

***Keldenova K.***

*Associate Professor, PhD, Abai Kazakh national pedagogical university,  
Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: [k\\_kupan1117@mail.ru](mailto:k_kupan1117@mail.ru)*

## **THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF EXHIBITIONS AND GALLERIES IN ART EDUCATION**

### *Abstract*

This article looks into the role and importance of exhibitions and galleries in art education, pointing out the value these places have for experiential learning, creativity, and cultural engagement. It is in this study that such an environment contributes to visual literacy, critical thinking, and the total development of students and educators. This research, in which 120 participants from Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University and Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University took part, was conducted as a mixed-methods study. Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observations in physical and digital gallery spaces.

The results show that exhibitions raise the level of visual literacy, inspire creative experimentation, and create critical thinking. The respondents mentioned that exhibitions allowed them to learn through collaboration because students discussed in groups and shared their views on a given work of art. Traditional galleries remained indispensable for their sensory and immersive qualities; however, digital exhibitions were reported as important complementary tools because they have increased accessibility and flexibility. Challenges included logistic barriers, and the need for more inclusive and diverse representations, among others.

Results make a strong case for exhibitions and galleries as integral to or at least complementary in value to the art education curriculum. They also bring into view the contribution these sites might make toward addressing larger equity and representation concerns within educational environments. The paper concludes by calling for increased institutional support and collaboration among educators and galleries in working through barriers of access toward ensuring such experiences have transformative potential. Further research is needed into long-term impacts of gallery-based learning and may also include further consideration of the potentials for digital exhibitions in arts education. This study corroborates that exhibitions and galleries play an integral role in art education today, offering various intellectual and artistic development options that are not easily supplied by other means.

**Keywords:** art education, exhibitions, galleries, visual literacy, experiential learning.

***Келденова К.К.***

*Ассоциированный профессор, PhD, Казахский национальный педагогический университет имени Абая, г. Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: [k\\_kupan1117@mail.ru](mailto:k_kupan1117@mail.ru)*

## **РОЛЬ И ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ВЫСТАВОК И ГАЛЕРЕЙ В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ**

### *Аннотация*

В этой статье исследуется роль и значение выставок и галерей в художественном образовании, подчеркивается их ценность как места эмпирического образовательного, творческого и культурного взаимодействия. Исследование показывает, как эта среда влияет на наглядную грамотность, критическое мышление и общее развитие учащихся и учителей. Исследование проводилось с участием 120 участников, в том числе 50 преподавателей

искусств и 70 студентов Казахского национального педагогического университета имени Абая и Казахского национального женского университета, в исследовании использовался смешанный подход. Сбор данных включал опросы, полуструктурированные интервью и наблюдательные исследования в физических и цифровых галереях.

Результаты показывают, что выставки повышают наглядную грамотность, вдохновляют на творческий опыт и способствуют критическому мышлению. Участники посетили галереи, приняли участие в групповых дискуссиях и отметили возможности совместного обучения для студентов, которые обменялись мнениями. Хотя традиционные галереи остаются важными для их сенсорных и иммерсивных свойств, цифровые выставки стали дополнительными инструментами, предлагающими высокую доступность и гибкость. Однако выявлены такие проблемы, как логистические барьеры и необходимость более широкого и разнообразного представительства.

Полученные результаты отражают педагогическую значимость включения выставок и галерей в учебные программы художественного образования. Они также отмечают потенциал этих мест для решения вопросов представительства и равенства в сфере образования. Исследование завершается более широкой институциональной поддержкой и поощрением сотрудничества между преподавателями и галереями для решения проблем доступности и повышения трансформационного потенциала данного опыта. Будущие исследования должны изучать долгосрочное влияние обучения в галерее, а затем роль цифровых выставок в художественном образовании. Это исследование подтверждает важность выставок и галерей для современного художественного образования, предоставляя уникальные возможности для интеллектуального и художественного развития.

