EXAMINING THE MALE RESTROOM AS A SITE OF VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

BY

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Art Education in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

Building on my prior research of the aestheticization of the male urinal, I will examine the male restroom as a visual and material culture site from both an historical and contemporary perspective with particular attention given to current and emerging trends. The aestheticized restroom suggests a dichotomy between existing structures and society’s attempts to create contemporary spaces that are consonant with emerging post postmodern ideologies and aesthetics. By combining aesthetic theories with an investigation of male restrooms, I investigate the integration of the aestheticization of the male restroom into everyday life, touch on the relationship between aestheticization of male restrooms and the construction of meaning and identity, and consider the possibility of the patron to these aestheticed spaces as an aesthetic subject. The purpose of my research is to begin to broaden our understanding of aesthetic consumption, to shed light on these aestheticized environments and the patrons who use them as aesthetic subjects, and to begin to define a discourse that further articulates these issues.
Dedicated to Ralph A. Cast Jr. who afforded me my first introduction to the male urinal and without whose support this research would not have been undertaken. O magum egregium
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to the many people I’ve come to know through my research on the aestheticization of the male urinal. To the countless men who afforded me glimpses into their private spaces, I say thank you. Your humor and willingness to share what was individually vulnerable, scary and informative have taught me so much. My research is richer and more human because of you.
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INTRODUCTION

Building on my prior research of the aestheticization of the male urinal, I will examine the male restroom as a visual and material culture site from both an historical and contemporary perspective with particular attention given to current and emerging trends. The aestheticized urinal suggests a dichotomy between existing structures and society’s attempts to create contemporary spaces that are consonant with emerging ideologies and aesthetics. By combining aesthetic theories with an investigation of male restrooms I investigate the integration of the aestheticization of male restroom into everyday life and touch on the relationship between aestheticization of the male restroom, the construction of meaning and identity, and the idea of the patron as an aesthetic subject. The purpose of my research is to begin to define a discourse which further articulates these issues.

For most of us, the use of public restrooms is a common, if not a regular occurrence. From shopping malls, restaurants and bars, colleges, public school restrooms, the public restroom exists for our convenience. Though often mundane, they are, for the most part, an inescapable necessity that we all endure as we live and work within society. It was not until I was introduced to my first view of the male restroom that I began to seriously question the role of the urinal in male restrooms, both public and private. I agree with Bandy and Bolin (2003), who argued that “common everyday objects and expressions that make up our world offer the rich potential of enabling us to forge valuable insight into the actions of those who make, use, respond to, and preserve these phenomena” (p. 253). I contend that the male restroom, the urinal in particular, has become contested terrain for the men who use them, the fashion designers, artists, and marketers who design and supply them, the academics who study them, the environmentalists who try to govern them, and the moralists who police them.
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The elite in every culture have employed every imaginable way to differentiate themselves from the toiling classes. This differentiation necessitated the elite’s demand for fine clothes and fine perfumes, cultivated table manners, and perfect speech. But in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—as capitalism spread wealth wider than ever before, causing a surge in the size of the middle class—the elite were forced to find other ways to distinguish themselves from the masses. They had to create distinctions, such as *high culture*, *serious literature*, *avant-garde*, and *genuine* cultural practices, which were employed with great regularity to reinforce the divide (Praeger, 2007, p. 75). Their dress, food, and houses became increasingly more opulent, and unattainable for those outside elite status. They developed intricate customs and exacting etiquette that demanded total denial of the sights, sounds, smells, and desires of the human body; “to sweat, to have bad breath, to burp, to show sexual desire or other strong emotions were taboo, because the Victorian elite identified these bodily functions with the brute masses” (Praeger, 2007, p. 37).

According to Praeger (2007), if the masses defecated in communal outdoor privies then the elite would defecate in private indoor rooms (p. 37). The elite understood that in order to remain the elite they must make the gulf between the classes as wide as possible. They needed to make sure that the chasm was wide and visible so the masses would see and understand the difference—the gulf, therefore, had to appear unspanable.

The elite’s efforts were misguided and unattainable. Soon it was not enough for the masses to believe them to be god-like; after all, they denied all that made them appear human—to the masses they did not even defecate, but now they had to make the other elitists believe the same thing. This required incredible feats: for example, women had to take emetic medicines before balls. There were no toilets at the balls, because their presence would have contradicted
the Victorian worldview. If nature called the women would have to get in their carriages and return to their own homes (Praeger, 2007, p. 37).

Apart from the conveniences of the extremely wealthy, sanitary management had not progressed much between ancient Rome and the seventeenth century. Praeger (2007) pointed out that although the elite defecated in odorless, private, water filled basins, upon standing they would still be faced with the physical evidence of their mortal condition. Praeger also posited that, “it was a problem of decorum outpacing technology” (p. 37). Thus, as Inglis stated in *A Sociological History of Excretory Experience*, “the desire for an apparatus to hide feces existed well before the apparatus itself” (as cited in Praeger, 2007, p. 37). According to Praeger, Sir John Harrington designed the first flush toilet in 1775, but finding it less than fully successful, various engineers and inventors eventually modified the design to make it more workable, so that the affluent could emerge from their bathroom with no evidence left behind (p. 39). The toilet allowed the wealthy to realize their fecal denial and served as another marker of class distinction.

The industrial revolution evolved with such rapidity that elitist and beggar alike were astounded at the changes unfolding before their eyes. Cities swelled by thousands each year and the ranks of the middle class exploded. The need for better sanitation became the cry of the day as fecal filth spread epidemic after epidemic through entire cities around the world (Praeger, 2007, p. 40). Something had to be done, and much was: freshwater infrastructures were installed; cesspools for sewage were created; and more efficient modern watertight sewer systems were put in place—and the wealthy benefited. The poor, once freed from cholera epidemics due to these improved sanitation conditions, lived longer and were able to work long hours in the factories owned by the elite.

It was during the mid 1800’s that the United States finally introduced the world to the concept of an standardized fecal infrastructure. Improving domestic life was the cornerstone of
life in America, and it was this focus that prompted the introduction of running water to homes. Along with running water, restrooms were introduced into houses. Upon refining technology from England, Americans developed and began mass-producing the porcelain toilet (Praeger, 2007, p. 53).

With the advent of industrialization, manufacturing skyrocketed and assembly plants became the norm. These massive workplaces housed hundreds if not thousands of men, and the need arose for a more efficient method to accommodate the normal bodily functions of the predominantly male workforce. Men needed to relieve themselves quickly, efficiently, cleanly and then get back to work. Time was not to be wasted, hence the introduction of the urinal. The urinal was an industrialization marvel—invented with mass use in mind. They were compact, efficient, and could accommodate multiple users quickly and efficiently. Just as municipalities began to govern water and sewer facilities, industry’s growing demands dictated the design and usage of the public restroom. Efficiency was essential and urinals (Figure 1) were installed along long walls like foot soldiers awaiting the arrival of the king.

