



IMAG

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InSEA ART Education VISUAL Journal IMAG intends to provide a visual platform, which, in line with the constitution of InSEA, will help foster international cooperation and understanding, and promote creative activity in art through sharing experiences, improving practices, and strengthening the position of art in all educational settings. IMAG is an international, online, Open Access and peer-reviewed e-publication for the identification, publication and dissemination of art education theories and practices through visual methods and media.

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TRACES

Visual Arts Education in Sweden

Introduction

This special IMAG issue, Traces – Visual Arts Education in Sweden, is published by members of InSEA Sweden, and include 20 visual essays and articles. The aim of this publication is to map the field of Swedish visual arts education by describing, exemplifying and discussing some of the issues relevant in current visual arts education, also of interest to the international art educational field. The InSEA members who are contributing with their work are visual arts teachers in elementary and secondary school, art pedagogues in preschools and museums, doctoral students and researchers in universities, from the far north to the south of Sweden.

In this issue of IMAG the content and the current national visual knowledge field is divided into five themes: Environment & Sustainability, Educational projects, Art & Museums, Gender perspectives and Teacher Education. Through the themes, the reader meets different practices and theoretical perspectives on visual arts education. The visual essays and articles give examples of discusses educational contexts and situations involving children and pupils, as well as visual arts teacher students work, through a combination of drawings, paintings, photographs and texts.

With this contribution – with an aim to trace and depict the Swedish visual arts educational situation on an international map – we wish the reader a pleasant and informative reading.

March 2020

The editors,
Tarja Karlsson Häikiö & Annika Hellman

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Presentation of themes and contributions



Photograph from visual essay Dissolving views, Anna Ramberg

Theme ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

In the first essay, *Art-based Environmental Education and Ecological Literacy as a Foundation for Sustainable Thinking and Acting*, Margaretha Häggström present a study with an attempt to explain the phases of ecological literacy in relation to art-based environmental education based on a life-world phenomenological perspective. This visual essay give examples of how teachers and pupils experience and use the aesthetic values of plants and natural environments. The study is an action-research study that includes

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video-taped, participative observations and interviews, where art-based environmental education is used in order to achieve sustainable sensibility and plant awareness. The results of the study contribute with knowledge about ecological literacy development.

The unexpected, risk-taking and creative actions are core pedagogic concepts in a second-year module in a visual arts teacher BA course at a university in southern Sweden. In the article *From Non-site to Sustainable Design Challenged by Material Transformations and Oral Receptions*, Helena Malm present and discuss the work processes of three second-year visual arts teacher students. The students' processes are about sustainable site-specific design through visual and ethnographic methods which includes documentation and sketching processes in different materials. During the process, the students challenge each other through oral reception analysis, inspired by social constructivist semiotic analysis. This pedagogic design is based on interweaving theory and practice, and the idea that students should develop knowledge in, about, and through images.

Theme SCHOOL PROJECTS

Oskar Lindvall's contribution is a visual essay called *Notes on lifting art - A creative school project*, that describes a collaborative project between a compulsory school in Sweden and two artists, focusing on strengthening the arts curriculum in secondary school. In the project pupils in school year 9 and the artists, with experience of working with collaborative site-specific street art projects, creates art works in the school environment. The project, that was financed with money from the Swedish Arts Council, was part of Creative school, a national investment in art in schools by the Swedish government. The art project is based on the curriculum for the subject visual arts for years 7-9, where the learning goals encompasses directives on meaning-making through art in society.

The authors of the article *Additional Adjustments in Visual Arts Education*, Lisa Öhman and Barbro Johansson, reports from an ongoing participatory project carried out in an upper secondary school in an Art program in visual arts. The two researchers and a

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visual arts teacher have jointly developed professional knowledge about additional adjustments in visual arts education. The overall aim for the project is to investigate how different additional adjustments can develop the didactic design in the classroom of visual arts. The documentation gathered in the study offers critical reflections on how the teacher can reorganise and provide new and different support structures for learning.

