

# **ASSESSMENT METHOD FOR GRAPHIC DESIGN ARTWORKS AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

**By**

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## ABSTRAK

### KAEDAH PENILAIAN KARYA SENIREKA GRAFIK DI PERINGKAT IJAZAH SARJANA MUDA

Penilaian dan pengukuran menjadi persoalan dikalangan pelajar. Mereka ingin mengetahui bagaimana pensyarah membuat penilaian terhadap karya mereka. Pelawat yang mengunjungi pameran seni turut mempersoalkan tentang baik atau tidak sesuatu karya. Persoalan ini juga dialami oleh pereka grafik khususnya ketika menghasilkan rekaan agar mesej yang ingin disampaikan secara visual berkesan. Lazimnya, karya seni reka grafik dinilai oleh mereka yang mempunyai kepakaran dan pengalaman dalam bidang tersebut. Penilaian yang biasa dilakukan adalah berdasarkan pengalaman dan pendapat sendiri. Sehingga kajian ini dihasilkan, penulis mendapati sangat terhad rujukan untuk menilai dan mengukur karya seni reka grafik samada di peringkat sekolah atau yang lebih tinggi. Kajian ini dilakukan untuk mengenalpasti maklumat dan kaedah berkaitan penilaian karya seni reka grafik. Matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti cara terbaik dari segi teori dan praktikal untuk membuat penilaian dan pemarkahan. Ia penting agar proses pembelajaran dan pengajaran menjadi lebih sistematik dan terarah sendiri.

Tinjauan *literature* daripada beberapa pengkaji terdahulu seperti Beattie (1997), yang member fokus kepada penilaian seni di dalam kelas dan teori mengenai pemahaman penilaian seni oleh Parson (1987), yang lebih memberi penekanan terhadap gerak hati atau perasaan secara kognitif dijadikan rujukan. Hasil karya pelajar di peringkat ijazah sarjana muda dari Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) dan Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) dinilai berdasarkan kriteria yang paling berkesan di dalam penghasilan karya seni reka grafik. Kecenderungan terhadap penggunaan elemen seni reka grafik pada karya ini berdasarkan teori dan fakta yang dikemukakan oleh pengkaji sebelum ini, dan digunakan sebagai panduan untuk menyokong kajian ini. Sebagai tambahan, sesi temubual dengan sembilan orang pensyarah berpengalaman dari institusi ini akan dikumpul dan dibuat perbandingan. Penilaian secara objektif dan subjektif digunakan untuk mengenalpasti kaedah yang paling berkesan untuk proses pengukuran karya grafik. Dapatan berdasarkan kaedah soalselidik dianalisis dan dipersembahkan dalam bentuk graf. Dapatan kajian ini penting sebagai langkah permulaan untuk mengenalpasti kaedah penilaian karya grafik agar dapat dijadikan rujukan pada masa hadapan.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **ASSESSMENT METHOD FOR GRAPHIC DESIGN ARTWORKS AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

In art education, students constantly question assessment and measurement. They are curious about how lecturer evaluate their artwork. Visitors to art exhibitions often question regarding the right and wrong doing of artwork. What is right or wrong? Good or bad? In graphic design, most designers are uncertain whether their artwork is good enough to convey their visually hidden message effectively. Generally, graphic artworks are evaluated by people who are highly skilled and experienced. Their assessment of artworks usually depends on their experience and personal views. As far as this research is concerned, there is very limited reference in measuring graphic design artwork. Currently, all institutions of higher learning are being asked to take evaluation and assessment seriously. This study is to identify a pool of information and methods in evaluating graphic design artwork. This study aims to determine the most effective theory and practice in artwork assessment so that the learning process in art education can be more systematic and self-directed.

