



The 2015 LISBON LETTER for Visual Art Education

FROM: International Society For Education
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To: European Parliamentarians: Committee
Education and Culture
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult/members.html>

As members of InSEA (*The International Society for Education through Art*), we wish to express our concerns about the right to visual art education for all in European Countries. In addition, we are sending suggestions to the European Parliamentarians in order to raise the status and profile of visual art education status as a core subject in European Education systems.

InSEA is an organization that advocates for art education as a means of “fostering values and disciplines essential for full intellectual, emotional and social development of human beings”¹ Our organization had its genesis in the philo-

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sophies of Sir. Herbert Read and other internationally respected philosophers, scholars, and art educators, who, when reflecting upon the horrors of WWII, recognized the importance of nurturing youth to become empathetic human beings. The founders of InSEA understood that through art, young people might come to an appreciation of cultural differences, be guided to think critically and analytically about problematic situations and – in perceiving these issues through the viewpoints of others - identify harmonious solutions to complex intellectual, social, cultural, environmental and geo-political problems.

This letter is a response to official discourses about art education, education through art and art in education (UN Global Education Goals, Education, sustainability and the post-2015 development agenda, OCDE; UNESCO/UNICEF and EU Reports). The letter is one result of the conclusions of *the InSEA Regional Conference: 'RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION IN EUROPE', held in LISBON, PORTUGAL, during 7-9 JULY 2015*, it was compiled by a special panel of international researchers in art education and European members of InSEA.

The arts remind us of our humanity by exploring aesthetics and ethics. While we believe that art education is particularly important for young people, we also think that every person in a democratic society has the right to lifelong visual art education in different educational and socio-cultural contexts.

Educational policies in Europe must integrate visual art education in the school curricula as a core subject in line with the ONU/UNESCO/UNICEF seven post 2015 education goals² as:

<http://www.insea.org/insea/about>

² UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2012), *Realizing the future we want for all: Report to the Secretary General*, www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf

1) unique learning experience within Culture and the arts domain: acquisition of creative arts specific knowledge and processes; cultural knowledge; self and community identity and awareness and respect for diversity

2) thinking, communication and problem solving process to develop physical well being; intellectual, emotional and social learning; learning and cognition and digital learning; literacies and communication

We have serious concerns about current trends in European educational policies which are fragmenting learning, separating the sciences and technology from the arts and humanities and over emphasizing technology and sciences to the detriment of the arts and humanities. In the last three years, in some European countries, visual art education in schools and time and resources allocated to teacher training (in visual art) in Universities has been reduced. We urge European Parliamentarians to investigate and question such agendas, because for the sake of the future of Europe we need arts and humanities programmes with appropriate time and resources. We also need expert teacher in our schools to foster a holistic educational experience (cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions). Therefore, we need to maintain the arts and humanities in educational policies to achieve the post 2015 goals such as '*Gender Equity and Empowerment*'; '*Preserving the Environment and Eco-system*'; '*Peaceful and Inclusive Societies are and how Human Rights are Honored*'. Visual art education; education through art, artistic/aesthetic education is essential to a well-rounded education. We believe that art education in general has enormous potential in educating people towards such goals.

The arts teach critical thinking, cooperation and encourage creativity. They are essentially interdisciplinary and enable individuals to effectively participate in the

socio-cultural life of their communities. Art education brings to the curriculum the important notion that there are often multiple ways to solve any given problem and that there are many potential right answers. Furthermore, art education offers students the option of risk taking, essential to innovation, which is at the heart of art (and craft and design).

We strongly encourage those responsible for education policies in the EU Parliament to think about the importance of visual art in our educational systems. Above all, effective art education fosters creative citizens who can think divergently, solve problems creatively and serve the needs of the knowledge/information society of the 21st century. The creative industries are increasingly recognised as important drivers in the economies of many countries a good art education is the foundation of people who work in such industries. It is important to remember that visual art education includes a wide range of disciplines related to traditional and new media for example design, craft, architecture, digital art, film, and multimedia.

Education *through* art is possible at all ages and levels of development. Through well taught regular multifaceted art lessons, students learn about visual thinking, understanding different cultures and essential tools that support full intellectual, emotional, and social development necessary for productive human beings in society (Winner; Goldstein; Vincent-Lancrin, 2013)³. However, we will only achieve excellence in art education across our European schools by having our art teachers trained in partnerships of Universities and schools working closely together.