In the article *Performing Otherwise - The Classroom as a Nomadic, Material Space*, Paul Resch and Ulla Lind engages in what the production of differences can mean for pedagogy in knowledge-generation, meaning-making and educational creativity. The aim is to exemplify how open-ended ambiguousness can cross boundaries, propose newness, and unfold knowledge as something playful. An assignment involving an imaginative story used to introduce a Sloyd (Handicraft) classroom assignment for 10 year-olds. The authors argue that by engaging with classroom experience as nomadic, material and performative, we gain intriguing passages into learning where the unexpected, uncertain and ambiguous have the potential to un-fold learning activities in relation to everyday life.

The research by Elin Låby involves the phenomena of how child art intervene with different ideals of schooling and childhood in a historical Swedish context. Her article is called *Interventions of Time – Child Art Competitions in the 20th Century*. It starts with a discussion on the phenomena of child art competitions, where the images from the 1940's to late 1970's are analysed. In the end of the article, the author also discuss how children in the municipality in the city of Eskilstuna worked together with artists in an art project in 2017, creating a sculpture together.

Ulla Lind and Annika Hellman writes about young people's visual and verbal becomings through fabulations, in their article called *Visual Fabulations and a Thousand Becomings in Media and Art Education*. The empirical material draws upon two educational research studies from visual arts and media practices, conducted by the authors. They contribute with knowledge about the potentials of visual arts and media education to fabulate, speculate and thus generate future becomings, that might be realised. By analysing

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pupil's fabrications, the potentiality of visual arts and media education becomes visible; for example unleashing creativity through experimental and open ended learning processes.

Malena Wallin and Charlotta Gavelin present a study called *Teacher Students Meet Their Intended Target Group - Aesthetic Work on Tweenies as a Phenomenon*, with the purpose to investigate how visual representations of identity are created and perceived by future leisure-time center teachers. In the leisure-time center there are opportunities to focus on interdisciplinary, value-based work, not least through aesthetic and creative processes through use of storyline. Through using storyline as a method, the students dared to experiment with other inputs than the ones in traditional teaching. The storyline method helped the students to approach and deal with problems like how to take up difficult subjects in the teaching activities.

Theme ART & MUSEUMS

In the visual essay *Children and young people meet the art at Moderna Museet*, Maria Taube, Ylva Hillström and Pernilla Stalfeldt writes about young people's encounters with art, and methods for children and young people to meet art. Moderna Museet was one of the first modern museums in Sweden to set up a workshop where children and young people could paint and draw inspired by what they saw at the museum. Since then, the pedagogical activity has developed further. Here three recent projects are presented, based on the museum's exhibitions on climate change, photography and guided art tours for parents with babies.

The visual essay *Project at Svandammsskolan Involving the Artist Marie-Louise Ekman* is written by Margareta Abenius Eriksson. The essay consists of images made by pupils in school years 3-6, as paraphrases on the expressive and colourful art by the Swedish artist Marie-Louise Ekman. In the autumn of 2017 the art project started from an exhibition with the artist at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Some of the pupils were acquainted with her art works, but for some of them the art by Ekman was intriguing. With inspiration from the painting *Lonely lady*, the pupils talked about what the artist – but

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also themselves – could long for. As a comment to the visit at the museum the pupils painted pictures of what one can long for, which were presented in a school gallery.

Bitte Fossbo writes about a school project with two high school classes in the visual essay *Learn from the Artist!* In the project, the students followed a guided tour at the art museum Moderna Muséet in Stockholm. The students participated in art talks and worked with the museum's collection of 20th century art. The visual essay describes how artistic expressions can be used for creating an understanding of what the world was like in the time when the artists were living. In this way the art talks also functioned as an example of visual arts educational activities outside of school, where the museum functions as a societal arena for knowledge acquisition.

In the article *Acts of Performance - as Research Method and Entangled Ethics*, Camilla Johansson Bäcklund explore how specific processes of art-based research can be described as method using concepts from posthuman theory. She explores boundaries between acting and performing that also grapples with wider ethical aspects produced from, and connected to, artistic practice. She discusses the act of performance in relation to the role of artist, but also as a way to approach the role of teacher through "research led-practice". This, claiming art to be useful within the usually text-dominated context of educational science, and as a comment to how teachers can approach roles, frameworks and learning spaces through Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical theory.