The literature review especially from theories and research proposed by Beattie (1997) who focuses on evaluation methods employed in the classroom and the theory of understanding art by Parson (1987) who focuses on the intuitive methods related to cognitive ability as a matter of art interpretation and complex understanding will be used as references. Students' artwork at degree level from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) are evaluated based on the most effective criteria in graphic design used in this research. The tendencies of the elements of design applied based on theories and facts proposed by previous researchers will be used as a guide to support this research. The evaluation method used, is a set of closed-ended questions. The finding from the data collected has been analyzed used formative evaluation form. In addition, interview sessions with an experienced lecturer from both institutions will be held to gather their views and to make a comparison between them. Hence, the findings established that formative and summative methods of evaluation can be implemented in graphic design evaluation. The result was presented in the form of graphs. The finding of this research is important as an early stage to identify the methods used in graphic design assessments.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

This research study is on the measurement and the assessment criteria of artworks used in graphic design. Beattie (1997)<sup>1</sup>, currently, all institutions of higher learning are being asked to take evaluation and assessment seriously. Assessment on graphic design is not merely a learning process but to ensure good merits will be obtained by a student. In fact in long term, it will affect the quality or design standard of their future artworks. It is important that what they learn will be practiced in their profession. So, it is the responsibility of the lecturer to ensure that the students obtain the right and accurate score on his or her artwork. Apart from this a valid and reliable measurement on graphic design will also satisfy the lecturer and the student.

This study will focus on intuitive and objective methods in graphic design judgment. Intuitive method of evaluation is based on a personal or group perspective or observation. An intuitive method of evaluation requires sound knowledge, vast experience, good education and a wide exposure on art and design.

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<sup>1</sup> Beattie, D. K. (1997). Assessment in art education. Worcester Massachusetts: Davis Publications.

Beattie added that different people see art in different perspectives. Personal views of art appraise by experience, education and observations. However, the Objective method of evaluation does not require the evaluator to have vast experience in different environments or a deep understanding of artwork. Evaluators are required to confirm the artwork based on facts and specifications. The criteria adapted from the elements and principles in graphic design are in a special format. Objective assessment is a method that requires facts, specifications and clear data to verify whether the artwork has fulfilled the requirements.

## **1.2 TITLE DEFINITION**

The definition of 'method' according to Blair (2005)<sup>2</sup>, is a way of doing something especially in accordance to a definite plan. Awang Sudjai (2001)<sup>3</sup>, defines 'evaluation' as to find out, to decide, the amount or value of something. Judy (1995)<sup>4</sup>, defines 'graphics' as the art, process of producing diagrams or drawings by giving a clear and easily understood image. Graphics in this study focus on the products of art, commercial design and illustration.

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<sup>2</sup> Blair, D. (2005). Pocket English dictionary. Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publication.

<sup>3</sup> Awang Sudjai, H. (2001). Times dictionary. Petaling Jaya: Times Educational Co.

<sup>4</sup> Judy, P. (1995). Oxford English reference dictionary. New York: Oxford Press.

Zainal Abidin (1985)<sup>5</sup>, defines graphic design as the products of graphic art, commercial design or illustration. According to Harper (2001)<sup>6</sup>, graphic design is defined as visual art. Which encompass the arrangement of colors, forms, or other elements "in a manner that affects the sense of beauty, specifically the production of the beautiful in a graphic or plastic medium". The nature of art has been described by Wollheim as "one of the most elusive of the traditional problems of human culture". It has been defined as a vehicle for the expression or communication of emotions and ideas, a means for exploring and appreciating formal elements for their own sake, and as a form of representation and as an indirect means to communicate from one person to another.

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<sup>5</sup> Zainal Abidin. (1995). Kamus besar bahasa Melayu Utusan. Kuala Lumpur: Kump. Utusan.

<sup>6</sup> Harper, V. (2009). Retrieved 8 January 2010, from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/undergraduate>.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Studies on references from published academic writings, and internet sources reveal that many theories are linked to the problem of art assessment. Several authors listed different methods and techniques in art assessment. However, their methods proposed similar objectives.

Research has shown that most teachers spend nearly half of their time doing assessment related work. Shavelson and Stern (1995)<sup>7</sup>, report that teachers make decisions about students every two to three minutes. Addis, S. & M. Erickson (1993)<sup>8</sup>, claims that the first major of art assessment was implemented in the United States in 1837, when Horace Mann called for oral and written teacher competency examinations. In China the pre –Qin Dynasty is the birthplace of all testing, assessment, and evaluation practices.

