



# Learning through Art #3

INTERNATIONAL PICTURES  
OF PRACTICE

**Edited by**

Section One: Gabriella Pataky

Section Two: Jonathan Silverman

Section Three: LiYan Wang & Yungshan Hung

Section Four: Sunah Kim

**Executive Editor**

Glen Coutts

**InSEA**  
THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR EDUCATION THROUGH ART

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**InSEA**  
PUBLICATIONS



First published 2022  
by InSEA Publications

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InSEA: International Society  
for Education through Art  
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**Publisher**  
InSEA Publications  
Quinta da Cruz  
Estrada de Sao Salvador,  
3510-784 Viseu, Portugal

[www.insea.org](http://www.insea.org)

ISBN: 978-989-53600-2-4  
DOI: 10.24981/2022-LTA3

**Art Direction & Design Layout**  
Maira Douranou

**Cover photo**  
David Bachelor  
'Plato's Disco #2' 2015  
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# Table of Contents

Preface	10
Editorial Team	14
Section 1 // Edited by Gabriella Pataky // DOI:10.24981/2022-LTA3_1	16
1.1 Drawing-sound choreographies by Sylvia Kind	18
1.2 PLAY Studio at the Whitworth Art Gallery by Lucy Turner	28
1.3 Through the Sands by Luiza Americano Grill and Jéssica Oliveira Barros	38
1.4 How 5- to 6-Year-Old Children Master the Challenges of Drawing Animals by Anja Morawietz	50
1.5 We are Part of Nature: Discovering Glaciers Through Play by Jelena Bjeletic	58
1.6 The Drawing Garden by Andri Savva, Valentina Erakleous and Sophia Rossidou	66
1.7 Romare Bearden Neighborhood Collages by Emily Higgins	76
1.8 Contemporary Sculpture as a Creative Practice for the Little Ones by Rut Martinez	82
1.9 A Study of Awareness and Empathy: Where did all the Yellow go? by Gigi Yu & Mary Bliss	90
1.10 Drawing That Photograph you Hear by Noemí Peña Sánchez	102
1.11 Trees & Animals : Art and English as a Foreign Language by Mirjana Tomasevic Dancevic	110

Section 2 // Edited by Jonathan Silverman // DOI:10.24981/2022-LTA3_2	118
2.1 Nature Art by Parnian Mahmoudzadeh Tussi	120
2.2 Learning Art Through Nature by Hui-Min Lin	128
2.3 Invisible Rivers by Eraldo Leandro Moraes Junior	136
2.4 How Many Ways? by Sharon Fortowsky	146
2.5 Lost Places, New Spaces by Gemma Comber	158
2.6 Beirut Museum: Artist in Residency by Maya Hage	170
2.7 "School of Designers: Schools of Tomorrow !" - Creative Leadership for Better Education in Tunisia by Sarah Belkhamsa	186
2.8 Children as Designers by Kerri Sellens	200
2.9 My Genre Box by Maria Broderick	210
2.10 History Appreciation: Outdoor Painting by Samia Elshaikh	218
2.11 Art Education for Wildlife Conservation Awareness by Priyasri Promchinda	226
2.12 Masks in Culture by Pingyen Lee	236

Section 3 // Edited by LiYan Wang & Yungshan Hung // DOI:10.24981/2022-LTA3_3	244
3.1 Collage Self-Portraits by Ivana Karlovcan	246
3.2 “Wow! It’s me”: Creating the Hidden Self through Pottery by Man Ti Huang	256
3.3 Art Time: Pause for Subjective Collections by Maria José Braga Falcão	262
3.4 Translucent and Opaque by M. Mercedes Sánchez	274
3.5 Colorful Pictures: Creative Plant Dyeing by Chung Feng Ma	280
3.6 Improving the Aesthetic Deliciousness of School Lunch through Food Plating by Min-Fang Chiu	286
3.7 Basic Elements of Design: Re-creating “Las Meninas” by Blanca M <sup>a</sup> González Crespán	292
3.8 Our Puzzle of the Past: A Family History Printmaking & Mixed Media Project by Ellen Wright & Vanessa Vanclief	298
3.9 The Heart of the City: A Collagraph Mural Project by Agnieszka Chalas	310
3.10 Discovering the NORTH by Aldona Kaczmarczyk-Kolucka	316
3.11 Using Technology to Cultivate Students’ Sense of Ecological Aesthetics Through Experiential Learning by Yuchun Chen	326
3.12 A Message in a Bottle by Rhian Foley	334
3.13 De Lixo a Bicho Project: Art Education for Sustainability by Rita Inês Petrykowski Peixe	342
3.14 The Interdependence Hexagon Project: Art into Action by Beth Burkhauser, Dr. Andrea Nerozzi, Robert Hughes, Lisa Temples	352

