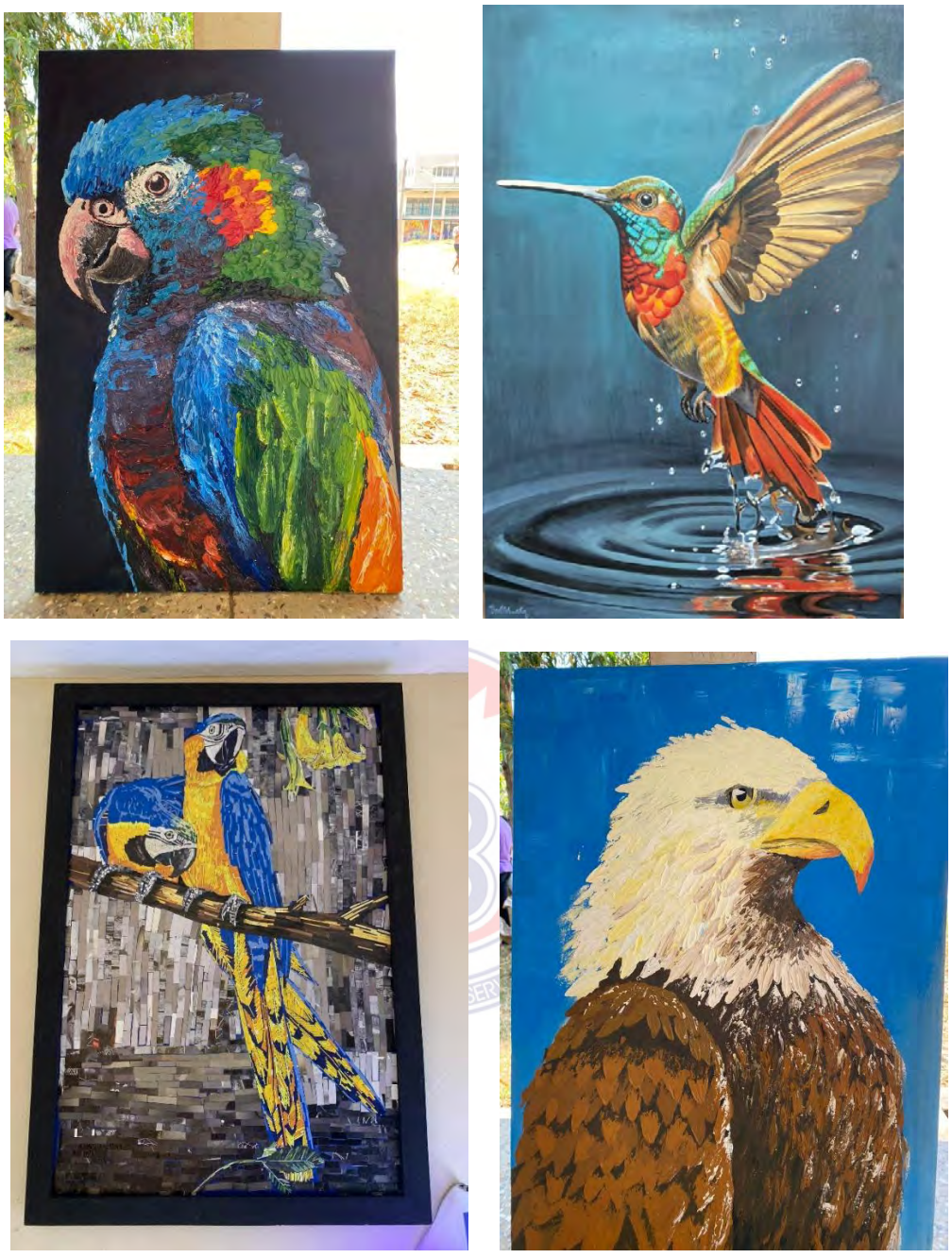

Figure 20a, b, c & d: Assignments on the Subject of Birds by Picture Making Students

