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LBST 330

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### **Module 3 – Getting Started**

#### ***1. Sample Research Project/2. Possible Topic of Investigation for a Proposed Tutorial***

In terms of a sample research project, I have chosen to look into the Art History department for inspiration. Before I was enrolled in Liberal Studies I was in the Art History program so I have some underlying knowledge on the subject, which is a big reason why I would want to focus a tutorial on it. With that being said, the research project that I have proposed would be “the reflection of society through art”. A lot of people say that it’s the art that shapes a society, which there is a truth to, but to me it is the other way around. I find people so fascinating; to know what makes them who they are and why they do certain things. Every individual is different, just like me they see the world through a different light and with that they express themselves in different ways. Everybody needs an outlet, they need some form of expression and art acts as an outlet for many people. It can be a reaction to what is going on around them; how they are affected by the world. So in order to delve deeper into the subject, for a tutorial, I would look into specific cases throughout history where there has been conflict or a dramatic shift in culture and from there I would analyze the art and make the connections. For example, maybe looking at the rule of Justinian in Byzantine and the effect he had on the culture of that time.

### ***3. Proposed Learning Outcomes***

- \* Articulate a set of answers to the question: “What’s the relationship between our society and the art that comes out of that particular period in history?”
- \* Engage in on-going research into the subject of society and its effects on the culture that surrounds it.
- \* Critically reflect on my progress and development in the context of the course and assess the utility of the acquired knowledge, skills, and values in my personal, academic, or professional trajectory.
- \* Apply the skills and knowledge of a given discipline or professional context, including working collaboratively in both leadership and team roles.

### ***4. Literature Review***

For the literature review I have chosen three sources that give insight into the ways in which art is a reflection of our society no matter the period. In doing so this will hopefully allow you to understand why the art looks the way that it does. Though each period in history is very different, the representation in the art is still seen. For example, in the case of Justinian’s rule in Byzantine, he changed the landscape of art. He had total control of the art that came out of that period and so when you look back and compare to what came before and after it is totally unique. When looked at even just once one can recognize what period it came from without hesitation based on the activity of a chosen society.

The first source that I have chosen is called “The Social Production of Art” by Janet Wolff. This book looks at art as a social production and shows the various ways the arts can only

be understood through a sociological perspective. It argues against the romantic and mystical notion of art as the creation of 'genius', transcending existence, society and time, and argues that it is rather the complex construction of a number of real, historical factors. In supporting this argument the author uses the qualitative method to review a number of recent developments in the sociology of the arts, many of which have taken place, for the most part, in isolation from one another. The author works towards a demonstration that art and literature have to be seen as historical, situated and produced, and not as descending as divine inspiration to people of innate genius. "In the end, a comprehensive sociology of art must integrate these perspectives" (Wolff 1), and one of the aims in this book is to try to suggest what such an integrated model would look like. In conclusion the author brings to light the overemphasis on the individual artist as unique creator of a work is misleading, because it writes out of the account the numerous other people involved in the production of any work, and also draws attention away from the various social constituting and determining processes involved. Secondly, the traditional concept of the artist as creator depends on an unexamined view of the subject, which fails to see the manner in which subjects are themselves constituted in social and ideological processes.

Similarly, the second source that I have found is called "Ideology and Art" by Virve Sarapik and Andreas Ventsel shares the relationship between art and our society, but rather than looking through such a broad lens this article focuses on a particular facet of society; that being ideology. The whole purpose of this article is to emphasize that the relationship of art to the central categories of social life, such as power and ideology, is multifaceted. The author analyzes the different definitions of ideology and its relationship with art, stating that "If we agree that ideology can be defined as the worldview of some social class or group and leave aside its normative dimension, it is clear that any practice, including artistic practice, is based on the

ideological principles characteristic of a certain group, from which one's surroundings are experienced and comprehended. Thus, art is also inevitably connected to some ideological world-view" (Sarapik and Ventsel 11). In supporting her argument, the author uses the qualitative method in exploring the phenomena by utilizing observation and other scholarly sources to come to her conclusions. In the end it is stated that there are four different possibilities in the relationship between art and ideology: 1) Art that directly and consciously serves a specific political ideology, being one of its components and one form in which it is manifested. 2) Art which, based on the artist's world-view, functions either purposefully or passively against the ruling ideology. 3) Art's own ideology, i.e. art as a social practice seeking an independent idea-related target. 4) Art as the unconscious expression of an ideological view.

For my third and final source I have chosen a scholarly article called "Augustus, Justinian, and the Artistic Transformation of the Roman Empire" by Zachary Scott Rupley. Unlike the first two sources cited, this article narrows the focus even further looking at a specific case rather than viewing the phenomena from a larger scope. The purpose of this project is to discuss and describe the transformation of the image of Roman Emperor through artistic representation and cultural demonstration. With that being the case, the author has chosen certain works of art that depict the first Roman Emperor, Gaius Octavian Caesar, best known as Augustus, and Justinian's, the greatest Roman Emperor. He analyzes each piece of art, discusses its history, determines what each piece represents and discusses the cosmetics of the Emperor in the work. In doing so, the qualitative method is applied being that the author looks at multiple written and pictorial sources to come to conclusion; using observation. In conclusion the author applies a comparison between Justinian and Augustus to explain the similarities between the two as well as state that the Christian religious movement grew out of and was surrounded by non-

Christian imagery. That pagan imagery, introduced by Augustus and continued forward by Justinian, had influenced Christian imagery.

All of the sources that I have chosen for this literature have some way or other supported my topic of the reflection of society through art. Two of the three sources that I chose, don't necessarily at first glance, seem like they have any relation to my proposed topic, but once you start reading and analyzing the information you can see the comparison and the way in which the information allows for a greater understanding of my topic. In certain circumstances I can be quite narrow minded, meaning that when I search for new information I look for specifics to support the argument that I'm trying to make, which in turn prohibits information getting to me, which could be very beneficial to the whole process of a greater understanding. With that being said I think I did a good job at remaining open and allowing for the introduction of new information. All of the sources that I have chosen allow the reader to understand how art is a reflection of our society whether it be looking at the relationship between art and ideology or Justinian's and Augustus's artistic transformation. When you remain open is when you allow for understanding.

### ***5. Next Steps***

In terms of potential departments and/or instructors that I would like to work with for my upcoming Tutorials I would choose Tisha Singer in the Art History department for my first and third tutorial. The reason why I say that is because I know that she is very knowledgeable on the subject. I have taken many art history courses taught by her and no matter what the period and no matter the medium she always seems to have the answers. I also find her very captivating in that when she's teaching she's telling a story and creating an experience through the art; she makes learning so very interesting. With that being the case, learning and composing my own ideas in

such an environment would really allow me to succeed and remain open for a greater understanding. For my second tutorial I would choose a professor in the anthropology department. I believe it would allow for a greater observation of the inner workings of a society and their culture. In being more knowledgeable about the society I will have a better understanding about why they create the things that they do and how art is an act of expression.

## **6. Works Cited**

Rupley, Zachary Scott. *Augustus, Justinian, and the Artistic Transformation of the Roman Emperor*. (2009). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 1863

Sarapik, Virve, and Andreas Ventsel. *Ideology and Art*. *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi*, vol. 26, no. 1/2, Jan. 2017, pp. 7–14.

Wolff, Janet. Conclusion Cultural Producer and Cultural Product. In: *The Social Production of Art*. Palgrave, London. Communications and Culture, 1981.