BEYOND THE FINE ART GHETTO:
WHY THE VISUAL ARTS ARE IMPORTANT IN EDUCATION

by
Paul Duncum

Studies in Education and the Arts — No. 2
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An occasional series of monographs and collected papers devoted to scholarly examination of and support for teaching and educational research in the arts.

Studies in Education and the Arts is an Australian series of monographs and collected papers focusing on research and theoretical investigation in the area of arts education. The series is designed to embrace a wide range of perspectives and will include studies undertaken within the individual art forms of dance, drama, media, music and visual arts education, as well as studies which adopt a more holistic approach to concepts which cross these art forms.

Issues to be addressed in the series may therefore include such areas as evaluation and assessment in the arts, research methodologies appropriate for arts education, sociological perspectives, cognitive studies, arts therapy, technology and the arts, and investigations of particular arts projects. As a refereed publication, the series is also designed to encourage educators and researchers in the arts to publish their views and findings and to do so in a professionally recognised form. Contributions for publication in this series may be submitted to the editors.
EDITORS’ PREFACE

This is the second in the series ‘Studies in Education and the Arts’. The focus in this edition is upon the visual arts in education. Paul Duncum argues the primacy of the visual arts in our everyday lives and posits the need for critical exploration of the visual arts as a central part of students’ education. Arts educators have always felt the need to justify the role of their discipline in the curriculum. Duncum probes the place of the visual arts in the curriculum and suggests new alliances which focus on different ways of conceptualising visual experiences in relation to other spheres of knowledge. The arts are complex fields of communication, expression and knowledge. We each define our field as we see it. Duncum’s view is contentious; it challenges the conventions of curriculum arrangements in schools and it seeks to redefine current definitions of ‘the arts’ in the curriculum. Others should take up the challenge and respond to the views expressed here. The editors invite contributors to submit theoretical papers which may be considered by the editors for future editions in this monograph series. The views expressed in this series do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors.