Visual culture is prevalent in almost every aspect of our lives. We take photos with our cell phones, read magazines brimming with full color images, visit art museums, download streaming video, watch MTV, and scan street signs to find our favorite fast food restaurant. One hundred years ago, except for visiting art museums and reading magazines, these activities were nonexistent. As the twentieth century progressed, visual culture has increasingly been disseminated through new technological developments. In the sixties, Marshall McLuhan forecasted the impact of media upon our changing world. “The medium
or process, of our time—electronic technology—is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life” (1967, p.9). As the transmission of visual culture continues to “reshape” our personal as well as our communal identities (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004), it is important to acknowledge and understand visual culture’s role in our lives. Recognizing the resulting shift and change brought about by the proliferation of imagery in our world, Tavin (2003), described visual culture as a “present-day condition where images play a more central role in the construction of consciousness and the creation of knowledge than in the past” (p. 204).

In response to the consumption of persistent and pervasive imagery, visual culture is frequently blamed for social problems in youth (Steinheimer, 2003). The author of Reviving Ophelia, Mary Pipher (1994), warns us that teenage girls “are coming of age in a more dangerous, sexualized and media-saturated culture. They face incredible pressures to be beautiful and sophisticated, which in junior high means using chemicals and being sexual” (p. 12). Steinheimer’s view of visual culture as a scapegoat for the real problems of youth and Pipher’s concern for the effects of visual culture on young girls are topics addressed in this paper. However, the larger questions about the role visual culture plays in the development of youth and the public’s response cannot be addressed in their entirety. I will focus primarily on visual culture as it relates to a young woman’s concept of body image and the development of self.

My understanding of visual culture is particularly influenced by art historian Nicholas Mirzoeff and art educator Paul Duncum. Mirzoeff (2002) argued that visual culture “is concerned with visual events in which the user seeks information, meaning or pleasure in an interface with visual technology” (p. 5). Expanding his point, in light of our rapidly changing world, Mirzoeff suggested that visual culture allows for a convergence of thought that is both “enabled and mandated by
digital technology” (p. 6). He further described visual culture as the “triangulation of the viewer in relation to herself, the watchers and the watched” (p. 18). Duncum’s (2003a) perspective, “adopts a critical view of society, seeing society as structured in power relationships that are unequal and unfair. This is essentially a view of society in constant conflict where making meaning is always a struggle of one group to establish power over others” (p. 22). Mirzoeff’s “triangulation” of the viewer and Duncum’s acknowledgement of the power hierarchies, as inherent structures within visual culture, provide the foundation for this paper.

A review of the literature on visual culture revealed tensions in the meaning and function of visual culture. Attempting to grasp the slippery term visual culture is challenging because of the dynamic and fluid nature of two words loaded with historical and cultural meaning. In my view, visual culture is an active and dynamic term that encompasses a wide range of visual experiences encountered in our daily life. Visual culture refers to engagement in our present visual environment, relies on critical understanding of cultural influences, embraces visual art histories, and is ever-changing in response to new technological developments.

My examination of visual culture focuses on both the visual and cultural aspects of the term as it relates to teenage girls and their development. The relationship of cultural factors to visual imagery is too often ignored or oversimplified. Visual imagery is often viewed as the dominant force in visual culture, creating an imbalance that shifts the focus away from its underlying, dynamic cultural influences. This may contribute to the general public’s views regarding the impact of visual culture on adolescents. Secondly, investigation of visual culture led to my realization of hope for dialogic interaction beyond the dichotomous relationship between “viewer/viewed” and “self/other” that appear to have developed within the power structure of gender
hierarchy confronting young women. The possibility of dialogic interaction allows for multiple perspectives and emerges as a tool. I believe this tool is capable of disrupting the conflict that results from dealing with the limitations of the dichotomous relationship of the “self” and “other.” I conclude with a brief exploration of the perceived threat of visual culture as a negative force in a teenage girl’s concept of self and body image and how this investigation relates to art education.