3.15 How Are You Connected to Nature? 9th Grade Students’ Visual Responses to Climate Issues by Leticia Balzi	362
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Section 4 // Edited by Sunah Kim // DOI:10.24981/2022-LTA3_4	368
4.1 This is me! Visual Art as a Means to Identify Self and the “Bigger Picture” by Margaretha Häggström	370
4.2 Collaborative Drawing with Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder by Phivi Antoniou & Nefi Charalambous-Darden	378
4.3 Colorful Flower Window by Ou Meng Ting	384
4.4 Cross-hatching: The Transferability of a Drawing Technique Across Different Topics by Ranae Lee-Nasir	392
4.5 Painting by Ice, Share Online by Kirita Keisuke	398
4.6 Recounting Losses and Reconnecting the Future Through Creative Arts Engagements by John Oyewole Adenle Ph.D	404
4.7 Rural Intergenerational Artmaking in Southwest Saskatchewan, Canada by Maria Enns, Valerie Triggs & Michele Sorensen	410
4.8 The Perfect Museum of Me by Helen Garbett and Bill Laybourne	418
4.9 Wohin des Weges? (Where to go?): Short Stage Play on Arts and Culture in Education by Wilfried Swoboda	424
4.10 Learning Through Collaboration: A Mural Project with Disability Students by Ahran Koo	432

## Preface

In 2019, at the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) World Congress in Vancouver, the second book in the *Learning Through Art series entitled Learning Through Art: International Perspectives* was published. During that event, the call for this book was launched with the central theme international *pictures* of practice. Our broad aim was to present readers with clear, first-hand accounts of what artist-educators are doing in a variety of contexts, for example, schools, communities or other settings. The notion of *pictures* of practice encouraged people from all parts of the world to submit visual essays or reports. We asked art educators to tell us, in their own words, what they are doing in classrooms and communities with young people aged between 3 and 18 years. In addition, we asked for examples of inclusive practices in education through art. As the title suggests, we aimed to make this a very visual book; art educators were invited to submit images and a simple narrative to describe a successful intervention, workshop or series of lessons. As an editorial team we set ourselves an ambitious task with the emphasis on the creativity of individual artist-educators and their students. Rather than designing a 'text book' containing formula lessons we strived to present critical 'portraits' of teaching and learning through the visual arts.

The response to our call was overwhelming and we had many more submissions than we could possibly publish in a single book. We invited authors to engage broadly with the idea(s) of practice (in art, design and craft), to write descriptive accounts in a straightforward and candid way. The results are illustrated stories that convey a sense of the creativity and imagination of the young people learning through the visual arts supported by artist-teachers.

During the time that this book has been in preparation, the world has endured a global pandemic; COVID-19 has forced us to reconsider our normal ways of working. Before the pandemic, art educators could simply visit other schools and teachers in order to share, refresh practice and exchange ideas, but since 2020 that has proven problematic. Travel, even locally, has been difficult and one result of this has been the rise of so called 'remote learning' for many. Teachers and artist-teachers have been compelled to find alternative ways to stay connected and work together. As an editorial team we were very conscious of these challenges and made every effort to help the authors present their work in the best possible way. The book is available on an open-access basis in order to be available to the widest possible cross section of the art education community. Readers may download the entire book or only the section(s) that particularly interest them. We invite you to explore each of the sections and hope that the book as a whole will stimulate debate, discussion and the sharing of ideas and methods.

Through personal, richly illustrated and highly readable accounts, authors reflect on their practice in visual arts education and the interconnections of art, design, craft and visual culture education. The book is arranged four sections, the first three follow chronological order; age groups 3-7; 8-11 and 12-18 and the fourth section cuts across age groups and addresses key issues of art-infused inclusive education.

The opening section concerns work with the students in the vital early years of ages 3-7. This section is edited by Gabriella Pataky, Director of the Art Teacher Master's Program at ELTE TÓK University, Head of Department of Visual Education and working at the Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design in Budapest. Her work with the authors in this section provides an insight to some of the fascinating work going in early years education. With 11 essays, readers are offered a valuable 'snapshot' of education through art with younger children.

