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Review of "Spiritual Art and Art Education," by Janis Lander

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to use a food analogy, might, at best, leave the reader hungry for more. If it does so, it will probably have accomplished its purpose.

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Spiritual Art and Art Education, by Janis Lander, New York, NY, Routledge, 2014,
274 pp., \$112.00 (hardcover), ISBN: 978-0-415-71262-0

Spirituality in art is an active subject matter and, in some cases, is all that is left of certain practices. Spirituality and art education, however, are somewhat foreign to one another. By fully understanding spirituality, we can see that there is a space for this understanding and practice within art, specifically art education. Part of the issue that can arise when discussing spirituality and art education is the misunderstanding that this relates to religion. Spirituality and religion, however, deserve a separation because, while similar in some aspects, they are unique to themselves. “Spirit, as understood by the writers under investigation, is defined in the literature as a refined consciousness conveying intuitive knowledge to those who experience it” (Lander 2014, p. 2). *Spiritual Art and Art Education* by Janis Lander examines this difference, citing original sources and using extensive research to differentiate the two. She discusses current and previous spiritual art in relation to the three spiritual practices that are focused on within the text. She then combines all material to relate spiritual practice and current art practices to explain how the use of spiritual education within the arts can be beneficial. The three spiritual choices that are focused on within the text are Rudolf Steiner’s *Anthroposophy*, also called “spiritual science,” Swami Satyanada’s *Kundalini Tantra*, and Choa Kok Sui’s *Pranic Healing*. These were chosen specifically because of the widespread practice, education, availability of materials, standard practice and testing for instructors; all place a heavy reliance on art for educational methods, and they are equally representative, including a practice from an Eastern stream of esoteric practice, Western stream of esoteric practice, and a combination of the two, among other qualifications that were chosen specifically for the purpose of the doctoral work.

Lander covers the history and process of the chosen spiritual practices. She begins by defining the necessary terms to move forward with the study of the concepts because, while used in contemporary society, many are defined more generically. For not having a strong background or familiarity in any of the chosen spiritual beliefs, Lander provides enough background to clarify misunderstandings and misinterpretations that are common in discussions, as some of the terms have turned into popular buzzwords and trends. Lander clearly states that some terms that have become popular in society are being oversimplified and, in some cases, incorrectly used. To combat this, she uses historical texts to make clear the beliefs as understood and represented by the masters of those cited earlier. This, in conjunction with the connections that are made to current cultural works and contemporary art, makes for an easy connection to the understanding of spirituality, both its practice and within arts and culture.

The spiritual practices that have been chosen as the main focus relate to experiential learning through individual practice. Although the practice is led, it is a strictly self-paced process with an ultimate goal of enlightenment or pure understanding of relation of self to the outer world and the admission of oneness with the universe. Lander quotes Satyananda with the idea that “meditation is ‘an event’ and that ‘it cannot be taught’” (Lander 2014, p. 36). These practices rely on the experience that is achieved, an experience of the energy that is within the universe and the individual. “Chakras are experiences as vortices of psychic energy interfacing between the physical and etheric layers, the etheric and astral layers, and as conduits for spiritual frequencies of energy” (Lander 2014, p. 59). While there are differences between each of the individual studies, there is a singular direction of oneness and enlightenment towards which

each path will uniquely lead. Using different meditative techniques, individuals that are led through these practices are seeking to reach an elevated state of understanding.

The author begins to introduce art and spiritual art using imagery as a method of concentration to reach a more enlightened state. Art can also be used as an explanation of what an individual experiences, although many say that there is no way to put into words or any other form the experience that is achieved through this process. Lander discusses Schafer-Simmern's work on art education, "Art making is neither 'creative self expression,' nor the mere application of 'rational' skills like craftsmanship, but involves a deep connection with intuitive thought process" (Lander 2014, p. 185). This explorative sensibility is a way to use spiritual practices within a classroom; allowing students to better know themselves will ultimately show up in their artwork.

This work is a valuable resource for individuals looking to become more aware of spirituality and how it relates to contemporary art, while also providing a background for individuals looking for more information on the history of the chosen spiritual practices. This work presents a unique perspective on using something abstract and applies it in a very concrete manner. Although the cases that are made are relevant and worthwhile, there could be a stronger representation of art education and spirituality and how spirituality can specifically offer a unique sensibility towards art education.

Reference

Lander, Janis. 2014. *Spiritual Art and Art Education*. New York: Routledge.

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Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia, by Silke Arnold-de Simine, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 239 pp., \$95.00 (hardcover), \$74.99 (e-book), ISBN: 978-0-230-23851-0

Silke Arnold-de Simine's book represents a welcome and relevant contribution both to memory studies and to museum studies. While the book deals with many different instances of traumatic events in history, for obvious reasons it refers quite often to the Holocaust. Indeed, the field of memory studies emerged from reflections on the Holocaust experience, which remains the marker of this field of inquiry. We are at a crucial time, when the last survivors are dying, and we face what will become the paramount (and permanent) question about memory transmission to generations who will never meet survivors. This unprecedented situation marks a turn in memory and museum studies; Arnold-de Simine has some interesting insights to offer in terms of intergenerational transmissions and the different media to do so. As far as museum studies are concerned, she also explores many recent developments, from the new museum to the increased usage of new technologies, passing through dark tourism and mushrooming of écomusée-style museums as a quest for authenticity.

The book attempts to address many questions concerning the different sorts of mediations of memory and how they foster forms of empathy and nostalgia, helping to make sense of traumas. But it does not always succeed in this effort for several reasons, some conceptual and theoretical, and others organizational or editorial. The research is located in two subfields that are, by nature, interdisciplinary (memory studies and museum studies), and the author wishes to develop ideas situated in the nexus between them. The result is that the book may be difficult to grasp for some, while others might tend to think that key elements are missing. It is an inherent problem in "cultural studies." What complicates matters, in this case, is the organization of the chapters. The book is composed of five parts and 19 chapters, itself an