Critic, theorist, and novelist Susan Sontag (2003) recently observed that it is extraordinary how our sense of the world is now ruled and shaped by images producing what she believes is a new consciousness. Historian and cultural theorist Martin Jay (1996) similarly concedes that "...the new fascination with modes of seeing and the enigmas of visual experience evident in a wide variety of fields may well betoken a paradigm shift in the cultural imaginary of our age." It is thus widely acknowledged, and this awareness has been building for over a decade, that the visual in deeply implicated in contemporary culture. Literary theorist W.J.T. Mitchell (1994) declares this to be the age of the "pictorial turn" and the twenty-first century's problem to be that of the
problem of the image." And cultural theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff (1999) argues that it is no longer possible to produce the totality of a "world-picture", therefore creating a crisis of visual information and visual overload in the everyday.

Contemporary artists must contend with the fact that culture is profoundly affected by the proliferation and circulation of images. The invention of the camera in the mid-nineteenth century instigated consequential changes to society that continue to evolve as technological inventions permit greater facility in the production and access to images. On one hand, artists today have an embarrassment of riches in regard to images and technologies as resources for artmaking while on the other, artists must compete for viewer attention and comparison with the never-ending stream of commercial, entertainment, and informational media that bombard Western culture. Media theorist Todd Gitlin (2002) declares, "Unless we click an off button or smash the screen, the images stream on…"

One consequence of the pictorial turn is that artists require an understanding of the implications of producing artworks in a media-saturated culture. In a word, artists need to understand vision and visuality as it has emerged in contemporary visual culture and, along with it, the new consciousness that has unfolded with the exponential explosion of images. The following discussion explores what this might mean for contemporary artmaking practice with the recognition that the conversation is only an initial foray into a highly dense area. What I want to do is examine how vision is socialized as visuality in visual culture and what this might mean for artmaking practice and instruction. Both visual culture and artmaking are shaped by human practices and it is the intersection of these practices which I find needful to explore in order to illuminate contemporary artmaking practice and its instruction. I further want to demonstrate the efficacy of looking to specific artistic practice as case studies that illuminate our understanding of these areas. The discussion is focused around the artmaking practice of contemporary artists Lisa Brice, Pepón Osorio, Laurie Simmons, and James Luna.

The criteria for selecting exemplar artists derived from the intent to consider artmaking practice that overtly engages with discourses of visuality as they occur in contemporary society. Brice's artmaking practice, for
example, transforms visual informational systems that pervade everyday life; Osorio's artmaking practice employs multiple visual representational systems taken from the worlds of commerce, film, television, and fine art; Laurie Simmons' artmaking practice entertains the visual event as it occurs in tourism; and James Luna's artmaking practice addresses cultural stereotypes through social practices associated with photography and tourism. This methodology, focusing on a limited number of exemplary artists, rather than attempting a comprehensive view, an untenable task within the scope of this article, is intended to serve as a demonstration of the relevance of individual case studies for understanding vision and visuality for artmaking practice. Efland (1995) has previously recognized that knowledge in the arts aggregates on a case by case basis, a necessary strategy in ill-structured disciplines such as the arts. In well-structured knowledge areas such as the sciences, for instance, the meaning of concepts remains consistent from case to case whereas concepts in ill-structured knowledge domains are much less consistent and more dependent upon individual cases.

**Visuality**

What is visuality? Art historian Norman Bryson (1988) describes visuality as the sum of discourses that inform how we see. He explains:

> For human beings collectively to orchestrate their visual experience together it is required that each submit his or her retinal experience to the socially agreed description(s) of an intelligible world… Between the subject and the world is inserted the entire sum of discourses which make up visuality, the cultural construct; and makes visuality different from vision, the notion of unmediated visual experience. Between retina and world is inserted a *screen of signs*, a screen consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social arena…. when I learn to see socially, that is, when I begin to articulate my retinal experience with the codes of recognition that come to me from my social milieu(s), I am inserted into systems of visual discourse that saw the world before I did, and will go on seeing after I see no longer.”
Walker and Chaplin (1997) similarly define visuality as a social process. These authors refer to *vision* as a physical/psychological process while *visuality* refers to the socialization of vision. This socialization is a network of cultural meanings generated from various discourses that shape the social practices of vision.