"Re-shaping" Visual Culture

Do teenage girls embrace visual culture and become “reshaped” by it? Is this “reshaping” the result of the medium, as McLuhan suggested in the sixties, or is it an insidious content that sucks teenage girls into buying products and pursuing unrealistic feminine ideals in spite of their awareness of false claims as suggested by Wiseman (2002)? Today’s “medium” goes beyond McLuhan’s sixties technologies of photocopy machines and television. Young women today can watch streaming videos on their home computers while simultaneously “instant messaging” their friends, scanning images to email and uploading to their web journals. How does this barrage of visual imagery affect the development of young women of the 21st Century?

I suspect that an adolescent girl’s concept of body image and sense of self are mediated by visual and cultural influences. However, this mediation is an extremely complicated process and therefore, it is necessary to “re-shape” the term visual culture in order to better understand the complexity of the interaction between adolescent girls and visual culture.

Considering the unequal weight of the terms within visual culture, I suggest that the visual aspect of visual culture has been attributed to having greater influence on the development of teenage girl’s concept of body image and sense of self than from the culture aspect. There is a host of contributing factors including political, philosophical, cultural, economic, and social that contribute to the culture aspect of visual
culture. These factors relate to prevailing power structures, perceptions of personal power, family history, personal and cultural values, personal and family philosophies, family structure and expectations, social interactions, and language usage. At this point, it is important to note that in Mirzoeff’s (2002) view of culture, a historically loaded term cannot be seen as static, but instead it must be seen as incorporating the dynamic nature of every day life, where previously existing forms of culture merge to become a new “transculture.” As identity boundaries shift and fade creating new transcultural experiences, there is a demand for revised histories, ideas, and representations.

A Parental Perspective

My arguments in this paper are tempered by the exposures I have had to my teenage daughter and her friends. I am continually reminded of the complexities of passing through the awkward stage of adolescence and have done my share of questioning the role of visual culture in my daughter’s life and the lives of her girlfriends. The teenage girls I have known for the past four years come from varying economic and cultural backgrounds, and I’ve heard them talk about school, friends, social activities, TV shows, movies, music, boys, sex, clothes, body image, and acne. Some of their talk focused on self-destructive behaviors such as “cutting” or anorexia. In describing negative and destructive behaviors demonstrated by young women, Valentine (1994) found motivation for such behaviors to have been associated with their ideas about body image. I’ve seen evidence of such behaviors through my interactions and observations of teenage girls: a young woman who re-shaped her appearance by taking diet pills; another who reportedly cuts herself; a third who is angered when her heritage is assumed to be Mexican; and yet another adolescent who dresses in skimpy and tight clothing. I do not wish to imply that my observations of these young women speak for all young women transitioning from childhood to
adulthood. Instead, my experience observing them as they talk among themselves, watch TV, play video games, instant message each other, and talk on their cell phones, has led me to appreciate the specific and complex scenario that influences each of these young girls as they move through the vulnerable period of adolescence into womanhood.

A Broader Perspective

With the experiences of teenagers intersecting my everyday life as a backdrop for this discussion, I can focus on the often overlooked aspects of culture as a component of visual culture. One reason adolescent girls are vulnerable, claims Pipher (1994) is because American culture values adolescent girls on the basis of their appearances. Additional evidence suggests that the value of being attractive and the stigmatization for unattractiveness appeared greater for females than males (Jackson, 1992). Valentine (1994) analyzed journals of late adolescent primarily white female students and argued "that idealized images of female bodily perfection and messages of perfectibility exercise control over women's lives by constructing a self that is distorted and divided against itself, and that is self-policing and self-destructive" (p. 113). She maintained, however that these ideals for body image are "produced and disseminated by electronic and print media" (p. 113). Valentine's research suggested that there is a stronger and more direct impact of visual imagery on young women in consumer societies that minimize the non-visual impact of social, cultural, and political aspects. In my estimation, Valentine is underestimating the role of culture in visual culture.

More recent discussions suggest that boys are also experiencing pressure to conform to image expectations derived from social, cultural, and political influences (Stout & Wiggins Frame, 2004; Weaver-Hightower, 2003). While the gender gap between boys and girls may be narrowing in this respect, Balsamo (2002) suggested that the influences of visual culture continue to affect females differently:
The body becomes the vehicle of confession; it is the site at which women, consciously or not, accept the meanings that circulate in popular culture about ideal beauty and, in comparison, devalue the material body. The female body comes to serve, in other words, as a site of inscription, a billboard for the dominant cultural meanings that the female body is to have in postmodernity (p. 693).

