

Culturally Responsible Approach to Teaching East Asian Art in the Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from the rich philosophical traditions of East Asia, we redress the questions and inquiry methods of teaching about East Asian artists and their works in the classroom, rejecting European White master frameworks when appreciating the arts of East Asia. To illustrate our approach, we have chosen two contemporary Asian artists, Do-ho Suh and Wou-Ki Zao, and we discuss why and how European White pedagogy has limitations in appreciating these works. As an alternative, we focus on a holistic lens of viewing East Asian artistic expressions, which is one of the key methods to understand artworks by many East Asian artists (Sullivan & Vainker, 2018; Stanley-Baker, 2014). To make East Asian art curriculum culturally responsive and authentic, we suggest that art educators adopt the holistic approach of teaching the East Asian art, in which art is seamlessly weaved with worldview, culture, and philosophy as one.

KEYWORDS: East Asian Art, pedagogy, master narratives, art curriculum

As art educators who migrated from East Asia to the United States, we often think of cultural and philosophical differences and contrasts between the East and the West¹. Recently, while examining East Asian philosophies such as Confucianism and Daoism and exploring their pedagogical significance, we learned that art educators in North America often pay minimal attention to these philosophies and cultural belief systems, as well as their fundamental contributions to the origins and developments of art pedagogy. After teaching Western art pedagogical traditions for pre-service art educators while rediscovering the art and philosophy of East Asia, we recognized the lacking consideration of cultural and philosophical foundations

¹ The term East Asia used in this article refers to the geographic region of East Asia. East Asian countries have shared a long tradition of cultural and philosophical traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. In this paper, we acknowledge the diversity of various forms and expressions of artists from East Asia, as some of their works are created in hybrid or liminal spaces through mobility and migration. However, we focus on identifying the cultural and philosophical foundation of art to understand East Asian artist's creative works.

in the art classroom (Bae & Dimitriadis, 2015; Ballengee-Morris, & Stuhr, 2001; Chung & Li, 2017). In this article, we discuss why and how the European White pedagogical approach does not suit teaching artworks of East Asia. Instead, we suggest adopting a holistic lens to teach East Asian artistic expressions, which is one of the key methods to understand artworks by many East Asian artists (Sullivan & Vainker, 2018; Stanley-Baker, 2014). To make East Asian art curriculum culturally responsive and authentic, we emphasize that much of East Asian art represents and is reflected on its worldview, culture, and philosophy as one.

This article is also self-reflective in nature, as we critically examine our own teaching practices and curriculum that rely on the framework of European Western ideals of pedagogy. As we studied more art and art practices of East Asia in recent years, we have realized that we miss some of the important aspects of art from the perspective of East Asia. We also note that many art education resources developed in the U. S. include Asian art from the perspective of the mainstream and formalistic art education drawn from Western art ideologies and theories. It appears that students have missed an opportunity of learning the art from its native philosophies and contexts. In this paper, we address this concern employing a critical multicultural perspective (Acuff, 2016; Lea, 2010; May & Sleeter, 2010).

To address these concerns as well as the limited resources or pedagogical approach to art in our field, we explore East Asian ontological and epistemological foundations embedded in philosophy as the basis for an authentic art experience. To illustrate our approach, we have chosen two contemporary Asian artists: Do-ho Suh (1962-) and Wou-Ki Zao (1921-2013). They were born and grew up in Eastern Asia and made their successful professional careers in the West as well-known by the Western art world and audience. In particular, we focus on a holistic lens, which is one of the key methods to understand artworks by many East Asian artists (Sullivan & Vainker, 2018; Stanley-Baker, 2014). In East Asia, a holistic and connected worldview of things is deeply ingrained in everyday life and belief systems (Bertschinger, 2011; Yigang & Qianli, 2011). We also note and emphasize that in East Asia, philosophy, art, and life are not separate from each other but are an organic whole. This article aims to shed light on East Asian philosophy in teaching and learning art from beyond the European Western pedagogical lens. First, we address the concerns of lacking art pedagogical models of teaching art from East Asia after our review and examination of curriculum resources. After that, we describe two case studies as examples to provide a stronger connection between art-making and East Asian philosophies. We also offer some implications for art education drawn from the two examples.