Author Anna Ramberg explore and present the course of events of children performing as guides at guided tours at an annual visual arts degree exhibition in Stockholm. In her visual essay *Dissolving Views - Re-Visualizing the Art Exhibition* the participants made paper fortune tellers to guide visitors through the exhibition. The aim of the essay is to show how both gallery exhibitions and guided tours can be re-visualized, thinking with children. Magic Lanterns, contemporary art, researchers and paper fortune tellers enabled dissolving views and creative ways of looking and learning. The study shows that art is not only about the artefacts; it is about the continuous making of the space, becoming together with the art

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and other visitors.

In this article, *Art Pedagogy – Contemporary Visual Art Studies*, the authors Anna Widén and Hans Örtengren describe a collaboration between a university and an art museum. The Contemporary Art Museum in Umeå in northern Sweden is one of Sweden's largest art galleries for contemporary art. The collaboration involves a course called Art Pedagogy, where an art-pedagogical project is planned, conducted and presented. Two projects collected in the spring of 2018 were selected for analysis. The result show that a win-win situation may occur when actors with different competences and resources participate in a project. For this to happen the schools and teachers need to have an interest in, and be prepared for a project, with an initial understanding.

Theme GENDER PERSPECTIVES

An image says more than a thousand words, but what does these words mean? Katarina Jansson Hydén gives examples of how art works can be analysed in upper secondary school, with and without a norm-critical perspective. Her essay *See more queer! to enable a broader perspective on existence through a norm-critical analytical thinking*, concerns notions pre-conceiving knowledge and the need of developing understanding through norm-critical image analysis in relation to a social gender context. Through examples with young people, the author discusses how image analysis is colored by normative pre-conceptions, often perceived and staged by gestures or choice of clothing, as well as glances of positioning, gender and spatiality.

The article *Perspectives on Equality and Assessment: Boys' Responses in Visual Arts Education* is written by Lova Palmér, and is centered around conditions for creating equivalence in assessment in the school subject visual arts. The study is informed by a socio-cultural perspective on learning, and the material presented is based on tasks in Palmér's own visual arts classroom from the study year 2017-2018 in the school years 7-9 in compulsory school. One of the main directives in the curriculum in Sweden is that school should be imbued with equivalence. According to previous studies, the

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subject visual arts has a strong female connotation, and according to national evaluations in Sweden girls have better average grades than boys in the subject. The aim of the study was to test and improve teaching practice, pupils' activities and assignments, and to improve the professional skills of the teacher.

Theme TEACHER EDUCATION

In the visual essay *What happens to image teacher students who work with conceptual contemporary art methods and processes?*, Ewa Berg describes the use of conceptual, contemporary art methods in visual arts teacher education. She shows how visual arts teacher students' critical thinking and active agencies has been developed and empowered by working with contemporary conceptual artistic methods. Equally important is the presenting of students' art work in public spaces. The author further argues that since art-teacher-student inevitably will re-enact their experiences to pupils in secondary school, and thus are able to also carry over processes of empowerment to these pupils, it is of a vital importance to provide well thought-through learning process in higher education.

In the visual essay *Sketching and Drawing as Part of the Learning Process - Showing Ideas and Presenting Projects*, Anneli Martin describes sketching as a part of the learning process in different kinds of teaching contexts with university students at three different faculties and programs in higher education. In the essay, case studies are presented from design courses, teacher education and engineering courses at three universities. Pen and paper, as well as charcoal and coloured crayons, were introduced to the students as analogue tools for sketching and presenting ideas. The essay is a summary of a five-year long study where results are presented of the similarity and difference on use of sketching and drawing as means for thinking and expression in different kind of studies.

Maria Stam discusses the possibility of using artistic role models as a way of understanding Modernism in visual arts teaching in her visual essay *Modernism - Historical Perspectives in Visual Arts Teacher Education*. The author shows examples from several students' duplications and paraphrases of art work from famous

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artists. The visual essay is a narrative description of how modernistic art works can be used as tools in visual arts teacher education to create understanding of how artistic trends affects the society and the ways of seeing in society, creating an insight of art historic, artistic and educational knowledge through the students' art work and pedagogical reflection.