*Figure 1.* Men’s restroom, Jamaica High School, Sidell, Illinois.  
*Figure 2.* Korean highway restroom.
THE URINAL IN POSTMODERN CULTURE

In 1913, a new aesthetic was introduced to the unsuspecting art world. A urinal designed for utilitarian mass use suddenly became the center of attention as it made its art debut with the staging of the *International Exhibition of Modern Art*. It was here that the artist-prophet Marcel Duchamp tried to enter his chosen work of art into the exhibition. Duchamp, belonged to The Society of Independent Artists, an organization of artists that he had helped to found in New York City. They had decided to put on an exhibition that was open to any artist who paid the six-dollar fee. There was no jury and theoretically no restrictions on what could be shown. Duchamp, ever the rebel, decided to test the reality of this artistic freedom by submitting his entry entitled, *The Fountain* (Figure 3), and signed R. Mutt. Duchamp had bought a porcelain urinal from a plumbing supply company, a *readymade* as he later called it, that he signed, titled, and submitted for entry as a sculpture.

![Figure 3. Marcel Duchamp’s The Fountain.](image)

Tomkins (1972) noted that, “the group flatly refused to exhibit the piece on the basis of moral grounds” (p. 39), and that Duchamp defended his decision by providing his own succinct definition of the readymade work of art. He wrote,

> Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made *The Fountain* or not has no importance. He chose it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under a new title and point of view—[he] created a new thought for that object. (p. 39)
Duchamp called the decision to refuse his work absurd and later went on to state, “It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers’ show windows. Besides which, the only works of art America had given [us] are her plumbing and her bridges” (Tomkins, 1972, p. 39). Although the exhibition rejected Duchamp’s ready-made, the show shook the art scene in America and this new aesthetic was here to stay.

Many artists, from that time to the present, have asked the questions Marcel Duchamp’s ready-made raised regarding the nature of art and the function of the artist. But the notions of genuine culture and avant-garde art were still entrenched in the psyche of the upper class and their critics. One such critic, Clement Greenberg (1904–94), coined the term kitsch to distinguish between what he felt was bogus culture and genuine avant-garde art. Kitsch, he argued was for those who are “insensible to the values of genuine culture” (as cited in Rampley, 2005, p. 76). Duchamp’s The Fountain (Figure 3) was considered kitsch. In a concrete way, Duchamp introduced us to what is now referred to as popular culture. Storey (1998) defines popular culture in several different ways; one is that it is “culture that is left over after we have decided what is high culture. … in other words it is inferior culture” (p. 6). However, popular culture, for those who hold to neo-Gramscian theory, see “popular culture as a site of struggle between the resistance of subordinate groups in society and the forces of ‘incorporation’ operating in the interests of dominant groups in society” (p. 11). Duchamp’s The Fountain exemplifies the divide that exists between high culture and low culture. But it also draws attention to the more political nature of popular culture by drawing attention to the resistance of Duchamp, who was a member of a subordinate group of artists at the time, and the forces of incorporation operating in the interests of dominant art groups in society.

Rampley (2005) posited that, “the more common visual experiences are and the more ordinary they appear, the more powerful they are in both informing and forming minds, it is
because they are so ordinary that they are so significant” (p. 81). Duchamp understood the power that common visual experiences held long before that concept was officially recognized; a concept, which of late, has become a source of significant academic inquiry.

Unfortunately for Duchamp, the urinal was a physical manifestation of the Protestant work ethic and therefore a prisoner of its time. The urinal’s institutionalized aesthetics were implicated in capitalism’s value system, which meant reifying workers as mere functionaries toiling at the behest of mechanical principles (Giles, 1993, p. 117). Praeger (2007) reminded us that the urinal’s value and importance, steeped in Apollonian social theory, which as Freud put it, demanded “guilt-based renunciation of the instincts” (p. 108) could only be viewed as “base or utilitarian, to be used, but never acknowledged” (p. 108). Langman (2003) noted however, that this repression of bodily functions and impulses enabled the “spirit of capitalism” to flourish (p. 65).

This Apollonian influence over the toilet continued well up into the middle of the twentieth century, when even allowing a view of a toilet in theatrical productions or in the movies was considered poor taste and unacceptable. It wasn’t until 1960 when Alfred Hitchcock, directing the movie Psycho, acknowledged the toilet’s existence and allowed the audience to catch a glimpse of it in the murderous bathroom scene for which the movie received instant acclaim. It was another ten years before audiences heard the flushing sound of the toilet on television with Norman Lear’s 1971 debut of the All In The Family. The sound of the televised flushing toilet reaffirmed what the general public already knew: Urination and excretory experience were a part of everyday life (Kelly, 2009).
THE MALE RESTROOM IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Fast-forward from the *International Exhibit of Modern Art* to the late twentieth century, and a wave of designer urinals in the shape of flowers (Figure 4), and musical instruments (Figure 5), have sprung up in many locations. Sorenson, the designer of the floral urinals (Figure 6), stated that these floral urinals were his attempt to bring attention to the fact that urinals in daily life provided very few “moments of dignity for the average male” (Sorenson, 2009).

![Figure 4. Sorenson’s Call of Nature floral urinals series.](image1)

![Figure 5. Tuba urinal.](image2)

![Figure 6. Proof on Main @ 21C Museum Hotel cascading waterfall urinals and mirrors with imbedded screens projecting blinking eyes.](image3)

Still other upscale locations, such as Proof on Main @ 21C Museum Hotel, sport elaborately designed male restrooms with cascading waterfalls as backdrops to the urinal area, where a trough catches the cascading water and urine and flushes them away (Figure 6). The backdrops in some of these restrooms equipped with cascading waterfalls, also feature video projected images of women in different stages of nudity or two-way mirrors that face the space beyond (Figure 7). In other restrooms the mirrors are equipped with embedded video screens that feature images of eyes, blinking casually, as their gaze falls upon the patrons (Figure 6).
The urinals in the Felix restroom, in the Peninsula Hotel in Kowloon, Hong Kong are placed in front of large expansive windows, where the gentleman urinating can enjoy an expansive view of the city (Figure 8).

These contemporary urinals signal the migration of the urinal from the staid space (Figure 8 and Figure 9) they occupied in society to their status as an important motif of society’s emerging fête champêtre lifestyle and haute-couture. Sorenson’s political humor series, urinals designed to resemble well known political figures, are examples of these emerging attitudinal changes (Figure 11).
Urinals today sport embedded video games (Figure 12), and some urinals feature soccer games where the ball is manipulated by the urine stream (Figure 13). Other urinals are equipped with motion activated deodorizing urinal cakes replete with sound and flashing lights (Figure 14); still others have fly decals attached to or etched onto the interior base of the urinal for men to aim at while urinating (Figure 16).

Figure 11. Sorenson’s political commentary urinals.

