

Drawing Color Lines - Olivia Gude

I ended up reading through this article twice because I wanted to be able to catch points that I thought I might have missed the first time through and ended up catching further points than expected. This was a great read for people of all ages, race, and career fields but especially for us in the field of art education or just studio art in general. An average person walking through an art gallery or museum would not think of some of these topics and realizing that they are associating colors with their own backgrounds and assumptions.

I am glad that the author started this out with the topic of teaching color symbolism to students. I do think that this is important in the art classroom. If a student is trying to convey a happy, cheerful scene full of dark purples, blues, and maybe even greens, as a teacher it is our job to help that student understand that maybe other students are not seeing the happy image he is seeing. It is also our job to tell that student it is ok that what he is seeing is alright that it is different from what some of his peers are seeing. I also thought it was an incredible interesting point that as art teachers we teach values of a color as low values and high values. I never would have thought of this until reading this. I grew up learning that dark values are low and light values are high but also I still have that connection that low marks are bad when it comes to being graded. She rightfully so brings up the question of "what are we teaching our students?"

The author moves nicely onto the next topic of colors giving everyone different cultural connections. This was my favorite part of this read. I think that cultural color associations are fascinating and of all people, artists and art educators should be aware of possible color connections with the students that are sitting in our classroom. The examples that the author made in this were very interesting, for example, I had no idea that white is a color of mourning in India while in the United States it is a cheerful color that brides wear on their wedding day. We here in the States choose to wear black to events such as funerals however the Mexican holiday Dia De Los Muertos encourages people to wear brights and festive colors. This read spurred me to look up other color and cultural connections and some of them really surprised me. In the U.S we typically associate the color orange with harvest in fall, I also connect this color with school, possibly because school starts in the fall. The color orange in the Middle East is actually a color of mourning and loss. Not only just for artists and educators but I do feel that

when traveling it would benefit oneself to educate themselves on colors and cultural connections in the country or region they are traveling to.

Something the author had written toward the end of this read really stood out to me. She stated, "Some may argue that analyzing language in this way is getting too touchy, that I am too quick to look for insult and injury where none is intended." (Page 9) I think that this is an important topic to bring up because yes, some people will definitely think this, however, if we are not educating ourselves on this topic then we are going to keep making color associations and connections like previously talked about. Just like with other topics regarding race that we are discussing in class, we as humans make so many unconscious decisions and assumptions without realizing it until someone else points it out. The author points out that this is another example of white privilege. Just because someone as a white person might have thought this topic was touchy does not mean that other people of other races don't and we need to be reminding ourselves of this.

This was a very eye opening article to read and something I do think that all educators should brief themselves on. As both teachers and artists we do have to be aware of possible unconscious assumptions people make about colors in an image and what the message is saying.