East Asian Art in the Art Curriculum

We have reviewed art education literature following a systematic review² to examine Asian art in the existing literature on U.S. art curricular and pedagogical praxis over a decade from 2010 to 2020. Using two key terms, “art education” and “Asian” to search peer-reviewed articles in EBSCOhost³, we identified only nine pieces with topics that center around East Asian art and artists.

Among them, nearly half of the studies have grounded its discussion in Western-based theories and perspectives (Morley, 2014, 2015; Park, 2014). Also, four other studies are predicated on the framework of multicultural art education but without an in-depth examination of the cultural meanings and connotations of a lens of East Asia (Cai, 2017; Chung & Li, 2017; Hanning, 2020; Li, 2019). There is only one exception that calls for a different sort of analytic patterns with an endless state of flux that does not depend on the West as a dominant and anchoring concern. Following critiques of globalization and postcolonialism, along with the accompanying logics of neoliberalism and resentment, Bae and Dimitriadis (2015) argue, “much of this conversation [about postcolonialism and education] has taken the West as its primary interlocutor or organizing node – a dynamic that has led to something of an impasse in the field” (p. 327). The authors thus propose an alternative system of discourse that draws our attention away from Western Euro/ U.S.-centrism. In so doing, a space for discussing Asian contemporary art could be preserved from Western domination.

In addition to those nine peer-reviewed articles discussed above, we were able to locate a few books during the same period of time (e.g., Chung, 2012; Shin, Lim, Bae-Dimitriadis, & Lee, 2017; Jesty, 2018). However, a limited number of publications shows an obvious lack of research and practices of teaching East Asian in the extant art education research. Our findings suggest that East Asian cultures have long been overlooked and marginalized by the mainstream discourse framed by Euro-American-centric values that have dominated most teaching and learning in North American art education. Therefore, we believe that East Asian art demands a culturally responsible approach (Gay, 2000; Knight, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lai, 2012; Nguyen, Terlouw & Pilot, 2006; Smith, 2010) to respect cultures, philosophies, and histories embedded in East

2 According to Grant and Booth (2009), a systematic review “seeks to systematically search for, appraise and synthesis research evidence” in an attempt to reveal “what is known, what remains unknown, uncertainty around findings, and recommendations for practice and future research” (p. 95).

3 EBSCOhost is an integrated academic search platform, including 44 databases that cover many major art and education-related databases, such as Art Full Text, Education Full Text, ERIC, and so forth. EBSCOhost is thus an ideal platform for a systematic review due to the broad coverage of various sources.

Asian art to buttress its authentic interpretations.

Challenging European White Master Pedagogy

Asian art and artists have often been introduced into American art education under the framework of multicultural art education or cultural diversity in an attempt to enrich and diversify art education curricula (Garber, 1995). However, many pedagogical practices of multicultural education mainly focus on the stylistic elements and formal skills of Asian art, including the artist’s biography and historically fragmented information and facts. Our literature review shows that few articles discussing East Asian art with multiculturalism lens employ culturally responsible praxis. Often, their approaches do not even address the fundamental and philosophical beliefs and worldviews in East Asia. As Garber (1995) argues, “without a strong conceptual understanding of the complexities of culture, and without immersion in the patterns of a culture other than our own, that these efforts will oversimplify and misrepresent other cultures and their artifacts” (p. 218). Presenting students with the authentic knowledge and cultural meanings of a particular culture, through its own lens and framework, is to realize cultural diversity in our art classroom, along with the decentralization of the mainstream Western master pedagogical lens.

Issues of representation lie at the core of decentering European Western pedagogical praxis and curricular planning when introducing and teaching about another culture in art classes. No matter how we phrase those common pitfalls (e.g., stylist appropriation in the name of cultural diversity, defining art only from the mainstream perspective, or exoticizing a culture by focusing on superficial differences) (Garber, 1995), this could result in distorting and misrepresenting a culture and its artifacts. Representation, as Desai (2000) points out, “is understood as a historically determined construction that is mediated by social, ideological, and cultural processes and not as a reflection of reality” (p. 115). The act of mediation implies the political nature, more precisely the dynamics of unequal power relations, which is ingrained in various ways of how a culture is represented (Desai, 2000, 2005; Grant & Price, 2020). The process of representation is not neutral because it “involve[s] some act of violence or decontextualization to the subject being represented” (Mariani & Crary, 1990, as cited in Desai, 2000, p. 116). That is, cultural meanings are shaped through the act of representation with inevitable “violence,” and the power of mainstream/ dominant forms of representation often determines who is “us” and “others” and how others are constructed in various institutions, especially education. Then we as art educators should ask: what kind of violence or distortions could be caused by our teaching, and would it be influenced by the dominant European White perspectives and