Figure 12. Video game-equipped urinal.

Figure 13. Soccer-game equipped urinal.
Several restrooms contain urinals styled to resemble the Virgin Mary (Figure 17); some are made to portray the vagina of women with female legs attached to the sides (Figure 18); and some sport urinals in the shape of women’s mouths (Figure 19).

Recently, Taiwanese society enjoyed the introduction of ‘restroom’ themed restaurants, such as the Toilet Bowl Restaurant in Taipei, Taiwan (Figure 20), featuring overall decor based on urinals and toilets (Figure 21). Here patrons are seated on porcelain toilets, eat from imitation squat toilet dishes and drink from urinal bottles (Figure 22).
One particular restroom (Figure 23) in Japan appears as though it would accompany a circus act. The patrons enter into the restroom and are greeted by massive four or five foot tall, brightly painted clown heads anchored on the wall opposite the toilets. Each toilet has a clown facing it, with its lips curled as if blowing the patron a kiss. Once the patron sits on the toilet, garish music starts and the clown begins to move out toward the patron, stopping only after its lips have touched the patron’s knees and after the supposed kiss, it retreats once again to the wall.

Other restrooms sport clown shaped urinals (Figure 24), and some are designed to become animated by the incoming urine stream, moving their many arms and playing music (Figure 25).
Male restrooms now feature urinals placed in front of female mannequins dressed in various outfits and posed suggestively (Figure 26), while other male restrooms, such as the Sofitel restaurant mens’ room in Queensland, Australia, have placed the urinals in front of wall-sized virtual images of women (Figure 27). The images are of eager, beautiful females, each one engaged visually with the patron and performing a different activity. Some are poised to measure the genitalia, others are equipped with cameras ready to take pictures, and others are holding measuring tapes in their hands ready to measure and record sizes (Figure 27).
Imagine being the patron who used the restroom facilities of the ski resorts in Japan (Figure 28), and as a part of the restroom experience you engaged visually in a virtual downhill ski jump.

*Figure 28. A ski resort restroom in Japan.*

Designer urinals are appearing more frequently in public spaces. For example, in England public planners designed the *Urilift* (Figure 29), or the disappearing urinal, which is a cylindrical shaped public male urinal that are raised out of the sidewalk in the evening when men are returning home from the bars and lowered just before dawn. They were designed as a way for the city to clean up their urban centers. By placing them in the middle of sidewalks located in the downtown nightclub district, male patrons, rather than urinating in the streets or along the buildings, can take advantage of them in their new convenient locations. In Barcelona, Spain, city planners in an attempt to clean up the environment, designed and installed urinals that attach conveniently to the sides of buildings (Figure 30). Outside the Tate Museum in England, the restroom (Figure 32) located nearby is constructed entirely of two-way mirrors and sits within the public square. Upon entering the space, patrons are given a full view of the city surrounding them on all sides, while those on the outside see only a reflection of themselves in the mirrors. Another restroom in Lausanne, Switzerland was designed using liquid crystal glass (Figure 33),
where upon entering the environment the patron can press the \textit{voir} button to the right of the door and the walls become white under electric tension, obscuring the patron from public view. Of course, the patron can choose not to press the button or perhaps forget to and then they become somewhat of a public spectacle.

\textbf{Figure 29.} Urilift. \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Figure 30.} Public urinals, Barcelona, Spain. \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Figure 31.} Exterior view of two-way mirror restroom. \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Figure 32.} Interior view of two-way mirror restroom.

In Chongqing, China the city opened up its first thirty–thousand square foot urinal park, which is home to one thousand urinals (Figure 34). The urinals are in the shape of dragons, the Virgin Mary, the human mouth, vampires and many other fantastical shapes. Speaking to the Associated Press, park spokesperson Lu Xiaoqing said, ”We are spreading toilet culture. People can listen to gentle music and watch TV. After they use the bathroom they will be very, very happy” (Shamoon, http://www.switched.com).
Public restrooms, used as a tool to draw attention to environmental issues, have been the subject of broadway musicals (Figure 35) and recently, urinal parodies have become popular and can be viewed on such places as YouTube. They appear to be highly sophisticated in their design (Figure 36), and all are humorous (Figure 37).

One urinal parody video featured a group of high school aged males attending a class titled *Urinal Protocol*³ (*Urinal Protocol*, 2008). The young male students were seated at desks, studiously taking notes, simulating a classroom environment that features a row of urinals along one wall. The lead young man portrayed the teacher, who was accompanied by several young men playing various musical instruments and singing the rules of urinal protocol to the class.
members. Several classmates acted out the various situations for the rest of the class members. At the end of each act, the members of the class would then stand and engage in a choreographed dance routine, signaling that they now understood the lesson and were ready for the next phase.

Another urinal protocol video clip was a virtual reality video\(^4\) that went into great detail about the proper protocol for men using the male restroom. Its treatment of the subject matter was both humorous and serious (Male Restroom Etiquette, 2008). Still another much more provocative urinal protocol video clip\(^5\) featured three middle-aged males using the urinals in a public setting. This video featured the various discomforting issues men face when using these urinals and how these particular men sought to overcome the troublesome matters. Their outrageous actions were a source of humor and yet signals a message to this viewer that here is an issue of perturbation (Gay Humor, 2004).
THE AESTHETICIZATION AND CARNIVALIZATION OF THE MALE RESTROOM

Gowans (1981) in his book, *Learning To See*, discussed the “arts of beautification” (p. 312), a function that Sorenson employed in the development of his urinal series (Figure 3 and Figure 10). According to Gowans, one of the functions of art is its role of cushioning against technological change and future shock (p. 356). Perhaps these entertainment-equipped (Figure 11) and festooned urinals (Figure 23) serve to contain some of the anger over and frustration of contemporary life that Langman (2003) suggested are a part of everyday life (p. 68). Gowans stated that humans feel the need for change but at the same time feel the need for stability (p. 356). Thus the art of beautification is employed which involves “deliberately refining shapes for aesthetic satisfaction… without any intended improvement in physical performance, only for the purpose of pleasing eye and mind” (p. 219). Sorenson’s urinals certainly fit Gowans’ category of beautification as they were aesthetically designed to please the eye but not to change their intended function. Gowans asserted that this popular art of beautification made the “environment more structured and hence more humane, less machine-like and hence less alien” (p. 356). These new, deliberately refined urinals are certainly less alien and more humane, and crafted for aesthetic satisfaction, but their design was not altered to change the basic mechanics of the structure nor improve the physical arrangement of the restrooms.

