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Workshops (30 min)

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

Keywords: Aesthetics of Cognitive Mapping, Contemporary Art, Critical Theory, Pedagogy, Art Education, Art-Based Research.

The Art of Cognitive Mapping

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Critical theorist Fredric Jameson once argued that we are facing an increasing challenge when it comes to locating ourselves in relation to largely invisible, global networks of capitalism. This condition is worsened by the fragmentation and dispersal of knowledge through social media where falsehoods often “trend” more frequently than facts.

How can education intervene in this situation? Can art help us map the complex totality of relationships which often live through our actions without us even knowing? One possible response can be found in Jameson’s call for the “aesthetics of cognitive mapping” (1991). Such maps are pedagogical in that they enable us to think totality about the complexity of interconnected economic, social, and political realities. Art-based research here, is utilized in connecting research with art practice to help viewers to see the unseen connections between a problem or an object and its relation to the global world.

For this workshop, we will first provide a description of cognitive mapping. Next, we will break the audience into small groups and ask them to apply our model. Then we will encourage the participant to think through questions of location, distribution, materials, etc. and to find information about the chosen items from the internet. Finally, as an analysis of their research, each group will create an artwork that plays a role as a pedagogical tool for raising awareness of global issues. We’ll end with a brief discussion about the artworks, the possibilities and potential limitations of seeing art as a cognitive mapping tool.