values consciously or unconsciously? How can a culture other than our own be authentically represented in day-to-day knowledge production? Who has the power to decide what should be selected for representation and how? Who has the power to define what is authentic? In the context where we situate our analysis in this paper, those questions raised above are in close relation to our concerns about the current status of how East Asian art can be represented and discussed authentically in classroom practices.

Different forms of misrepresentation can be observed in art education practices, especially those related to multiculturalism in an attempt to teach other cultures (Chalmers, 1999; Desai, 2000; 2005; Garber, 1995). Some critical educators argue that “current practical demonstrations of multicultural education in schools often reduce it to trivial examples and artifacts of cultures such as eating ethnic or cultural foods, singing songs or dancing, reading folktales” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 61). They further point out that the current multicultural education practice is rooted in an assimilationist thought; in an attempt to reduce prejudice, it can assimilate others culturally, economically and politically, marginalizing “aliens” as part of America’s melting pot (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This denies that ethnic or cultural groups have their unique culture, history, and belief systems, even though the legitimacy of their ethnic or racial identification does not depend on the acceptance by or standards of the dominant and privileged group or the mainstream European discourse (May & Sleeter, 2010; Lea, 2010). The danger of this perspective assumes that all art forms can be taught and appreciated by Western meta or master pedagogy.

The absence of local or cultural insiders’ perspectives and voices erodes the very intention of presenting our learners with accurate and authentic representations in teaching and learning about art and artifacts from cultures. As Chalmers (1999) criticizes how we treat another culture under multicultural post-colonial art education, it causes the peril of cultural voyeurism, “the tourist image frequently played out in art education by having students vicariously voyage to a smorgasbord of selected and safe exotic places to make trite and decorative copies of decontextualized crafts” (p. 178). In fact, exoticization oftentimes results in labelling, homogenization, stereotyping, and decontextualization, which would keep us far away from the culture we study (e.g., Desai, 2000, 2005; Garber, 1995; Ross, 2014).

Most of the Eastern Asian people and artifacts studied and presented in the dominant Western pedagogical practices have been treated as others without a strong conceptual comprehension of and immersion in the complexities, varieties, and subtleties of their culture and philosophy, as well as their local lens or interpreting framework, as

Clarke (2002) calls it “an emphasis on the local” (p. 239). To avoid cultural homogenization, or an “act of [cultural] removal” (Saldivar, 1990, p. 254) or a “multicultural quick-fix” (Garber, 1995, p. 220), is to restructure and enrich our curriculum, when teaching foreign cultures such as Eastern Asian art and artifacts, by addressing epistemological or ontological foundations, which refrains us from misrepresenting the messages or meanings presented to students. That is, we argue that Eastern Asian artists and artifacts should be addressed and discussed in association with their culture systems. In the rest of this paper, we examine several artworks by two Eastern Asia-born artists, Do-Ho Suh and Wou-Ki Zao, as the examples of a holistic approach of seeing art, philosophy, and social and cultural beliefs as a unity.