Gowans (1981) maintained that people living in modern times are living in an age of great technological advancement and change (p. 356). Gowans maintained that, “too much and too sudden technological change is bad for people” (p. 359) and he used the term “future shock” to summarize the problem (p. 359). According to Gowans, people engage in cushioning strategies such as using the arts to “beautify” (p. 359) everyday objects in order to fight against these ill effects (p. 360). It could be suggested that these aestheticized urinals were “beautified” (p. 359) in order to enable individuals to feel a sense of stability. These entertainment-equipped
and festooned urinals could serve to cushion against the ills of contemporary life as the subjects in the BBC video clip verified when they quipped, “they [the aestheticized urinals] add a bit to a sunny disposition” (Sorenson, 2009).

Certainly flowers (Figure 4), tubas (Figure 5), and water falls (Figure 6), appear to be more humane and less alien than the traditional white porcelain urinal, and yet the environments in which these urinals are located remain just as structured as before. Even though the industrial revolution caused extensive changes to society, public male restrooms still sporting urinals plastered along walls (Figure 1) continue to proliferate. They appear somewhat like porcelain coffins standing vertically, shoulder to shoulder, as far as the eye can see (Figure 2).

In the BBC video clip6 embedded within Sorenson’s web page7, these beautified urinals are shown installed in series along the walls of a rather upscale British restaurant. A viewer might interpret this to mean that the owner of the establishment had not considered restructuring the environment to afford the patrons using them a little more privacy. Kupritz (1998) conducted research on privacy needs within work environments and concluded that visual and acoustical privacy are of concern to workers in the workplace (p. 2). Anthony and Dufresne (2007) concluded from their research on discrimination in public restrooms that “although men do not admit it, the lack of privacy in men’s restrooms poses problems for them” (p. 2). Privacy is a luxury that post industrialization can now afford and support. However, old dogmas persist and whereas men should be afforded more privacy, by placing urinals in private chambers or having them separated by dividing walls, the industrialized model still persists. Even Sorenson’s floral urinals (Figure 3) were installed, just as they had been in the early days of industrialization, next to each other in a wide open space.

Herbert Marcuse, a German sociologist, coined the phrase, “repressive desublimation,” to define his belief that American capitalism had succeeded in dominating American society.
This seems evident in the case of the proliferation of aestheticized restrooms and urinals. According to Pederson:

Repressive desublimation is the term Marcuse employs to describe his witness of the phenomena observed by Juvenal, by which the people give over their sovereignty, their liberty, to tyrants in favor of vulgar material and sensual satisfactions. The term is oxymoronic on its face; in Freudian psychology, desublimation betokens the absence or end of repression: the free and unrestricted flow of desire. By attaching to it the modifier of ‘repressive,’ Marcuse challenges common sense to come to terms with the potentially repressive—read: antidemocratic—effects of desublimation. To wit: when the gratification of immediate material and sensual needs becomes the prevailing concern of men, then the ideals of freedom and democracy have no chance. (p. 1)

Pederson (1998) continues:

One might say that desublimation is a practical result of a capitalist order - capitalism encourages the growth of a consumer society, of a society devoted to the satisfactions of desire. We might expect that this would be just what is wanted. But, as Marcuse tries to show, not all forms of desublimation are emancipatory. Some, indeed, actually preclude the possibility of emancipation in subtle ways. (p. 2)

According to Marcuse (1970), repressive desublimation is a system that permits some degree of natural expression or satisfaction of instinctual energy, and desublimation is so powerful that even a small dose can succeed in capturing individuals. He maintained that individuals would return repetitively to satisfy themselves even in small ways (p. 3). He used the example of *Playboy* magazine that allowed men to feed a measure of formerly tabooed sexual satisfaction, but this happened only by becoming regular customers (Marcuse, 1970, p. 3). Thus, according to Maucuse’s theory of repressive desublimation, men are actually being repressed
anew to the specific advantages of capitalist producers. For example, the price tags on Sorenson’s urinals (Figure 4) indicate that men are being enticed into believing that recreation is achieved through purchase and ownership. This is, after all, what capitalism requires—a never ending will to acquire and to consume products (Marcuse, 1970). His view is supported by Langman (2008), who posited that:

> While the classical forms of domination are less visible today, domination—whether economic, political or cultural—not only endures, but operates in ways that are quite subtle if not invisible: mediated through consumerism and mass culture and disguised as erotic freedom. (p. 661)

One look at the restrooms in Sao Joao da Madeira Shopping Center (Figure 26) and the Sofitel restroom in Australia (Figure 27) and the evidence of this subtle domination disguised as erotic freedom begs attention.

It is the rise in the appeal of the carnivalesque that accounts for the growing enjoyment and desire for these aestheticized urinals (Figure 16) and restrooms (Figure 25). Duncum (2005), referencing Bakhtin, posited that the carnival emerged as a popular spring festival that arose from the ranks of the common peasants and townsfolk. With profanity, laughter, transgressive acts, feasts and singing, it stood in stark contrast to the Apollonian social affairs of the aristocracy. During carnival, sexual norms and standards of modesty were discarded and the sensual aspects of the body took center stage. According to Duncum, Bakhtin wrote that, “carnival celebrated all that was lowly and irrational, earthly, fleshly and extreme” (Bakhtin, as cited in Duncum, 2005, p. 39), and “its main purpose was to subvert and revile every lofty and revered thing” (Bakhtin, as cited in Duncum, 2005, p. 39). This carnivalesque attitude is apparent when viewing the urinals of the Sofitel restroom (Figure 25), where virtual women gaze, photograph, and measure the male patrons’ genitalia.
According to Langman (2008):

Carnival can be understood as an expression of cultural resistance to the lifestyles and values of the aristocracy—it provided a second life, a moment of utopian equality that opposed the official life demanded by a hierarchical society. That resistance served as a safety valve, dissipating many of the frustrations of medieval life and ultimately serving to reproduce social arrangements. (p. 661)

The urinals outfitted with legs to look like female anatomy (Figure 18) and shaped like women’s mouths (Figure 19) could easily be seen as an expression of cultural resistance. The men in the restrooms of Proof on Main @ 21C Museum Hotel (Figure 6) enjoy a moment of cultural resistance, for as they urinate they feel as though they are virtually urinating on the patrons. Somewhat like shadowboxing, the men act out their aggression with no ill effects to the unsuspecting patrons on the other side of the mirror (Figure 7).

This carnivalization of the male restroom, in particular the male urinal, “offers an opportunity for resistance and fun” (Duncum, 2002b, p. 115). However, as Duncum suggested, “they are [still] socially and politically conservative” (p. 115). This is evident in the Japanese Toilet Experience (Figure 23) and the urinals equipped with video games (Figure 12). Langman (2003) posited that consumerism now depends on the production and diffusion of “carnivalesque dreamworlds,” (p. 85) and these “containment fields” (p. 68) serve to sustain late-capitalist society (p. 85). Containment fields, according to Langman, are spaces that, “foster antistructural releases that can only exist for fleeting moments in marginal, interstitial, or even imaginary sites for the expressions of acts, feelings and identities, that are forbidden or taboo” (p. 68). The restrooms equipped with urinals shaped like the Virgin Mary (Figure 17) and women’s mouths (Figure 19) are examples of containment fields.