“I believe that assessment in artwork should be taken seriously.” Beattie (1997)<sup>9</sup>, she claimed that not many art teachers took evaluation seriously in those days. She added that students’ achievement is totally dependent on teachers’ decision. Thus, it can be concluded that detailed explanation on methods of artwork evaluation is very important in art education so that judgments in art can be treated fairly.

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<sup>7</sup> Shavelson & Stern. P. (1995). Research on teachers’ pedagogical thoughts, judgment, decisions and behavior. Albany: Suny Press.

<sup>8</sup> Addis, S. & M. Erickson. (1993). Art History and Education. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. P 1.



#### 1.4 SCOPE OF RESEARCH AND LIMITATION

This study requires data collection from students' artwork at under graduate level. Students' artwork from USM and UiTM were evaluated based on the most effective criteria applied in graphic design. These two public Universities were selected because of pioneered among other university. USM started graphic design course since 1960 while USM since 1970 and has been accredited with the ability in producing high quality designers among a good number of students. Each institution presented different styles of graphic art work but with the same objective to produce a commercial medium of visual communication.

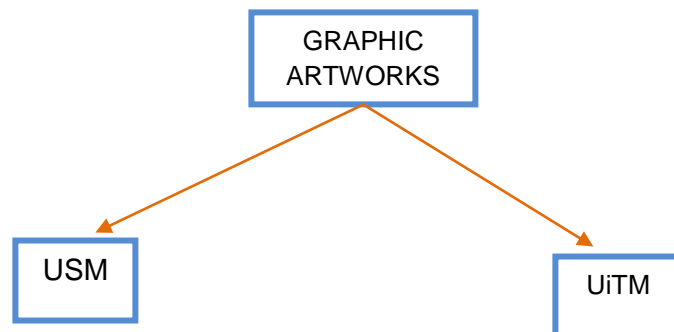


Figure 1. Sources of evaluated artworks

This study has been conducted on final year student on their final project exhibition to gathering data. Advertising, packaging, book or magazine cover and brochure design has been evaluated to identify the common element used among them. A valid mark division specification is affirmed in order to clarify the

methods of evaluation from these lecturers. However due to the confidential basis, details specification of the marks division was shown limitedly as a lecturer request. Writer just involved in final exhibition evaluation and miss to monitor the process of evaluation due to time and distance constrain.

## **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this study is to:

1. Establish methods used in the assessment of graphic design artwork at undergraduate level.
2. Determine the tendencies of graphic design elements employed by students from UiTM and USM.
3. Create a guide for students and art teachers in the teaching and learning process.

This involvement could empower the students in order that, their learning become more focused and self-directed.

## 1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Assessment in graphic artwork has significant evidence. The measurement and comparison between formative and intuitive methods will enhance and improve art education. The graphic design artwork is divided into several categories. Each category of the artwork is evaluated based on a set of criteria such as typography, layout, photo / illustration and iconography.

See graph below;

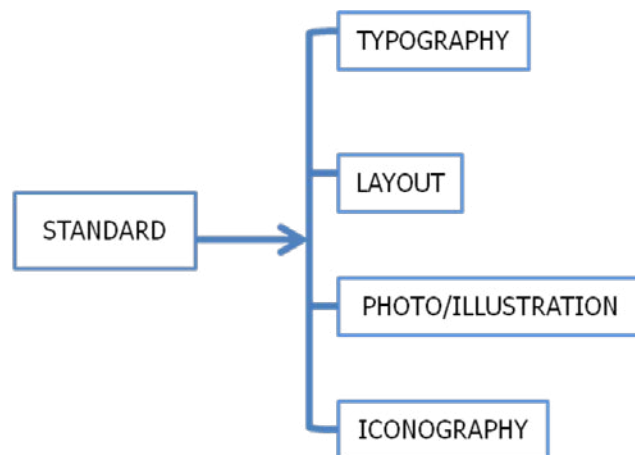


Figure 2. Prominent features of graphic design.

From the objective as mentioned earlier and references from the literature review, it creates a hypothesis posited to answer the questions present this research.

### **Hypothesis on graphic design assessment**

The combination of formative and intuitive method in graphic design assessment can be practice in awarding marks.

The formative method is fairer, clearer, show proof and facts in marks awarding. However, needs a detailed breakdown of the criteria involved in the creation of graphic design.

The method of evaluation is conducted personally, based on group perspective and observation.