A common theme echoed in the extensive literature associated with vision and visuality is its social side. Contemporary theorists consistently invoke the historical, cultural, and social in their explanations of the visual. Social discourses such as those that inform vision and visuality are informal rather than formal entities. Composed of statements, texts, rules, and social practices that negotiate a particular social arena, discourses form an aggregate of social understandings. In previous writing (Walker, 1997), I have considered the significance of discourses, agreeing with Hutcheon (1988) that “discourse becomes an important and unavoidable term in discussions of postmodernism, of the art and theory that will not let us ignore social practices, the historical conditions of meaning, and the positions from which texts are both produced and received.”

In regard to the present discussion and how vision is socialized, the discourses of *semiology*, *perception*, *epistemology*, *convention*, *pleasure*, *mimesis*, *illusion*, *simulacrum*, *veracity*, *representation*, and *subjectivity* are among those which come to mind. These discourses have been extensively theorized both historically and contemporarily, and not unproblematically, the present objective is much less ambitious, only to consider discourses and visuality in the context of the artmaking practice of four exemplar artists as a demonstration of the importance of understanding for artmaking practice.

**Lisa Brice**

In this first investigation, focused on the artmaking practice of multi-media...
In an age of visual culture, we consider how the discourses of representation, perception, semiology and convention are interwoven in the fabric of contemporary visuality. W. T. Mitchell (1997), who has written extensively about images and representation, denies the existence of any naked reality and readily acknowledges that we live in a "world clothed in...systems of representation". Importantly, systems of representation connoted worldviews and paradigms of how we understand the world. Renaissance perspective and Cartesian philosophy, for instance, inaugurated a paradigm shift from a world view premised upon resemblance to one of mental percepts. Mirzoeff (1999) perceives that "in the Cartesian system of vision, representation replaced resemblance. From this point on the modern picturing of the world as representation could begin." Cartesian perspectivalism dominated Western vision and visuality although current theoretical interest in the visual has contested its dominance (Jay, 1988). Semiotic theories of representation followed, offering a counter position to the perceptual theories of Cartesian perspectivalism. Unlike perceptual theory and mental constructs, semiotic theory is constituted upon social convention. The work of Lisa Brice, described below, transforms a perceptual representational system into a semiotic system of representation.

Philosopher Richard Wollheim (1991) speculates as to whether or not international road signs, logos, stickmen, the signs on public lavatories count as representations, concluding that such cases reside on the borderline of representation. A recent work by Lisa Brice, Sout Piel, (2000), takes on these borderline cases. Brice's ten light boxes, part of a larger series of works, utilize international communication pictograms, ubiquitous in airports and urban areas across the globe. The highly stylized pictograms that comprise this communication system direct the public sphere, travelers, shoppers, and visitors, toward telephones, escalators, rest rooms, dining areas, and so forth. This informational system, a commonplace among the plethora of visual forms that comprise contemporary visual culture, works on identification and singular meanings, not as semiotic signification in which meaning is plural.

Graphically designed in contrasting flat green and white hues, pictographic forms lifted from the international sign system populate Brice's
light boxes, narrating a tale of her home country's internal racial strife. The individual light boxes depict pictographic figures running, robbing, leaving, killing, and meeting against a background interspersed with other stock international icons such as airplanes, telephones, escalators, and automobiles and the ominous human skull pictogram that communicates danger. The resultant narrative is one of urban angst and racial fear.

Brice’s understanding of visual culture and the different systems of representation that socialize vision have enabled her to undermine and transform a perceptualist system into a semiological representation. Critic Jeffery Kipnis (2003) remarks of this artistic strategy, "That complex urban angst can be reduced to generic graphic symbols, can expect global recognition, and can be solved by simply an exit sign should give pause."

Co-opting systems of representation from mass media is not new to artmaking practice. Cultural theorist John Walker (1994, p.46) notes, "since the zenith of pop, thousands of artists have responded favourably to the existence of mass culture." The ceaseless production and circulation of mass-media images virtually insures continued interaction between mass-media and artmaking practice. Productive results from this relationship will result from an artistic knowledge base that is informed about visuality and its socialization.

**Pepón Osorio**

The following discussion considers the artmaking practice of installation artist Pepón Osorio who intertwines systems of representation drawn from the cultural context of American Puerto Rican communities; mass media technologies of film, television, and video; fine art traditions; and consumer culture. Utilizing multiple systems of representation, Osorio produces highly energized, flamboyant installations that depict ordinary public and private sites such as the barbershop, funeral parlor, family apartment, government social services office, prison cell, and teen-age bedroom.