Langman (2003) argued that, “consumerism and privatized hedonism provide, on one
hand, the basis for profits as well as identities that sustain hegemony, and, on the other hand, the ideological control of culture to produce willing consent to the new economic reality” (p. 68).

Evidence of this privatized hedonism, as well as the ideological control of culture, can be seen in the urinal park in Chongqing, China (Figure 34). These unique, entertaining public spaces provide emotionally gratifying experiences in what had been necessary but inconsequential environments.

It is evident from the proliferation of these carnivalesque spaces in many countries that they fulfill a need within global society. Scholars such as Langman (2008) have pointed out that this type of paradigm shift has occurred in the past. For example, he stated that, “pornography has migrated from the luminal spaces … to influence the mainstreams of society and become a central motif in its lifestyle and culture” (p. 659).

One way to understand sites of contemporary culture, such as toilet–themed restaurants (Figure 21), aestheticized urinals (Figure 25), and male restrooms (Figure 27), is through the lens of an aesthetics of embodiment. This lens is an aesthetics devoted entirely to dealing with all bodily sensations (Duncum, 2005). That is, this aesthetics includes the pleasant and the unpleasant, and it stands for the ordinary as well as heightened sensations (p. 43). Furthermore, Duncum pointed out that, “modernist aesthetics as derived from Kant and his followers focused on a narrow range of perceptual sensations and ignored the full range of bodily sensations” (p. 35). Duncum (2005) wrote,

An aesthetic of embodiment reintegrates aesthetics with vulgar, crude, and sensationalist experiences. Historically, it is linked to medieval carnival, and the return of carnival in mediated form is linked to a hedonistic consumer body. The aesthetics of embodiment is a necessary theoretical construct for dealing with many cultural sites of corporate, global capital. (p. 35)
The very existence of these carnivalesque restrooms equipped with two-way mirrors (Figure 6), and urinals outfitted to resemble female anatomy (Figure 18), suggest that contemporary culture is embracing the theoretical construct of an aesthetics of embodiment.

It is the act of taking pleasure in the intimate though banal spaces that has prompted entrepreneurs worldwide to cash in on the excitement. Take, for instance, the development of the The Fly. Restroom attendants have long complained about the amount of work required to clean the splatter around urinals, so a European designer came up with idea of etching a fly in the bottom of urinals to give the men something to aim at. According to product engineer Vincente (2003), this is a great example of human friendly design:

If you go to the men's washrooms at the Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, you may notice there's a fly in the urinals (Figure 16). So what do you think most men do? That's right, they aim at the fly when they urinate. They don't even think about it, and they don't need to read a user's manual; it's just an instinctive reaction. The interesting feature of these urinals is that they're deliberately designed to take advantage of this ... male tendency. (Vincente, 2003)

This discovery led to the development of a line of stick-on fly decals that could be used in any urinal. Now, not only are companies mass producing urinals etched with a fly on them, other companies are producing cheaper alternatives by marketing stick-on fly decals that are replaced periodically. These decals are massed produced on sheets of contact paper and are much more readily accessible and easy to apply rather than having to obtain porcelain urinals which had been permanently etched with The Fly design. As Langman (2008) poignantly noted, “the consumerism of our age secures legitimacy for the system while providing that system with vast profits” (p. 661).

The Wizmark, the interactive, talking, men’s urinal deodorizing devise (Figure 14), is
another example of how consumerism secures legitimacy for the capitalist system while providing it with vast profits. Companies spend advertising dollars to secure a place for their promotional advertisements on the *Wizmark*. Not only does the company that produces the *Wizmark* benefit financially, but the companies that are employed to produce the actual advertisements are in line to make a profit. The owners of the establishments that employ these unique and entertaining urinals benefit not only from the increased traffic flow, as men are drawn in by the entertainment value of these devices, but also financially as the men spend their disposable income on whatever these businesses offer for sale. The urinals equipped with the *Wizmark* (Figure 14), the video games (Figure 12), and the soccer game (Figure 13) point to the fact that these once banal spaces now provide a moment of entertainment, as well as feed the capitalist consumerist system, as men are more inclined to patronize those establishments equipped with carnivalesque–styled urinals.

The urinal sites that were visited for this research involve a great deal of *visuality* (Rose, 2005, p. 90). According to Foster (as cited in Rose, 2005), visuality is the way in which vision is constructed in various ways: “how we see, how we are able, allowed or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein” (p. 90). This visuality is very similar to the concept of the *scopic regime* (Rose, 2005, p. 90), because both refer to ways in which what is seen and how it is seen are culturally constructed (Rose, 2005). The concept of seeing, or ocularcentrism points to the importance of the visual to contemporary Western life, which Jenks claimed has come to the point that, “looking, seeing, and knowing have become perilously intertwined so that the modern world is very much a ‘seen phenomenon’ ” (as cited in Rose, 2005, p. 90). This postmodern oocularcentric phenomenon is supported by restroom environments such as the urinals at *Proof on Main @ 21C Museum Hotel* (Figure 6), the urinals in the *Sofitel* (Figure 27), and the urinals at the *Sao Joao do Madeira Shopping Center* (Figure 26). The male patrons in
these environments are, as Rose (2005) posited, “interacting more and more with totally constructed visual experiences” (p. 92).

Thus, it is duly noted that these images, however subtle, projected from within the cascading waterfalls (Figure 5), animated on walls overlooking the patrons (Figure 25), and peeping from projected screens in the mirrors (Figure 5), do something. Rose (2005) argued that, “images are powerful and seductive in their own right” (p. 10). In addition, Duncum (2002a) noted, “it is important to understand images in terms of how they are slipped into people’s daily rituals” (p. 334). Therefore, it is important to examine these images overlooking the urinals. As men engage in the common ritual of using these public facilities, what messages are these images in front of them communicating, with regard to class, gender, race, sexuality, able-bodiedness, and so on? Furthermore, it is important to consider what kind of seeing they invite during these rituals. Berger (1972) insisted that, “we never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves” (as cited in Rose, 2005, p. 96). As one considers the images in these restrooms, it is important to understand how projected images of women and video-taped gazing eyes position the viewer of these images. The focus on audiencing is important because, as Rose (2005) pointed out,

Just as an image may be a site of resistance and recalcitrance, so too might a particular audience. Not all audiences will be able or willing to respond to the way of seeing invited by a particular image and its particular practices of display. (p. 9)

The advent of urine protocol parodies broadcasted over the internet, demonstrate that the site of the male urinal is not only a site of commercial enterprise, but is also a “spectacle” (Langman, 2003, p. 67). Langman (2003) defined spectacle as “an extraordinary public display drawing people together in nonordinary larger groups and experiences” (p. 67). The increasing
number of urinal parodies involving large groups of males indicate that men in the last ten to fifteen years are seeking to express their “feeling rules” (p. 68); that is, “social rules and symbolic cues that elicit emotions, define their meaning, and guide their expression in various situations publicly” (p. 68). Men are seeking the “positive emotional experiences that come with community and attachments, recognition, esteem and dignity, and a degree of empowerment, and they guide their expression in various situations publicly,” a phenomenon first alluded to by Langman (p. 68). These internet video clips indicate that young men and older male adults alike have moved beyond the negative effects and adverse feelings of isolation, anger, shame, guilt, and powerlessness that have accompanied urinal use.