Two Case Studies: Do-Ho Suh and Wou-Ki Zao

In this section, we provide two case studies to share and showcase how we understand and approach two artists from China and Korea, suggesting a pedagogical lens of locality and philosophical underpinning. We also see them as alternatives to Western aesthetics and formalistic approach. The following discussions address a core question: how does an art educator introduce and teach art and artifacts of other cultures to which he or she does not belong, such as East Asian art? Garber (1995) suggests, though she does not specifically refer to East Asian art, investigating “the culture that nurtured the artist who made it – the experiences, beliefs, practices, artifacts, and literature of the people the artist calls his or her people” (p. 220). To avoid “flattening” diverse ethnic groups, individual artists, art works, cultural patterns, and voices in the East Asia region into a homogeneous humanity / category (Garber, 1995, p. 220; Saldivar, 1990, p. 255), it is worth noting that these two artists discussed below by no means represent the whole body of East Asian art, because the complexity and depth of East Asia cultures cannot be exhausted by a small group of artworks / artists. They serve as examples showing what cultural information / meaning should be included and deconstructed in teaching arts from cultures other than the teacher’s own. Furthermore, the following examination emphasizes the culture behind an artifact / artist, such as philosophical beliefs, customs, values, and how it impacts the creative process. By doing so, we argue against the taken-for-granted manipulation of exoticizing a culture outside the Euro-centric traditions in multicultural art education practices by only highlighting those superficial and formalist differentiations, which is still shaped and determined by the mainstream (or the selectors’) cultural values (Garber, 1995).

We also confess our positionality as Asian American art educators who share the similar culture with the two artists described below.

We are insiders of the cultures and thus resonate with the artists' cultural connotations constructed and informed in their artistic expressions. Throughout analysis, we demonstrate and emphasize the necessity of using local knowledge and theoretical/philosophical frames to deepen and enrich the cultural meanings in teaching students about other ethnic cultures. More importantly, our approach can serve as an exemplar for other art educators who are interested in teaching art from a culture other than their own.

Zao Wou-Ki: Spirituality, Emptiness, and Interdependence

Zao was born in Beijing, China in 1920. He grew up in Nantung, a small town north of Shanghai. Zao entered Hangzhou School of Fine Arts at the age of fifteen and spent six years there studying brush-and-ink techniques and the traditions of Chinese art history. For further artistic exploration, Zao decided to migrate to Paris at the age of twenty-eight and spent most of his lifetime in France from 1948. Zao's education in Chinese art and Chinese culture at an early age left a remarkable impact on his aesthetic understanding and style in his art, even after decades of his engagement with European modernism in France. Zao called this mental and spiritual attachment to his original cultural root as being "in spite of myself" (Beres & King, 2013, p. 75). Zao acknowledged this usual "return," which was reflected on navigating two different cultural systems. He recollected that "although the influence of Paris is undeniable in all my training as an artist, I also wish to say that I have gradually rediscovered China. In my recent paintings, this is expressed in an innate manner." (Molcard, 2018, para. 5).

Zao travelled back to China in 1985, spending a month in his alma mater – Zhejiang Academy of Fine Arts, now called China Academy of Art, to offer a special class for art teachers coming to hear him from various art colleges across the country. In the discussion of basic principles in traditional Chinese painting, Zao articulated his understanding of Daoism and Buddhism, saying:

Laozi [Lao Tsu] said 'the great image has no shape,' which is the real principle for drawing and painting. Painting is not only about the issue of painting itself. It is like Buddhist monks' practice of being quiet to keep fit. [When you] think of how to paint, forget the topic, and forget about everything in the world. You put yourself inside [the creative process], connecting yourself to the emotion and the painting together. (Zao & Sun, 2016, p. 53)

The phrase "Buddhist monks' practice of being quiet to keep fit" refers to Buddhist meditation, which is supported by Zen Buddhism.

Nothingness and forgetfulness, two similar key concepts from both Zen Buddhism and Daoism, are the main theme of Zao's statement. What he suggested to his students also emphasizes the top level of professional skillfulness in Cook Ding's story about three different levels of skills in cutting up an ox – "When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now – now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes." (Zhuangzi, 2003, p. 46). This kind of "spirit-like state" would occur when a professional such as a painter keeps himself/herself away from daily trivialities and draws a high-degree of pure attention to his work, even without consciously thinking of the task. The power of high mastery of skills means that "perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants" (Zhuangzi, 2003, p. 46). Zao thus recommended his students to "forget the topic and forget about everything in the world" in order to reach the ultimate state that Cook Ding describes. He also expresses the mental state of nothingness in his art practice, as Zen meditation concept of 'emptying.' Regarding nothingness asked by one of his students, Zao further detailed Daoist thoughts that influence his artistic creation:

Laozi's philosophy is about emptiness, nothing fixed. It talks a lot about the space, offering the viewer numerous discoveries and imaginations... painting is something like breathing. Human beings need breathing, otherwise we will die, so does painting ... The representation should include both tightness and looseness. If everywhere is tight, there is no way to breathe. If everywhere is loose, there is only a void. Contrast and comparison exist between different things in the world. Music always has the moment to pause, and there are spaces for a 'pause' in Chinese paintings – emptiness. This is very important. Those who don't know how to paint always hope to fill the canvas completely, and do not understand the concept of 'breathing'" (Zao & Sun, 2016, p. 55).