In the article *A/r/tography in Visual Arts Teacher Training Program Examination*, Annika Hellman and Tarja Karlsson Häikiö discusses degree projects in visual arts teacher education. Through the concept a/r/tography the authors aim to reflect and discuss the positions as artist, researcher and teacher, that are interlaced in the future position as, and becoming a visual arts teacher. One student's visual and textual degree project is selected to investigate the exams from artistic, research-based and teaching practice perspectives. The authors highlight and discuss the benefits and limitations of merging these three positions, and what implications these processes might have for visual arts education in general.

SCHOOL PROJECT

Interventions of time – Child Art Competitions in the 20th century

Elin Låby Konstfack

Senior lecturer Visual Arts Education
Department of Visual Arts and Sloyd Education
University of Arts, Craft and Design
Stockholm
Email: elin.laby@konstfack.se

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Abstract

This research concerns children's art competitions between 1930-2000 and it analyzes both the competitions and the actual pictures. In this article I discuss pictures from three different competitions, from two generations, one competition from the 1940's and two from the late 1970's.

The research questions concern how children's pictures have been used to bring forth social agendas, with pictures from different organizations or arrangers. They have all used children's pictures to bring forth their special agendas, but at the same time with the aim of spreading knowledge about children's perspectives and giving children recognition. Children's pictures was used to promote both change and continuity in society. School and the art education played an important part in this, in the 1940s competition the art teacher union was one of the arrangers, with the aim of changing the art subject in school. Children's participation and action through their artwork were asked for during this period, even if the idea of choosing the most talented, winning, pictures changed between the 1940s and the 1970s. Through the competitions the pictures got public and published in different ways, and thereby gained attention. In this way children's voices and children's art were seen and heard in society.

In the article I also discuss how children in the municipality of Eskilstuna worked together with artists in an art project in 2017, creating a sculpture together that is now put up as public art in the municipality. How children's art and ideas can be included in society in different ways is an interesting question for the future.

In my dissertation *Winning pictures – art competitions for children 1938-2000* (2018), I study how the phenomena of child art and children's art competitions could intervene with different ideals of schooling and childhood in a Swedish context. Different agents - from the National Museum to the National telephone company or a dairy cooperation company - have been arranging art competitions. I want to share part of my studies and some of the questions I discuss in the dissertation: Which agents have been interested in children's pictures and children's art competitions during different times and for what reasons? What cultural meanings are expressed and formed through the pictures and competitions?

By analyzing children's art competitions, it is possible to see how ideals of children and childhood as well as of children's drawings have changed or been reproduced over time. I have studied the actual pictures, as well as written archive material related to the art competitions, mapping the context in which they were made.

I will start by discussing the phenomena of the child art competitions, and how the practices of the competitions both continued and changed over time. I will also discuss how the material can be related to ideals of gender, emotions, modernity and the modern and how this have been pictured and discussed in different ways. Finally, I want to give some present examples of public child art that has come to my knowledge through the child picture archive in the city of Eskilstuna. The Swedish child picture archive is a starting point for this study, and creating a state financed child art archive in 1977 is a sign of a changed ideal of children and childhood, signifying a societal interest in keeping and archiving children's pictures.

What made the phenomena of art competitions for children possible?

In the historical documents concerning the earliest competition from 1938-1947 three main discourses emerge in the material. These are the discourses of psychology, especially developmental psychology; of education and pedagogy; and maybe most apparent; the modern art discourse. How these three will intertwine and change over the period from the late 1930s to the late 20th century is essential in the thesis, and a relevant background for this article. To analyze the material, I

have combined a semiotic analysis and a critical discourse analysis where the semiotic analysis has been a tool to discuss the content and meanings of the pictures. Both images and competitions could create different subjectivities.

Commercial and political structures are also relevant in contextualizing the competitions. This allows a discussion of what has been regarded appropriate social scenes or places for children to depict or be depicted in.

The competitions and pictures are affected by the different discourses, but they simultaneously also affect the discourses, and are part of both reproducing and changing the ideals of children and childhood. An increased interest in the child, shown for instance by the publication of the book *The Century of the Child*¹, by the Swedish author Ellen Key in 1900, also made children's drawings interesting and valuable, and this applies not only in developmental psychology but also on the art scene and within education. The interest in children's art started early in the 20th century, when galleries and art educators held exhibitions featuring children's pictures². Furthermore, artists like Kandinsky, Klee or Picasso had collections of children's drawings as inspiration³.