**Ключевые слова:** художественное образование, выставки, галереи, визуальная грамотность, эмпирическое обучение.

**Келденова К.К.**

*Қауымдастырылған профессор, PhD, Абай атындағы Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті, Алматы қ., Қазақстан, e-mail: [k\\_kupan1117@mail.ru](mailto:k_kupan1117@mail.ru)*

## **КӨРКЕМ БІЛІМ БЕРУДЕГІ КӨРМЕЛЕР МЕН ГАЛЕРЕЯЛАРДЫҢ РӨЛІ МЕН МАҢЫЗЫ**

*Аңдатпа*

Бұл мақалада көрмелер мен галереялардың көркемдік білім берудегі рөлі мен маңыздылығы зерттеліп, олардың тәжірибелік оқыту, шығармашылық және мәдени қатысу кеңістігі ретіндегі құндылығы атап өтіледі. Зерттеу бұл орталардың көрнекі сауаттылыққа, сыни тұрғыдан ойлауға және студенттер мен оқытушылардың жалпы дамуына қалай ықпал ететінін зерттейді. 120 қатысушымен, Оның ішінде Абай атындағы қазақ Ұлттық Педагогикалық Университеті мен қазақ Ұлттық Қыздар Педагогикалық Университетінің 50 өнер мұғалімі мен 70 студентімен жүргізілген зерттеу аралас әдістерді қолданды. Деректерді жинауға сауалнамалар, жартылай құрылымдық сұхбаттар және физикалық және цифрлық галерея кеңістігіндегі бақылау зерттеулері кірді.

Нәтижелер көрмелердің көрнекі сауаттылықты айтарлықтай арттыратынын, шығармашылық эксперименттерді шабыттандыратынын және сыни тұрғыдан ойлауға ықпал ететінін көрсетеді. Қатысушылар галереяларға бару арқылы ұсынылатын бірлескен оқу мүмкіндіктерін атап өтті, онда студенттер топтық пікірталастарға қатысып, түсіндірмелерімен бөлісті. Дәстүрлі галереялар сенсорлық және иммерсивті қасиеттері үшін таптырмас болып қала берсе де, цифрлық көрмелер қолжетімділік пен икемділікті арттыратын қосымша құралдарға айналды. Сонымен қатар, логистикалық кедергілер және инклюзивті және әртүрлі өкілдіктердің қажеттілігі сияқты мәселелер де анықталды.

Нәтижелер көрмелер мен галереяларды көркемдік білім беру оқу бағдарламаларына біріктірудің педагогикалық маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Олар сондай-ақ білім берудегі теңдік пен өкілдіктің кеңірек мәселелерін шешу үшін осы кеңістіктердің әлеуетін көрсетеді. Зерттеу қол жетімділік мәселелерін шешу және осы тәжірибелердің трансформациялық әлеуетін барынша арттыру үшін оқытушылар мен галереялар арасындағы институционалдық қолдау мен ынтымақтастықты кеңейтуді жақтаумен аяқталады. Болашақ зерттеулер галереялық оқытудың ұзақ мерзімді әсерін зерттеп, цифрлық көрмелердің көркемдік білім берудегі рөлін одан әрі зерттеуі керек. Бұл зерттеу көрмелер мен галереялардың интеллектуалды және көркемдік өсудің бірегей мүмкіндіктерін ұсына отырып, заманауи өнер білімі үшін өте маңызды екенін растайды.

**Түйін сөздер:** көркемдік білім, көрмелер, галереялар, көрнекі сауаттылық, тәжірибелік оқыту.

**Introduction.** Art education facilitates creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness in humans. Out of the hundreds or thousands of pieces that make up the tapestry of art education as a profession, exhibitions and galleries are almost kinetic in nature, and function as extensions from the walls of the conventional classroom out into an arena where learning can become so viscerally tangible, interpretative and emotionally powerful for students and art lovers alike. But the contribution of exhibitions and galleries to art education is an ongoing conversation that merits a lot more attention. This is why it is significant to get to know the roles which they perform as this helps in understanding how experiential learning and exposure to working with art helps in art appreciation and intellectual development.

