

Position Statement on Use of Imagery, Cultural Appropriation, and Socially Just Practices

[Adopted March 2017; Reviewed with recommendations March 2020; Reviewed and Revised February 2021; **Approved as Standing March 2026**]

PLATFORM: CURRICULUM

NAEA believes images have power and meaning that impact individuals, communities, and cultures. Understanding the complexity of images is foundational in the development of students as artists, designers, and citizens. This includes the study of cultures, the use of images, and their meanings in an informed way. Visual arts, design, and media arts educators are then able to understand and challenge the implications surrounding the use of images in order to avoid cultural appropriation, misinformation, and the perpetuation of stereotypes.

NAEA encourages visual arts, design, and media arts educators to make curricular and pedagogical decisions that:

- Acknowledge, **uplift, and celebrate cultures and identities and** the multiple worldviews and voices of people and communities;
- respect, value, and integrate different perspectives in pedagogical practices;
- advance insightful understandings of the context and meaning of cultural belongings and cultural art practice;
- authentically reflect both historical and contemporary cultures and philosophies of diverse people;
- confront issues around cultural appropriation and move toward greater cultural equity and inclusivity, valuing the ownership and significance of cultural images; and
- eliminate the perpetuation of stereotypes, social inequities, and assumptions of cultural homogeneity in educational settings.

NAEA supports the necessity of culturally competent and responsive visual arts, design, and media arts educators who encourage critical socially just practices and policies that provide and promote increased awareness, understanding, and acceptance of individual and group identities that affect all human interactions.

Resources:

Definition of Cultural Appropriation:

Nittle, N. K. (2021, February 4). *A guide to understanding and avoiding cultural appropriation*. ThoughtCo, Dec. 27, 2020, <https://thoughtco.com/cultural-appropriation-and-why-iits-wrong-2834561>

Cultural appropriation is the adoption of certain elements from another culture without the consent of people who belong to that culture. It's a controversial topic, one that activists and celebrities like Adrienne Keene and Jesse Williams have helped bring into the national spotlight. However, much of the public remains confused about what the term actually means.

- NAEA Position Statement on Diversity and Inclusion in Visual Arts Education
- Resource Document from the Position Statement Regarding the Use of **Race Based Mascots in Educational Settings** **Mascots Depicting Native and Indigenous Cultures in Educational Settings**

(Resources continue on the next page)

Additional Related Reading Materials:

Cultural Appropriation 101:

- <https://kluge-ruhe.org/cultural-appropriation-101/>

National Indian Education Association. (2016). *Building relationships with Tribes: A Native Process for ESSA Consultation.*

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c9fbf319973d70001853771f/5d8294a2a7dec04fd2e84bc/1568838821668/NIEA-BuildingRelationships-FINAL.pdf>

Acuff, J. B. (2018). "Being" a critical multicultural pedagogue in the art education classroom. *Critical Studies in Education*, 59(1), 35–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2016.1176063>

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (Eds.). (2001). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (4th ed.). Wiley.

Delacruz, E. M. (2003). Racism American style and resistance to change: Art education's role in the Indian mascot issue. *Art Education*, 56(3), 13–20.

Delacruz, E. M. (2014). Research in story form: A narrative account of how one person made a difference against all odds. In K. M. Miraglia & C. Smilan (Eds.), *Inquiry in action: Paradigms, methodologies, and perspectives in art education research* (pp.137–144). National Art Education Association.

Garber, E. (1995). Teaching art in the context of culture: A study in the borderlands. *Studies in Art Education*, 36(4), 218–232.

Han, B.-C. (2017). The copy is the original (N. Warburton, Ed.). *Aeon*. <https://aeon.co/essays/why-in-china-and-japan-a-copy-is-just-as-good-as-an-original>

Knight, W. K. (2006). Using contemporary art to challenge cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions. *Art Education*, 59(4), 39–45.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2006.11651602>

Manifold, M. C., Willis, S., & Zimmerman, E. (Eds.). (2016). *Culturally sensitive art education in a global world: A handbook for teachers*. National Art Education Association.

Mueller, E. (n.d.). *Tools*. Remixing and Drawing. <http://remixinganddrawing.com/tools>

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.

Stuhr, P. L., Petrovich Mwaniki, L., & Wasson, R. (1992). Curriculum guidelines for the multicultural art classroom. *Art Education*, 45(1), 16–24.

Wasson, R., Stuhr, P., & Petrovich Mwaniki, L. (1990). Teaching art in the multicultural classroom: Six position statements. *Studies in Art Education*, 31(4), 234–246.

More information on cultural misappropriation:

Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage Project. (2015). Think before you appropriate: Things to know and questions to ask in order to avoid misappropriating Indigenous cultures. Simon Fraser University.

https://www.sfu.ca/ipinch/sites/default/files/resources/teaching_resources/think_before_you_appropriate_jan_2016.pdf

Bernardin, M. (2018, March 29). Wes Anderson’s “Isle of Dogs”: Is cultural appropriation Hollywood’s next big battleground? *The Hollywood Reporter*.

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/isle-dogs-is-cultural-appropriation-hollywoods-next-big-battleground-1098228>

Scafidi, S. (2005). *Who owns culture? Appropriation and authenticity in American law*. Rutgers University Press.