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Globalization and Me

Art for Life

I have always believed that we are all connected and that art can change the world. Art has been a place of peace for me when working and I put those feelings into my process so that they may spread into the world. While this earth has had many sufferings between people, I found that creating art for peace and for life continues to give hope whether shared in person, in our communities or through technology. Art is a language we all can understand and through it, change can happen.

World Symbol for Peace

Pablo Picasso painted the famous mural, *Guernica*, after being asked by the Spanish Republican government in 1936 for an exhibition in Paris at the Spanish Pavilion. The original theme at the Spanish Pavilion was supposed to be a celebration of modern technology but after Picasso heard the news of the civil war bombing devastation in 1937 in Spain, he painted the mural showing people and animals suffering so that everyone could be confronted with the pain and suffering caused to the civilians. This painting helped end the Spanish War and traveled for many for years to different countries since the 1940's. It was only allowed to Spain when it became a democratic country (Guernica (painting) Facts for Kids). It now hangs in the *Museo Reina Sofia* in Madrid. When Picasso was asked about the meaning of his images, Picasso said, "In the panel on which I am working, which I call Guernica, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain into an ocean of pain and death" (Robinson, 2015, para 10).

Peace Mural Project

In 1995, for the 50th anniversary to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and the end of World War II, Tom Anderson of Florida State University assisted Abe Toshifumi of Osaka Women's College to develop the international children's peace mural exchange (Anderson, 1997). *The Kids' Guernica* is an international children's art project where children from all over the world create peace murals on the same size canvas as Picasso's *Guernica* mural (Kids Guernica and third paradise exhibition in Havana, Cuba, 2018). As stated by Anderson, "Since 1995, *The Kids' Guernica* peace mural project has been an excellent example of art for life in a global context" (2009, p. 233). The first mural created was made in a parking lot of a warehouse gallery in the *Railroad Square Art District* in Tallahassee, FL with little financial sponsorship. Anderson stated, "The children involved were so called "at-risk" kids from the inner city and children who were physically and emotionally challenged" (2009, p. 234). Since then, the project has consisted of workshops held in schools, museums and other settings where over 10,000 children of all ages and backgrounds participate in paintings to promote peace all over the world. There have been over 150 murals created and each are made locally specific so the culture and problems of that area are formed into the process of the murals. It is through these culture processes that we can learn about each other's cultures and what we value. These understandings of culture that we can learn through art is how we can create peace.

Artists promoting peace through murals

An example of murals being locally specific to the problems in an area is a mural project discussion called "Promoting Peace" by The Arts Empowerment Movement in 2016. The project goal was to address concerns in the community between the youth and police officers so the project members were with "at-risk" children and members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police

Department. The purpose was for the police officers and youth to come together for healing and to rebuild trust. They learned that they all shared the same feelings about the sadness in their community. The founder of *The Arts Empowerment Project*, Natalie Frazier Allen, stated, “Rebuilding of trust, promoting peace and justice and finding healing in the community can be very complex and very challenging. However, through the universal language of art, officers and students are better able to express their feelings and be heard and understood” (Tyron street news racks to display the arts empowerment project’s “promoting peace” mural , 2017, para 6).

Reflection and Inspiration

I found it very informative to learn more about Picasso through researching his mural painting and the symbolism used from colors to images that depict the horrors suffered. It is amazing how a work of art could help end a war and that it continues to inspire people to this day that create their own peace murals to promote peace. Through art, such as peace murals created around the world, change really does happen. We continue to see it through the continued peace mural project exchanges with *Kids’ Guernica* on a global scale and through organizations such as *The Arts Empowerment Project* to address local issues within communities. I look forward to working with my students to promote peace and create our own peace mural that we can share locally. My idea is that in the future I can have each student create their own sections of a mural on canvas like the first mural project was done in Tallahassee, FL that we would then sew together to measure the same as Picasso's *Guernica* mural size. Thinking locally, a recent shooting took place where I live at a local yoga studio. It really shook up our community and it has been weighing heavily on my mind. After researching more about peace murals, I would love to gather students together to create a mural for the owners of the studio to help bring a sense of peace and healing to our community.

References

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