At this point, it is necessary to look more critically at the social, cultural, and political constraints that affect teenage girls. First let us look at fundamental social/cultural ideas regarding beauty for women in a society where vestiges of patriarchal practices remain. It is important to note that feminine beauty is socially constructed and within a patriarchal system it is defined and controlled by men. Therefore women who strive for beauty do so to obtain approval of men, not for personal satisfaction (Berger, 1972; Bloustien, 2003; Callaghan, 1994). Vestiges of patriarchal concepts regarding beauty have remained within philosophical, religious, social, political and economic arenas giving way to a perceived “natural,” “necessary,” and “unchangeable” order.

Cultural influences of age, class and race are also used as a means of social control in the development of identity in women (Bloustien, 2003; Callaghan, 1994). Jackson’s (1992) review of scientific studies on gender supports the role that social class plays in influencing women and concluded that there may be an association between body thinness and wealth in the United States. In our current period of prosperity, the ideal of body thinness prevails as the desirable body type (Bloustien, 2003). Cultural trends dictating the ideal female body forces extreme choices such as excessive dieting or plastic surgery. To achieve that ideal image, there is the suggestion of an inherent, unspoken element of social and political control. Unfortunately, the choices made by women are considered voluntary and natural, rather than dictated by
an oppressive power of a patriarchal system (Bartky, 2003). Bartky suggested that the responses young women make as they progress from youth to adulthood are social constructions such as a rite of passage into adulthood, an acceptance of a particular aesthetic, a means to announce social and economic status, an avenue to compete with other women for jobs and men, and/or a way to engage in narcissistic behavior. These social constructions often include a hidden agenda promoting the concept of the ideal feminine body to prevail. As a result, a woman must see herself in two ways, as both an identity of the “self” and as a subject or an “other” in order to achieve the culturally, socially, and politically required desirability. To view herself otherwise is to be forced outside the system.

The Conflict of “Self” and “Other”

In consideration of the gender hierarchy’s ability to control, the concepts of “self” and “other” emerge as important, yet limited constructs of identity development for young women. Reviewing the work of Callaghan (1994), Valentine (1994), de Beauvoir (1952), Pipher (1994), and Bartky (2003) it is apparent that decision points form for developing young women who function within a system of gender hierarchy. These decisions have to do with how a young woman views herself within the system. In response to the “legitimated” oppression of patriarchal practices, women’s motives to achieve become mediated by expectations of others (Callaghan, 1994). The adolescent girl eventually reaches a critical decision point. In Simone de Beauvoir’s (1952) view, it is not Freud’s idea of penis envy, but rather power envy that provides the conflict. A young woman must either choose to relinquish power by being strong and independent or paradoxically obtain power covertly by becoming submissive and manipulative. Ultimately, the discrepancy between a young girl’s independent self and the role of becoming feminine, forces a young woman to deny her natural inclinations (e.g., displaying: intelligence, athleticism, overtly
aggressive behaviors) in favor of the adoption of behaviors related to
perceived expectations (e.g., being: passive, demure, nurturing).

Berger (1972) viewed the dichotomy slightly differently. Instead
of a decision to relinquish power or paradoxically hold power through
submission, he sees the dichotomy as a simultaneous internal conflict
of the "surveyor" and "the surveyed" to be ever present in a woman's
life. He described the "woman's self being split into two" because:

a woman must continually watch herself. She is almost
continually accompanied by her own image of herself. From
earliest childhood she had been taught and persuaded to
survey herself continually.

And so she comes to consider the surveyor and
surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct
elements of her identity as a woman. She has to survey
everything she is and everything she does because how she
appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men,
is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as
the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is
supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by
another (p. 46).

In Berger's view, the "surveyed" or "other" self dominate the
personal "self" or "surveyor". However, both "self" and "other"
construct and instruct the young woman's sense of identity.