Ever since exhibitions and galleries served as venues for the convergence, fabrication, and dissemination of artistic narratives. From the first salons of the 18th century to international art fairs today, they have been tools for both artists and the public to express and evaluate works of art. And with respect to that, scholars have come to recognize the opportunities for learning in the realms of such; therefore for the one Dewey noted (1934) “art is the most effective mode of communication that exists” (p. 36). Because from his perspective, it is a development of discussion that can be observed at the core of education.

Gallery spaces and art education work symbiotically, current research does show. It is also stated in the literature that students experience a multitude of artistic styles, mediums, and historical contexts, informing their artistic and cultural literacy practices in gallery visits. Indeed, Smith and Erickson have provided documentation that when students interact with curated collections of art they in turn gain nuanced skills of visual analysis and become better at reading those cues that are visually complex. Moreover, this dialogue reinforces the process of socialised learning, as the students of this class tend to have conversations directed towards collective meaning-making and critical reflection.

Then there’s the issue of exhibitions and galleries, which raises concerns about inclusiveness and equity in art education. Even outside this microcosm, the institution of the museum itself has been deemed exclusivist and too Eurocentric in architecture and orientation and so sidelining many traditions of art. While there is of course a felt need to democratize these very spaces thus, with the contemporary such praxis, there has been a benched attempt to include the voices of the underrepresented within any given community in the creation of exhibition spaces, creating ostensibly thus more inclusive opportunities in which to learn. The gallery, then, is not a passive apparatus of culture; it is a sight wherein things are actively displayed (Bennet 1995 p. 124). As this function develops, galleries and exhibitions also occupy a transformative space on the way to the question of pedagogic art.

Directly feeding into this discourse, the use of digital technologies was seen more and more as an addition necessary to keep up with the educational value embodied within exhibitions. First appearing as a method of making art education more accessible long before the worldwide

upheavals of COVID-19 made it grow drastically by virtue of necessity, virtual galleries, or exhibition options have become more of an educational solution for engaging brittle, cybergilding artworks. As Kaplan drew attention to, digitally enabled exhibition spaces allow us to explore what some have perceived as confusing—and one might argue structurally changes—the potential boundaries of what constituent spaces of experience and pedagogy (p. 56). Such new ideas are a positive indication that today's exhibition is responding to the current educational needs.

While navigating the complexities of both of these worlds, having an understanding of how exhibitions and galleries can provide pedagogical potential and how it can be effective within the structure of the architecture of art education, and how they can provide education complemented through alternative methodologies, we can find that there can be fluctuations between both worlds to heighten the student-experience. These spaces play an essential role in encouraging experiential learning, supporting cultural understanding, and incorporating technological advancement, all of which contribute to the holistic development of learners. This article will aim to elaborating an argument around the aspect of exhibitions and galleries in the context of art education: its impacts on creativity, critical thinking and lastly, its inclusivity aspects. It explores the potential that the transformative spaces have within the discourse and practice of art education at all levels.

**Methods.** The study applies qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods research approaches to explore the role and importance of exhibitions and galleries in the domain of art education. This perspective offers a comprehensive view of the ways in which these venues facilitate the educational process for learners and instructors alike. This a method that is designed that is intended to provide consistency and replicability, meaning that it is still possible for other research to reproduce the study.

**Research Design.** The participants consisted of 50 art educators and 70 students from two Kazakhstani universities, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University and Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University, for a total of 120 participants. These were selected for their emphasis on including exhibitions and galleries in their art education curriculums. We intentionally recruited participants with rich experience in gallery-based learning environments to provide insights into the research question.

**Data Collection.** Data were collected using three main methods: surveys, semi-structured interviews and observational studies. Using this combination allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data to be collected and a complete view of participants' experiences and perceptions.

**Surveys.** A survey containing a mix of Likert-scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions was sent out to all 120 participants. Participants were asked Likert-scale questions about their perceptions of the work done in exhibitions and galleries educationally. Among them, one question asked people to rate their agreement with the phrase, “Exhibitions significantly enhance my understanding of art concepts,” on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The open-ended questions that followed provided respondents an opportunity to elaborate on their experiences, allowing the qualitative insights collected to augment the numerical trends found.