Zao naturally merged two Daoist concepts, emptiness and interdependence, into his artistic and creative practices – a painting needs "emptiness" as humans need "breathing." Additionally, both tightness and looseness in Zao's paintings are presented as a coexistent relationship of opposites, as seen in the push and pull of yin and yang. For painters and musicians, the result of an active action is either "tightness" in painting or "continuousness" in music, which is oftentimes the focus of a viewer or a listener. Zao particularly highlighted the idea of "empty space" in painting and "pause" in music, or negative space, *ma* in Japanese landscape term, as a consequence of non-action, which is usually overlooked by the audience.



Figure 1. Wou-Ki Zao, *Juin-Octobre 1985*, oil on canvas.

He claims the awareness of the interdependence of two opposites creating the balance and comprehensiveness of the world. "If one consistently tries to focus on or uphold one specific side of an idea, then half of reality is being ignored: to understand life one must recognize and come to terms with all of its features" (Lochmann, 2018, p. 26). *Juin-Octobre 1985*, the largest-ever painting by Zao is an exemplary piece showing the beliefs of Daoism, including both tightness and looseness in a contrasting yet harmonious manner (see Figure 1). It is obvious that the darker tone on the left, right and bottom periphery of the piece represents the "tightness" (i.e., purposive action) of elements, in order to make the center outstanding with brighter colors, which denotes the idea of emptiness as the absence of purposeful action.

Zao's understanding of interdependence of two opposites, from an artist's point of view, also demystifies the encounter between the East and the West embedded in his artistic experiment of abstraction throughout his career. For example, he reinterpreted the Song Dynasty landscape painting to show the harmony of land, sea, earth, and sky (See Figure 2). He refused to label his art as only "Chinese" or "Western" by saying, "I think that there is no conflict between Chinese art and Western art; they can only help each other and complement each other. It is hard to say that you paint Chinese paintings, and I paint Western paintings, which makes no sense to distinguish them clearly" (Zao & Sun, 2016, p. 57-58). In addition to Daoism, Confucius's doctrine convinces people to maintain their focus on the interdependence of two opposites, rather than a polarized or dichotomous way of thinking, suggesting a "middle-of-the-road" philosophy. As Schneider (1971) defines Zao's approach, "the West liberates him from the East, the East saves him from the West. Between the two he builds his empire of the middle" (p. 132-

133). In fact, Zao really embraced and enjoyed the hybridity of his cultural identification – "everybody is bound by a tradition – I, by two. To make a good painting, you have to understand" (as cited in Weitz, 2016, p. 17). The interrelationship and co-existence of two opposites, in Zao's view, served as the foundation of his works, deeply ingrained in his life and East Asian philosophy.

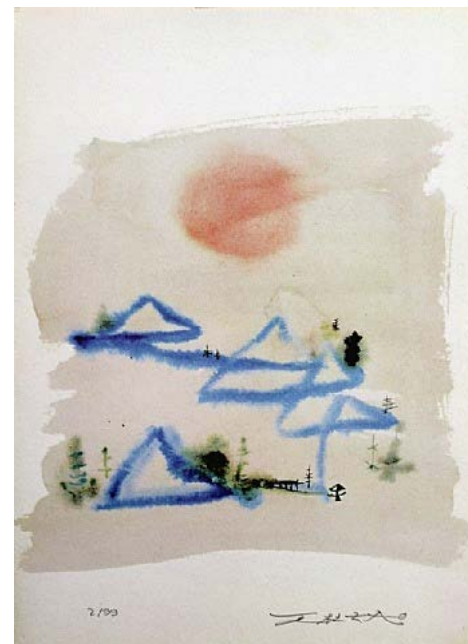


Figure 2. Wou-Ki Zao, *Les Carnets de Voyages I, 1950-2006*, oil on canvas.