Source; Photographed by the Researcher

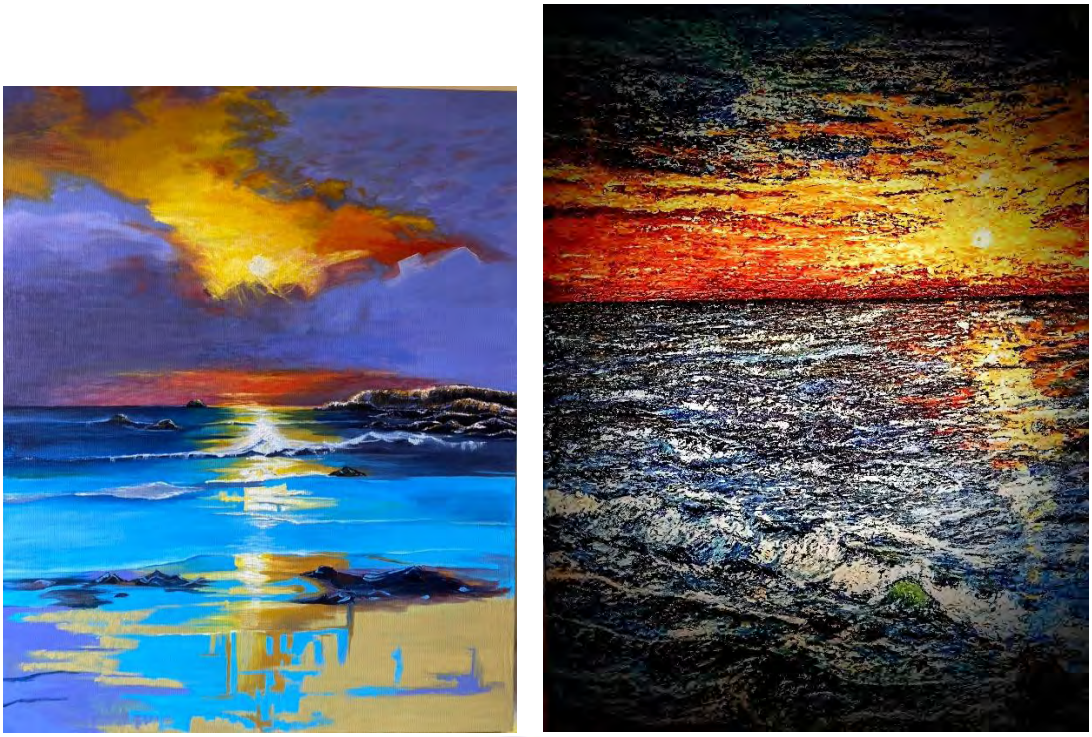

Figure 21a,&b: Landscape Painting Assignment by Picture Making Students

Source; Photographed by the Researcher

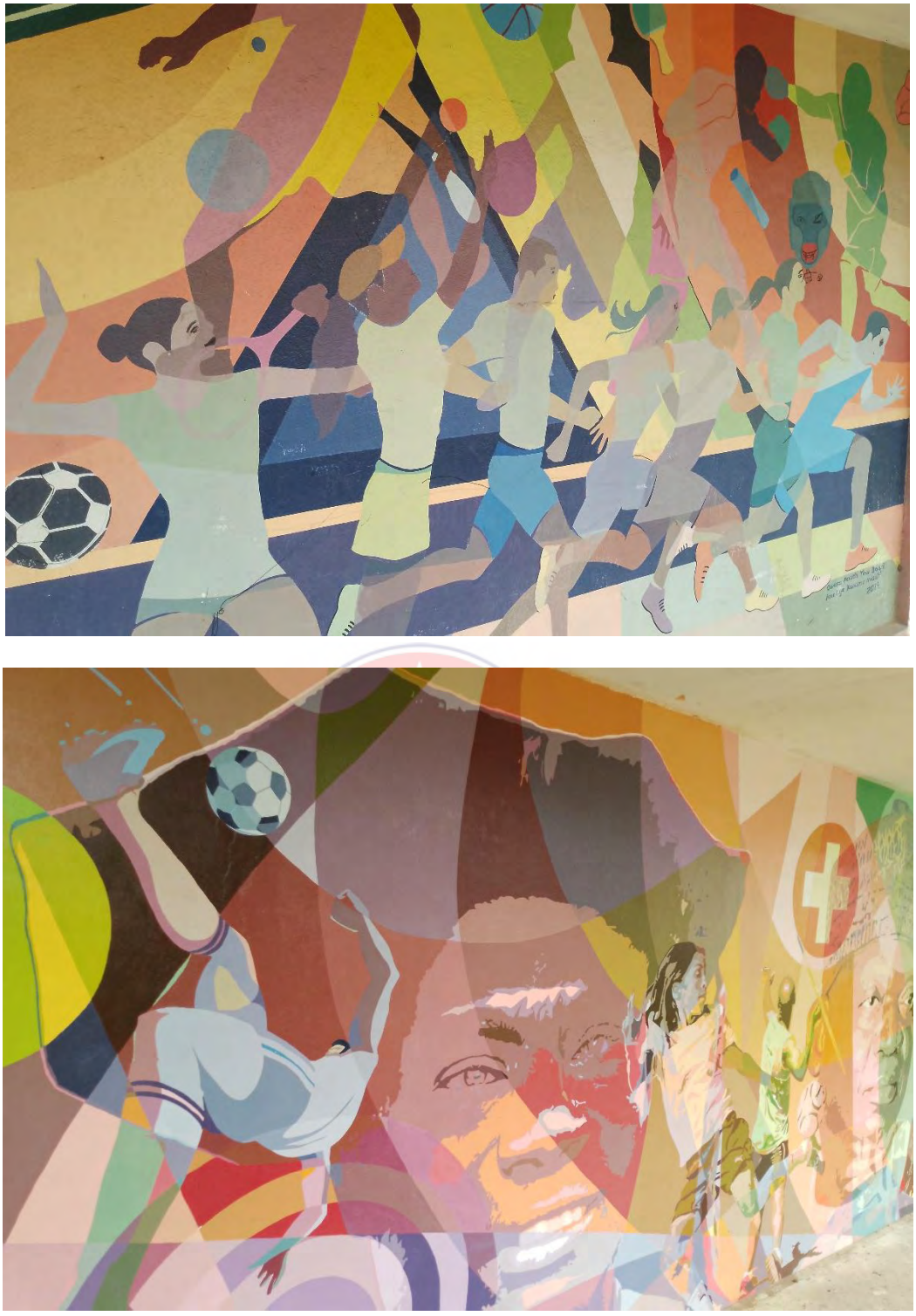

Figure 22a &b: Mural Projects by Picture Making Students

Source; Photographed by the Researcher

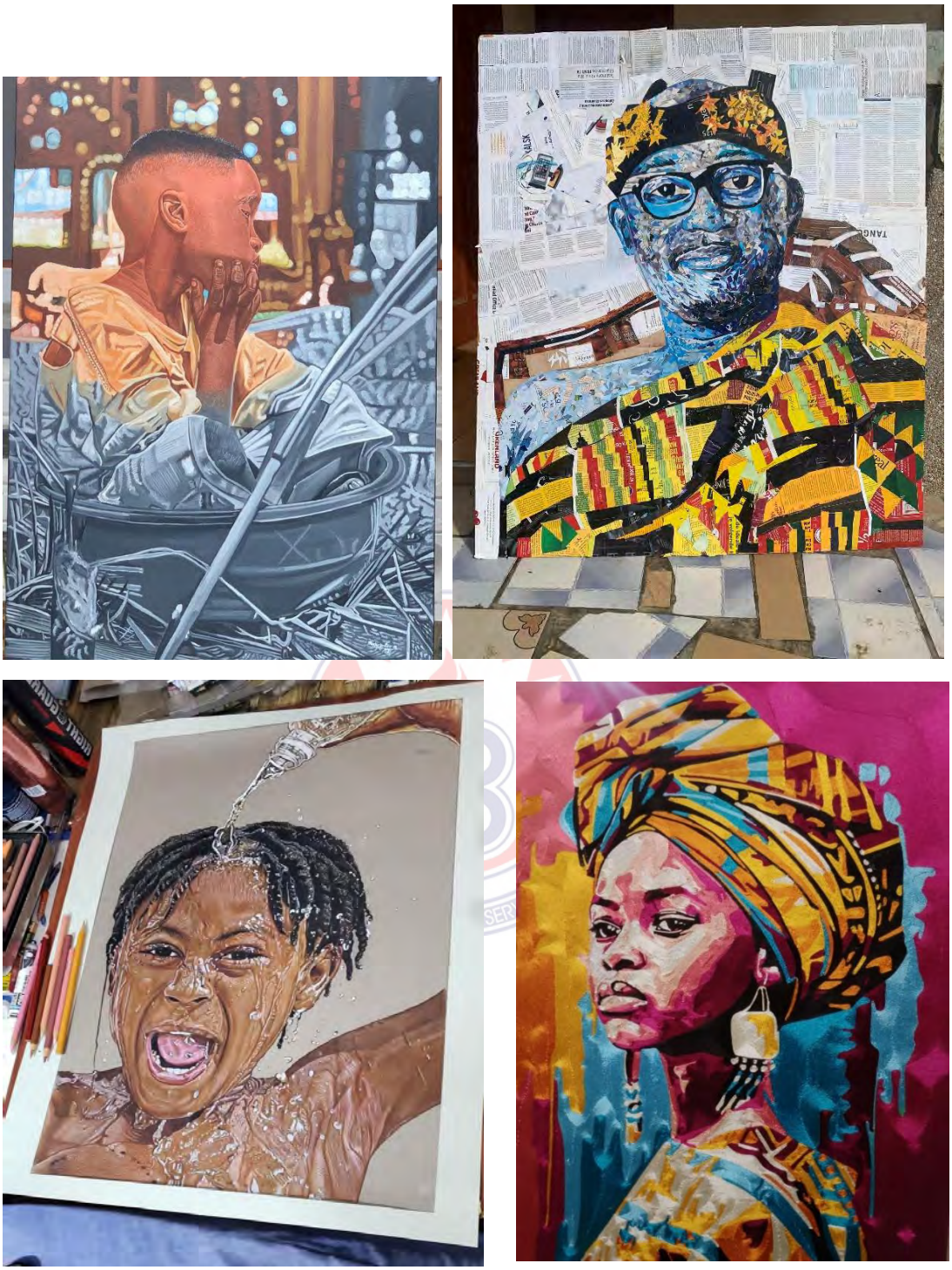

Figure 23a, b, c & d. Independent Studies in Art Projects by Picture Making Students

Source; Photographed by the Researcher

4.3.7 Section Summery

The analysis in this section identifies conceptual, technological, and professional gaps. Technical proficiency often overshadows conceptual understanding, with many students struggling to articulate the theoretical, cultural, or socio-political ideas informing their work. Contemporary art is frequently understood in superficial terms, such as stylistic departure from realism, rather than as a complex, discursive, and interdisciplinary practice. Critical reflection, audience engagement, symbolism, and contextual interpretation remain underdeveloped, except in isolated cases within the Independent Studies course.

Curricular rigidity limits student agency and experimentation. While some students independently explore contemporary materials, digital tools, and alternative practices, these efforts are largely informal and uneven, reinforcing inequalities in preparedness. There is also the limited integration of digital and new media, leaving many graduates to self-teach essential skills after graduation in order to remain relevant in contemporary art spaces.

Finally, the absence of structured entrepreneurial and professional training detaches studio practice from real-world application. Students graduate with strong making skills but limited knowledge of portfolio development, networking, marketing, and sustainable artistic practice, undermining their ability to navigate contemporary creative economies.

4.4 Objective 4: To develop evident-based strategies to broaden the scope of Picture Making at UEW, in line with contemporary art trends

Tertiary education institutions have a responsibility to ensure that their courses remain current, responsive, and innovative in this era of rapid changes in society, culture, and technology. As art evolves, so must art curricula. The Picture Making course in the Department of Art Education is a key part of this mandate. At its best, this course should equip graduates not only to be skilled technical practitioners but also to become art educators who are critically informed, imaginative, adaptable, and able to navigate and contribute to contemporary art discourses.

Despite being founded on practical conventional skills and formalist approaches, the current Picture Making curriculum clearly lacks some elements necessary to meet the demands of 21st-century art practice, as demonstrated by earlier analysis. Although students learn the fundamentals of mimetic and basic techniques such as painting, mosaic, collage, marquetry, and pyrography, the curriculum is still largely founded on concepts that prioritise imitation and craftsmanship over experimentation, conceptual inquiry, and interdisciplinary exploration. This narrow focus prevents students from engaging with the broader dimensions of contemporary art, which increasingly emphasise interdisciplinary approaches, new media, socially engaged art-making, and digital innovation.