In *Reviving Ophelia* (1994), Pipher refers to Shakespeare's character,
Ophelia, as a literary example of the dichotomous self literally self-
destructing. The story brings the critical nature of the split selves in
terms of a "happy and free" young girl who after falling in love with
Hamlet, lives only for his approval. Torn between getting approval
from either her father or Hamlet, she is rejected by Hamlet because of
her expressed devotion to her father. She drowns herself in a flowered
stream dressed in beautiful clothes as a final expression of grief. Pipher
contended that these internal conflicts cause modern day teenage girls to “lose their resiliency and optimism and become less curious and inclined to take risks. They lose their assertive, energetic and ‘tomboyish’ personalities and become more deferential, self-critical and depressed. They report great unhappiness with their own bodies” (p. 19). Pipher described the conflict as complicated and acknowledged destructive behaviors by noting, “their voices have gone underground—their speech is more tentative and less articulate. Their moods swing widely....Their problems are complicated and metaphorical—eating disorders, school phobias and self-inflicted injuries” (p. 20). While I acknowledge observing behaviors that seem to fit the above descriptions and the construction of “self” and “other,” I recognize the limitations of describing the development and behavior of adolescent girls and offer an expanded view that goes beyond the binary conflict of “self” and “other.”

**Beyond Binary Choices**

I question whether or not self-destructive behaviors are the only results of internal conflict. I argue that the inner struggles that adolescent girls face in trying to please others and to define themselves, not only fuels self-destructive behaviors, but also fuels the secret aggression against other girls, as recently documented by Rachel Simmons’ (2002) *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* and supported by Wiseman’s (2002) *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends & Other Realities of Adolescence*. In extensive interviews with teenage girls from several US cities and schools, Simmons described “mean” as contrary to the “feminine identity” which is “to be nice, to nurture, to say “yes” (p. 150). Simmons’ and Wiseman’s findings suggest that to achieve what adolescent girls perceive as expected of them in terms of a “feminine identity,” they hide their aggressive acts to appear feminine.
It is Simmons' notion that girls identify themselves dichotomously, not as "self" and "other" but as "victims" or "bullies". The either/or classification of "victims" and "bullies" simplifies and continues to hide the true nature of the aggression. I agree with Simmons' argument that by ignoring the hidden aggression and clinging to the stereotype of women as non-aggressive, we assist in the cultural repression of young women. However, I believe the attempt to appear non-aggressive relates to the young woman's construction of "self" and "other" and that this tension fuels hidden aggression. Rather than admit to aggression (e.g. backstabbing) and be labeled unfeminine, women are more likely to provide assistance to silent aggression. This pathological behavior ultimately separates young women from each other (Simmons, 2002). Until young women are able to accommodate upfront honest assessments of the destructive, hidden aggression, there will not be a change in our cultural and social interactions. The cultural and social change necessary for the improvement of teenage girls' inner and interpersonal struggles, require more than Pipher's (1994) limited and socially acceptable suggestions for the development of emotional strength, nurturing, and self-protection as change agents for young women.

At this point, it is important to consider the perspectives of "self" and "other" through the eyes of philosophers Bakhtin, Sartre, and Barthes. These authors wrote about the body in terms of "subject" or "self" and "other." In their views, "the body is what others see, but what the subject does not, the subject becomes dependent upon the Other in a way that ultimately makes the body the focus of a power struggle with far-reaching ramifications" (Jefferson, 1989, p. 153). In the teenage girls' cultural/social/political position within a patriarchal system, the internal power struggle between "self" and "other" emerges as womanhood is approached. In this less restrictive view, the possible choices for a teenage girl are: 1) choose to embrace "self" and reject "other," 2) choose to reject "self" and become the "other," 3) choose to
resolve the conflict through self-destructive behavior and/or destructive aggressive acts towards others, or 4) choose to acknowledge and enter into critical dialogue to deal with the conflicting agendas of both "self" and "other."

In the first situation however, Bakhtin, Sartre, and Barthes oppose the view that the body/self or "subject" is capable of freely determining itself because the body/self or "subject" is always within "the grip and grasp of the gaze of the Other" (Jefferson, 1989, p. 153). Thus, the first choice is not viable and therefore forces the selection to the second, third or fourth choices.

