The Benefits of Art

The crushing weight of Disney and big Hollywood is nothing but causes and effects, and is suffocating the originality of film as an art form. In addition, the seeming war on expressionism in the South is putting a huge dent on more kids engaging in art. Growing up in a city, it is difficult to imagine a world without an art-house cinema or some artist collective/workspace, but, moving out of the city, the devastating effect of what mainstream culture and lack of creativity has done to these towns or cities becomes clear. Kids who have to grow up in these towns are completely left homeless if they choose to disregard what’s “in” and desire to pick up a skateboard, comic or paintbrush instead.

It doesn’t take long to realize that small towns like Dalton, GA are barren and dry in regards to outlets for creative and niche hobbies. Whether it be skateboarding, art, or even a place to go buy comics and play board games, Dalton only provides one legitimate source for creative individuals. Dalton only carters to so little in the way of arts is a more economic related problem, though some of the issue stems from the unwillingness of local government. The Dalton City skate park, for example, is very petite. Entertainment only lasts fifteen minutes, but a police officer will certainly issue a ticket if one leaves the park. Skateboarding in the park would be fine if Dalton had a skate park that wasn’t made for ants. The entire park shows how little the City cares for its population that skates. The emptiness of the park will in turn send skaters into the streets to find a better spot. The effect of this park is completely negative, leaving a sour taste
in the mouths of people who desperately need an outlet as important as a skate park. Skating provides such a healthy way for people of all ages to explore their creative side.

Even if one isn’t interested in skating, as it’s not for everyone, perhaps indie films are more appealing. There is absolutely nowhere to go to see one of those movies within a one hundred mile radius of Dalton. The independent cinema has taken a huge hit since the evolution of blockbuster movies, and people who want to be able to see art-house films are left to either torrent, or rent the movie online. With the rise of torrents, and lack of people going out and seeing movies, indie theaters will all but vanish in small towns and only be available in cities. This means rural kids will never have the chance to be able to go out and meet some of the other people who share their same tastes. Big Hollywood has completely ruined the ability for people to go and see a movie they never heard of. Like skating, movies provide a great outlet for youth. They are wonderful ways for people to connect themselves and feel like they’re understood. They also act as a gateway that sparks imagination and potentially the desire to make a career out of a passion.

Of all the things Dalton lacks, it at least has an art center where one can go and learn dance, pottery, or basic painting skills, and see some classical artwork. Even though it’s a win to have the art space, it still lacks a wide array of activities and spaces that could cater to artist of all kinds; the potential areas of art it could cover could be anywhere from someone looking for a recording studio, a place to practice street art, a computer lab for graphic artists or just an area where artists can collaborate and make art together. According to Jamesclear.com, a recent research study showed that out of 100 observations on art and its benefits to one’s physical and mental health, approximately eighty percent of people who were battling depression showed immediate signs of recovery while partaking in any art form. All one hundred participants
showed a “reduction in distress and negative emotions,” while another sixty-seven showed that art can help the “productivity and outcome of your experience with chemotherapy” (Clear). The positives from having an art space is astronomical, so the question is, if the effect of dividing money equally into the arts is overwhelmingly positive, then why do city boards have such a difficult time? Mainly because they don’t understand it, they don’t understand what it means for the people to have a space they can call their own. It’s very disheartening to see Dalton’s lone art space have its funding cut by 23% over the next two years.

Another example is the card game, “Magic the Gathering,” frequently played in gaming shops and comic stores. Dalton doesn’t have a comic shop, or a place for similar minded individuals to gather together and play or read or discuss games/comics. One interested student stated “…Yah it sucks, I have to drive up to Chatt (Chattanooga) to buy my comics, and there isn’t even a place where we can game and meet other gamers” (Thompson). According to a Business insider.com 2013 article on the incredibly low turnover rate of comic book shops, Julie Bort wrote, “While conventional bookstores have been folding, Comic shops have made a resurgence. Out of the approximately 2,100 stores across America, only an estimated 171 had to close its doors, while another 193 have opened. No other small business has that low of a turnover rate, showing that if you build it, nerds will come” (Bort). Disney and Marvel have heavily invested in making sure they release quality comics tailor made for the comic fan.

Even though it can be hard to see at times, the positives of having a blooming and eventful creative space in rural cities far outweighs the negatives. Dalton needs to invest and increase its means to give teenagers and adults alike the option to engage in their desired hobbies, just like they give the option to people who are engaged in sports. It is also up to these select people who desire to see change that they speak up and demand more. Maybe one of these
unlikely days people will start to realize the unoriginality of movies and start to pursue the bliss of art-house cinema. Maybe more people will realize the calming and peaceful effects of skateboarding, and a bigger park will be built. Maybe the next generation will bring the next great age of art, but no one will never know if everyone keeps engaging in a war with originality and creativity, especially in small cities like Dalton, Georgia.
Work Cited


Thompson, John. Personal interview. 25 March 2016.