To address these gaps, this study pursued an important objective: to develop evidence-based recommendations for upgrading and improving the Picture Making aspect of the Art Education programme, ensuring its relevance, innovation, and responsiveness to contemporary art, so that graduates can become fully informed and adaptable art

teachers.

This objective proposes a model known as the Four-Phase Curriculum Model, designed to guide students through a learning process that builds on their prior knowledge while simultaneously providing them with fresh opportunities to exercise critical and conceptual thinking. To ensure that students gain a firm grasp of both historical and contemporary concepts and methodologies, the approach begins with foundational studies, then progresses into post-foundational and interdisciplinary phases that emphasise relational aesthetics, hybridity, and critical realism. Advanced engagements with affect theory, digital and immersive art forms, and site-specific art practices round out the course. Students complete an independent studies project in their senior year, which helps them synthesise their knowledge and develop their creative autonomy.

This idea rests on the understanding that contemporary art education must transform its teaching methodology rather than merely incorporate new content into an outdated framework. It must encourage teaching strategies that foster self-reliance, creativity, and critical thinking, guiding students towards becoming more independent and self-directed learners. In addition to positioning UEW's Picture Making course strongly within the contemporary art space, this objective acknowledges the particular institutional, cultural, and social conditions that must exist for these changes to occur by offering evidence-based recommendations for each phase.

As discussed in the review of related literature, current models of art education and teacher preparation demonstrate a clear shift away from conventional, skill-based instruction towards integrated, contemporary, and socially relevant approaches. Early models influenced by industrial needs, such as those in North America and Europe,

placed an emphasis on handicrafts, technical drawing, and the replication of classical art forms (Stankiewicz, 2009; Chalmers, 1992). Later reforms, such as Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), expanded art curricula to include art history, criticism, aesthetics, and production while also emphasising multiculturalism, visual culture, and museum education as core elements. This foundation has been further developed by contemporary programmes at institutions like Belmont University and New York University, which integrate interdisciplinary practice, multicultural education, contemporary art themes, and critical pedagogy. They prioritise student-centred learning, artistic exploration of contemporary social issues, self-expression, and community engagement. These examples demonstrate how contemporary art education encourages critical thinking, reflective practice, and the integration of art into broader cultural and social contexts.

The Four-Phase Model builds on these precedents by structuring art teacher preparation in Ghana to bridge traditional and contemporary practices. By combining foundational skills, critical themes, relational aesthetics, and independent exploration, the model responds to the call for curriculum reform and prepares future art teachers to make contemporary art meaningful and relevant within their local contexts.

This model and its potential implementation have been described in detail in the following section of the discussion. The section explains how each stage builds on the preceding one, providing students with a methodical, yet flexible pathway to enhance their technical proficiency, conceptual fluency, and artistic independence. By offering these recommendations, supported by thorough analysis and practical viability, the

study aims to contribute to the revitalisation of visual arts education at UEW. A visual representation of the components of the model follows.

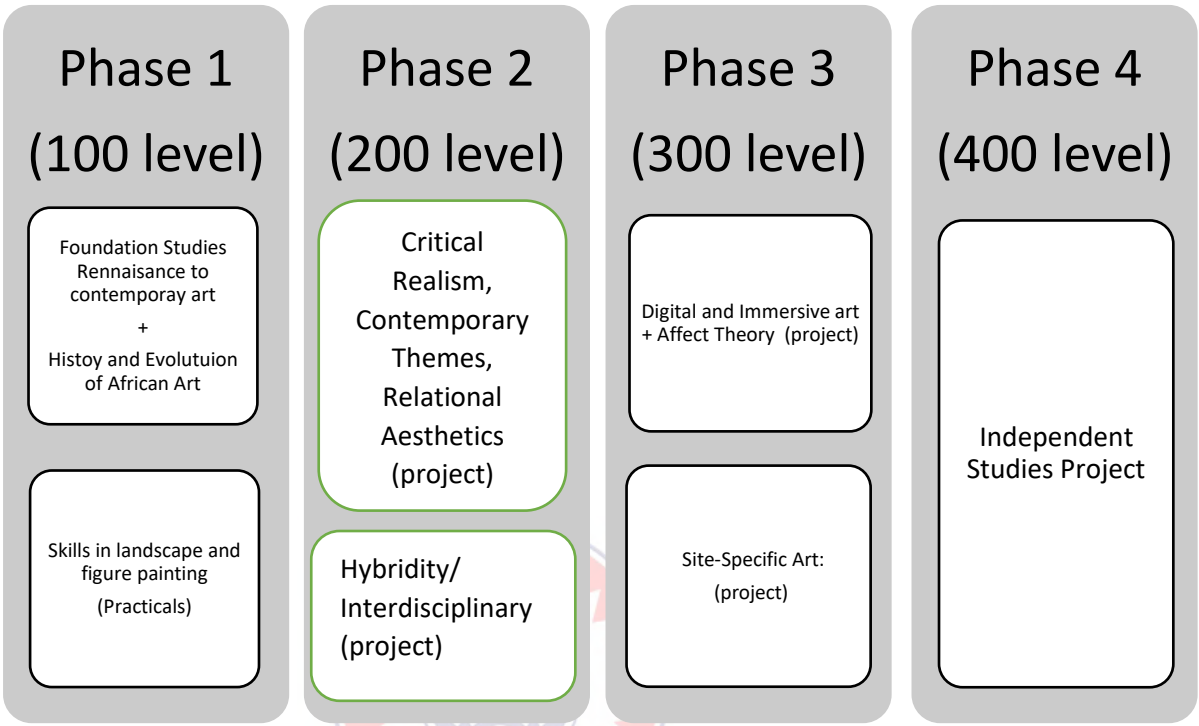

Figure 24. A Four phased model proposal for Picture Making

Source: Researcher's construct

4.4.1 Four-Phased Picture Making Curriculum Model

The Four-Phased Picture Making curriculum combines Tyler's Rational Model with Stenhouse's Process Model to offer a flexible framework for teaching. This hybrid model combines Tyler's methodical focus on clear goals, logical organisation, and structured evaluation with Stenhouse's flexible, inquiry-based approach. It gives

students strong technical and conceptual skills while also encouraging them to explore art in an open-ended, process-driven way.

Tyler's model, which Ralph W. Tyler created in the middle of the 20th century, is still useful today because it gives a clear framework for planning, delivering, and evaluating educational experiences. The curriculum's progress is guided by its four principles: setting goals, choosing the right learning experiences, logically organising these experiences, and coming up with good ways to evaluate them. Ensuring that each phase follows these rules makes sure that students move progressively from basic abilities to more advanced, independent practice. Goals are directly related to activities that build real-world skills and critical thinking, and logical sequencing helps people progress and stay on track.

Stenhouse's Process Model further supports the curriculum's flexible, inquiry-based approach. This method doesn't tell students and teachers what to learn or how to do it. Instead, it encourages them to learn together via questioning, experimenting, critiquing, and reflecting. This focus on working together and being able to adjust is very much in line with how studios work now. As students move through the phases, they combine basic skills with social interaction, new technology, and independent investigation in ways that are relevant to their lives and make sense in the context of their studies.

Phase 1 (Level 100): Foundation Studies

Key Enquiry: What is contemporary art and how do its theories and histories inform practice?

Educational Objectives (Tyler):

- Identify and explain key theories in contemporary art.
- Demonstrate knowledge in the evolutuion African art
- Connect theory to studio ideas and projects.
- Demonstrate technical competence in landscape and figure painting.
- Experiment with combining traditional and digital processes.

Process (Stenhouse):

- Joint reading circles and collaborative discussions.
- Negotiated short projects applying theoretical concepts.
- Visiting artists and alumni share process-based practices.
- Peer critiques, small exhibitions, and reflective journals foster dialogue.

Organization:

Begins with theoretical grounding, moves to practical skill-building, then explores experimental links between traditional and digital practice.

Evaluation:

Reflective journals, critiques, short projects, portfolio reviews, with formative peer and faculty feedback aligned to objectives and enquiry outcomes.