The changing life conditions for many children at this time, with compulsory schooling, led not only to the possibility to examine their drawing abilities and compare this to developmental schemes, but also to greater access to painting supplies and material, and a request from many educators to make the former upper-/middle-class values of art available to a broader public. Along with the modernist art there is a distinct change at the beginning of the century regarding what is good middle-class taste, including an appreciation of children's drawings. This is what made the child art competitions and exhibitions possible during this time⁴.

1. Key, E. (1900). *Century of the child*. Stockholm: Bonnier.

2. Wilhelm, V. (1936). *Child Art and Franz Cizek*; Ricci, C. (1906) *Kinderkunst*: Ber.Ubers.aus dem Ital.von E.Roncali. Leipzig.

3. Fineberg, J. (1998). *Discovering Child Art: Essays on childhood, Primitivism and Modernism*, Princeton University Press.

4. Pettersson, S. & Åsén, G. (1989) *Bildundervisningen och det pedagogiska rummet: traditioner, föreställningar och undervisningsprocess inom skolämnet teckning/bild i grundskolan*. Diss. Stockholm: Univ. Stockholm, Illeris, H. (2002) *Billede, pædagogik og magt: postmoderne optikker i det billedpædagogiske felt*. 1. uppl. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

How the pictures were displayed and presented

An important difference between the competitions that I studied is where they have been displayed and shown. Here I will present three competitions I have examined more thoroughly – one from the 1940s and two from the 1970s.

The earliest competition in my material was held between 1938 and 1947, arranged by the socialistic, or, the popular movement magazine called *People in Pictures* (Folket i bild, FIB) in collaboration with the art teacher union and the National museum. The competition had different themes each year, for instance "Life in our school", "Life in our homestead" "Our games" or "Swedish holidays". They were exhibited at the National museum every year between 1941-1947.



Figure 1: **The pictures exhibited at the art museum**

This picture was published in FIB 1944 where we see the winning pictures from the competition exhibited at the National Museum.

The caption reads as follows (In English):

Last year 20 000 children participated in the competition from all over the country. Here we see some interested participants studying the pictures that were exhibited at the National Museum. The theme of the competition last year was Swedes in troubled times, emergency then and now.

In this picture we see a detail from the magazine in 1944 where some students are looking at the pictures with great interest. In newspaper articles and publications about the competition, the pictures were discussed to be inspiration for both other students and adults who want to learn about the life and art of children. This picture was being published in the youth pages of the FIB magazine. The popular movement paper FIB could in this way also be part of an art education, encouraging children to both make and enjoy art. In the 1940s the art competitions were encouraged by arts advocates, like the curator of the national museum. It was also encouraged by the popular movement magazine that had an interest in children's conditions and the growth and construction of the welfare state. Both the progressive social movements and the more conservative art scene were interested in highlighting children and child art at the time. From different angles they could see the benefit of child art, in a romanticized idea of the innocent child having a natural sense for the arts, or as means of uniting young people from all of Sweden, from city and countryside, in worrisome times of war in Europe. The art teachers meant that the competition could help to stimulate more of children's free imagination in the art classes in school. This competition also awarded quite good prizes, which the children could use for school trips, which is often mentioned in comments from the teachers published in the paper FIB.





Figure 2: The pictures published in public for a special brand – on the cover of the telephone catalogue (1977-1984), and on the cover of milk cartoons (1976).

These pictures (figure 2) are from two competitions from the 1970s, both starting in 1976. One was arranged by the *National telephone company* (Televerket) where the competition was to make the cover for the 25 regional telephone catalogues, with variations on the theme of "Homestead" between 1976 and 1981. Every region had their own competition. Like the FIB competition this was made in school, with the price going collectively to the class. The other competition I studied more closely was only arranged in 1976, by *Arla* (a large cooperative milk company) and the post office. The theme for their competition was "What I want to protect". These images were mainly made in children's free time, and had no monetary price, *Arla* meant instead that the price was to have one's picture printed on the milk cartons, and the aim, according to the arrangers, was to give children a voice. It is significant how children in these competitions have been asked to depict different

topics to further or emphasize political, economic or social interests. *Arla* printed, as mentioned, the children's pictures on their milk cartons, the message of the pictures were important, with the theme for the competition being "What I want to protect". The pictures are almost always accompanied by text, like in a commercial.