## **1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

As far as this research is concerned, there are very limited specific rules in graphic design judgment. Therefore, researcher hopes that this research will contribute as a new knowledge to the existing pool. Therefore, this research will help individuals or groups to address questions regarding graphic design assessment. Expectantly, this study can be a source of reference to graphic students and academicians involved in this field of study/work.

This writing strength four main elements that should be focused in producing good artwork. Every person who is involved in graphic design must be sensitive to the elements mentioned. This is to ensure that all the elements mentioned are used correctly and accurately to achieve a good standard in graphic design. Hence, by establishing the specific rules, it will expand the learning quality of graphic design at undergraduate level. Findings from the samples and data collected from USM and UiTM will influence other institutions in producing good designers of similar quality.

## **1.8 RESEARCH ORGANIZATION**

This thesis contains five chapters. Research background, problem statements, scope and limitations, the demographics of the study, research objectives, hypothesis and the significance of the study was explained in chapter one. Whilst, chapter two, contains the information gathered from local and external literature review. Research methodology was explained in chapter three. This chapter explains in details about the demographics of the respondents and the result answer every questionnaire conducted to the respondent. Chapter four, focused on the results gained from the data and analyzed. Afterward the result presented in graph to show the propensity of the study. Finally, chapter five provides the summary, and conclusion of the analyzed data to enlighten the research hypothesis.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

This research is to identify the methods of evaluation in graphic design assessment. The data is gathered from USM and UiTM which served as a sample of this study. However, in analyzing data from these two institutions, no comparison is made. This is because the findings are merged together and measured based on the tendencies of the methods of evaluation in graphic design produced. Therefore, the combination of intuitive and formative methods in graphic design evaluation applied by the academicians, serve as a guide to achieve a standard routine for graphic design assessment.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks in detail at the objective and the intuitive methods in art evaluation. How can we assess accurately and fairly? What did our students learn? These are questions raised by teachers and students. The main purpose of teaching is to understand and the process of assessment is more than just evaluation; it is a substantive contribution to learning. Assessment needs to inform students, teachers about what students currently understand and how to proceed further with teaching and learning. The theory of art judgment employed by Parsons (1987)<sup>10</sup>, mentioned that cognitive as a major idea in art assessment. Whilst, Beattie (1997)<sup>11</sup>, provides variety of art measurement method to be implemented in the classroom. The theories from other researcher likes Nitko (1996)<sup>12</sup>, Eisner (1985)<sup>13</sup>, Mat Desa (2002)<sup>14</sup>, and Raja Zahabuddin (2010)<sup>15</sup>, in graphic design assessment method is also used as references.

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<sup>10</sup> Parsons, M. J. (1987). *How we understand art: A cognitive developmental account of aesthetic experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. P 1.

<sup>12</sup> Nitko, A. J. (1996). *Educational assessment of students* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Englewood Cliffs: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.

<sup>13</sup> Eisner, E. W. (1985). *The art of educational evaluation a personal view*. Thame Oxon: Falmer Press Imago Publishing Ltd.

<sup>14</sup> Mat Desa. (2002). *Pengajaran pendidikan seni visual sekolah menengah: Kecenderungan dan kerelevanan untuk memenuhi hasrat falsafah pendidikan kebangsaan*. Retrived 25 January 2011, from [http://web.usm.my/art/html/w\\_j.html](http://web.usm.my/art/html/w_j.html).

<sup>15</sup> Raja Zahabuddin. (2010). Retrived 27 January 2011, from [http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=396696314247&comments&ref=mf](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=396696314247&comments&ref=mf).



### 2.1.1 Assessment and Evaluation in Art Education

**Assessment:** is the process of judging student behavior or product in terms of some criteria, Eisner (1985)<sup>16</sup>. This includes various means of gathering information about the quantity, quality and progress of students, their performance/studio and academic work. Assessment may include objective tests as well as the use of rating scales, observation checklists, content analysis, interviews based on performances, discussions and written assignments. Assessment is generally ongoing and occurs during the learning process. It often has a formative element, intended to aid learning, add to Lesson Plans and guide the students. Assessment often offers feedback to the student and/or the teacher. Individuals are assessed, but responses are summarized to ascertain achievement of groups or subgroups of students.