Phase 2 (Level 200): Social Engagement & Hybrid Practice

Key Enquiry: How can art address real social contexts and what happens when disciplines merge?

Educational Objectives (Tyler):

- Analyze and interpret artworks through critical realism and ethics.
- Develop works responding to social and cultural themes.
- Produce participatory or community-based projects.
- Combine methods and media across disciplines to create hybrid works.

Process (Stenhouse):

- Projects originate from student-driven topics, fieldwork, and community issues.
- Collaborative, cross-department tasks foster hybrid thinking.
- Faculty facilitate ongoing reflection and co-construction.
- Dialogic critiques and artist statements refine ideas.

Organization:

Builds from representational to critical realism, progressing into interdisciplinary hybrid practice through structured partnerships and real-world contexts.

Evaluation:

Completed artworks, written statements, collaborative outcomes, critiques, and community feedback measured by rubrics linking objectives with process insight.

Phase 3 (Level 300): Digital, Immersive & Site-Specific Art

Key Enquiry: How do digital tools and physical contexts transform artistic experience, and how does emotion shape art's impact?

Educational Objectives (Tyler):

- Use digital and immersive technologies to create innovative artworks
- Design experiences that engage audiences emotionally, intellectually, and spatially
- Experiment with site-specific, ephemeral, and context-responsive works
- Demonstrate conceptual integration and readiness to contribute to contemporary discourse

Process (Stenhouse):

- Enquiry groups explore VR/AR, projection mapping, and locative media in relation to physical environments
- Visiting artists with site-specific and digital expertise guide practice-based learning
- Pilot projects are installed in real-world contexts, critiqued, iterated, and refined collaboratively
- Reflexive journals and process portfolios support spatial, critical, and contextual analysis

Organization:

Begins with technical training and conceptual framing, moving into exploration of place-based, site-responsive practices through experimentation, installation, and audience engagement.

Evaluation:

Site-specific and immersive digital projects, contextual process documentation, peer critiques, spatial analysis, audience interaction testing, and reflective statements aligned with both skill and enquiry goals.

Phase 4 (Level 400): Independent Studies Project

Key Enquiry: What do I want my practice to say and do now?

Educational Objectives (Tyler):

- Plan and execute an independent studio project synthesizing skills and concepts
- Articulate a personal artistic vision
- Engage in advanced, self-directed research and critical inquiry
- Present and defend work professionally
- Collaborate cross-disciplinarily if relevant

Process (Stenhouse):

- Project proposals negotiated with faculty
- Students manage methods, timelines, and outcomes independently
- Work-in-progress critiques and interim showcases enable peer learning
- Process diaries and reflective writing capture evolving enquiry

Organization:

Independent work with clear milestones: proposal, research, production, critique, and final presentation.

Evaluation:

Final project, artist statements, research documentation, oral defense, public exhibition, and peer critique, assessed using rubrics that balance technical excellence, conceptual depth, and enquiry outcomes.

4.4.2 Proposed Implementation Plan for the Four-Phased Curriculum

This section explains a proposed implementation plan for the Four-Phased curriculum, designed to guide students through a structured and progressive learning journey from foundational skills to advanced, independent practice. The curriculum is organized into four phases (100 to 400 levels), each building upon the previous to ensure the development of technical proficiency, critical thinking, creative exploration, and professional readiness.

In order to transition from a predominantly mimetic and formalist art curriculum toward one that reflects the diverse, interdisciplinary, and concept-driven nature of contemporary art, this research proposed adaptable approaches for balanced teacher art education. These approaches are grounded in progressive contemporary art theories and practices already in use at leading art institutions, yet were tailored to suit the specific context of the University of Education, Winneba, which sought to produce teachers for the basic and secondary levels of education. These suggestions took into consideration the current state of visual art education in basic and secondary levels of education, as well as contemporary art practices, which have prospects of being introduced into Ghanaian schools. This approach provided a progressive structure, taking students

through foundational studies and progression of skills from modern to contemporary art. It took into account concerns raised by participants about the likely elimination of traditional art skills associated with mimetic and formalistic approaches and concerns regarding the likelihood of graduates not being able to adjust to the contemporary world of art.

Phase 1 / Level 100 (Foundation Studies)

Semester 1: The first semester marks the entry point into the Picture Making programme. At this stage, students often carry forward some knowledge of classical art history, mainly Renaissance and modern movements from SHS, but have limited grounding in contemporary art concepts that shape current global art practice. This gap means students may replicate traditional approaches without critically engaging with the theories that drive the work of today's artists.

To address this, the curriculum at this stage must centre on foundational studies in contemporary art. Core concepts such as deconstructivism, decolonization, multiculturalism, interdisciplinary practice, and critical aesthetics should be unpacked in accessible yet challenging ways. Introducing these frameworks early builds students' ability to think about art not just as technical production but as intellectual practice embedded in social, cultural, and political contexts.

Although the suggested four-phase framework seeks to strike a balance between contemporary theory and practice and the development of fundamental skills, it also highlights underlying conflicts in art education curriculum reform. Students who attend

the program with mostly exam-oriented and mimetic training may find it difficult to deal with the early introduction of critical frameworks like decolonization and deconstructivism. This leads to a constructive but challenging paradox: while students are still gaining fundamental technical confidence, they are expected to think critically about representation. The model purposefully maintains this tension rather than resolving it, viewing critical discomfort as a necessary component for reflective practice.

One effective strategy is to combine lectures with interactive discussions, reading circles, and practical tasks that test how theory informs making. For example, a short project should require students to apply the idea of deconstructivism by breaking apart a familiar image or object and reassembling it to expose new meanings. A unit on decolonization should guide students to explore local cultural symbols and rethink how they are used in contemporary artworks. Students should be asked to reflect on the multiple identities they bring to their practice and how these shape what they create.

Engaging practicing artists, curators, or scholars as visiting resource persons should ensure students hear firsthand how theory and practice interconnect in real-world contexts. Alumni who have transitioned into contemporary practice should be invited to share project examples, failures, and lessons learned. This would bridge the gap between what is taught in class and how the same ideas are negotiated in studios, galleries, and community projects.

To strengthen this phase, studio tasks should always develop directly from theory. Small group critiques, reflective journals, and presentations should support students to

develop their ability to argue for their choices, cite references, and place their own work within wider debates.

Expected learning outcomes for Semester 1 are:

1. Identify and explain key theories relevant to contemporary art.
2. Connect contemporary theories to ideas for studio projects.
3. Demonstrate the ability to discuss and critique art practices in relation to cultural, social, or political contexts.
4. Form independent views on how theory shapes personal visual language.

A potential barrier at this stage is limited access to up-to-date libraries or visual resources. One practical solution is to ensure students create shared digital archives of key readings, artist case studies, and project outcomes. Faculty should also curate small exhibitions of contemporary works by artists to create a direct link between classroom content and actual practice. This brings theory off the page and into the studio.

Semester 2; The second semester strengthens the foundation by focusing on practical skills that have stood the test of time but are often overlooked as art education shifts towards conceptual and digital domains. Landscape and figure painting are not just historical practices; they train the eye and hand to see and interpret the world with precision. The challenge is not to teach them in isolation but to anchor them in ways that show their ongoing relevance.

Students should engage in intensive exercises in observation, composition, proportion, anatomy, light, and texture. Projects should include indoor and outdoor studies, quick life drawing sessions, longer canvas works, and experiments combining media such as

mosaic, marquetry, and collage. The aim is to ensure students see traditional techniques as adaptable tools, not rigid formulas.

A key change stakeholders suggested is that these traditional skills should not remain static exercises but should open pathways to contemporary expression. For instance, students should translate a figure study into a stylised digital drawing, a collage, or an installation piece that plays with the idea of the human body in space. Hybrid projects should help students test how skills in realism are reapplied creatively when working with abstraction, new media, or performance.

Structural barriers to this phase include limited space, insufficient studio time, or lack of modern equipment for digital translation of analogue skills. These should be addressed through sharing resources across departments, flexible studio schedules, and basic investment in digital tools that complement traditional media.

Throughout Semester 2, it is vital that students document their process. This should include maintaining sketchbooks, process boards, and visual diaries that trace how an idea moves from life study to experiment to final piece. Such habits develop professional discipline and prepare students for future self-directed projects. Expected learning outcomes for Semester 2 include:

1. Demonstrate technical competence in landscape and figure painting.
2. Use traditional techniques to produce observational and interpretive work.
3. Experiment with combining analogue and digital processes.
4. Present a small body of work that shows progression from skill-building to conceptual exploration.