As with other media, installation possesses its own signifying system and critic Brandon Taylor (1995) portrays installation as a means to "fictionalize a space in a way that the singular object seldom can." This ability to signify the "real" is a significant element in Osorio's construction of community-based
installations that engage real lives and stories of persons, ones known to the artist, from Puerto Rican communities in New York and Philadelphia. In Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?) (1993), described below, Osorio's desire for authenticity extended to working with two police detectives who investigate homicides. A second example, Badge of Honor (1995), also discussed, originated from Osorio's relationship with an imprisoned father and his teen-age son in Newark, New Jersey. Osorio plainly states that he is unsympathetic with art for arts sake, but bases his artmaking practice on social and political realities.

Osorio models his installations on representational systems that typify film and television. Such representational systems satisfy Osorio's intent to create installations with high drama, theater, and mimesis. Fictionalized reality is a ubiquitous and familiar model of representation throughout visual culture; and, irregardless of the fact that we have learned to see such fictionalized accounts as fabrications, they strongly factor in shaping personal and social constructs of reality. Thus the stereotypic and one-dimensional representations that frequently inhabit media representations are problematic. Osorio's artmaking practice targets such representations or mis-representations, as they should probably be termed. The following discussion describes this practice in two of his installations, Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?), (1993) and Badge of Honor, (1995).

Scene of the Crime (Whose Crime?)

Official yellow police tape and signage reading "POLICE LINE, DO NOT CROSS," prevents viewers from entering Scene of the Crime. The constructed crime scene reads as a Hollywood set because Osorio has deliberately and overtly employed the systems of representation that inform this entertainment genre. One notices the movie light that hangs over the table where a newspaper with the headlines, "He beat my wife," is visible and the several tripods supporting a movie camera and lights that are scattered among the domestic environment. The theatricality of the scene is further enhanced by the photographic portraits attached with zippered covers to backs of the four dining chairs, evoking an absent family.

Conscious that he is engaging a media-based system of representation,
Osorio (2001), admits "I'm trying to take what is given to me, the images that I've been raised with, and somehow with this installation reverse them." He queries, "Who am I as a Latino person, in relationship to the world, in relationship to what's out there? How does Hollywood portray me as a Latino?... there are a lot of subtle messages here.... When you come into this installation, you're standing in front of a dead body. She's, well, a mannequin, of course, she's right in the middle. You're confronting yourself with the idea that Hollywood always presents the Latino as extremely accessible, extremely sexual, and here it is on a horizontal position, dead."

Osorio constructed Scene of the Crime as a Puerto Rican working class home, filling the living room and dining room with dozens of commercially purchased objects such as plaster black virgin Mary statues; a quantity of chucherias, the Puerto Rican term for knick-knacks; family photographs; a glass case replete with trophies; fake flowers; wallpaper created from the covers of TV Guides and other magazine; chairs upholstered with the Puerto Rican flag; white lace tablecloth-covered dining room table, dead female mannequin body lying face down upon a red-patterned carpeted living room floor; and longish, curved Victorian upholstered sofa embedded with multiple, highly imposing, ornate knives rising from the cushioned seats.

As typical of Osorio's installations, Scene of the Crime, is extravagant in its excess, overflowing with 'stuff.' Osorio (1991) declares that "...overloading is an important facet in my work. I play a lot with abundance, with the that more is better." A knowing use of excessive decoration and embellishment is, for Osorio, an alternative aesthetic that contradicts middle class and artworld standards while simultaneously signifying the place of abundance in working class Latino communities. Osorio explains abundance in this context remarking:

It deals with Puerto Rico today; with the worries about shortages witnessed by our parents in World War II; it concerns the fear of recession, of depression...It affects the way Puerto Ricans live for appearances' sake, the hypertension we willingly undergo to defend it, not one car, but five cars! Everything, Felix, Puerto Rico, New York...at the supermarket, they don't give you just one bag, they give you five! We are terrified of living moderately or economizing.
Critics frequently characterize Osorio's excess as a baroque vision. Spawned in the seventeenth century, the baroque prizes the irregular, bizarre, and peculiar as opposed to the order, rationality, and clarity of the classical. For art historian Martin Jay, the baroque represents the system of representation most compatible with our present contemporary period. Jay asserts this claim based upon French philosopher Christine Buci-Glucksmann's description of the baroque as "the madness of vision...the overloading of the visual apparatus with a surplus of images..." Such a description appears to echo Osorio's dazzling assemblages. Further, Jay's remarks occur in the context of contending for a plurality of visions in modern culture rather than a singular, unified vision. This too, is not unlike Orsorio's artmaking practice.