The urinal etiquette movie clips can also be viewed as “containment fields” (Langman, 2003, p. 68), as these liminal spaces have a dialectical relationship with society’s standards for urinal use. As Langman maintained, “society’s structural constraints foster anti-structural releases that provide resistance, inversion, and repudiation and yet serve to secure the original structure” (p. 68). Consequently, with this inversion of the dominant ideology, urinals are no longer restricted to pallid spaces in society. They have become public spaces where contemporary male patrons can demonstrate their difference through a celebration of a resistant culture. Men can identify with these popular urinal videos from the perspective of an underdog and embrace the subtle messages of defiance as a chance to demonstrate their resistance to the dominant societal repression. They enjoy the sense of camaraderie with members of their own sex while humorously mocking traditional boundaries.

According to Efland (2004), the term visual culture refers to “an all-encompassing category of cultural production that includes the traditional fine arts, as well as various forms of popular culture” (p. 235). Theoreticians associated with the study of visual culture argue that its usage is increasing in response to the proliferation of images challenging the hegemony of
written text and spoken word (Mirzoeff, 1999, p. 3). Visual culture can refer to television, the internet, malls, videos, movies, theme park rides, aestheticized male restrooms and so on.

According to Mirzoeff, society is, in general, a visual culture because of our “tendency to picture or visualize experience” (p. 3). He maintained that “the visual appears both as global in scope and as part of ordinary everyday life” (p. 3).

Imagine being the patron who used the restroom facilities (Figure 28) at ski resorts in Japan, and as a part of the restroom experience you are engaged visually in a virtual downhill ski jump. These visual events are not just the neutral background or white noise of your life. They have meaning and you absorb these events as knowledge because of that meaning. There are no rules on how one experiences an object; therefore, as Venkatesch and Meamber (2008) argued, aesthetic experiences cannot be subject to cognitive reductionism. For children, youth adults, and adults, the process of internalizing meaning from images is the same. While the visual events are temporal, the meanings endure: “Meanings we make from visual information are foundational to future understandings. Images that communicate their very identity to young people today impact who and what they will become as adults” (Burkhart, 2006, p. 17).

It is this visual nature evident in these contemporary male restrooms that demands a careful study of visual culture. As Duncum (2007b) posited, “visual culture is a focal point for many, diverse concerns, but all have in common the recognition that today, more than at any time in history, we are living our everyday lives through visual imagery” (p. 230). Darley (as cited in Duncum, 2002a) maintained that “today’s particular image culture is characterized by depth-less and self-referential images, more concerned with surface than substance, and more with play than significance” (p. 332). Furthermore, Duncum (2002a) maintained that, “these images involve immediate, short and intense sensations” (p. 332). This would be applicable to the many male restrooms equipped with the Wizmark (Figure 14), stream activated video games in urinals (Figure
12), and the numerous restrooms equipped with images of women observing males as they urinate (Figure 27). These images of women gapping at the male genitalia, holding cameras as if to take pictures, and mockingly measuring their size certainly suggest, as Darley (2000) maintained, a concern with surface and play.

In addition to video clips on the internet, movies, advertisements, MTV, and other forms of visual culture, we also experience countless material forms: Cars, clothing, aestheticized restrooms and urinals, toys, furniture and breakfasts. According to Burkhart (2006), we experience these material forms everyday. These material forms convey ideas and influence our movements and lives in ways that do not usually register in our consciousness and often go without notice (p. 33). According to Blandy and Bolin (2005), Material Culture Studies includes the study of visual culture, yet calls for a broader view that encompasses the study of other kinds of human-made forms in addition to those that are primarily perceived as visual (p. 252). The term material culture can be traced back to the writings of anthropologist A. Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers who referred to material culture as “the outward signs and symbols of particular ideas in the mind” (Schlereth, as cited in Blandy & Bolin, 2003, p. 242). The purpose for investigating material culture is to learn about the people who make, use, respond to and preserve these phenomena. (p. 252). However, Berger (as cited in Blandy & Bolin, 2003) believed that:

One reason analyzing material culture is so problematical for many academicians and others is that it is a multidisciplinary kind of research and we still haven’t figured out very well how to do this kind of research. (p. 242)

For the sake of this paper, Blandy and Bolin’s definition of material culture will suffice as a “descriptor of any and all human-constructed or human-mediated objects, forms, or expressions, manifested consciously or unconsciously through culturally acquired behaviors” (p. 242). Thus, it can be safely assumed that the male urinal, as an artifact, is an example of material culture—a
human—constructed object. The variety and quantity of aestheticized urinals that exist around the globe is astonishing. Their presence suggests that societies across the globe have found something about them that they feel is worth propagating and preserving. Even though the urinals’ basic purpose has not been altered, the unique designs now offered in some public restrooms have allowed men to have a new appreciation of a common ritual. As Deetz (1977) noted:

For in the seemingly little and insignificant things that accumulate to create a lifetime, the essence of our existence is captured. We must remember these bits and pieces, and we must use them in new and imaginative ways so that a different appreciation for what life is today … can be achieved. (p. 254)

Kingerly (as cited in Blandy & Bolin, 2003) asserted that:

The grammar of things is related to, but more complex and difficult to decipher than the grammar of words. Because artifacts are tools as well as signs and symbols, their use and functions are multiple and intertwined; much of their meaning is subliminal and unconscious. (p. 251)

Indeed, the grammar that these aestheticized urinals and restrooms speak is complex given their global presence. And the belief, that the meanings these carnivalesque restrooms and aestheticized urinals manifest are subliminal and unconscious is clear, as no one individual could begin to decipher all that they represent to those that use them (Figure 25). Blandy and Bolin pointed out that because of this, “we must work to develop skills that will enable us to ‘read’ carefully and insightfully the cultural expressions that permeate our world” (p. 242).