Combining theory and technical skill at the foundation level builds a balanced base for students to tackle more complex, independent, and experimental work in later phases. This approach responded directly to what students, faculty, and alumni saw as necessary: students must think, make, and discuss art in ways that prepare them to enter an evolving art world, not just replicate old forms.

When these foundations are clear and well-supported, the next phases; studio practice, independent study, and advanced projects will stand on firm ground.

Phase 2 / Level 200

Semester 1: Phase 2, Semester 1 was built directly on the technical and theoretical base laid in Phase 1. At this point, students have gained basic competence in observation, composition, and key ideas in contemporary theory. The next step is to push them beyond skills training to deeper levels of analysis, contextual understanding, and social engagement. The curriculum requires a combined approach that interlinks three core elements: critical realism, contemporary themes, and relational aesthetics.

Critical realism would take the skills students have developed in representational painting and extend them beyond technical depiction. The aim is not to produce copies of reality but to understand the social and ethical questions embedded in what is seen and represented. This includes examining how realism can carry political or cultural meaning, challenge stereotypes, and act as a tool for social commentary. Students should connect content to real-life issues and practical contexts and should question why certain subjects are represented and who decides what is shown.

Students must examine artworks in relation to ethics, intersubjectivity, and human rights. For example, a project should require students to produce a series of works that address a social issue relevant to their community, accompanied by written statements that explain the ethical choices behind their visual decisions. Small group critiques should help students articulate these connections clearly and test how their works communicate ideas to others.

Integrating contemporary themes keeps the work grounded in current social, cultural, and technological realities. Students should investigate local or global topics such as migration, urbanization, climate, identity politics, or digital culture. Faculty should guide students to conduct short field investigations, collect visual references, and draw inspiration from current events, news media, or community interactions.

Relational aesthetics pushes students to move beyond the production of standalone art objects and think about art as a framework for human connection. They should plan participatory works, site-specific installations, or projects that involve dialogue with an audience. For example, a student should develop a mural that invites community input, a collaborative drawing that grows over time, or a public intervention that prompts viewers to respond directly. This dimension ensures students think critically about context, audience, and the role of the artist in society.

Together, these three elements; realism as social connection, contemporary themes as relevance, and relational aesthetics as interaction create a strong approach that deepens students' capacity to think, make, and engage critically. Expected learning outcomes for Semester 1:

1. Analyze and interpret artworks using critical realism and ethical frameworks.
2. Develop visual work that responds directly to contemporary social and cultural themes.
3. Produce projects that involve human interaction, dialogue, or community participation.
4. Present and defend work through critiques, artist statements, and peer feedback.

A practical concern here is time and resource management. Relational or community projects require planning, permissions, and coordination. Faculty should ensure students develop clear proposals, realistic timelines, and strategies for managing collaboration. This strengthens students' project management skills, which are essential for any practicing artist today.

Semester 2: In the second semester of Phase 2, students build on critical realism and relational approaches by stepping into hybrid and interdisciplinary modes of art making. The aim is to ensure students push past single-medium comfort zones and test how their foundational skills translate when disciplines merge.

In today's art scenery, the boundaries between painting, sculpture, digital media, design, performance, and even scientific research are fluid. Many contemporary artists combine methods and ideas from diverse fields to produce work that is layered, open-ended, and experimental. By introducing students to hybrid thinking, the programme would prepare them to take risks, adapt their skills to new challenges, and find solutions.

Projects should require students to blend methods. For example, they should combine painting with projection mapping, integrate collage with sound elements, or fuse observational drawing with performative action. The School of Creative Arts should set up collaborative assignments with students from other departments. For instance, a Picture Making student should work with Graphic Design peers to produce visual narratives or with Theatre Arts students to develop painted backdrops or live art interventions. Partnerships with the Sciences should open up ideas around environmental art and related areas.

The drive for digital integration and hybridity is not without restrictions, though. Interdisciplinarity has the risk of becoming unevenly experienced or remaining conceptually ambitious but practically confined in environments where access to cutting-edge technologies and flexible studio spaces is limited. This study emphasizes the need to rethink technology adoption as a pedagogical mentality that prioritizes flexibility, low-tech creativity, and critical experimentation rather than as a dependence on high-end instruments.

This phase must also ensure students read and reference ideas from other disciplines. Exposure to basic concepts from design thinking, storytelling, and dramaturgy should expand their understanding of how art can function in broader contexts. Students must learn to research, test materials, prototype, and refine ideas through iterative processes.

In terms of pedagogy, the curriculum promotes a change from transmission-based instruction to models of dialogic and reflective learning. Students are positioned as active knowledge producers rather than passive recipients of instruction thanks to the

emphasis on critique sessions, reflective notebooks, group projects, and community involvement. In line with contemporary educational theories that value critical inquiry, social learning, and experiential knowledge production, this method redefines the role of the art instructor as facilitator, mediator, and co-learner.

Respondents for this research agreed that this progression from realism to hybrid work is vital for students to remain relevant in a changing creative economy. It also would help students discover personal directions, as some gravitate towards new media, collaborative practice, critical writing, or curatorial work. Expected learning outcomes for Semester 2:

1. Combine methods, media, and ideas from multiple disciplines to produce original artworks.
2. Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively with peers from other fields.
3. Develop and present hybrid projects that test new materials, formats, or audiences.
4. Reflect critically on how interdisciplinary work changes the role of the artist.

Barriers to this stage include the rigid structure of departmental silos and lack of flexible studio spaces. These should be addressed through joint timetabling, shared facilities, and co-teaching between departments where possible. Students must be guided to manage collaborative tensions and balance shared responsibilities and communication throughout the art-making process.

Phase 2 shifts the student from technical training towards becoming a critical maker and a collaborator. The three-in-one approach grounds them in socially engaged,

reflective practice, while the push towards hybridity opens paths to innovation. This builds confident graduates ready to adapt to the demands of a complex, interdisciplinary art world.

Phase 3 (Tech and site-specific Phase): Digital and Immersive Art + Affect Theory

Semester 1: Digital and immersive art have become essential components in contemporary art teacher education, as they significantly broaden the creative possibilities of art making and mirror the evolving ways in which students engage with visual culture today. Integrating these technologies allows educators to design innovative, interactive learning experiences that go beyond traditional media, promoting diverse forms of artistic interaction and human engagement.

By incorporating tools such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and advanced digital design platforms, teachers should prepare students for contemporary artistic practices and emerging creative industries. Equipping student-teachers with the skills to navigate and teach with these tools ensures they remain relevant, inclusive, and adaptable within an ever-changing educational landscape.

Affect Theory offers a compelling lens for this phase, recognizing the significant role of emotion in shaping human behavior, cognition, and artistic experience. Immersive and digital art forms have unique capacities to provoke, manipulate, and deepen the emotional engagement of audiences. As the "affective turn" in the humanities has highlighted, attention to affective responses is central to contemporary art discourse and pedagogy. By exploring immersive art practices, students would learn to harness

emotional impact as a vital element of their creative toolkit, shaping how audiences experience, interpret, and connect with their work.

Semester 2: Building on their strong foundations in realism and interdisciplinary approaches, students at this advanced stage are encouraged to move into the exploration of Site-specific art as the culminating phase of their artistic development. This progression would signal their readiness to engage critically and conceptually with non-traditional forms of artistic expression that emphasize ideas, processes, and experiences over physical objects.

Embracing Site-specific art would enable students to fuse their technical skills with conceptual depth, encouraging them to experiment with context-responsive, ephemeral, participatory, and installation-based forms that align with global contemporary trends. Examples include murals, or installations that respond to the physical, historical, or social characteristics of specific locations. Unlike traditional mural painting that uses only wet media, this open-ended approach allows students to vary their ideas and explore a range of materials and techniques based on the demands of each site. In doing so, they would emerge as thoughtful practitioners capable of influencing and expanding the boundaries in contemporary art practice. It is important for this phase to include practical planning for site access, documentation methods, and permissions from relevant authorities.