The second section presents work from educators working with students aged between 8 and 11 years. Jonathan Silverman is the section editor, who at Saint Michael's College, Vermont, USA coordinated Arts Education and taught courses on aesthetics, interdisciplinary curriculum, creativity and environmental art. His professional interests on cross-cultural and interdisciplinary learning and environmental and social justice can be detected in some of the 12 essays in section two.

Teachers who work with students in the 12-18 years age group is the focus of section three. Yungshan Hung and LiYan Wang, both based in Taiwan, co-edited this section. Yungshan is Research Fellow of the Center for Curriculum and Instruction, National Academy for Educational Research, Taiwan (R.O.C.). Li-Yan is a professor of the Department of Fine Arts at National Changhua University of Education in Taiwan (R.O.C.). Her research areas have focused on visual art education history, narrative analysis, and ways to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and dialogue through art and the use of social media. The 15 essays in this section offer a rich variety of interventions, lessons and projects, many of which mirror the professional interests of the section editors.

The closing section with 10 essays, focuses on how education empowers vulnerable populations. Unlike the previous three parts, this section is not linked to age groups, rather its thematic concern is inclusion. Sunah Kim, the editor of section four is a professor at the Department of Applied Art Education of Hanyang University, Korea with a research focus on inclusion and diversity.

All books are the result of the efforts of many people and this is no exception; 48 essays by 57 authors from 28 countries; a considerable endeavor. It has been a great pleasure to work with such a dedicated and creative editorial team. The section editors have worked tirelessly to ensure that the authentic voices of authors (and students) shine

through and their work is presented in a vibrant, accurate and accessible manner. As an editorial team we thank the Publications Board of InSEA, our reviewers and the very many critical friends who commented on early drafts. We also thank Teresa Torres de Eça (co-editor) Ângela Saldanha (designer) who worked on the first two books in the *Learning Through Art* series, you remain guiding lights. To the authors, thank you for your patience and professionalism, this is your book. Our deep gratitude is due to the design editor, Moira Douranou, without whom the book you are now reading would not have been so visually coherent, engaging or true to life.

In the *Learning Through Art* series the aim remains to investigate and report ways in which the visual arts might help to create new ways of educating for sustainable futures and to celebrate different, original thinking. Striving to be inclusive, the series offers a channel to those whose voices are not normally heard in the conversations about education through art. We dedicate this book to the thousands of educators in schools, colleges and communities who offer windows into the world of art, design and craft education for the students they work with, be they 3 or 80 years old.

Glen Coutts  
Executive Editor  
On behalf of the Editorial Team

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# Editorial Team



**Gabriella Pataky**

The aim of my enthusiasm is to continuously renew art education, assist to its adaptation to current professional and social requirements, support the decision-making process in educational matters as well as accumulate and spread knowledge concerning art education and its environment. As one of the IMAG Quartet: (the group of PrincipalEditors&GraphicDesigner) I am working on InSEA's most visual journal to share ideas and connect members. I am the director of the Art Teacher Master's Program at ELTE TÓK University, head of Department of Visual Education and working at the Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design in Budapest as well.  
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**Jonathan Silverman**

I strive to help future educators replenish their artistic identities, engage in cross-cultural and interdisciplinary learning, address

environmental and social justice and help schools transform from traditional curriculum to integrated arts. At Saint Michael's College, Vermont, USA I coordinated Arts Education and taught courses on aesthetics, interdisciplinary curriculum, creativity, and environmental art. As visiting professor fall 2019 at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan I integrated arts with holistic education. I currently co-edit InSEA's IMAG and section edit for InSEA's Learning through Art #3. I maintain my artistic identity through ceramics, watercolors, and sculpture and sanity by baking bread and climbing mountains.  
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**LiYan Wang**

I am a professor and department chair of the Department of Fine Arts at National Changhua University of Education in Taiwan. I graduated from The Ohio State University. My research areas have focused on visual arts education history, narrative analysis of students' art learning, and ways to facilitate understanding and dialogue through art. I co-edited several books on the development of art education in Taiwan, served as an