The transparency of staging *Scene of the Crime* as a movie set allows Osorio to reference and suggest the portrayal of Latino stereotypes, an idea that is reinforced by the columns of videotape boxes, films that convey Latin stereotypes, positioned outside the installation. Osorio opposes the shallowness of these stereotypes by imposing complexity onto the staged scene. He explains, the Latino community is often portrayed as very accessible, but *Scene of the Crime* presents the Latino home as a temple, a scared place, where strangers are not permitted, halted not only by the police tape, but a welcome mat that reads, "Only if you understand that it has taken years of pain is to see how in the movies other make fun of the way we live." To further compound the scene, Osorio clothes the living room in red, a sign of the passion and anger of crime, and the dining room in white, a sign of lushness and contemplation. Osorio comments, "...I'm trying to bring together...in *Scene of the Crime*, a place that is for meditation and much as for anger. And there is a place for all of it within one."

As a final observation, the surrounding environment of Osorio's installations contextualize the photographic imagery within them, thus partially disrupting the inherent disconnectedness that often characterizes photography's signifying system. Sontag (1977) theorizes that photographs have changed the world into "a series of unrelated, free-standing particles...The camera, she observes, makes reality atomic, manageable, and opaque. It is a view of the world which denies interconnectedness, continuity, but which confers on each moment the character of a mystery." The family portraits in
Scene of the Crime, silk-screened photographs attached with zippered covers to backs of the four dining chairs, acquire a sense of interconnectedness, continuity, and relationship with the staged surroundings. The photographic family portraits gain complexity from the surrounding scene and are thus less resistant to interpretation. The artmaking practice of embedding his installations with multiple systems of representation, typified by Scene of the Crime, cogent to Osorio's handling of Badge of Honor, is described in the following section.

**Badge of Honor**

Osorio employs systems of representation from media and consumer culture in the dual spaces of Badge of Honor. One half, a stark, minimally equipped prison cell, recognizable from its stock appearance in film and television dramas; and the other half, a teen-ager's bedroom, flaunts the excesses of consumer culture. The teen-age haven is crammed with kung fu, basketball, and Latino prizefighters posters; floor to ceiling baseball cards lining the walls; expensive sneakers; mountain bike; boom box and other electronic audio and video equipment; reflective gold and silver trophies; brightly colored sports uniforms and casual outfits; and multiple basketballs; all duplicated by the reflective mirror-tiled bedroom floor. Large gilded plastic fists with jeweled rings that decorate the edges of dressers, bed, and shelves further enhance the baroque nature of the construction.

Viewers of the installation encounter two large video projections, one in each space, on the teenagers' bedroom wall, a video projection depicts the son, Nelson Jr., speaking about the father's absence from the family home; and on the prison cell wall, the father, Nelson Sr., asking his son's forgiveness. The twenty-two minute audiovisual dialogue is an edited version of Osorio's interviews with the father and son. The over life-size talking head shots suggest a time-based system of representation associated with documentation and television news. Such a system of representation connotes a sense of reality that contrasts with the fictionalized realities of the father's prison cell and teen-ager's bedroom. This perception of reality is further enhanced and rendered more powerful by the audio component of the video. Interestingly, Jonathan Crary (1989) notes that one of the primary features of
television's ability to hold an individual's attention occurred through the development of sync sound.

The confluence of sound and image is a further aspect that should be considered in evolving an understanding of representational systems. This factor was brought to my attention by Branden W. Joseph's (2002) discussion of Robert Rauchenberg's experimentation with the conjunction of vision and sound, embedding three radios beneath the surface of the Combine painting Broadcast in 1959.