Architects understand that physical spaces are not meant to be merely seen but are to be experienced (Rasmussen, 1991). According to Bachelard (1964), spaces can be read like a book. In addition to seeing spaces, we also breathe the air and smell the smells that the spaces envelope, hear the sounds that the spaces collect and emit, and feel the surroundings through our bodies
(Pallasmaa, 2005). Each of these sensory experiences contribute to a sense of place. A sense of place is a widely discussed concept in fields as diverse as geography, environmental psychology and art. Even though widely used, a sense of place remains somewhat difficult to define. In contemporary life a sense of place connotes the atmosphere of the place or the quality of the environment. This is important because it indicates that people “recognize that certain localities have an attraction which gives us a certain indefinable sense of well-being and which we want to return to, time and again” (p. 1451). According to Frumkin (2003), place is important, as the features of a place allow us to gain spatial orientation, and places can evoke memories, arouse emotions and excite passions (p. 1451). Places affect our performance as we work and study (p. 1451). Sociologists even refer to certain places as “great good places” because these places help us connect with other people (p. 1452). Place is also a social construct:

While a place’s character is a function of physical qualities, it is also a product of risks and opportunities, the nature of the social organization attached to the locale, its political, social and economic relationships with other places, the psycho-social characteristics of the individuals occupying the space, and the local cultural milieu. (p. 1451)

According to Frumkin we learn to act in specific ways in certain places, “we don’t genuflect in bars or drink beer and eat popcorn in churches. Hence, our actions in various places are conditioned by a number of factors, all of which may operate on the individual to affect not only their behavior but their health” (p. 1452)

This sense of place becomes very important when addressing some of the current male restrooms on exhibit. This might at first seem strange; that is, the idea of a restroom as an exhibit. However, the internet, with its instant access, has allowed people everywhere to view, and in some respects enjoy, virtual tours of these spaces and places (Figure 6).

There is a movement in some countries to provide the general public with the luxury of
convenient restroom facilities in public places. These environments have been constructed quite creatively (Figures 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34). Many of these restrooms (Figure 31) reflect what Frumkin (2003) called “great good places” (p. 1452). One example of this phenomenon is the thirty thousand square foot urinal park in Chongqing, China (Figure 34), featuring one thousand public urinals, complete with soft playing music and videos. This demonstrates an effort to provide their citizens with not only necessary but enjoyable facilities. Another example is the Urilift (Figure 29) in London. These disappearing urinals rise at ten in the evening in the downtown social districts so that male patrons, rather than urinating in the streets or along the buildings, can take advantage of them. In Barcelona, Spain, urinals in the shape of plastic dripping yellow urine structures were installed along the walls of the buildings downtown in an attempt to clean up their city (Figure 30). What was, at first, seen as an intrusion into modern society is now viewed as a solution to an age–old problem.

Many public restrooms, such as the one located in the Proof on Main @ 21 C Museum Hotel (Figure 5), the Japanese Toilet Experience (Figure 21), the restroom in the Sofitel, Queensland, Australia (Figure 27), and the restroom in Sao Joao da Madera Shopping Center, Portugal (Figure 26) are not located in public spaces but are spaces meant to arouse emotions and excite passions, pointing to the importance that places and spaces play in today’s society. These public restrooms have, as Frumkin (2003) noted, an “attraction” which compels the patron to return time and again (p. 145).

As one regards the recently renovated restrooms of the ski resorts in Japan (Figure 28), it is hard to overlook the commercial influences that have permeated the environment. The coffee company who sponsored the makeover made sure that the toilet paper dispenser only carries tissue which is embedded with company advertizing. For a rather large sum of money, anyone can purchase one of Sorenson’s elaborately designed urinals (Figure 4) with which to redecorate
a formerly undignified space. Rampley (2005) posited that, “where styling and design were once viewed simply as forms of embellishment, they are now viewed as rhetorical ploys to promote consumption” (p. 186). This is important when one realizes that Sorenson’s aestheticized urinals are in great demand (Figure 4 and Figure 10). They are now considered part of designer capital, and sell for upwards of seven thousand dollars a piece.

According to Venkatesh and Meamber (2008), this trend has been noted by recent scholars who have argued that as commercial influences on popular culture increase, aesthetic images make their way into everyday consumption (p. 45). They also maintained that “as the everyday life of the consumer became aestheticized, they conceptualized the consumer as an aesthetic subject” (p. 66). Venkatesch and Meamber maintained that “participation in aesthetic experiences contributes to identity construction and is related to many motivating factors, including hedonism, sensory experiences, and emotions” (p. 66). This is an interesting point to consider as one views the video of the Japanese toilet experience (Figure 28) where the massive, fiberglass, decoratively painted, animated clown faces move out from the wall opposite the patron to kiss the patrons’ knees as they use the toilet. The same is true as one observes the video game equipped urinals (Figure 12). Venkatesch and Meamber stated that there is an increasing blurring of boundaries between commerce and entertainment, that is, products as art and art as products. Furthermore, these products are creating new symbols, icons, and rituals, both locally and globally (p. 67).
THE MALE RESTROOM AND POST–POSTMODERNISM

While much of the theory surrounding the fields of study of visual culture and material culture remains relevant there appear to be a conceptual inadequacy that these theories are not able to adequately address. The sense that there must be more to the phenomenon of the aestheticized male restroom has led to a consideration of post–postmodernism as an explanation of this inadequacy. While Rose’s (2005) definition of the scopic nature, Rampley’s (2005) discussion of the carnivalesque, Duncum’s (2002) explanation of visual culture, and Blandy and Bolin’s (2003) focus on the significance of material culture help explain the phenomenon of the aestheticized male restrooms, there remains a certain level of participation on the part of the patron that this previous literature has not addressed. According to Kirby (2009b), this new participatory phenomenon is evidence of what he refers to as “digimodernism” (p. 3). Scholars such as Kirby (2009a) and Bourriaud (2009) refer to this new paradigm as “post postmodernism” “altermodernism”, “digimodernism”, “pseudomodernism”, and “new modernity” which are characterized by “participatism” (p. 3).

Bourriaud (2009) and Kirby (2009b) both agree that the current generation is very interested in interacting with culture, society, technology and even politics. Most notable is the prevalence of skyping, texting, twittering, and clickers used in lecture halls and television shows to record individuals’ voting preferences. The social situations these individuals engage in requires of them some sort of participatism. Whether texting on a phone, using a clicker to signal their choices, calling in with their opinion on the latest poll, twittering, or playing soccer urinal (Figure 13), this generation desires to be actively engaged with whatever they are attracted to.

This new paradigm explains the explosion in these unique interactive restroom spaces (Figure 12) and one-of-a-kind designer urinals (Figure 4). Bourriaud (2009) maintained that in
this new era, art is made as a reaction against global trends for standardization and commercialism. And whereas artists fight for autonomy, they desire to produce singularities in an increasingly standardized world (p. 36).

Eshelman (2008) coined the term “performatism” (p. 2) to show that works of art in the new epoch are constructed in such a way as to bring about a unified, aesthetically mediated experience of transcendence. Performatism does this by creating closed works of art that force viewers to identify with simple, opaque characters or situations and to experience beauty, love, belief and transcendence under particular, artificial conditions (p. 3). This would certainly describe the experience a man would have as he visited the Sofitel mens’ room (Figure 27) in Queensland, Australia.