Lecturers must be prepared to guide students in research-based approaches, encouraging them to study the environments they intervene in. Teachers in traditional studios should prioritize professional development that strengthens their curatorial and

contextual analysis skills, including attending conferences, short courses, and networking with experienced site-based artists. This will make it easier for teachers to support students with both conceptual and technical components. They should also invite artists who specialize in environmental art, public interventions, or socially engaged practice, and negotiate for outdoor or community-based spaces through partnerships with local institutions, municipal assemblies, or cultural centres.

For the tech aspect of phase 3 It is important for this Phase to have the necessary infrastructure in place. Obstacles to implementing Phase 3 remain significant. The first is limited budgets: the department may not yet have funds to acquire new digital tools and software licenses or to maintain them. The department must set up multimedia labs or digital art studios with the right equipment, such as projectors, digital drawing tablets, powerful computers, VR and AR headsets, high-speed internet, and secure storage. These costs may be expensive for the school alone.

Lecturers must be prepared. Teachers in traditional studios should prioritize professional development that strengthens their technological skills, including attending conferences, short courses, and networking with experienced digital artists. This will make it easier for teachers to support students with both conceptual and technical components. They should also learn new digital skills, host visiting artists, and negotiate for shared spaces through partnerships with local IT companies, digital art collectives, or international schools. To fund new technologies and keep them operational, the department must secure grants, private sponsorships, or donations. The university must also dedicate part of its internal budget specifically to the digital transformation of the arts.

The department should recognize that the Tech Phase cannot happen overnight. Starting with small pilot projects and scaling up gradually is the prudent path. Achieving this will enable Phase 3 to transform Picture Making education at UEW, making it distinctive and aligned with the current global art scene.

At this phase there are more opportunities for artistic expression because of the combination of digital and immersive technologies. Their pedagogical integration also presents issues related to authorship, access, and embodied experience. Immersion settings can heighten emotional reactions, but if they are not properly constructed, they run the risk of promoting spectacle over prolonged critical thought. This phase invites students to assess how emotional intensity is generated, whose experiences are highlighted, and how immersive art can either challenge or support power systems.

Phase 4 (Independent Studies Project)

The Independent Studies in Art course, typically the final studio-based course undertaken by students in their graduating year, has already demonstrated strong potential to foster diverse and experimental art making. Positioned at the end of the proposed Four-Phased model, this course serves as a culminating opportunity for students to synthesize the skills, conceptual approaches, and contemporary practices they have acquired throughout their training.

Independent studio practice serves as a place of knowledge production where theory, practice, and pedagogy come together, in addition to being a means of personal expression. By clearly referencing the conceptual frameworks and approaches

presented in previous stages, students are expected to show that they can place their work within current artistic and educational discourses.

Having progressed through foundational skills, interdisciplinary exploration, and advanced digital and site-specific practices, students will be fully prepared and confident to articulate their unique artistic visions through a broad spectrum of expressive forms. This final phase should continue to prioritize student autonomy, encouraging self-directed learning and critical inquiry.

Students, under the guidance and supervision of faculty, should be granted the flexibility to pursue collaborative and cross-disciplinary projects if they choose. Such an approach reflects contemporary art's emphasis on collective practice and knowledge exchange and prepares students to navigate real-world creative contexts where collaboration across disciplines is valued.

By positioning the Independent Studies Project as a space for experimentation, risk-taking, and synthesis, this final phase ensures that graduates leave the program not only as technically proficient artists but also as innovative thinkers ready to contribute to and challenge the broader contemporary art landscape.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents in four sections, the summary, conclusions, recommendations and recommendations for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The analysis highlighted a number of interconnected areas in which the outcomes of learning appear to be misaligned with contemporary expectations. Although the Picture Making curriculum at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), offers a strong foundation in conventional materials and manual processes, it does not adequately address the dynamic needs of contemporary art education. A fundamental pedagogical barrier is presented by the absence of digital tools and technologies in the curriculum, including drawing tablets, digital painting software (such as Procreate and Photoshop), image manipulation tools, and design programs. Students risk graduating without the digital fluency that is now expected in both the artistic and educational professions.

The current curriculum also limits students' freedom as they become art teachers, artists, and critical thinkers because it only teaches a few techniques. While these older methods of making art are still valuable in many ways, the visual arts are moving more and more towards new, experimental, and technology-based ways of making art that break down the conventional barriers between media, disciplines, and audiences. There is little proof that the curriculum emphasises sustainable and environmentally friendly

techniques that involve the use of recycled or biodegradable materials, which is an area that is becoming more important in global art education.

Furthermore, the curriculum, in its current form, does not have a defined thematic framework that aligns with the socio-political, environmental, and cultural discourses dominating the contemporary art landscape. Although the topics described offer a strong foundation for the development of foundational artistic skills, the curriculum needs to be rethought in order to accommodate the critical, conceptual, and interdisciplinary requirements of contemporary art. The curriculum currently offered in Picture Making aligns more with formalist traditions than with critical cultural literacy. Scholars such as Gude (2007) and Bresler et al. (2008) advocate for the expansion of art education to incorporate the critique of visual culture, mass media, and digital imagery.

There is a significant constraint in the breadth and diversity of artistic traditions, ideologies, and cultural narratives that are represented in the Picture Making curriculum at UEW. In its current configuration, the curriculum does not contain any conscious measures to ensure diversity and balance, and as a result, reproduces biases that are inherent in conventional canons of art. The lack of different materials and procedures is both a technical and a cultural deficiency. The curriculum notably lacks interdisciplinary, digital, and global frameworks, which is a significant gap from a contemporary art perspective.

The Picture Making curriculum at UEW found that its underlying conceptual framework is implicitly anchored in two prevalent aesthetic theories: imitationalism

(mimetic theory) and formalism. Another glaring omission is that the curriculum does not include any clear theoretical training. Students do not receive a systematic introduction to aesthetic ideologies, critical art theories, or reflective inquiry, all of which are important for the development of intellectually independent artists and educators.

Although the existing Picture Making curriculum at UEW does a good job of laying a solid basis in traditional media and classical techniques, it does not adequately prepare students for the conceptual, technological, environmental, and collaborative demands that are present in the art industry today. Students develop craft-based skills but may not cultivate critical thinking, social awareness, or the ability to use art as a tool for commentary and advocacy. They are not adequately equipped for the digital realities that are present in the current art world.

In the Picture Making class, it was clearly evident that pedagogy is largely affected by the curriculum. Picture Making education mostly limited by conventional, skill-oriented, and imitative approaches was revealed. The Picture Making learning environment depends on technical imitation, copying individuals, landscapes, and still life compositions. Critical thinking, analysis, and contextual discourse are insufficiently emphasised, resulting in superficial artistic outputs without conceptual depth and socio-cultural critique. Critique, which should function as a dialogic arena for meaning-making and ideological exploration, is frequently neglected or relegated to theoretical classes that are wholly distinct from studio practice.

Constraints in technical resources, learning environments, and professional development opportunities hinder an atmosphere that is unfavourable for the pedagogical advances required by contemporary art. Students are regarded not as pioneers of novel ideas, but as doers of predetermined studio goals. The phrase, “we decide what the students should do,” articulated by a participant, indicates a paternalistic framework that regards learners as passive recipients instead of active creators of information.

All three groups of participants for the third objective; final-year students, contemporary practice-inclined undergraduates, and postgraduate alumni demonstrated strong knowledge of classic painting techniques and studio operations. However, this technical competence often overshadowed conceptual understanding. They frequently equated any departure from realism with being ‘contemporary,’ displaying a limited understanding of the complex ideas that underpin current practice. The second group’s experiences confirmed this gap, stating that most of what they knew came from self-directed learning rather than formal instruction. Although postgraduate study provided more research opportunities, many still described contemporary art as “breaking away” from established rules, lacking the depth required to critically engage with its evolving discourses.

Participants expressed that the Picture Making curriculum was too prescriptive and focused heavily on repetitive studio practice and mastery of traditional media. They commonly used terms like “boxed,” “narrow,” and “restrictive” to describe their experience. While the Level 400 Independent Studies in Art course allowed for some experimentation and self-expression, students and graduates agreed that this limited

freedom could not compensate for the rigidity of the core curriculum from Levels 100 to 300. This narrow approach inhibited students from testing new ideas, collaborating across disciplines, and engaging with the diverse practices that define the global contemporary art scene.