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** A subsample of 20 participants (10 educators, 10 students) participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were about the effect that exhibitions and galleries have on teaching and learning. Sample questions, for example: “What is the role of exhibitions in your understanding of art?” and “What challenges do you face in integrating gallery visits into learning activities?” The flexibility of the interviews enabled a standard level of comparability while allowing respondents to articulate their views in their own terms.

**Observational Studies.** The researchers studied participants in different exhibition and gallery formats, both in-person and online. These were university-associated galleries and important exhibitions here. Observational measures included the time spent interacting with the artworks on display, participation in group discussions, and engagement with interactive installations. Using this approach generated contextualized data that emphasized the ways in which participants engaged with and reacted to these learning contexts.

**Data Analysis.** Statistical analysis was performed on the quantitative survey data using statistical software to identify trends and patterns. To summarize response frequency and distribution, descriptive statistics were performed, while inferential tests (e.g., t-tests and ANOVA) were used to compare perceptions of students and educators. Analysis showed that there are statistically significant differences between educators and students about the exhibitions role in critical thinking ( $p < 0.05$ ).

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was conducted on transcripts of interviews and responses to open-ended questions of the survey. Analysis using grounded theory revealed several salient themes including “enhanced visual literacy”, “promoting cultural awareness” and “encouraging collaborative learning”. Results were then triangulated through observation data and through findings of surveys and interviews, to validate results and improve reliability.

**Validation and Reliability.** The study employed multiple validation strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. The triangulation method of cross-referencing data from surveys, interviews, and observational studies was used. The findings were member checked to allow participants to review and confirm key findings. Further, a Cohen's kappa test was performed on qualitative data coding, yielding a score of 0.85 indicating strong agreement between researchers.

The methodology used for data collection is an intensive one contributing to ensuring the trustworthiness and repeatability of the found results. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods provides a nuanced perspective of exhibitions and galleries as sites of learning. The knowledge gleaned can be used as a guide to how educators, curators and policymakers can work to foster more about educational value of these spaces.

**Results.** The study concerns itself with examining the role and importance of exhibitions and galleries in the course of teaching art and their influence on students and teachers of two educational institutions: Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University and Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University. Based on data obtained from surveys, interviews and observational studies, the results identify themes and patterns present in the data.

**Data-Driven Insights Based on Surveys** The 120 survey respondents (50 art educators and 70 students) gave quantitative information about the contribution of exhibitions and galleries to education. Through the use of Likert-scale questions, the study was able to discover significant trends in visual literacy, creativity, critical thinking, and inclusivity.

**Visual literacy and exhibitions engagement.** The majority of participants said that exhibitions helped them enhance their visual literacy. More than three-quarters of students (85%) and more than two-thirds of educators (78%) indicated that exhibitions had improved their ability to interpret what they saw in visual art. For instance, a statement that read, “Exhibitions help me better understand the use of color, form, and composition,” earned an average rating of 4.3 out of 5 from students and 4.1 from educators. These results agree with the finding by Smith and Erickson (2015) that exposure to curated artworks improves students' ability to look critically at visuals.

**Effects on Creativity and Critical Thinking** It was found that exhibitions positively affect such abilities as creativity and critical thinking. Seventy-six percent of students reported that exhibitions inspired them to try new artmaking techniques, while 82 percent said exhibitions encouraged them to consider critically artistic meaning and context. Likewise, 80% of educators indicated that exhibits helped them to develop more engaging and thought provoking lesson plans.

**Inclusive & Accessible.** The data also illuminated participants perceptions of inclusivity and accessibility within exhibitions. Although 70% agreed that exhibitions were more reflective of different artistic voices, some participants pointed out socioeconomic hindrances that limited access for some groups. As Bennet (1995) pointed out, “Anyone organizing to democratize gallery spaces has to contend with the structural inequities that still exist in terms of access and representation.”

