



NATIONAL
ART EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION

Platform: Relationships

Position Statement on Freedom of Speech Through Visual Expression [Adopted July 2011; Update of 1991 Statement on Censorship and the Arts Reviewed and Revised April 2014; March 2019; April 2024]

Open communication is essential to the preservation of a free democratic society and a creative culture. The Arts are among our most effective instruments of freedom. They are powerful means for expressing ideas, feelings, responding to social justice issues and current events, envisioning new possibilities for humankind, problem-solving, and improving human life.

As the professional association for visual art educators, NAEA supports the following:

- Freedom of expression in the arts must be preserved. Individuals have the right to accept or reject any work of art, but do not have the right to suppress works of art for or by others.
- Censorship is contrary to democratic principles.

Visual Art Educator Responsibility:

It is the role of the visual art educator to introduce students to diverse art experiences and to help support students in developing the ability to interpret and to think critically. Visual art educators provide students with access to a diverse range of images, perspectives, and artists. They should also respect students' right to express themselves freely and to have their own personal voice about art.

The visual art educator should impress upon students the vital importance of freedom of expression as a basic premise in a free democratic society and support students in guarding against efforts to limit or curtail that freedom.

Visual art educators engage students in identifying, understanding, recognizing, and acknowledging the power of visual art. In practice, visual art educators must be sensitive to the distinct nature of their class community and education system, as they support their students' freedom of expression balanced with creating a safe environment for all students.

[Note: The April 2014 revision amended the title "Position Statement on Freedom of Speech" to "Position Statement on Freedom of Speech Through Visual Expression.]"

Resources:

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Constitution.

<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactiveconstitution/amendments/amendment-i>

<https://constitutionus.com/> <https://www.aclu.org/free-speech/censorship>

<http://www.ncac.org/> ·

censorship - Legal Dictionary - The Free Dictionary

legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/censorship Censorship. The suppression or proscription of speech or writing that is deemed obscene, indecent, or unduly controversial. The term censorship derives from ... ·

Censorship | American Civil Liberties Union

<https://www.aclu.org/free-speech/censorship> Censorship, the suppression of words, images, or ideas that are "offensive," ... Censorship can be carried out by the government as well as private pressure ... ·

What is Censorship? - Global Internet Liberty Campaign

gilc.org/speech/osistudy/censorship/ Censorship -- the control of the information and ideas circulated within a society -- has been a hallmark of dictatorships throughout history. In the 20th Century, ...