Do Ho Suh: Movement and change, interdependence, and karma

Do Ho Suh has a strong family tradition of engaging with art: his father was a famous Korean artist and scholar who practiced ink-and-wash painting, calligraphy, poetry, and literature, and his mother also loves art and has a strong art knowledge about traditional arts, costumes, and architecture (Kim, 2008). Suh acknowledges that he was influenced by his parents' aesthetics and tastes, i.e. his father's preservation of traditional house *Hanok* against Korea's modernization between the 1960s and 1970s (Choi, 2012). Suh studied Oriental Painting for his bachelor's and master's in South Korea. The acquisition of training in traditional painting techniques became an important part of his early artistic learning before his migration to the United States in 1991.

Suh's artworks include many symbolic pieces, including gate, house, home, bridge, and star. His sheer fabric sculpture, *Seoul Home/L.A. Home* (1999) is one of the early pieces showing an emerging concept of

his art world. He explained that the noise generated by the fire station right across the street from his apartment in New York kept him awake, and thus, he thought of his quiet and peaceful Korean house (Art21, 2001). His memory brought him an idea to install a cultural embodiment, a fabric Korean house, in his New York apartment. Suh names it as “a way of dealing with cultural displacement” – “the experience [that] was about transporting space from one place to the other.” Suh also specified, “Leaving Korea for the US was my most significant experience of displacement” (Choi, 2012, para 4).

His personal experience of cultural displacement was derived from his involvement with constantly navigating across two cultural systems and with the establishment of his dual cultural identities. Also, a lack of a sense of belonging in the context of situating the artist self in a foreign land leads to the “choice of the material.” According to him, he needed to make “something that’s light and transportable, something that you can fold and put in a suitcase and bring with you all the time” (Art21, 2011, para 7). He wants to always carry his “spiritual home” along in his life journey. Movement and change are some of the significant parts of his art world. His view on constant movement and change as the essence of East Asian culture, rather than structured or categorized construction of the world, appears in his work, *Gate* (2005). In this work, he created a gate as a point, entrance, or networked node between cultures, reflecting his concept of things being changed and moving.

The constant movement and change in Suh’s art, resonating in the main thesis of *I Ching* (*Book of Change*, 1000–750 BCE), describes the cause and effects of all things resulting from the dynamics between yin and yang. The *yin* and *yang* symbols represent this worldview of an ancient East Asian cosmology. The symbols visualize the interaction of two forces: the white dot on the black field and the black dot on the white field. This symbol even explains all changes and movements in social realms. Interconnectivity and interdependency of these two powers and poles are well addressed in Daoism, as well as *I Ching* becoming one of the Confucian classics. They are the axes of East Asian ancient philosophy, and Suh’s flux and change themes were influenced by this world view (Lee, 2012).

Suh’s installation piece, *Home Within Home Within Home Within Home Within Home* (2013), is another example of displaying the interweaving of his memories of the two opposite cultural experiences. The life-size purple fabric sculpture includes two homes: his traditional Korean house, where he lived during his childhood, was enveloped and hung inside a bigger building, his first apartment in Providence, Rhode Island when he first arrived in the United States. The two seemingly diverse patterns are constructed together within a harmonious ecosystem, “this” and “that” give birth to one

another. A similar theme can also be found in Suh’s piece, *A Perfect Home: The Bridge Project* (2010), where the “perfect home” in Suh’s ideal was placed in the middle of an imaginary bridge across the Pacific Ocean to connect the two continents. Suh recognizes his navigation across different systems and cultures but rejects using the term “international voyager” – “But I spend a lot of time on the airplane. And I’m not in one place – just in between [the two different cultures], definitely” (Art21, 2011, para 5). Suh’s experiences in both Korea and the U.S. appear somehow contrary but can be interpreted as interdependent, coexisting to shape his current self – the two sides of one thing.



Figure 3. Do Ho Suh, *A Perfect Home: The Bridge Project*, 2010.