A critical gap identified by all groups was the limited integration of digital tools and new media in the Picture Making programme. While some students used basic digital software like Photoshop to prepare reference materials for painting, they rarely viewed technology as an artistic medium in its own right. Both current students and alumni stressed that in today's art world, digital literacy was non-negotiable. Many alumni had to teach themselves new technologies after graduation to stay relevant, often with no formal support or mentorship.

In addition to technological gaps, students across all groups highlighted a notable lack of entrepreneurial training and real-world career preparation. While the curriculum equipped students with painting and studio skills, it largely neglected to teach them how to translate these skills into viable professional pathways. As one master's degree holder put it, "We learned how to paint beautifully, but nobody taught us how to sell that painting, tell its story, or get it into the right spaces."

One positive note that emerged from the discussions was the role of informal learning and self-driven exposure in bridging these gaps. Students, especially in the second group, described how visits to local galleries, contemporary exhibitions, and online platforms expanded their understanding of what art could be. However, this compensatory learning was inconsistent and uneven. Students who lacked the

motivation, resources, or connections to seek out these experiences remained limited by the formal curriculum's narrow scope, perpetuating unequal levels of preparedness across graduating cohorts.

Objective last aimed to "provide evidence-based recommendations for revising the Picture Making curriculum to reflect contemporary art practices." Based on findings from students, lecturers, alumni, and document analysis, several targeted recommendations were suggested.

It recommends the provision of digital infrastructure and resources, including computers, tablets, and relevant software, in order to pilot the Four-Phased curriculum model proposed by this study. Partnerships with local and international art institutions can help bridge resource gaps. The professional development of lecturers must be prioritised through regular workshops, conferences, and artist residencies.

Finally, the study emphasised the need for participatory curriculum design, where lecturers, students, and industry stakeholders collaborate in the curriculum development process. This participatory approach will foster a sense of ownership and accountability across all levels of the educational ecosystem.

5.2 Conclusions

The conclusions of this study, "A Study of the Picture Making Course at UEW and Its Alignment with Global Contemporary Art Trends," are drawn from the extent to which the Picture Making curriculum at UEW enables the acquisition of contemporary art

knowledge and the level of engagement with contemporary practices by students and lecturers. Beyond evaluating curriculum relevance at an institutional level, this study contributes to scholarship in art education by interrogating how contemporary art theory is, or is not translated into pedagogical practice within a postcolonial higher education context.

The study found that the Picture Making programme remains rigid and rooted in post-colonial philosophies that emphasize realism, mimetic representation, and technical execution. While these approaches reflect inherited academic art traditions, they stand in tension with contemporary art theories that prioritise conceptual inquiry, plurality of meaning, process-based practice, and critical engagement with social realities. The curriculum offers minimal opportunities for students to engage with social, cultural, or global discourse, and largely excludes contemporary genres, interdisciplinary approaches, and conceptual frameworks. As a result, students are trained to replicate rather than to question, experiment, or innovate.

Despite the broader institutional environment offering some potential for contemporary and collaborative practice, the curriculum itself remains a significant obstacle. It is prescriptive and narrow, with little room for conceptual or experimental work. This finding challenges dominant pedagogical frameworks in art education that equate skill acquisition with artistic competence, revealing the limitations of technique-centred models in addressing contemporary art's discursive and critical demands. The lack of digital infrastructure, critical teaching frameworks, and flexible learning spaces further limits both teaching and learning. In particular, the absence of digital tools and new media practices marginalises students from key modes of contemporary art production

and circulation. Lecturers, though aware of global trends, are constrained by a structure that does not support their inclusion, often forcing them to repeat outdated content.

Graduates of the programme emerge with limited knowledge of contemporary art and minimal exposure to its key movements, media, and discourses. Their engagement with contemporary practices is often incidental and self-directed. This gap has implications not only for artistic practice but also for art education, as graduates are inadequately prepared to teach contemporary art in ways that reflect its conceptual, technological, and socio-political dimensions. Without training in conceptual thinking, new media, or global art contexts, they leave with a narrow, technique-based view of art that does not equip them to function meaningfully in today's art world or to teach it effectively.

In response to these gaps, this study proposes a revised curriculum model aimed at bridging traditional training with contemporary practice. The model introduces flexible, theme-based, and interdisciplinary content that incorporates digital tools, critical theory, and exploratory learning. Grounded in contemporary art theory, the model reconceptualizes picture making as a dynamic site for experimentation, critical reflection, and cross-cultural dialogue, rather than solely as a means of technical reproduction. It empowers lecturers to move beyond rigid formats and prepares students with the reflective, collaborative, and adaptive skills essential for success in contemporary art.

Moreover, by integrating decolonial perspectives, the model challenges inherited Eurocentric and postcolonial hierarchies in art education, encouraging students to critically engage with local, global, and hybridised artistic practices. The inclusion of

digital media and new technologies ensures that students are conversant with the tools and platforms shaping contemporary art production and dissemination, addressing the digital gap that currently constrains both pedagogy and practice. In doing so, the curriculum positions UEW as a space where theory, practice, and pedagogy intersect, fostering an educational environment that is conceptually rigorous, socially responsive, and globally attuned.

If implemented, this model not only enhances students' knowledge and creative agency but also contributes to broader debates in art education by exemplifying how curricula can be redesigned to reconcile technical skill with conceptual innovation, global awareness, and socially engaged practice. It provides a tangible framework for other institutions seeking to align traditional art programmes with contemporary art discourses, demonstrating how educational reform can simultaneously address decolonisation, digital integration, and critical pedagogy.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are considered vital to a successful introduction of contemporary art into teaching and learning of Picture Making at the University of Education, Winneba. These recommendations are made based on the conclusion drawn from the findings of the research.

A. Short-Term Recommendations (Immediate to Medium-Term Actions)

1. Pilot Implementation of the Proposed Model

- UEW should adopt the proposed curriculum model developed through this study to **pilot** selected components within the current Picture Making programme.
- The Picture Making Unit should pilot the model in selected courses and progressively roll it out across all levels, with ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms.
- Findings from the pilot phase should inform revisions before full institutional adoption.

2. Curriculum Enrichment and Conceptual Integration

- Lecturers should use the proposed model to revise course content, incorporating contemporary art practices that balance traditional techniques with modern expressions.
- Picture Making lecturers should embed thematic and conceptual modules that address global issues, social justice, digital culture, and cultural identity in the syllabus.
- Short modular courses or workshops on conceptual thinking and contemporary art theory should be introduced to ease transition.

3. Enhancement of Digital Technologies and Learning Resources

- UEW should allocate funding for upgrading studios with digital infrastructure such as tablets, computers, scanners, projectors, and contemporary design software.

- Lecturers should integrate digital tools such as digital imaging software, online portfolios, virtual exhibitions, and new media practices into studio teaching.
- UEW and the Department of Art Education should update library and online resources to include materials on contemporary art, conceptual theory, new media, and global practices.

4. Lecturer Capacity Building and Pedagogical Support

- The Department of Art Education should organize training programmes to familiarise lecturers with the proposed model and support their transition to new pedagogical approaches.
- The Department should encourage faculty involvement in residencies, art symposiums, and contemporary practice workshops.
- Short-term peer mentoring and professional learning communities should be established to support experimentation with new teaching methods.

5. Student-Centred and Experiential Learning Practices

- UEW should redesign learning environments to encourage conceptual exploration, studio experimentation, and peer critique.
- Picture Making lecturers should empower students through open-ended assignments and reflective practices.
- Lecturers should integrate real-world experiences such as exhibitions and community-based projects aligned with the proposed model.

B. Long-Term Recommendations (Strategic and Structural Actions)

6. Full Curriculum Reform and Institutionalisation

- UEW should formally adopt the proposed curriculum model to replace or comprehensively restructure the existing Picture Making programme.
- UEW should ensure the model is institutionalised through formal approval processes involving curriculum committees, academic boards, and the National Accreditation Board.
- Periodic curriculum review mechanisms should be established to ensure alignment with evolving global art trends.

7. Infrastructure Expansion and Sustainable Resource Development

- UEW should establish dedicated virtual and physical spaces for contemporary exhibitions, digital production, and collaborative projects.
- Long-term investment in emerging technologies such as VR, AR, AI-assisted art tools, and digital fabrication should be considered to future-proof the programme.