Osorio's artmaking practice in *Badge of Honor* is invested with diverse systems of representation drawn from mass media, consumer culture, and aesthetics. These representational systems of mimeticism, visual display, naturalism, and baroque and classical order, both create and disrupt meaning. The contrast between the stunning aesthetic brilliance of the teen-age dream world, the solemnity of the prison cell, and the human emotion transmitted through the audiovisual presentations, are visual and aural manifestations of a purposefully unresolved tension that permeates the installation. For example, the son's admission, from the video dialogue, that he would give up everything he has just to have the father home with the family fractures the allure of the teen-age bedroom as a consumer paradise.

Osorio's artmaking practice consistently co-mingles various representational systems drawn from a range of visual sources in contemporary visual culture. Such diversity permits the interaction of multiple discourses such as *reality, fiction, consumerism, aesthetics, display, time, and visibility and invisibility*, to become the screen of signs through which spectators see and read Osorio's work. The resulting interplay of meaning that derives from the multiple systems of representation evidences the import of understanding contemporary visual culture through systems of representation and visuality.

A final consideration into visuality and artmaking practice derives from a closer look at photography and how it represents. In the following section the miniaturized tableaux scenes of photographer Laurie Simmons, a Sony advertisement, and the installation of artist James Luna focus this discussion.

**Photography and Visuality**

John Berger (1980) recounts the amazing swiftness in which the camera,
invented by Fox Talbot in 1839, assumed a key role in everyday life and, in the 20th century and the period between the two world wars, "the photograph became the dominant and most 'natural' ways of referring to appearances." Mirzoeff (1999) observes that "photography made possible ways of seeing that were previously unimaginable." To achieve some perspective amid the largeness of this subject, I have drawn the following from Sontag's (1977) On

- Photography as an example of how vision is socialized through photographs.
- Anything in the world is material for the camera, either for aestheticizing or the recording of reality.
- At one end of the spectrum, photographs are objective data; at the other end, they are items of psychological science fiction.

The camera's rendering of reality must always hide more than it discloses. With photographs, we acquire something as information rather than as experience.

Although these statements present only a small portion of Sontag's perceptions, they indicate significant discourses that create visuality with photographs, discourses such as veridicality, reality, aesthetics, framing, democratization, and visibility and invisibility.

Visuality and photography is complicated for artmaking practice by the fact that the medium is extensively implicated in mass media and personal usage. As Berger recounted, the photographic image has quickly assumed an increasing importance in contemporary life. Mirzoeff (1999) also refers to the global impact of the visual image in remarks about the death of Princess Diana. He observes that "Diana's death suddenly made it clear that the gap between the global and the local in the contemporary world is most effectively crossed by the visual image." He further elaborates, "In the contemporary moment, it has become common sense to understand the new configurations of the global and the local via images. However, these new visualizations are by no means simple or one-dimensional."

The following attempts to demonstrate how the interplay among commercial, social, and art worlds creates a network of meanings for visuality and photography. In this section, travel and tourism provide an opportunity to explore visuality and photography in the world of commerce, art, and society.
The Tourist Experience

Critic Lucy Lippard (1999) writes, "Some sources suggest that tourism will soon be the largest global source of employment; others say it already is." Visuality is a key factor in this experience. The camera and photograph factor considerably in the travel experience as well as the visual event between viewer and viewed. The following examples, a Sony advertisement for a camcorder, the work of installation and performance artist James Luna and photographer Laurie Simmons explore visuality in this context.

Sony Advertisement

A recent Sony advertisement, appearing in Interview magazine (February, 2003), depicts the tourist experience with a double-page color advertisement portraying a white suburban couple, arm-in-arm with five dark skin tribal natives who bear spears and wear elaborately painted body decoration. The depicted occasion, most conspicuously and deliberately devoid of any real experience, makes no attempt to conceal the artifice of the situation which becomes only an opportunity for a photo-op. The advertisement suggests capturing your vacation with a Sony Handy Camcorder, editing the video as a home movie, and burning a DVD for your VAIO GRX notebook which will be powered by a Mobile Intel Pentulum 4 Processor. This, supposedly, is what the family vacation is all about. The real experience is capturing the image for the DVD, not encountering or engaging with another culture.