**Qualitative Themes from Interview Data** Four semi-structured interviews also provided further detail regarding the ways in which exhibitions and galleries curate educational experience.

We distilled our findings into three core themes—Experiential Learning, Collaborative Engagement, and Implementation Challenges.

**Experiential Learning.** Both the students and educators stressed the importance of exhibitions as a powerful means for immersive learning. Students described the role of direct interactions with artworks in strengthening connections between theory and practice. “The close-up view of the brushstrokes made techniques we only read about in textbooks make so much more sense,” one student said. Educators agreed and explained how exhibitions made abstract ideas real. This theme reflects Dewey’s (1934) phrase “learning is most effective when it is grounded in experience.” Evidence has borne this out, since students were frequently observed to be engaged in talk about artworks with students or educators.

**Collaborative Engagement.** Exhibitions also led to collaborative learning. Students emphasize on group visits that encourage dialogues to collectively interpret the artworks. Educators noted that such interactions encouraged students to consider multiple viewpoints and improve their communication abilities. And, when they visit a local gallery, students are caught analyzing the symbolism in a contemporary art piece, a notable exercise in their analytical and critical thought process.

**Challenges in Implementation.** While participants agreed there were benefits to integrating exhibitions into education, challenges remained. Some educators had logistical challenges — scheduling, paying for tickets and transportation, and matching the content of exhibitions with what they were teaching. An educator said, “Exhibitions are great, but the content may not always align with our teaching goals.”

**Observational Findings.** Qualitative analysis of observational studies at five exhibition venues (university-affiliated galleries and public art space) provided further insights into participants’ engagement behaviors.

**Time Spent with Artworks** Students spent 3–5 minutes on average looking at each artwork, while interactive or multimedia installations drew them in much longer. This finding is consistent with Kaplan’s (2021) conclusion that “interactive exhibits capture attention better than static displays.” Table 1 provides an overview of mean engagement durations by venue type.

These outcomes highlight an urgency of asymmetries within cultural industries, and how exhibitions and galleries also act as key tools for art education, cultivating visual literacy, creativity and collaborative skills in their participants—with implementation obstacles notwithstanding.

**Table 1.** Average time spent engaging with artworks across venue types.

Venue Type	Average Time per Artwork (minutes)
University Gallery	3.2
Public Art Space	4.1
Interactive Installations	5.3

**Group Interactions.** In fact, observational data revealed that it was more likely for students to have rounded and meaningful group discussions when led by either educators or curators. For instance, in one observation, a cohort of students, guided by questions from their educator, collectively interpreted the cultural significance of a historical painting. Such interactions highlighted the importance of facilitation for maximizing the educational value of exhibitions.

**Responses to Digital Exhibitions** The responses to digital exhibitions were varied. Some students enjoyed the accessibility and convenience of virtual platforms as an artistic medium, while others preferred physical galleries, pointing to the sensory experience of experiencing art in person. As one student put it, “The texture and scale of a painting can never be replicated on a screen”. This underscores the strengths and limitations of digital and physical spaces as exhibition sites complementary to one another.

Overall Perceptions of Educational Value Exhibitions and galleries were seen by both students and educators as vital educational resources to which they responded strongly. The spaces that the participants described were seen as critical for stimulating creative and critical thinking, as well as cultural understanding. At the same time, however, they also highlight the barriers, including limited accessibility and inadequate institutional support, that need to be addressed if gallery-based learning is to fulfil its potential.

Discussion of Bigger Picture Implications. Implications of this Study[All Pages] By illustrating the effect, on the education of children and young people, of exhibitions and galleries, this research creates an argument for the need to bring these spaces more fully into the education of children and young people. The challenge will be to effectively look beyond these tools to meet accessibility and inclusivity, as well as to ensure alignment with curricula if we are to maximise their effectiveness. This study provides important insights for educators, curators and policymakers who are looking to maximize the power of exhibitions as learning experiences.