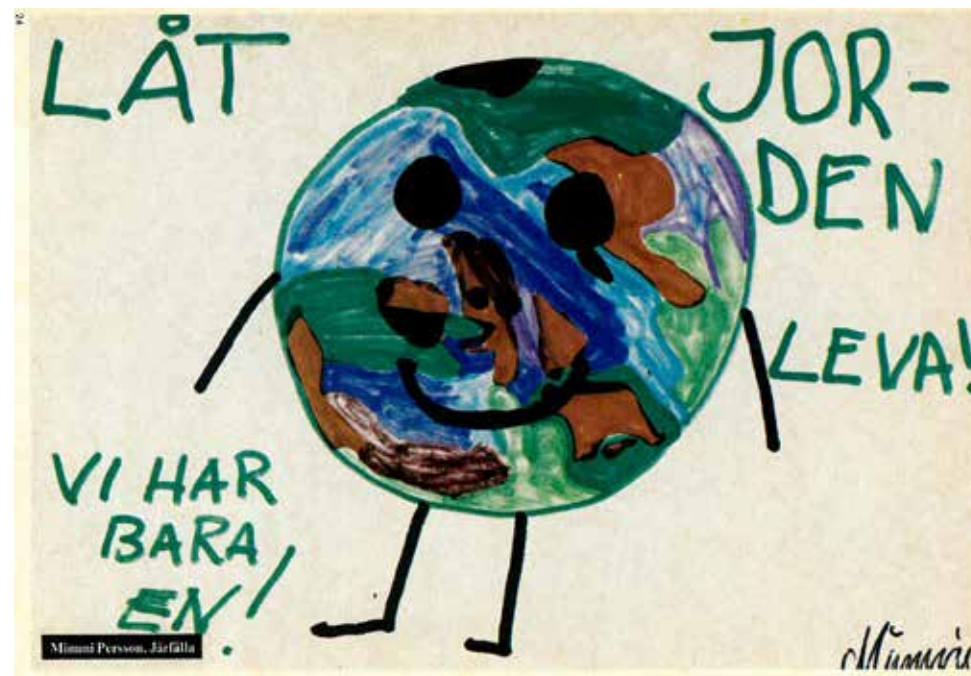


Figure 3: There we see an example of a picture from the *Arla* competition published in the book *Why can not children decide* (1977) where the text say: "LET THE EARTH LIVE! WE ONLY HAVE ONE!"

The text and picture are together making a distinct statement. In the milk cartons above we see a call not to leave summer cats after vacation is over, to stop smoking, and to care for endangered flowers.

Studying the archive of the telephone company, it is obvious they had mainly economic motives, using the children's pictures as an inexpensive way to change their bureaucratic image, and at the same time turn children into future telephone consumers. Asking the children to depict their homestead, and use certain crayons, they could get colorful, "childlike" pictures also resembling those found

in tourist brochures. The telephone company had the winning pictures printed on their catalogue covers, and the catalogues were distributed to all homes in Sweden. The themes we see on the covers in figure 2 was "My homestead" in 1977 and "Animals in our homestead" 1981.

In the competitions in the 1970s the children were regarded both as producers of commercial art, but also as consumers and especially here of milk or telephones⁵.

Children's places; the national child in 1947, the competent child in 1977



Figure 4: Cover for the album Sweden through Children's Eyes (1947)

Picture 4 and 5 show two book covers featuring children's pictures from the FIB competition in the 1940s and the Arla competition in the 1970s. The winning pictures show big differences, the title of the book also sends us different messages. In the book *Sweden through Children's Eyes*, arranged by the FIB magazine and the National Museum and published in 1947, we understand from the title it is the story of Sweden pictured by the young artists. The picture chosen for this cover exhibits a red house and the Swedish flag surrounded with flowers and trees. A boy with a cap is seen at the corner of the house, playing with pebbles, on a sunny summer's day. The title of the picture is *Playing with pebbles* and it was part of the competition "Our games" held in 1945. World war II was at its end and this winning picture can depict Sweden as a safe and caring nation, who also encourages its talented children. The child is depicted quite small, and the surroundings including the flag, the house and a nice summer garden are just as important. This gives a romantic impression of a child both playing games and also having a flourishing environment to grow in.

