

ID: 452

Academic paper (20+10 min)

Topics: Contemporary artistic and art educational approaches to diversity and cultural changes

Keywords: collective identities; arts education; difference

Collective identities: differences that binds us

Sofia Ré

Centro de Investigação e de Estudos em Belas-Artes, Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal; menina.re@gmail.com

Yanko Tzetkov's maps outlining collective identities assume two things: that identities are separated by boundaries; and that within those limits people share the same characteristics. It is the homogenizing stereotype what binds the collective. In a globalized world young people tend to look alike, and to be alike, sharing the same cultural references and preferences of consume. However, this transcendent force that homogenises the transnational collective of earthlings (or a significant part of these) don't take place without the resistance of minorities that strive for affirming their singularity and, therefore, their distinction of others.

In my PhD research project I try to understand how cultural national identity is imagined and reified in the Portugal of 21st century, and how artistic and marketing objects (tourists' souvenirs) support a particular idea of the national collective that becomes real. In the past, both Arts and Education, separately, served this purpose of homogenizing masses around the nation-state, but how can Arts Education, an entanglement of its two constituent concepts, positions itself in the construction of collective identity? Arts Education not also deals with a material dimension, by manipulating visual objects, as it easily allows a collective construction of an object that expresses different cultural inputs. These bottom-up constructions of collectives based in cultural difference, rather than homogeneity, place Arts Education in the spotlight, revealing that both in collectives and in Arts Education it is not the essences of their components that define their identities, but what binds their constituting elements.