September 23, 2014

* Natural drawings, even though they were made without direct visual reference, became accepted scientific fact for hundreds of years.
  + - Albrecht Dürer, Rhinocerous
* Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Biography
* Kamala Khan, Captain Marvel #14 (August, 2013)
  + - Mainstream comic book industry
    - Non-white, muslim superhero
    - These distribution houses had the power to promote cultural values
    - Provides representation to underrepresented people: SUPER IMPORTANT
    - Important politically also.
* Maps: One of North Africa, Rene Levasseur, 1856
  + - Incredibly ideological and allegorical
    - Maps created the world; only when places are known are they documented; until that point it’s just a blank space on the map.
* “Santiago”: Written in 1918, children’s book by Javier Zabala made in 2007, Chile.
* Emory Douglas, USA Black Panther Movement, 1971
* Scrimshaws:Whale teeth, made by sailors. Carved ivory
* Victor Stiebel (1907-1976)

GROUP H: Presentation

* Counterculture/World Culture: Illustrating from the Edges
  + Cultures have differences in language, values, behaviours, beliefs, etc.
  + Counterculture:
    - A type of subculture
    - Against the mainstream
    - Have different views/beliefs than the rest of the the general public.
  + Examples:
    - LGBT
    - Homeschooled kids whose parents chose to keep their kids out of public institutions
    - Feminism and women’s rights
      * Very political/Lifestyle based
  + Subculture:
    - A group within culture
    - More about visual appearance
    - Has their own beliefs but are a part of mainstream culture.
    - May look different, but still more or less in-line with mainstream culture.
    - Counterculture is against the mainstream culture.
  + Examples:
    - Geek/Otaku
    - Goth
    - Greasers
      * Very visual
  + Images create a powerful impact
    - Engagement in looking everyday
    - Social Practice Negotiation with our social relationships and meaning through viewing. Communicate, influence and be influenced.
  + Visual Images have more power
    - The power to calm or incite action
    - To persuade or mystify
    - To be remembered
  + Images of anti-consumerism
    - From an article about Black Friday and consumerism
    - Shoppers walk beheaded, their own heads in their shopping bags.
  + Experiences
    - Reading and listening to a second language can be a huge barrier to communication.
    - Comic books and TV shows are preferred over novels, articles, and newspapers; images communicate so clearly despite language barriers.
  + “I am what I have” Jessica Barlow: Illustration accompanying an article by Helga Dittmar, “To have is to be?”
  + Power of images:
    - Language is a huge barrier. People forget how in the history of illustration many people were illiterate; even nowadays for younger people. Illustration serves an important role in disseminating information and communication.
    - Palette of Narmer: Egyptian, 31st Century BC
    - Some believe it depicts the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the King Narmer.
  + Stations of the cross: Depicts Christ carrying the cross to his crucifixion
    - Small plates with reliefs
  + Der Struwwelpeter
    - German children’s book of Cautionary tales
    - Disastrous consequences of misbehaviour: the illustrations get the point across stronger than the text alone
  + Propaganda posters
  + Different culture, different understanding
    - Brazil:
    - In different cultures colour, composition or symbols may have a dual or different meaning.
    - Paulo Ito, 2014, world cup protest image
      * Still full of colour, despite the topic
    - J. Miguel, Brazilian Gypsies. Still colourful, primary colours, but very clear.
    - Korea:
    - North vs. South Korea
    - Opposition to communist government and leaders.
    - Kim Jong-Un is compared to Psy.
    - 1920s tattoo ladies
    - Tattooed women were part of freak shows because that kind of body modification was entirely opposed to views of femininity at the time.
    - Society or regular culture absorbs counterculture: now, tattoos are definitely an everyday thing.
  + Conclusion:
    - Counterculture exists and always will wherever there is a culture to be opposite to
    - Shows that the public are not sheep that can make their own choices and challenge the status quo
    - Art has been very important in counter culture to spread messages quickly to a large group of people
    - Comics, posters, political images are important fuel to the fire in terms of distribution of counterculture.

Afterthoughts+Discussion:

* Anxiety society feels toward childhood. Why cautionary tales? Why are we concerned with discipline and regulating children? Is childhood a counterculture or subculture?
* There’s a fear that kids will not follow the same views of the adults of the time; we must teach them and mold them while they’re young.
* Kids reflect their parents; they don’t want to feel as though what their children do are reflecting on the parent.
* Childhood is a really dangerous thing. Kids aren’t disciplined. Illustration is also ill-disciplined compared to language.
  + Names mean things; parents assert things simply in naming their kids. A name isn’t just a name.
  + Once you say “something is this” you’re automatically excluding everything else and what it isn’t.
  + Saying “snow is white” limits how one thinks about snow. Snow may not only be white; illustration opens that definition up.
* Children don’t have language, they’re acquiring it.
* Childhood is crazy/mad: Children will say things without shame; They speak their mind. No idea of social conventions. A lot of teaching children is about teaching them social conventions. Breaking social conventions is terrifying to most adults.
* Illustrators can pick up levels of discomfort/amusement/etc.
* There are reasons images look the way they do, or why certain practices evolved.
* Kids can’t create that culture; but societies creations for children makes it clear our anxieties about childhood.
* Cultures/Countercultures: Publics/Counterpublics
  + Subcultures: grouped by what they enjoy (Music, fashions, etc.)
  + Countercultures: Are grouped by what they are against (politics, issues, rights, etc.)
  + Systems of communications are used to distinguish countercultures: They have a way of communicating what cannot be read by the wider culture.

Reading Discussion:

* What constitutes art? The work is a way of recording as well as exploiting their cultural experiences. On one hand it can be considered positive, but what wider connotations do they have?
* How is the meaning changed as it changes hands? From artist, to distributor, to buyer, to collector, to curator…?
* Work made counter to the prevailing culture is not very legible to the wider culture; but it has particular meaning when you understand where it’s coming from, or the culture who created it. (Plains Indian ledger drawings vs. Dominant white culture)

Argument:

Plains Indian ledger drawings where coveted by Westerners/Whites as symbols or relics of a dying culture even while they were actively exterminating that culture.

Evidence:

Page 13: “It is one of the tragic ironies of history that United States military men on the Plains, sent to wipe out Native culture, were intensely interested in the drawings they plundered from dead warriors on battlefields and commissioned from Indian scouts as mementos of their days in ‘Indian country’.”

“That the indigenous people were killed and their art valued as relics of a vanishing civilization is one of the many perverse paradoxes of the late nineteenth-century anti-Indian military campaigns.” (Page 13)

“The summit Springs book in the Colorado Historical Society was… “ (Page 13)