Finally, we suggest the following recommendations:

- Visual art education programmes should promote critical thinking together

3 Winner, E., T. Goldstein and S. Vincent-Lancrin (2013), Art for Art's Sake? Overview, OECD Publishing

with visual media and digital literacy.

- Governments in Europe should provide visual art education as a curricular subject of study for all with specialized teachers from pre-school to upper secondary schools (from 3 to 18 years old students).
- Educational policies should ensure that schools allocate considerable time for visual art education in the curricula, because good quality art education needs time to explore and foster creativity.
- Ministries of Education in Europe should provide excellent teachers for visual art education by ensuring that appropriate initial and in-service teacher training is in place.
- Educational systems should ensure that valid assessment instruments in visual art education are used (authentic art evaluation and assessment instruments to measure learning outcomes).
- Curriculum developers should ensure that visual art education syllabuses are comprehensive, flexible and can be contextualised to socio-cultural circumstances and contemporary art practices.

We therefore propose to the Education and Culture Committee to create a task force to study art education in Europe, and to Invite InSEA experts to dialogue with Members of the European Parliament and discuss these demands.

Lisbon, 17-11-2015

InSEA President Teresa Torres de Eça; InSEA Past President Marie-Françoise Chavanne; InSEA Past President Dr. John Steers; InSEA Past President Diederik Schönau; InSEA Vice President Glen Coutts;

InSEA secretary Vedat Oszoy; Chair of the European Council of InSEA Marjan Prevodnik; InSEA World Councillor Peter Gregory; InSEA World Councillor Janeke Wienk; InSEA World Councillor Martina Paatela-Nieminen; InSEA ERC members Buschkühle, Carl-Peter; Fritzsche, Marc; Haanstra, Folkert; Pataky, Gabriella; Schönau, Diederik; Wagner, Ernst.

C3 art educators Maria Jesus Agra Pardiñas; Cristina Trigo; Ana Vida; Guillermo Calvino; Ollala Cortizas; Manuel Miguéns; Carmen Franco; Daniel Vilas León; José Maria Mesías Lema; Silvia Capelo.

Researchers John Johnston (Goldsmiths, University of London); Juan Carlos Araño (University of Sevilla); Seija Ulkuniemi (University of Lapland); Joaquin Roldán and Ricardo Viadel (University of Granada); Maria Jesus Agra-Pardiñas and Cristina Trigo (University of Santiago de Compostela); Maria de Lourdes Riobom (IADE); Fernando Hernandez (University of Barcelona); Jose Maria Mesias Lema (University of Coruña, Spain); Aderito Marcos (Universidade Aberta /Artech-International, Research Centre for Arts and Communication-CIAC); Ricard Huerta (University of Valencia); Mira Kallio Tavin (Aalto University, Helsinki); Isabel Moreno and Dolores Callejón Chinchilla (University of Jaen); José Pedro Aznarez (University of Huelva); Carlos Escaño (University of Sevilla); Angeles Saura and Cristina Moreno (University Autonoma of Madrid); Pilar Perez (University Autonoma of Madrid); Apollinie Torregrosa (University Paris IV); Paloma Palau-Pellicer (University Jaume I of Castellón); Margarida Calado (University of Lisboa, Faculty of Fine Arts); João Paulo Queiroz (University of Lisboa, Faculty of Fine Arts); Tomaž Zupančič (University of Maribor, Slovenia); Leena Hannula (Sinebrychoff Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery); Ângela Saldanha, Célia Ferreira and Isabel Trindade (APECV/InSEA); Estrella Luna Munoz, Silvia Casian (APECV/CIIE/FPCEUP); Margarete Barbosa Nicolosi Soares (USP/i2ADS); Ana Barbero (APECV/i2ADS); Rui Alexandre (APECV/Lab:ACM); Marta Ornelas (UB/APECV); Aldo Passarinho (Lab:ACM); Tiago Caldas (Lab:ACM).

And 265 more European art educators from Greece; Cyprus; Portugal; Spain; UK; Belgium; Czech Republic; Slovenia; Moldavia; Estonia; Latvia; Finland; Sweden; Germany; Poland; Ireland; Denmark and France who participated in the InSEA European congress in Lisbon, July 2015.