

# **Pilot Studies on the Promotion of Self-concept in Art Education through Expressive Art: A Case Study of Flexibility-Innovative Contemporary Ink Art Exhibited in Taipei Fine Arts Museum**

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## **Summary**

Now that multi-culturalism has become an issue in Taiwan's art education, a number of difficulties face educators, including the consensus: "all learners shall be entitled to rights" and the fact that not all learners are capable of self-cognition or possess the ability to interpret the profound meaning of images. The researcher of this study, accordingly, argues that art education should return to the perspective: "art is expressed by man"; art courses need to enhance learners' self-concept and ability to appreciate art.

In Section I, a review of both the western and oriental histories of art is discussed to capture artists' self-concept and to better understand the process of human cognition which progresses from simplicity to complexity, and how such a transition has acted on the development of self-concept as a civilizing concept. The researcher attempts to attest to the perspective: "art is expressed by man", by discussing the high-level mental functions, while also appreciating artworks in a subjective way. Jung's psychological types, psychological philosophy, and participant observation method, as well as a study on the ideals of the course and a course design based upon the theory of curriculum integration, are adopted to create a guiding course on expressive art. The research objectives include: 1. exploring the theory of enhancing self-concept in integrative art education; 2. designing a guiding course on expressive art that can enhance self-concept; and 3. observing the behavior phenomenon

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of self-concept manifested in the guidance of expressive art.

Section II presents a literature review, including the following topics: 1. the connotations of self-concept: (1) Jung's theory of individuation that indicates the existence of different phases and different levels of self-concept, as well as the theories by Merleau-Ponty, Husserl and Read that point out the role of human sensory perception in higher level mental activities and the subjective/objective self-perception by communicating with the outside world, are analyzed; (2) the theory of self-concept, from the external- and internal-oriented viewpoints, is organized by referring to diverse psychological scholars; (3) in expressive art and self-concept, whether it is a representation of a personal story or an interaction with external messages, it is the self that expresses the individualization which embodies the abstract concepts in real life; (4) in expressive education and self-concept, it is concluded that learners should be guided to internalize the external messages and turn them into creations, as well as to form their own self-concept, and 2. concerning the teaching of integrative and self-concept, art education can be connected with the concepts of psychology and curriculum integration based on the features of expressive art; self-concept can be taken as the core value to develop the requisite knowledge and further change the current practices in art education.

Section III takes "the enhancement of self-concept" as the objective, with the artworks and hosting philosophy of "Open Flexibility: Innovative Contemporary Ink Art" in the series exhibition: "Art Education In-Depth" organized by Taipei Fine Arts Museum constituting the knowledge related to expressive art guidance. In addition, a teaching plan for a guiding museum course is designed based on understanding how the self-concept can be enhanced via appreciation of expressive art, by observing the learning effects, feedback and suggestions of the learners. The core significance of the course development lies in the attempt to recover the essence of the concept: "art is an act and achievement man uses to express what's inside." The theoretical basis comprises the four mental functions in Jung's analytical psychology; by studying the mental functions that transit from the internal to the external, the ideas of self-concept and self-discovery are expected to serve as reference for those involved in art expression. Then, the subject-object relationship in the psychology of the 'mirror image' and the intersubjectivity in phenomenology are taken as the fundamental correlative ideas, while Jung's "active imagination" is employed to communicate with the

artists. The course content and activities include: guiding the learners to understand the historic significance and multiplicity of artworks; getting them to understand Jung's four mental functions through the images and symbolic meanings of Greek gods; leading them to apprehend their own mental functions via the common mental functions utilized in art; guiding activities; and evaluation recording and feedback.

Section IV presents the course execution and results. Besides presenting the teaching plan that contains the process and content of the guiding activities, three dimensions are analyzed to record the feedback of the learners: 1. observation on the manifestation of self-concept from those who are outstanding in thinking, feeling, emotions, and instinct, respectively; 2. the learners' feedback on the enhancement of self-concept; and 3. other opinions: the benefits of appreciation of expressive art for the understanding of artworks and artists, new understanding of the guiding activities of expressive art appreciation, and suggestions for this guiding course.

Section V presents the conclusion and suggestions. This study aims to attest that artists and spectators are outside the artworks and interact with those objects according to their own individual mental functions. Expressive art not only helps in the assimilation of the subject and object for the presentation of self-concept but also in understanding the mental processes in perceiving the internal and external worlds for forming self-concept. However, attitude toward art as well as artistic performance and interpretation are the manifestations of high-level mental processes in each individual, so the cross-disciplinary integration of art education in psychology still requires further study for the enhancement of self-concept on the part of learners. The integration of expressive art, philosophy and psychology represents the spirits of modernism and postmodernism, while also offering a path for returning to the purely aesthetic and the self. Contemporary art education that features curriculum integration is the framework for realizing this goal.

**Keywords:** psychological types, self-concept, expressive art, phenomenology, Jung, art museum exhibition guiding, art education

