

From Workshop to Augmented Reality: Rethinking Art Education in the Age of Digital Aesthetics

Maryam Vahid Esmaceli, Mohammadhassan Asnaei
Freelancer, Armenia

Abstract

Art education is undergoing a significant transformation in response to rapidly evolving technologies and the shifting expectations of a new generation of learners. Technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) are not only altering the tools available to artists but also reshaping how art is taught, experienced, and understood. This paper examines the intersection of traditional and digital approaches to art education, with a focus on integrating physical experience with emerging digital aesthetics.

Drawing on foundational theories by John Dewey and Elliot Eisner, the study proposes a theoretical framework for experience-based and interactive learning. Traditional methods such as drawing and sculpture are contrasted with digital practices including AR installation and NFT creation, analyzing both their pedagogical value and limitations. A central case study highlights a five-week hybrid workshop where students transitioned from physical drawing to augmented reality experiences, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration and sensory engagement.

The paper also addresses critical challenges: unequal access to digital tools, the potential loss of tactile, embodied learning, and ethical concerns around digital ownership and authorship. At the same time, it explores new opportunities: global connectivity, cross-cultural dialogue, and the development of digital-aesthetic literacy.

Ultimately, the article proposes a blended educational model that merges classical art instruction with digital innovation. This approach not only respects the tactile and sensory roots of artistic practice but also prepares students to create meaningfully in digital environments. Art education, the paper argues, must evolve to foster creators who can move fluidly between canvas and code.

Keywords: aesthetic literacy; creativity; augmented reality (AR); digital aesthetics; hybrid workshop