8. Institutional Policy Support and Alignment

- The Department of Art Education should align university and departmental policies to support the flexible, inquiry-driven nature of the proposed model.
- Picture Making lecturers should re-evaluate and reduce the influence of the Senior High School syllabus on tertiary Picture Making education.
- The Department should secure long-term administrative and policy-level commitment to sustain implementation and review.

9. Strengthening Industry and International Linkages

- UEW should leverage the model's interdisciplinary and globally relevant design to form strategic partnerships with art institutions, galleries, creative industries, and cultural organisations.
- Structured internship programmes, artist-in-residence schemes, and industry-led studio projects should be embedded into the curriculum.
- The Department of Art Education should facilitate student and staff exchanges, collaborative exhibitions, and cross-institutional projects.
- These partnerships should ensure students are exposed to professional practices, global art markets, and evolving contemporary art trends.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

- An action research project that pilots and evaluates the proposed Picture Making model, focusing on student outcomes and feedback
- Longitudinal study on the impact of the proposed Four-Phase model.
- Students' perception and reception of contemporary art education
- Picture Making lecturers' preparedness and professional development needs

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APPENDIX A

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YOUR REF:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
RUBY TABITHA KUMANGTUM

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce, Ruby Tabitha Kumangtum, a PhD Student of the Department of Music Education, University of Education, Winneba, who is conducting a research on the topic: **"A study of the picture making course at UEW and its alignment with global contemporary art trends".** Please, this research and information is for academic purposes only.

I would be very grateful if you could give him the assistance required.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

DR. JOHN FRANCIS ANNAN

AG. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide (Picture Making Lecturers)

Research Title: A Study of the Picture Making Course at UEW and Its Alignment with Global Contemporary Art Trends

Objective: To investigate the methodologies employed in teaching Picture Making, and their effectiveness in fostering proficiency in the contemporary art discourse.

Section	Main Question	Probes / Follow-ups
A. Background Information	1. Could you briefly describe your teaching experience in the Picture Making program at UEW?	- How long have you been teaching? - Which areas of Picture Making do you focus on?
B. Teaching Methodologies	2. What teaching methodologies do you mostly employ in your Picture Making classes?	- Do you use lectures, demonstrations, studio practice, project-based learning, collaborative approaches, or technology-assisted methods?
	3. How would you say these methodologies align with global contemporary art pedagogy?	- Do they reflect conceptual approaches, experimentation, or interdisciplinary practices?
C. Creativity, Conceptual Thinking, and Skills	4. In your experience, how effectively do these teaching methods foster: • Creativity? • Conceptual/critical thinking? • Technical skill development?	- Could you share examples of student works or outcomes that illustrate this?
D. Critical Discourse in Studio Practice	5. To what extent do you integrate critical discourse into your teaching?	- Do you use critiques, peer reviews, theoretical debates, or research-led discussions? - How do students respond to this practice?
E. Challenges	6. What challenges do you face in adapting teaching methodologies to the dynamic nature of contemporary art?	- Are there institutional, curricular, resource, or student-related challenges? - How do you try to overcome these challenges?
F. Recommendations	7. What changes or innovations could be made in	

Section	Main Question	Probes / Follow-ups
	the Picture Making program to better align with global contemporary art trends?	

APPENDIX C

Guide for Focus Group Discussion

Research Title: A Study of the Picture Making Course at UEW and Its Alignment with Global Contemporary Art Trends

Objective: To analyse Picture Making students' preparedness to thrive in the evolving landscape of contemporary art.

Section A: Introduction & Background

1. Can you share your experience as a student/graduate of the Picture Making program at UEW?
    - (Probe: What drew you to the program? Which areas of Picture Making did you focus on most?)

Section B: Program Effectiveness

2. How effective do you think the Picture Making program has been in preparing you for a career in contemporary art and related industries?

    - (Probe: In what ways has it helped you? Are there areas where you feel less prepared?)

Section C: Skills Development

3. Which skills do you think are most emphasized in the program (technical, conceptual, entrepreneurial)?

    - (Probe: Which skills do you feel are underrepresented? How important are these underrepresented skills in real practice?)

Section D: Adaptability to Emerging Trends

4. How well do you feel the training has prepared you to adapt to emerging art forms, new technologies, or evolving market demands?

    - (Probe: Can you give examples of contemporary practices or tools you were/weren't exposed to? How confident do you feel in adapting to new art trends?)

Section E: Gaps and Real-World Competencies

5. What differences do you notice between what you were taught in the program and what is required in the professional art world?

- (Probe: Do you feel there are gaps between theory/studio training and professional practice? What specific skills or experiences do you wish the program included?)

Section F: Recommendations

6. What improvements would you suggest for the Picture Making program to better prepare students for the realities of contemporary art practice?

    - (Probe: Curriculum changes? More exposure to professional practice, internships, exhibitions, digital art, or entrepreneurship?)

Closing

7. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences in the program and your readiness for the contemporary art world?

APPENDIX D

Observation Guide: Picture Making Artworks at UEW

Research Title: *A Study of the Picture Making Course at UEW and Its Alignment with Global Contemporary Art Trends*

Purpose: To observe the qualities of students' artworks and the extent to which they align with global contemporary art trends.

1. Technical Qualities (Traditional Strengths)

- Devotion to accuracy in realism (portraits, landscapes, still life, birds).
  Are students devoted to accurately depicting figures, objects, and environments represented?
- Media choices (traditional and contemporary).
  Which media are used, and to what extent do they reflect contemporary art trends?
- Use of composition (balance, proportion, perspective, depth).
  How do students organise space their elements in their artworks?
- Attention to detail and technical qualities (texture, tonal variation, colour blending).
  How carefully do students consider technical qualities in their works?

Notes/Examples:
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2. Contemporary Alignment

- Experimentation with non-traditional media (layering, collage, combining dry & wet).
  Do students experiment beyond conventional media use?
- Evidence of contemporary art theories, symbolism, or personal expression.
  Do works move beyond realism to convey ideas or emotions?
- Interdisciplinary or innovative approaches (borrowing from design, sculpture, digital, or other art areas).
  Are students blending methods or borrowing from other fields?
- Consideration of meaning, cultural context, or audience reception.
  Do artworks reflect deeper meaning, social themes, or audience engagement?

Notes/Examples:
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APPENDIX E

School of Creative Arts
Department of Art Education
University of Education, Winneba
P. O. Box 25
Winneba-Ghana

Purpose of this Research

The purpose of the research is to analyse the components of Picture Making at University of Education, Winneba and its alignment with global contemporary art trends.

What you will be expected to do

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to participate in a guided interview with the investigator (recorded). Then, you will be recorded while conversing about matters relating to a *Study of Picture Making at University of Education, Winneba and its alignment with global contemporary art trends***.** This study will take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

Your rights to confidentiality

The obtained data will be treated with absolute confidentiality. A random number will be assigned to you in order to conceal your actual identity. No information will be released to expose your identity. The audio recordings and background information will be stored in a secure location and only the responsible project investigator and his research consultants will have access to them.

Your right to ask questions at any time

You may ask questions about the research at any time by emailing the responsible project investigator at by phone at 050 -739-1013.

Your right to withdraw at any time

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may withdraw from it or discontinue participation at any time. You may also request for the destruction of your data without any consequences.

Benefits

Your participation in this research may benefit the students and lecturers in the teaching and learning of Picture Making at UEW. Also, the study sought to help students connect with the world around them and understand the issues, ideas, and themes that are shaping contemporary culture. It will also enlighten art teachers and students on new and innovative techniques, materials, and technologies. By keeping up with these practices, schools can provide students with opportunities to learn and develop skills that are in demand in the modern art industry.

Possible risks

To our knowledge, there are no risks or discomforts involved in this research beyond those found in everyday life.

Dissemination

The results will be disseminated through a doctor of philosophy thesis. They may also be disseminated at conferences and in journals.

Giving consent to participate

By signing the consent form:

- You certify that you are 18 years of age or older, that you have read, and understand the above, that you have been given satisfactory answers to questions concerning the research, that you are aware that you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation in the research any time, without any prejudice.
- If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions, or have comments or complaints about your participation in this research, you may contact:
  Dr. Theophilus Mensah on 0208493839 or Dr. Ebenezer Acquah on 0507391013.

Participant: I have read and understand the above information and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Name

Signature Date

Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.