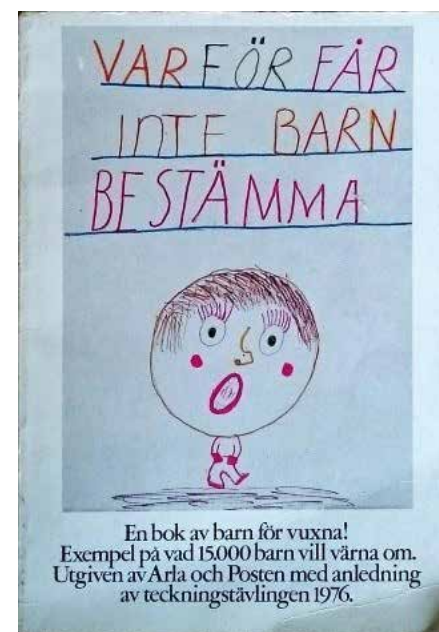


Figure 5: Cover for the album Why don't children get to decide: A book by children for adults! (1977)

5. This is discussed further in Låby, E (2018) Vinnande bilder: Teckningstävlingar för barn 1938-2000. Diss. Linköping : Linköpings universitet, p.120

In the book cover from 1977, the theme of the *Arla* competition was “What I want to protect”⁶. the child in the picture is drawn very large and is screaming *Why don't children get to decide*.

Here the child, painted as a naïve simple stick figure, is in focus. This reflects both the view on children in the 1970s as competent in making decisions, and that the competence of drawing in central perspective is no longer needed. The pictures imply that arrangers at different times are asking for different ideas or ideals of both children and children's pictures. You can also see a difference between those competitions where the pictures are made in school and the ones made at home. This is seen in the use of visual art materials and in how detailed the pictures are.

It is evident in the material that the idea of modernity – and modern technology – has changed over time from being pictured as a possibility of progress in the 1940's to be later regarded as a threat. This changing discourse of modernity is noticed already in the theme of the 1976 *Arla* competition “What I want to protect”, where modernity is viewed as problematic. A majority of the pictures concern animal and environmental protection. Even in many later competitions between 1970-2000 children are asked to come up with solutions of fears about the future. In the following text we will see two examples from 1939 and 1976.

Changing discourse of modernity

In the pictures from the 1940s modernity is seen as positive, modern industry generating work opportunities or modern agricultural equipment making harvesting more efficient. One can sense a feeling of a promising future in the pictures of the 1940s, where the themes for the competitions were *Life in our school* in 1938, and *Life in our Homestead* in 1939. This can be seen in pictures of the building of new houses, different factories, large schools with playing schoolchildren, or work being done by children and adults together on the farm. The children have adult role models to look up to, and they have opportunities ahead⁷.



Figure 6: Life in our homestead (1939) “Harvest” (skörd)

6. Varför får inte barn bestämma: en bok av barn för vuxna! ... / utg. av Arla och Posten med anledning av teckningstävlingen 1976. - 1977

7. Låby, E (2018) chapter 3.

In contrast to children in the 1940's the children of the 1970's reveal that they had a devastated environment to take care of, as expressed in their pictures. They were also given other themes to depict, the theme of the *Arla* competition being *What I want to protect*. Here we see how the sun is crying in this picture called *Let all plants live*. An airplane is flying over the trees and we understand it is spreading poison that kills the plants. Modern agriculture had now become a problem. In the 1970-80 the winning pictures from art competitions show more of emotionality, bringing up problems both in school and in the surrounding world. This could be related to bullying, environmental problems, war and famine. The pictures from the 1970s and 1980s show emotions, like tears, that were absent in the 1940s pictures. These changes were also to be expressed in the curricula from 1980 where art education was stressed as a means of communication. Additionally, the connection between art and environmental education was a new issue. *Arla* writes: "the drawings show adults that children want to be engaged in society".⁸ The pictures in the *Arla* competition 1976 often come with a text, and the more childish the picture looks, the better.⁹ The aim has transformed from viewing children's pictures as art, to societal participation for children and making children heard.