International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) World Council member (2011 – 2014), and secretary of InSEA Asia Regional Council (2019 – 2022). I initiated an art learning group “Let's Art 藝起來” in 2013, and I am an editorial board member of several art education journals.  
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**Yungshan Hung**

is the Associate Research Fellow of the Center for Curriculum and Instruction, National Academy for Educational Research, Taiwan(R.O.C.) Additionally, since 2015, as the Main Investigator of Asia-Pacific Office for Aesthetic Education, Yungshan has been engaged in long-term research of aesthetic education, built the national and international academic practice network, including signed MOU with InSEA. Yungshan would like to bring forward my experience in Art education research and practice and connecting and co-making LTA effort with InSEA community.  
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**Sunah Kim**

I am a professor of the Department of Applied Art Education of Hanyang University, Korea. My research interests focus on art education curriculum, art learning analysis, inclusion and diversity. These research topics have currently led me to develop the online art education platform that accommodates personalized art learning for all students. Besides extensive scholarly publications, I am also serving as the director of the gifted art program for children in low-income families, and the special art program for children with developmental disabilities.  
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I am a multidisciplinary designer and visual artist. I hold a master's degree in arctic art & design from the University of Lapland, Finland, and a bachelor's degree in interior architecture, decorative arts & design from TEI of Athens, Greece. I have been participating in cross-

disciplinary research projects on socially engaged practices (Common ground, ArtGear, Utopia Ltd.) since 2016 and I am working in networking organisations since 2018. My interest lies on the tangible and intangible, human and non-human structures. I believe in people and networking in order to evoke and achieve social change.  
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**Glen Coutts**

I am a Professor of Applied Visual Arts Education at the University of Lapland in Finland. I graduated from Glasgow School of Art and the University of Strathclyde and taught art and design in secondary (high) schools in Scotland for ten years. A practising artist, I write regularly about issues in art education, was Principal Editor of the International Journal of Education through art (2010-16) and Co-editor of the *Relate North* series. In 2016, I was presented with the United States Society of Education through Art Ziegfeld Award for outstanding international leadership in art education. I am President of the International Society for Education through Art (2019-23).  
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“When looking through that window it is as if children are looking with a frame to a new world, full of possibilities, but also with the comfort of knowing that someone looks at them there, as if they were always on the other side, waiting for them and taking care of them.”

### **Overview**

In this first section of Learning Through Art, art educators describe their interaction with children as ways of being together in and through the arts. An alternative way to envision primary education is a common theme for each of the authors to contribute to the development of children below school age and offer exemplary models for early child educators. These essays avoid tempting clichés for early development and focus on the development of the personalities of children through art, the effects of which can only be watched and cultivated, though often difficult to witness. I invite you to learn how art educators from various parts of the world demonstrate how early childhood visual education can mirror the reality of today. Each contribution investigates the unique creation of environmental space and sources of inspiration, both materialist and natural; the topics surround the lives of the children. As you will see, urbanization as well as connection to nature provide opportunities for children to know their world through activities, experiences, and interdisciplinary art education.

- 1.1. Drawing-sound choreographies,  
by **Sylvia Kind** - p.18
- 1.2. PLAY Studio at the Whitworth Art Gallery,  
by **Lucy Turner** - p.28
- 1.3. Through the Sands,  
by **Luiza Americano Grillo and Jéssica Oliveira Barros** - p.38
- 1.4. How 5- to 6-Year-Old Children Master the Challenges of Drawing Animals,  
by **Anja Morawietz** - p.50
- 1.5. We are Part of Nature: Discovering Glaciers Through Play,  
by **Jelena Bjeletic** - p.58
- 1.6. The Drawing Garden,  
by **Andri Savva, Valentina Erakleous and Sophia Rossidou** - p.66
- 1.7. Romare Bearden Neighborhood Collages,  
by **Emily Higgins** - p.76
- 1.8. Contemporary Sculpture as a Creative Practice for the Little Ones,  
by **Rut Martinez** - p.82
- 1.9. A Study of Awareness and Empathy: Where did all the Yellow go?,  
by **Gigi Yu & Mary Bliss** - p.90
- 1.10. Drawing That Photograph you Hear,  
by **Noemí Peña Sánchez** - p.102
- 1.11. Trees & Animals : Art and English as a Foreign Language,  
by **Mirjana Tomasevic Dancevic** - p.110

# Drawing-sound choreographies

**Sylvia Kind**, Ph.D. is an instructor and atelierista in early childhood at Capilano University. Her work is motivated by an interest in research-creation methodologies and in young children's studio practices, their lively material improvisations and collective experimentations, and in developing understandings of studio research in early childhood contexts. [skind@capilano.ca](mailto:skind@capilano.ca)  
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## Overview

In this narrative I describe a drawing-sound project that took place with 3 and 4 year old children in the Capilano University Children's Center studio, in North Vancouver, Canada. I narrate the evolution of the year-long project, from initial collective drawing and material improvisations with graphite, charcoal, and black pens to sound experimentations, and the composition of choreographed dance-sound inventions.