His view on relationships or connections of people, things, and places have extended to his sculpture and installation art. Themes, such as movement and change, the interdependent relationship, are reflected in his work, which he calls karma, or the cause and effect. Karma in East Asia as a concept or principle of life is popular common knowledge often associated with Buddhist beliefs, which represents a worldview explaining the causes and effects of all things in the present and the past, and even in the future. This concept includes how we see social, political, economic, and even moral realms of life. His sculpture titled *Karma* (2010), a 23-foot bronze tower of people perched atop one another’s shoulder, echoing the pagoda towers of Buddhist temples in Asia, shows one’s connection to another (Lee, 2012). His other sculptures were often created with many small figures (*Net-Work*, 2010; *Cause and Effect*, 2007; *Floor*, 1997-2000; *Who Am We?* 2000) or objects representing humans (*Some/One*, 2001), which expresses how a person cannot exist or live alone but is part of a bigger system, even connected with many others.



Figure 4. Do Ho Suh, *Karma*, 2011, Brushed stainless steel and stone base.

The interdependence of people, groups of people, or even nature and the human is considered as one of the deeply-rooted beliefs of Daoism. Daoists see interdependence as a complement (Danylova, 2014), emphasizing the relationship, interaction, and interdependence between one another. They are different aspects of one thing, which to some degree, reject classificatory categories and divisions. To Daoists, the dichotomous point of view, therefore, is misleading. As seen in Zao's paintings, viewers find the significance of the negative or empty space as being intendedly left out but as equally significant for the work. Suh's metaphor of the connection of numerous anonymous people with strings represents individuals being understood as part of an interdependent relationship with each other in the holistic perspective of East Asia (Nagatomo, 2018).

Conclusion

Drawing from the rich philosophical traditions of East Asia, we redress the questions and inquiry methods used in the classroom to propose a new lens or approach to discuss and understand artists and artworks from East Asia. Sharing the two examples using a holistic lens, we focused on why and how these artworks reflect East Asian

philosophical and epistemological concepts and themes. Therefore, we encourage art educators to understand that many artworks ingrained in East Asian concepts and epistemology require a holistic framework to fully appreciate their authentic meanings. As Garber (1995) and Chalmers (1999) pointed out, when we look at art from different times and places, we should not neglect their ways of seeing the world and belief systems. Many artistic expressions in and from East Asia are not only addressing or advocating philosophical or aesthetic inquires in art, but also making strong connections with their culture, beliefs, values, and worldviews. As seen in the works of Suh and Zao, many contemporary artists in East Asian backgrounds still make art to share their epistemological and ontological views in association with their cultural insights, struggles and conflicts, inviting the audience to see their world. This approach is a reiteration of cultural anthropologists who understand artifacts in a culturally responsible way (Gay, 2000; Knight, 2015; Lai, 2012; Smith, S. (2010). When avoiding Western art languages but focusing on meaning-making and understanding people, art teachers focus on such questions as why an artist creates an artwork, for what purpose, and how the work represents the way of life of people who see and use in their life. Art teachers can also take advantage of online and museum resources to develop a deeply engaged research about an artwork (Garber 1995), as we note that more resources are available online in English, examining and accessing to making meaningful connections among art, philosophy, social values, and worldviews.

As we interpreted the artworks of Suh and Zao, art does not only root in their philosophy but is also deeply connected with their worldviews. We illustrate their main conceptual themes drawn from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, which are fundamental in understanding their life values, social systems, nature, and universe. That is, art is a small part of the connected universe expressed as a visual form. This tradition was reflected in many East Asian art forms, such as Japanese tea ceremony, bronze vessels of Shang Dynasty in China (Fahr-Becker, 2011), and Korean folk paintings and folding screens (Shin, 2018; Shin & Choi, 2006). For example, art educators can teach Japanese tea ceremony to engage students with Zen aesthetics, *mono no aware*, meditation, and symbols that reflect Japan's cultural values. Korean folk paintings are full of symbolic objects and icons that can lead to understanding Koreans' social values and their world views, including moral and religious lessons from Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Early in the paper, we criticize European Western frameworks of teaching Asian art or other ethnic products from the narratives of homogenization, exoticization, and cultural voyeurism. We encourage art educators to reflect critically on how East Asian artworks are presented on websites and textbooks, as many of them are

eatured through a Western lens. We see that the oversimplification, homogenization, even Westernization of art and culture only detaches artworks from their historical origins, philosophies, and culture. To make East Asian art curriculum culturally responsive and authentic, we suggest art teachers adopt an authentic and holistic lens by creating art curriculums which seamlessly weave art with worldview, culture, epistemology, and ontology as one.

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