Figure 7: What I want to protect (1976) "Let all plants live!" (låt alla växter leva)

Changing ideas of children's participation in competition over time

In the 1940s the competition was a means to show in international comparison "that Swedish schoolchildren can draw"¹⁰. Children's pictures had a value as art and as inspiration for artists. It was also seen as a possibility for all children regardless of social class to participate on equal grounds. Competitions were a way to strengthen the position of the visual art subject in school, and the competition was mentioned as something positive and playful.

In the 1970s the National schoolboard instructed the competitions arrangers not to use the word competition, since it is something they want to avoid in school. A discourse that implies that it is not possible to compete in art – The largest daily newspaper arranged an art competition for children in 1977 with the theme *outer space*; in the headline it said art competition, and they had prices for winning pictures, but beneath they wrote, "well it is not really a competition since it is not possible to compete in art."¹¹ Artists got upset and saw children taking over their job opportunities. A changed art scene as well as changed media scene and changed ideals of children's participation, gave different possibilities for children's art competitions. Art as communication is stressed in the art subject in school from 1980, and art competitions were described as giving children a voice.

I want to end with two contemporary examples of public visual art by children in 2017, in the municipality of Eskilstuna. The first one is labelled *Unknown planet*.¹² Here we see one of the artists discussing with pupils about their sketches.

8. Varför får inte barn bestämma: en bok av barn för vuxna! (1977) sid.7.

9. As example: Picture 3 and 5.

10. Låby, E (2018) sid. 66. (FIB 1938 nr 24 sid. 27).

11. DN 1977-08-28 sid. 40.

12. <https://www.eskilstuna.se/uppleva-och-gora/museer-och-konst/offentlig-konst/invigd-verk/okand-planet----vilsta.html> (2018-11-22)



Figure 8: Children and artists Working with the project *Unknown Planet* (2017)

During 2017 an Art Group called Kultivator, worked together with 4th and 5th grade children from the Skjulsta school, that resulted in the public art piece *Unknown Planet* in an outdoor recreation area nearby Eskilstuna. The children were around 10-12 years, and the theme given was to draw a spaceship, that was also possible to build. The children all made pictures and then they voted within their own class what ideas to use. Together with the artists and architects they then made the final idea of the spaceship, and they built it together. Many of the children had not been for a long time in Sweden, and they also used the spaceship to explore the surrounding when you come to a new place, pretending they were from another planet. In the spaceship there are also science equipment like microscopes or measuring tools to explore the nature around the "spaceship".



Figure 9: Children at the opening of their collaborative outdoor art project *Unknown Planet* (2017)



Figure 10: One example of bronze plate made from a child's drawing, from the Art competition *Play in my spare time* arranged by Eskilstuna municipality (2018)

This picture shows another competition arranged by the municipality of Eskilstuna, the theme was *Play in my spare time*. All children in grade 1-3 in 28 schools in Eskilstuna were invited, and more than 1700 pictures were sent in. All pictures are now archived at the Swedish child picture archive, SBBA (Swedish Child Picture Archive). 24 of the children's pictures were made into bronze plates and placed in the pavement on the main shopping street in Eskilstuna. This picture is made by Iris, Björkorpsskolan.¹³ At present also schoolchildren in grade 4-9 is participating in a similar competition, to be exposed in the same way.

Summary

The study of children's art competitions shows how children have been given a voice, even if restrained by the preconditions for the competitions, and demonstrating what the arrangers have regarded as winning pictures. The pictures also show how the concept of modernity have altered over time, where modernity is the positively visualized in the 1940s it is questioned by pictures related to environmental questions in the 1970s.

In this article I have pointed out how the idea of child art has been addressed in different ways and by different actors at different historical times and shown how different ideologies have been a part of competitions. I have discussed the art competitions as a means of both giving voice to children, but also restraining through what subject's children have been asked to depict. How do we respond to children's art competitions today; are competitions excluding when not everyone is winning, or can they be used to include children as a group in public participation?

As art educators we have reason to bring child art and children's expressions to the fore. To make children and artists collaborate and work together gives possibilities of communication across time and place, the children's work made visual over time in public places.

13. <https://www.eskilstuna.se/uppleva-och-gora/museer-och-konst/offentlig-konst/invigda-verk/jag-ar-en-liten-gron-planta-och-lek-pa-fritiden---kungsgatan.html> (2018-11-22)

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