**Evaluation:** is a judgment of merit based on various measurements, notable events, and subjective impressions. A total art program evaluation assesses the quality of components such as facilities, resources, teacher preparation, extra- curricular art activities, or safety in the art room or performance facility, and includes curriculum evaluation and the program for assessment of student learning. Assessment of student learning in the arts can lead to refining or reinforcing curriculum.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P 12.

Shavelson and Stren (1995)<sup>17</sup>, defined, assessment as the method or process used for gathering information about people, programs, or object for the purpose of making evaluation. Assessment occurs at the classroom, district, state, and national levels. In an educational setting assessment provides a powerful tool for dictating institutional goals, initiating educational reforms and restructuring programs from the top down.

Dictionary.com (2009) <sup>18</sup>, defines assessment as the act of assessing; appraisal; evaluation.

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<sup>17</sup> Shavelson & Stern. P. (1995). Research on teachers pedagogical thoughts, judgment, decision and behavior. New York: Freeman.

<sup>18</sup> Dictionary.com. (2009). Retrieved 15 January 2011, from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/undergraduate>.

Ross (1986)<sup>19</sup>, claims in art education, only the art teacher can interpret art. For example, he writes from his experience in January 1982, (*The Arts in schools*) he introduced art as a part of the curriculum for all pupils. Art in school should have evidence and arguments that would convince those responsible for implementing policies and programs of instruction in school activities. Four years after implementation, they found that theoretical arguments about the place of the arts on the school curriculum has been won. Finally the chairman of the school, declared art as priority and important in education even though, the chairman gave more attention and priority to English, Mathematics, Science and Technology subjects. After five years art has become more valuable and important to the teachers and parents even though art was viewed as having a 'low status' earlier.

The author also discussed the issue of objectivity in art and the possibility of assessment on the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that count as worthwhile outcomes of an art education. The art and the aesthetic judgment derived from an educational activity in them can be said to be objective. Therefore, art must have facts and evidence.

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<sup>19</sup> Ross, M. (1986). *Assessment in art education, a necessary discipline or a loss of happiness* Headington: Oxford Pergamon Press.

Wikipedia defines an evaluation of art has become especially problematic since the 20th century. Therefore, Kurtis Karr (2009)<sup>20</sup>, distinguishes three approaches: the Realist, whereby aesthetic quality is an absolute value independent of any human view; the Objectivist, whereby it is also an absolute value, but is dependent on general human experience; and the Relativist position, whereby it is not an absolute value, but depends on, and varies with, the human experience of different humans. An object may be characterized by the intentions, or lack thereof, of its creator, regardless of its apparent purpose. Here in understanding art, personal view and self interpretation is needed to judge art fairly. Works of art are mere things until we begin to carefully perceive and interpret them. So, to evaluate graphic design we need to match the result with the message of the visual communication.

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<sup>20</sup> Kurtis Karr. (2009). Retrieved 15 July 2011, from <http://www.artistcreation.com/Art/encyclopedia.htm>.

At educational level, the role of the academician in judgment and measurement in evaluation requires clear specifications. In this study two main methods has been identified in graphic design assessment. Intuitive is a current method used by the academician in art judgment. But marks given by the lecturer through self interpretation or personal view is not enough to convince others to decide whether the art work is effective enough to communicate visually or to achieve the target. Therefore, a formative method is important in graphic design judgment to ensure the accuracy of the marks given. Besides that, to explain clearly whether the designer or student creating the design follow the rules and specifications given by the lecturer.

## 2.2 INTUITIVE ASSESSMENT

Intuitive assessment is connected to themes in psychology, philosophy, art and education. It describes the theory of development of aesthetic understanding and incurs a variety of intellectual. So, art education needs this method in assessing art. It is because, the effectiveness, aesthetic value, originality, and articulation are measured through these criteria.

Gregg (1990)<sup>21</sup>, defines intuitive as a direct perception or independent of any reasoning process. According to Parsons (1987)<sup>22</sup>, intuitive in measuring art is about the idea of evaluation through organized accounts in terms of, subject matter, expression, medium form or style and followed by judgment. Allen (1990)<sup>23</sup>, defines intuitive as perceiving by intuition, as a person or the mind. Intuitive obtained through intuition rather than from reasoning or observation. Intuitive is about knowing, or perceiving, by intuition; capable of knowing without deduction or reasoning and spontaneously derived from or prompted by a natural tendency; "an intuitive revulsion".