Jesse Thorn, radio host for The Sound of Young America on Public Radio International refers to this new paradigm as new sincerity, which he states is “a particular brand of irony which is sympathetic and warm” (2009). According to Thorn, new sincerity’s credo is “be more awesome” and their lifestyle is “maximum fun” (2009). Thorn (2009) says to think of it as irony and sincerity combined, like Voltron (the defender of the universe from the movie The Transformers) to form a new movement of astonishing power. This could certainly be said of the the urinal park in Chongqing, China (Figure 34) the urinal protocol videos, and the Japanese toilet experience (Figure 23). All of these examples can be viewed as attempts to transform environments once cold and sterile into ones promoting good feelings.
CONCLUSION

It is important to note that research suggests that aesthetic experiences lead to identity construction and taste formation (Venkatesch & Meamber, 2008, p. 66). This in turn implies the existence of the patron (consumer) as an aesthetic subject. These findings have far reaching implications with regard to art and artistic production. Are the development of these aestheticized male restrooms a result of male identity construction or are they perpetuating male identity and taste formation? Further research must be undertaken in order to adequately answer these questions.

The phenomenon of aestheticized male restrooms appearing across the globe suggests that the desire for these types of environments is global as well. Their presence is evidence of the phenomenon of the patron as an aesthetic subject (Venkatesch & Meamber, 2008) and to what some have referred to as the “death of distance” (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003, p. 311). With the advent of the internet and cellular phones, the world has become intimately connected in ways never thought possible. Further research is needed in order to address this issue of the patron as an aesthetic subject and identity formation in a more global environment. With a new blurring of boundaries between commerce, entertainment and art (Venkatesch & Meamber, 2008), new paradigms have been created. Regardless of whatever terminology one chooses to address them, they are global in nature. Further research is required in this arena as well.

From the standpoint of art education, Duncum (2001) argued that, “failing to consider global culture represented a retreat from the kind of imagery that impacts on youngsters’ minds and emotions … continuing to focus exclusively on the art of the institutionalized artworld simply denies students their most immediate experiences” (p. 8). According to Tavin (2004), “critical citizens are individuals who are self-reflexive—setting themselves and their world in question—and have a deep concern for the lives of others” (p. 43). It is important to remember, as Blandy
and Bolin (2003) maintained, “art education can uniquely contribute to this preparation of [critical] citizens by promoting the investigation and appreciation of the broadest possible range of objects, artifacts, spaces, expressions, and experiences” (p. 246). However, if art education is committed to remain abreast of these global changes, change should be at least “equal to the breadth and depth of sensory experiences that contribute to life now and beyond” (Blandy & Bolin, 2003, p. 252). In order to buffet the “aesthetic hurricane of current events” (Neperud, 1995), it is important for art educators to recognize and make sense out of these global changes, understand that they are always in transition, and reconstruct new approaches to their educational practices.

It is imperative that art educators fully embrace visual culture studies argued for by Duncum (2002) and the multi-sensory orientation of material culture studies forwarded by Blandy and Bolin (2003). These approaches are in touch with contemporary trends in the arts and global cultures and will permit art educators to “facilitate the aesthetic imagination necessary to engage with and to participate with contemporary arts and cultural experiences” (Brandy & Bolin, 2003, p. 254) in order for students to develop into critical citizens in a global society.
ENDNOTES

1 *Psycho*: http://www.mainstreammovies.com/

2 *All in the Family* Television Sitcom: http://www.mainstreammovies.com/

3 *Urinal Protocol Video*: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AE5tfji3NU


5 *Gay Humor* video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtsCxkol18-M

6 To view this video clip: www.clarkmade.com

7 To visit this web site go to www.clarkmade.com


10 For further information visit http://www.urinal.net/cmt_wizmark

11 To view these videos visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AE5tfJi3NU

12 To view this video clip visit

   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnOaMC8KHA4&feature=relate

13 To view this YouTube video visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtsCxkol8-M
FIGURE CREDITS

Figure 1: Mens’ restroom Jamaica High School, Sidell, Illinois

Figure 2: Mens’ Restroom Highway Rest Stop, Korea:
http://www.urinal.net/korean_expressways/

Figure 3: Marcel Duchamp’s *The Fountain* signed R. Mutt:
http://www.beatmuseum.org/duchamp/fountain.html

Figure 4: Clark Sorenson’s *Call of Nature* Series: www.clarkmade.com

Figure 5: Tuba urinals: http://www.woosk.com/2009/05/tubas-turned-into-urinals.html

Figure 6: Proof on Main @ 21c Museum Hotel:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEWMYaYxhd80

Figure 7: Video projections imbedded in mirrors of eyes viewing patron:
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Figure 8: The Felix restroom, New Kowloon, Hong Kong:
http://www.urinal.net/the_felix/uFelix3.jpg

Figure 9: The trough urinal: http://www.flickr.com/photos/evilrobot6/3210877522/

Figure 10: Urinals in restroom of the Oakwood, Illinois truckstop

Figure 11: Sorenson’s political series urinals:www.clarkmade.com

Figure 12: Video urinal game: http://www.tubegame.com/the_urinal_game.html

Figure 13: Soccer urinal game:
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http://www.urinal.net/cmt_wizmark

Figure 15: *The Toilet Marksman* decals:

www.toiletmarksman.com/toilet_stickers.php

Figure 16: *The Fly* at the Schiphol Airport: www.urinal.net/schiphol/

Figure 17: Virgin Mary urinals: http://nowthatsnifty.blogspot.com/2009/05/unique-and-strange-toilets-and-urinals.html

Figure 18: *Totally Inappropriate* urinal:


Figure 19: *Classy Mouth* urinal: http://nowthatsnifty.blogspot.com/2009/05/unique-and-strange-toilets-and urinals.html

Figure 20: Taipei Toilet Bowl Restaurant:


Figure 21: Taipei Toilet Bowl Restaurant:


Figure 22: Taipei Toilet Bowl Restaurant:


Figure 23: *Japanese Toilet Experience*:

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Figure 27: Sofitel restroom, Queensland, Australia:

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Figure 30: Public urinals Barcelona, Spain:

Figure 31: Exterior view of Two-way mirrored restroom, Tate Museum, London, UK:
   http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4326340/
Figure 32: Interior view of Two-way mirrored restroom, Tate Museum, London, UK:
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4326340/

Figure 33: Transparent restroom, Lausanne, Switzerland:
http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en-us&q=Lausanne+Switzerland+restroom&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8

Figure 34: 30,000 square foot *Urinal Park* in Chongqing, China:

Figure 35: Picture of poster advertizing *Urinetown: The Musical*:
www.allmusicals.com/u/urinetown.hem

Figure 36: *Male Restroom Etiquette* video by Zarathrustra Studios:
www.zarathrustrastudios.com/

Figure 37: *Gay Humor* video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtsCxkol8-M
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