

Panel 7

IVSA Conference 2009

Appreciating the views: How we're looking at the social and visual landscape

Panel Title	
'The Writing's on the Wall'; reading school spaces in the educational landscape?	
Description	
<p>This panel of presentations will explore some of the most recent and ongoing research that foregrounds visual texts in histories of education. School buildings, classroom design and school walls will be viewed as providing evidence of shifting views of the child as pupil and the school building as teacher. Sources will include photographs, school plans, murals and architectural drawings. The panel will consist of a cross-disciplinary group of scholars drawing from their own fields of history of childhood, histories of urban education, sociology of education and history of art and design.</p>	
Panel Chair Name:	Jon Prosser, University of Leeds
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Final Selected Papers

Name:	Catherine Burke, Cambridge University
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Paper Title	
Concealment and exposure: the story of the Barbara Mildred Jones mural (1959 – 2009)	
Description	
<p>For the historian of education, refining the art of seeing and locating the significance of the visual culture of schooling can generate new research agendas and develop innovative methodologies. Historians are of course always concerned with the traces left behind by the subjects of their interest. But such traces are found not only in the formal and informal written record, nor only in photographs and film, but are also inscribed in the material world of the school and school environment. This paper will consider the relationship between architect and artist and their consideration of the view of the child through the story of one mural recently rediscovered at a school demolition site. It will offer some starting points as possible stimuli for the research imagination.</p>	

Name:	Jeremy Howard, St Andrews University
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Paper Title	
Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsim: The Monumentally (or Otherwise) Decorated School and some of its Visual Lessons	
Description	
<p>To read a school building and its environment as a tableau, as a visual narrative concerned with change, progress, tradition and status quo, suggests the presentation of a case for the re-examination of the educational complex itself as a trope for learning. The meanings and myths embodied in the physical fabric of monumentally decorated schools are the focus of this paper. Such articulation and display makes manifest notions of community, nation and civilisation. That abiding ideas of order (and occasionally their refutation) should so mark the external walls of a school reveals much about what is to be taught, and how, both within the institution's bounds and beyond. This study analyses a range of schools, predominantly from the early twentieth century, that are adorned with murals, sculptures and stained glass. The intention is to reveal, or at least question, how their iconography coincides with their socio-political and pedagogic context. The schools considered will be selected from Belgian, Dutch, German, English, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish, Lithuanian and Russian examples.</p>	

Name:	Sheila Fram and Eric Margolis, Arizona State University
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Paper Title	
Architectural and Built Environment Discourses in an Educational Context: The Gottscho and Schleisner Collection	
Description	
<p>This essay examines architectural photographs of schools produced for consumer magazines like House Beautiful that helped create aspirations for the rising American middle class during the period 1935-1959. It reveals the way that schools for the upper-middle classes were promulgated as "role models" for the boom in school construction that accompanied the post-war baby boom. We examined images of exterior and interior school architecture and built environments in the Gottscho and Schleisner photography collection at the Library of Congress. Through Sekula's (1989) framework for seeing the process of archivization and archives as an institution of power, we re-view the images in this collection and discuss the prominent middle-class, architectural discourses inscribed on/in and surrounding the schools. We further discuss the maintenance of the middle-class ideology through the existence of the collection.</p>	

Name:	Donal O Donoghue, The University of British Columbia
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Paper Title	Producing Culture in Place: Practices of Visual Representation in Public Spaces in Elite Boys' Schools in Canada
Description	<p>Embedded in historically contingent and shared cultural understandings of schooling, manhood, and civic and moral responsibilities, practices of representation in public places in boys' schools impact on the formation of cultured subjectivities. Drawing on a case study of an elite boys' school in Canada, this paper considers how the structuring of school place through visual representations serves as a powerful means of creating particular cultural dispositions. Practices of visual representation, it is argued, creates and narrates places to be perceived, experienced, read, and interpreted (Soja 1996). These visual representations are not passive presences, but rather symbolic representations or 'reifications', which reinforce, among other things, particular cultural dispositions as they configure and define a culture of a place.</p>