The advertisement encourages and advances Sontag’s insight that photographs have replaced actual experience. Sontag's (1977) further remark that "today everything exists to end in a photograph." is fitting as well. Accordingly, contemporary life is reduced to the scale of an image that fits on a computer screen or in the sleeve of a photo album. There is nothing in the Sony advertisement that suggests that things should be different. The

---

2 I am indebted to Greer Pagano, art education graduate student, for perceptively calling my attention to the Sony advertisement as an example of reducing contemporary experience to the photographic moment.
superficiality displayed in the obviously constructed scene of the natives and suburban couple connotes an attitude that tourism is primarily an empty experience, hence its redeeming value is to capture the experience for the camera. Lippard (1999, p.136) comments along these lines,

Tourists see and remember with visual aids. All the travel magazines feature a plethora of ads for expensive camera equipment. Yet even as photography has opened up views so faraway places, it has offered ways to avoid experiencing.

**James Luna**

Native American artist James Luna addresses cultural issues about the invasion of privacy and cultural boundaries and stereotyping of native peoples through the tourist experience and photography. In 1991, Luna created a museum piece which offered viewers the opportunity to *Take a Picture with a Real Indian*. Luna was present at the opening of the participatory installation, but during the remaining exhibition, the artist was represented by three cut-out versions, the "real Indian," constructed of stereotypes; the artist in street clothes; and the Plains Indian attire which tourists expect all Indians to wear all the time. Luna's installation and its reference to the ubiquitous camera as an essential element in the tourist experience, brings to mind Sontag's (1977) previous insight about that "anything in the world is material for the camera...." Sontag additionally speculates that one reason people seek to have their photographs taken is that they are made real by photographs. Thus, the tourist experience acquires personal validity through the camera. Luna objects to the stock, stereotypic tourist photograph, a representation of falsity, while tourists conversely view it as evidence of their experience and as Sontag terms it, "a crisis-proof experience." The quality of that experience, as suggested by the Sony advertisement is never the issue, but only its documentation. The Sony ad reinforces all that Luna finds objectionable and that which the tourist seems to be seeking as well. The visuality of the tourist photograph is made complex by Luna's installation, disturbing its opaqueness as a social practice.

**Laurie Simmons**
Photographer Laurie Simmons creates miniaturized tableau scenes which she composes with plastic Barbie-like dolls, stand-ins for humans, and additional props that contextualize domestic interiors and outdoor sites. Although reductive in scale, Simmons' photographs are premised upon a mimetic system of representation. The self-taught photographer (1996) declares "I don't want to make supernatural pictures. Characters never fly. I'm not interested in a visual Magical Realism. Given a chance, I'll always go for accurate perspective and scale in the hopes that someone might believe the scene." In her *Tourism series*, Simmons' stages large-scale color photographs depicting miniaturized scenes of tourists with popular global icons such as the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids, the Eiffel Tower, and the Taj Mahal.

The Sony advertisement and Luna's installation focused on issues surrounding the photographic image and the tourist experience; Simmons tackles touring as a visual event occurring between viewer and viewed, investigating the spectatorship and the visuality associated with mythic icons and the social experience of touring such timeless antiquities. What are the discourses and social practices of visuality that inform this experience? On one hand, in using doll-size proportions, Simmons' reduces the experience to one of image; while on the other, through highly dramatic lighting effects, she invests the situation with an aura of mystery.

In *Pink Stonehenge* (1984), for example, one of the fifteen photographs in the series, Simmons transforms the mythic icon into a reddish pink version of itself while four female figures pose and appear to move in the foreground. Once viewers move past the initial humor of the rosy version of Stonehenge, the dramatized scene suggests inquiry about spectatorship and viewing icons. In effect, Simmons seeks to subvert the photographic system that imprisons reality by creating an image that refers to the possibility of something beyond itself. The reductive scale portrays the tourist experience as one of trivia and play, but the dramatic aesthetics dramatize the scene. A dark foreground sharply contrasts an expansive lighter background, massed with white fluffy clouds that rise behind the looming forms of the mystical icon. The spectacular effect, produced primarily through lighting and scale, suggests what has been defined as the surplus of the image, its sensual
immediacy. Mirzoeff (1999) argues for the significance of the senuousness of images claiming that this is the very element that distinguishes the visual from texts and linguistic meanings. Simmons over-dramatizes the popular icons in a very 'hollywood' treatment; but at the same time, this artifice indicates, or at least hints at, a conflictual desire for transcendence beyond the ordinary hollowness of the tourist experience.

