Classical Academy
ALBERTA

Art and Aesthetics

Purpose

This policy provides guidance and direction to school administrators regarding:

a) the selection of artwork displayed in Alberta Classical Academy schools;
b) the music that may be played in the school during transitions and at other times.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, "school artwork" refers to the classical artwork chosen to adorn the school's walls on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. It does not refer to student works, although the standards outlined here should be considered aspirational ideals for student creations.

Principles

The Alberta Classical Academy aims to help pupils develop intellectual, moral, and aesthetic discernment, so that they may orient themselves towards what is true, good, and beautiful. We accomplish that, in part, by providing pupils opportunities to encounter beautiful works of art on a daily basis through in-class instruction, as well as in the physical environment of the school.

A distinctive feature of Alberta Classical Academy schools is the display of classical and enduring works of art in the hallways and in classrooms. Examples of classical art are provided to:

i. Help educate the aesthetic emotions and sensibilities of young learners, orienting them towards the sublime and the beautiful;
ii. Provide models of artistic excellence and technical mastery;
iii. Expand the mimetic horizons of pupils;
iv. Inspire contemplation;
v. Contribute to cultural and historical literacy.

Selection criteria for school artwork

i. The artwork should display a high level of technical mastery in whichever medium it employs;
ii. The artwork should be beautiful, and conducive to inspiring contemplation, awe, and wonder;
iii. Artwork should not convey an underlying sense of darkness or negativity;
iv. Heightened caution should be exercised with artwork created after the turn of the 20th century;

v. The collection of artwork should represent a range of time periods, cultures, and mediums (e.g. sculpture, frescoes, oil on canvas, architecture, mosaics, brush painting, etc.);

vi. Recognizing that classical art frequently depicts religious themes, schools should ensure that no more than 25% of the artwork is explicitly connected to a single religious tradition;

vii. In schools serving elementary-age children, discretion should be applied with respect to depictions of nudity or violence;

viii. Artwork should contribute to the acquisition of cultural and historical literacy. For example, by depicting important historical events, stories, and persons that may be discussed in class (e.g. the School of Athens, Laocoon and his Sons); demonstrating major architectural styles of different civilizations (e.g. the Taj Mahal, Angkor Wat, St. Basil's Cathedral); showcasing important cultural touch-points (e.g. the Mona Lisa, the Creation of Adam); enhancing pupils' understanding of art history and major artists; showcasing how movements of peoples in history influenced artistic styles (e.g. Greco-Buddhist art), and so on.

Music

Should teachers or school administrators choose to play music in the school, similar criteria shall apply. Specifically:

i. Schools shall impart an awareness of and appreciation for classical music, broadly defined. This includes musical compositions from the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods in the West, and may include subsequent compositions that adhere to the style and principles common to those periods. Classical music may also refer to compositions from outside Western musical canon, insofar as they employ traditional instruments and arrangement styles.

ii. Music should be beautiful, and should contribute to the aesthetic, moral, and intellectual development of pupils.

Process

The Superintendent or delegate shall be responsible for ensuring campus-level compliance with this policy, and for resolving any concerns relating to art or music selections and placement.

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