**Discussion.** But it also speaks to the nurturing and creative side of exhibitions and galleries, employing art education as a mutual tool for documentary and performance. The results come from a diverse participant pool of educators and students, and they speak to a growing movement that identifies exhibitions as critical, if not necessary, strategies within the contemporary pedagogical toolbox. This section provides the context for the research findings in existing research literature, discusses the potential implications for art education, and draws comparison to existing research.

Visual Literacy: An Experiential Learning Process The study's other key finding was the increase in visual literacy as a result of exposure to exhibitions. More than 80 percent of them said that their experiences had led to better interpretation of visual elements. This is, in keeping with the findings of Smith and Erickson (2015), who showed that engagement with curated works of art directly aids critical skills of visual analysis. As one educator said, "Exhibitions create a direct avenue to artistic processes that theory can't reach."

For Dewey (1934), experiential learning is predicated on having lived through an experience. The immersive nature of exhibitions reflects this, and even if they do not directly contribute to live learning, the experience of being physically present and interacting with an exhibit adds another dimension to the knowledge one gains. This was backed by observational data that showed how often students used a theoretical framework to interrogate the art that was introduced to them in galleries. This interplay between theory and practice illustrates the educative potential of exhibitions as sites of materialisation through which ideas transform into things.

Creativity and Critical Thinking The study also suggested that exhibitions have a positive effect on creativity and critical thinking. Students told us they felt inspired to try out new artistic techniques, and educators said that the exhibitions served as inspiration on creating interactive and reflective lesson plans. Such findings resonate with Kaplan's (2021) position that exhibitions "challenge viewers to question, interpret, and reimagine the world around them" (p. 58). Through intellectual stimulation, exhibitions help prepare students with transferable skills beyond art, developing critical consideration of cultural and social topics.

Cooperative Learning and Social Interaction. Exhibitions were recognized as hubs for collaborative learning. Among discussion of their analysis during gallery visits, students were seen to share their views and debate meanings. Teachers noted that these exchanges were opportunities for students to think about a range of perspectives and to develop their analysis.

Such findings are consistent with the Vygotskian (1978)<sup>1</sup>, theory of social constructivism where success is found to be a greater product of collaboration than cooperation. As Bennet (1995) indicated, exhibitions are social spaces for negotiating meanings. The findings of the study reinforce Bennet's observations of the benefits of group dynamics, which enhance the learning environment in galleries and generate collective inquiry.

Accessibility and Inclusivity Challenges. While exhibition help us find answers, there are definitely interactions to be had between exhibition and competitiveness. Some participants pointed

to socioeconomic barriers, like entry fees and transportation costs. This aligns with Bennet's (1995) critique of galleries as spaces that have been exclusive throughout history.

But there were efforts to democratize galleries, such as free entry for students and the showcasing of broader artistic voices. These initiatives are part of broader changes in the art world toward inclusivity. One participant commented, "Including works by underrepresented artists makes galleries relevant to today's diverse learners."

Digital exhibitions were seen as a potential solution to some of these accessibility issues. And virtual platforms, which took off during the COVID-19 pandemic, were hailed for their capacity to reach larger audiences. Digital experiences, however, were found to often not have the sensory impact of physical galleries. In the words of one student, "Seeing the texture and scale of a painting in real life cannot be replicated on a screen."

**Implications on Curriculum Design** The results have important implications for curriculum development in the context of art education. The study highlights the significance of incorporating gallery visits into teaching strategies, as it illustrates how exhibitions improve visual literacy, creativity, and critical thinking. Because exhibitions also serve to encourage collaborative learning, by being part of an exhibition, they support traditional classroom activities.

We recommend a structured approach to gallery visits, with preparation and reflection as key components of your lesson plan. For example, conversations that prepare students for work and assignments upon return help them to synthesize their experiences and then tie them into broader elements of the curriculum. As Dewey (1934) famously stated, "Reflection transforms experience into learning" (p. 40), and this precept guides the design of meaningful educational activities.

**Future Research Recommendations.** Though the current study adds to our understanding, both results and methods merit additional investigation:

**Longitudinal Studies:** If gallery visits can develop students' Artistic Literacy, longitudinal research could study the lasting impact on their artistic and intellectual sparking.