These examples, the Sony advertisement, Luna's installation, and Simmon's photographs only hint at the issues surrounding visuality and photography. Further investigations into additional artists and artmaking practices are needed to expand and deepen our understanding of this dense area as it impacts artmaking practice. The challenge to contemporary artmaking is understanding visuality and images as a social event, outside of artmaking and the artworld. The purpose is, not to mimic, nor even always to critique, but to recognize how seeing is a social phenomena that has acquired new dimensions in an age of visual culture. Photography is in particular of interest and import since the photographic image dominates mass media in one form or another; hence Mirzoeff's (1999) earlier remark, "it has become common sense to understand the new configurations of the global and the local via images."

Conclusions

What implications for artmaking instruction can be derived from the previous discussion? As demonstrated with the artist exemplars, specific cases can be highly useful in revealing connections between visual culture and artmaking practice. The case studies, Brice, Osorio, Simmons, and Luna revealed these connections in distinct ways, demonstrating the value of studying specific practice. A central theme in the evolving discussion was the socialization of vision and its impact on artmaking practice. This area was explored primarily in regard to the artist's choice of representation and the conceptual implications, a result of the socialization of vision, which attend these choices.

Visual culture with its technodrama, to borrow a term from Foster (1988), was shown to offer a range of options in regard to representation. Further, it was demonstrated that the artists' choice of representation produced
connections to particular discourses that acted as a screen of signs and meaning for the artworks. If students are to meaningfully engage visual culture for artmaking, they require knowledge and understanding of this nature to inform their own practice.

These case studies indicate that there is much more that could be learned about visuality and representation through further artist examples and probing of artistic practice. I have previously advocated studying the artmaking practice of professional artists as a model for art instruction and, in light of understanding artmaking practice in an age of visual culture, view this as a generative strategy (Walker, 2000). Other researchers and educators have used a similar methodology such as Schön's (1985) in depth studies of the professional practice of architects and graphic designers and Manuel Barkan's (1962) ground-breaking 1960's art education curriculum reforms which approached art curriculum through the practice of art professionals. Barkan argued that "...artistic activity anywhere is the same, whether at the frontier of art or in a third-grade classroom.... The difference is in degree not kind." More recently, political activist artist, Hachivi Edgar-Heap-of-Birds, describes his teaching philosophy as looking to professional artistic practice as a primary source for developing student understandings about the artmaking process. Heap-of-Birds (2000) describes his instructional methods in the following manner, "The first step in teaching is one of informing and inspiring the student with various methods of artistic practice concentrating particularly upon the conceptual themes of artists...."

The enormity of the realm of visual culture, the products, theories, bodies of knowledge, and social consequences, dictates locating a strategy that provides focus in attaining understanding. In terms of artmaking practice and instruction, the investigation of individual cases proves highly useful and productive provided there is an appropriate conceptual focus. I would suggest that this study include a range of contemporary artmaking practice with connections to visual culture as it exists in everyday life. I would include artists who critique the visual as it occurs socially as well as those who incorporate its representational systems and mediums to explore other subject matter. I also strongly recommend seeking the conceptual implications in these choices, not simply the more obvious uses of mass media form and
media in artmaking practice as formal strategies. The stress in this article on the socialization of vision, in the form of visuality, demonstrates this approach and the examination of the exemplar artists can serve as a guide for framing an investigation of artistic practice with this focus.

As students consider various artist case studies and artmaking practice related to vision in society, it will be incumbent upon them to make the connections to their own practice. However, without prior knowledge and overt instruction about visual culture and its relationship to artmaking practice, this will be an opaque area for many students. Students will most likely recognize, as Mirzoeff (1999) argues, that there is "a crisis of visual information and visual overload in the everyday." but will need demonstrations of practice to make connections to their own artmaking practice.

Laurie Simmons
Pink Stonehenge, 1996
Tourism series, Cibachrome print.

Pepón Osorio
Badge of Honor, 1995,
Installation, mixed media.
James Luna
Take a Picture with a Real Indian, 1991, Performance piece.

James Luna
Take a Picture with a Real Indian, 1991, Performance piece.

Lisa Brice
Sout Piel, 2000, (detail)
Light boxes, Perspex and vinyl.

It is in pending publication by Visual Art Research
References


http://www.heapofbirds. [Online].


http://www.giarts.org/conf_01/Keynote Pepon.htm