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<sup>21</sup> Gregg, B. (1990). Notes on graphic design and visual communication. California: Crisp Publication Inc.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. P 12.

<sup>23</sup> Allen, R. E. (1990). The concise Oxford dictionary of current English. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Intuitive judgment is related to the aesthetic taste. A journal by Daniel (2003)<sup>24</sup>, mentioned, aesthetic taste in reflecting the sensitivities peculiar to the organ of sight the eye (working in conjunction with the brain, obviously, since the eye is passive) derives from a number of things, beginning (although by no means ending) with the biology of the viewer possessing the taste. Some people, for example, can distinguish a significantly larger range of colors than others, or make out a greater range of tonal variations. On the other hand, some people have red/green color blindness (about 8 percent of the population) and a few have the condition of achromatopsia (where no colors can be distinguished at all).

It should be obvious (although somehow it isn't) that having good or bad taste—in anything—has utterly no connection to whether one is morally good or bad, and startlingly less correspondence with intelligence or level of education than one might think. Life mixes morals, intelligence, education and taste in individuals into various stews.

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel Kahneman. (2003). A perspective on judgment and choice mapping bounded rationality. Retrieved 13 Jun 2010, from <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~gbc/psycDM/Nobel%20Prize.pdf>.

### **2.2.2 Cognitive and Creativity As A Major Idea in Art Assessment**

Cognitive is a process of thought. When talking about critics in art evaluation, actually it is discussed as relationship between three rather different concepts. Simplified, “aesthetic sensitivity”, “taste”, and perception of “harmony” in art assessment. The term harmony could be justifiably interpreted as referring to degrees of elegance, symmetry, order or peace among other things. Visual aesthetic sensitivity is an ability to perceive, to understand and integrate art. Taste is referred to the personal desirable or individual view.

Parsons (1987)<sup>25</sup>, in his book mentioned that the ability to make aesthetic judgments comes directly from the ability to enter into the ‘language games’ in which approaches to the questions of value in our assessment of works of art are conceived, articulated and then understood.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. P 12.



That means that only those who have learned about art will judge and appreciate the different kinds of art and aesthetic means. Aesthetic definition comes from various definitions and interpretations. First the meaning of use, people can look at art and examine both how other people react to the work of art and their effect of the artist.

Heyfron (2002)<sup>26</sup>, in his articles mentioned that aesthetic development is debated as cause of contrasting views about the possibilities identifying objective criteria appropriate in judging artwork among students. However, there are certain features crucial to our understanding of aesthetic discourse which is not adequately accommodated in its account of objectivity.

Eisner (1985)<sup>27</sup>, making judgments of value requires a basis for criticism. At the simplest level, a way to determine whether the impact of the object on the senses meets the criteria to be considered art is whether it is perceived to be attractive or repulsive. Though perception is always colored by experience, and is necessarily subjective, it is commonly taken that which is not aesthetically satisfying in some fashion cannot be art.

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<sup>26</sup> Heyfron. V. (1983). The objective status of aesthetic knowledge. The arts: a way of knowing. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. P 12.

However, "good" art is not always or even regularly aesthetically appealing to a majority of viewers. In other words, an artist's prime motivation need not be the pursuit of the aesthetic. Also, art often depicts terrible images made for social, moral, or thought-provoking reasons.

There are problems in judging whether an artwork is of quality or not. It is confusing to the educated and uneducated including practitioners trained in art. It is because there is no agreed standards against which one can finally decide between the competing judgments of assessors. It only depends on sense claims whether they are true or false, good or bad.

Mat Desa (2002)<sup>28</sup>, recommended a methods of art interpretation as well. He mentioned that students shouldn't be edge on any conception by teacher perception. For this reason, personal and social relevance judgment probably considered in order to spread an education fairly. He added, during the assessment process students are encouraged to prepared a personal art portfolio. The rationale of the portfolio is to keep track students' performance in her or his learning process.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P 12.