The second choice stipulates that a young woman chooses to be the "other" or the "object" and relinquishes "self" which allows for a paradoxical power to be obtained by submitting to the "other." The extreme realization of the second choice ironically results in the wielding of power often exercised in terms of actions that are dishonest, manipulative, hypocritical, and inauthentic. The use of this power suppresses a young woman's true sentiments (de Beauvoir, 1952). Recently, aggressive behaviors of girls toward each other were documented in Wiseman's *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, Simmons' *Odd Girl Out* and Tina Fey's screenplay for the newly released *Mean Girls* (Waters, 2004). These works suggested a common power play used by girls that rejects "self" and accepts the expectations of the "other." Simone de Beauvoir asserts men are willing to view women as equals, however with the stipulation that women remain non-threatening to men's position of power. Once again, the tension which de Beauvoir identified as woman's independent success is in direct conflict with her "femininity" and requires that she choose to be the object or the "other."

The third and fourth options represent two alternatives for maintaining both "self" and "other" simultaneously. The third choice reflects the inability to deal with the dualism of "self" and "other". The
dualism results in the destructive behaviors that cause personal individual harm, such as anorexia, cutting, or harm to others (Pipher, 1994). The destructive aggression toward others documented by Simmons (2002) and Wiseman (2002) may also be an outcome in this choice.

It is the fourth choice that suggests the acceptance of the conflicting voices of “self” and “other” as an adversarial relationship but also with a willingness to deal with the conflict in a dialogic manner. Within the dialogic framework the potential conflict is allowed to surface and to be considered by multiple views. This translation of “self” and “other” into a dialogic framework encourages interaction that is a powerful force with the potential to stimulate change. The fourth option goes beyond the potentially destructive polarized relationship described in the third option. Considering the attempts that both men and women have made to equalize the vestiges of patriarchy, I wish to consider the question of how we can promote a move away from the subversively permeating dualism of “self” and “other” and its negative impact on gender equality. Bakhtin’s “ability to think through many of the sterile binaries (e.g. subject/object, form/content, individual /society) that have plagued existing philosophical and sociological pronouncements on language, the self, and society, and to transcend these limitations via a whole series of innovative syntheses” (Gardiner, 1992, p. 190) provides a thread of hope for positive change. It is Bakhtin’s concept of “dialogism” that promotes “re-integration of the fractured and fragmented consciousness of the modern individual into a non-estranged whole” (Gardiner, 1992, p. 193). It is through dialogue (including that of “self” and “other”) that “enlightened self-understanding” can be achieved with the potential for improved interactions with others.
Visual Culture Ties to Fear and Control

In the final phase of this argument, I return to the *visual* aspect of the term *visual culture* with particular attention given to the cultivation of the fear of visual media. The fear can be traced back to Plato’s (360 B.C./1998) contention that everyday objects and images are only imitations of the ideal. Plato’s thinking significantly influenced Western thought and its distrust of visual imagery, aiding the prevailing and excessive emphasis on the *visual* of *visual culture*. In spite of this notion of distrust, it is imperative that we acknowledge the connection of visual culture to our actions (Mirzoeff, 2002).

When George W. Bush and Al Gore campaigned against each other in the 2000 Presidential election, they warned the public of popular culture and its potentially dangerous effect on children (Steinheimer, 2003). Politicians continue to blame visual culture for the problems of today’s youth. This deflects “our public conversation away from addressing the real problems that impact children’s lives” (p. 4). The public conversation is further distracted by the mixed messages endured by America’s youth. Today’s children simultaneously experience protected innocence and greater opportunities to gain knowledge of adult behaviors. This contradiction appears to exacerbate the need to control youth (Mintz, 2004). The rapidly changing visual culture promotes a prevailing sense of lack of control fed by a fear of change. Examples of the attempt to gain control can be seen in the representations of thin, childlike women. These images function to project restricted ideas of femininity as well as suggest the need for protection. Such projections subversively oppress a young woman’s ability to be strong, developed and mature (Steinheimer, 2003).

I agree with Steinheimer’s argument that “media culture is not the root cause of American social problems, not the Big Bad Wolf, as our ongoing public discussion would suggest” (p. 3). Steinheimer maintains that the sources of the problems are more closely aligned
with fear of change, the unknown, and our unwillingness to address serious social issues such as the consequences of the objectification. While admitting that visual media has a pervasive influence in children’s lives, it is important to broaden the focus to the social, cultural, political, and economic problems confronting today’s youth, relating the visual to the culture in visual culture. Instead of blaming visual culture as the source of problems in today’s youth, it is time to seriously address children in poverty, children with poor quality day care, children without health benefits, and children suffering from poor quality and lack of support for public education.