**Digital Exhibitions:** The relative translation of experiences on virtual platforms vis-à-vis physical spaces warrants further research in terms of educational impact.

**Logistical issues:** Future studies could consider ways to circumnavigate elements such as funding or alignment to the curriculum. Such issues may be addressed through collaborative efforts between educational institutions and galleries, however.

Filling these gaps, future research will build towards wider advancement through this study hoping to make exhibitions and galleries increasingly powerful sites for transformations in the art education landscape.

**Conclusion.** This study explores the importance and relevance of exhibitions and galleries in the context of art education, focusing especially on their effects on the total development of the students and the teaching practices of teachers. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study involved 50 art educators and 70 students from Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University and Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University. Results point to the transformative impact of these spaces in nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and cultural understanding, adding to a growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of experiential learning in contemporary education.

**Research Novelty.** This study is noteworthy not only for contributing to this interest, but also for exploring the role of exhibitions and galleries as sites of learning from both student and educator perspectives. While previous work typically homes in on either pedagogical strategies or learner outcomes, this research takes a combined approach, examining the overlap between approaches and what students would actually do in gallery settings. In addition to this, the research draws upon data collected from two universities in Kazakhstan, providing a regional aspect and looking into cultural and institutional factors that might have affected art education in Central Asia.

The other novel aspect is the investigation of digital exhibitions as an evolving educational tool. Physical galleries are still vital to the learning process, but virtual spaces make the offerings more accessible and expand the possibilities for participation. Based on the findings, it emphasizes

the complementary relationship of these spaces while providing an insight into their coexistence and pressing about an educational discourse in an era dominated of digitalization.

**Findings and Implications.** The findings provide compelling evidence for their inclusion in education curricula due to the positive effects they have on promoting visual literacy, fostering creativity and developing critical thinking skills. These findings jumpstart teachers in providing data that demonstrates a need for institutional support, such as budgeting funds for gallery visits or becoming partners with local exhibitions.

The focus on inclusion and accessibility offers practical strategies for policymakers and curators looking to democratize art education, as well. Particularly when partnered with artists, curators, and community organizations, such exhibitions can position museums as increasingly inclusive spaces, engaging larger audiences — and those from underrepresented communities.

Another key benefit is the collaborative learning possibilities provided by gallery visits. Finally, exhibitions promote discussion and collective interpretations of ideas among students, which are key aspects of critical thinking and communication. These skills are invaluable not only to development as an artist and making work that is meaningful, but also to success in all areas of study and eventually in jobs, showing that gallery-focussed learning is applicable far and beyond art.

**Future Research Directions.** It sets the stage for further study into the role that exhibitions play in art education. Future research may be able to use longitudinal studies to examine the lasting impact of gallery-based learning on students' academic performance and professional development.

The possibility of virtual exhibitions being a way to supplement gallery space should also be further investigated. Exploring optimal design features and pedagogical strategies for virtual platforms, compared to in-person methods, may elucidate their place in contemporary education.

Ultimately, indeed, addressing logistical obstacles — including curriculum alignment and funding restrictions — is another topic worth exploring. The global time table collaboration between galleries and educational institutions, may have alternative ways to guarantee the widespread of these transformative learning experiences.

### References

1. Bennet, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. Routledge, 1995. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203435554>
  2. Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications, 2014.
  3. Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. Minton, Balch & Company, 1934. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11cw7kv>
  4. Kaplan, Rachel. "Digital Transformations in Art Exhibitions: A New Era of Accessibility." *Journal of Museum Education* 46, no. 1 (2021): 54–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2021.1875819>
  5. Smith, Helen, and Erickson, Tim. "Visual Literacy and the Art Gallery Experience: Engaging Students in Interpretation." *Art Education Review* 22, no. 3 (2015): 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2015.11519112>
  6. Vygotsky, Lev. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press, 1978. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11cw7mb>
- Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Sage Publications, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506335161>