The nation’s anxiety about the future, symbolized by our youth, has been projected onto the visual media making it symbolic of our present society (Steinheimer, 2003). It is imperative that the real issues facing our teenage girls are addressed by the public. Instead of attempting to protect youth’s innocence, it is necessary to take a hard look at the issues of social class, economic status, cultural influences, and political systems as active participants in the force of visual culture. These social/political/cultural issues need to have higher visibility and public awareness than what currently exists.

Visual Culture’s Tie to Art Education

The overt and covert effects of visual culture and its role in the development of identity of teenage girls is complex. The background and influence of each developing teenage girl is unique. The specific way in which the visual and the cultural impact a teenage girl varies for each individual. It is with this understanding that parents and educators must understand the importance of their roles as active participants in the guidance of teenage girls. Instead of sabotaging young women by fearing and shunning the world of visual media, it is time to make sense of visual culture by creating opportunities for openly discussing cultural pressures and inequities.
As the parent of a teenage daughter, I am aware of the complicated nature of my claims and suggestions. Sometimes it is readily apparent that my daughter does not wish to discuss or reveal at my request or within the context of the classroom issues that concern her. As she progresses toward adulthood, she seems to be looking for ways to separate from my husband and me, preferring to confide in her peers. However, I have noticed that when I reserve time to be present in my daughter’s life by listening, watching television and movies together, sharing meals, and taking an interest in her activities and concerns, I am more likely to be solicited for deeper and more critical discussions. Admittedly, the ability to be “present” is not easy to provide in our busy lives and often conflicting schedules.

Our postmodern times can be differentiated from the past by acknowledging that adolescence is prolonged, that teens have more freedom, and spend less time with their parents. Instead adolescents are increasingly spending more time within public institutions and with their peers (Jagodzinski, 2004). In light of this shift from times of greater parental contact to greater institutional control, it is critical for politicians, parents, educators, and art educators to find ways to be “present” in adolescents’ lives. Taking an interest in their activities includes acknowledging and discussing the visual culture present in their lives. Addressing visual culture in the art classroom through technology and/or traditional and non-traditional materials is not a new recommendation (Duncan, 2003a, 2003b; Freedman, 2003; Taylor, 2000; Wilson, 2001). These previous recommendations give space for the dialogic hope to be realized, facilitated by the use of visual culture in the art curriculum, where teachers and students can begin to create opportunities for critically addressing issues related to their cultural context. Unveiling underlying assumptions attached to visual culture and recognizing the opportunities for creative open ended discussion related to artistic practices is one way to provide dialogic interaction.
The art classroom provides one possible arena for teachers and students to explore the complexities of visual culture's relationship to the past, to uncover assumptions that limit possibilities, to reveal multiple possibilities, and to provide for new understandings that are relevant to students' lives and their concepts of self.

**Conclusion**

Visual culture surrounds us. Instead of fearing visual culture, it can be a valuable tool that encourages interaction, awareness, and understanding. My argument is not meant to portray teenage girls' as victims in their response to visual culture or to promote a reversal of power of young women over young men. Instead, this initial proposal is advocating a paradigm of dialogic interaction where adolescents consider visual culture within the architecture of patriarchal practices and engage in active interpretation of visual culture's impact upon their lives. Considering Mirzoeff's (2002) visual culture as a "transforming encounter that leaves nothing the same as it was before" (p. 17), we can move away from the diametrically opposed concepts of "self" and "other" and move toward an interaction or dialogic relationship between the two. In view of the current gender hierarchy, Mirzoeff's contends that visual culture is an interaction of the "viewer in relation to herself, the watchers and the watched," (2002, p. 18). Future research is needed to unpack the inter-relationship of the visual and culture in the term visual culture to better understand its relationship to adolescents. Further research will help to refine the argument for dialogic interaction and determine how it may help adolescent women in particular resist victimization and passivity in favor of establishing a strong, confident, and an autonomous sense of self. In this paper, I begin to unpack the term visual culture. In subsequent research, I encourage deconstructing the social construction of visual imagery and the interaction between the terms. As a first step, I recommend a
reconsideration of the term *visual culture* by placing as much emphasis and importance on the term *culture* as on the term *visual*.

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