Figure 1: The studio

In the early childhood studio, my primary aim is to nurture a culture of creating, inventing, and thinking together and so we begin this project

with an extended time of collective drawing. Like many artists, we take inspiration from natural forms such as leaves, roots, twigs, driftwood, stones, seeds, pods, and vines which are arranged around long lengths of paper that encircle the table. For weeks we draw together, several children working alongside each other on a single paper, and the natural materials and drawing media invite many kinds of interactions and engagements. We listen to the sounds, feel the textures, encounter the qualities and stories of the materials, and respond with drawn marks to the forms, lines, tangles, sensations, and textures. Each drawing is put on the wall so we can take time with it and begin to read back the lines, marks, and images, not looking initially for the meaning or story in the drawing, but reading the lines and letting the drawing propose something. Children consider a “tangly, bumpy line”, whisper as they describe “a soft quiet line”, and respond by jumping to the “loud, jumpy line”. In this we keep alive the possibilities that drawings tell us something, can be read in different ways, and don't just contain fixed meanings.

I am interested in drawing as a way of engaging with the world and with each other and what takes shape are choreographic movements of taking up the invitations that emerge and responding by activating possibilities. Each movement in the project is at once hospitality to the emergences, invitation to attend closely to what arrives, and a proposal to investigate further.

I am part of these engagements along with the children, neither simply as observer-facilitator or as instructor-director, rather giving propositional form and offering speculative possibilities in an effort to give shape to the events, to make the children's emerging processes visible to themselves and to others, and to help form the direction of the project.



Figure 2: Poppy pod drawing, morning glory and twine drawings



I am particularly curious about the ways the child-material-drawings move and correspond together. At times drawing is a process of creating a representational likeness. For instance, PJ plays with the large dried poppy pods, shakes the brittle seed head, wonders what it is and how it 'used to be' a flower, and responds by drawing a resemblance. Zoe fingers the circular entwined and twisted morning glory vines and draws tangled scribble-like lines. The next morning, I bring in a textured ball of natural jute twine. Bennet unwinds the ball, lays it beside the drawn twine-like tangled lines and considers the resonances. One isn't illustrative of the other, but offers a way of seeing the echoes between the materials and the image and to keep the materials and drawings in relation. To draw attention to and enlarge these acts of noticing I bring in stethoscopes, magnifying glasses, and flashlights. I attend to the rhythm, tempo, and rhymes of drawing.

Julia considers the drawing in front of her, places small cedar tree twigs over her drawn charcoal lines, sings a song and taps a rhythm with her hands as she 'reads' the lines on her page. Bennet taps on a coconut shell and dried mango seeds and marks the rhythms and scratchy sounds with drawn marks on the paper. In instances like these drawing becomes poetry and soundscape. Pritti, the educator I am working with, instigates a game in response. She makes various sounds with the pods and sticks and encourages children draw what they hear. They invent with the propositions and try to focus on the sounds by closing their eyes while they draw. Bennet and Julia draw in rhythm with the tempos, the movement of their hands keeping time with Pritti's rhythmic tapping. Zoe draws images of what she thinks she's hearing.



Figure 3: Acts of noticing

Throughout this project, to help expand my own vision and what I'm able to see in children's drawing processes and enlarge my view of what a drawing could be or might become, I am reading Tim Ingold's (2007) book, *Lines, A Brief History*. I am intrigued by how he describes writing in medieval times as akin to musical notation. I begin to speculate about how we could take up Ingold's proposition of writing, or drawing, not as a script to read for meaning but as a musical score that prompts actions and sonority and tells us to do something or perform in a particular way. I begin to imagine composing sound scores with the children that could be played back as musical compositions, but we take our time getting there.

I take note of how the prickles of the horse chestnut pods are particularly interesting to the children. I respond by searching the parks and tree-lined streets for even more intensely thorny varieties which prompts curiosities and drawings and stimulates a prolonged interest in the spikey spines. I begin to notice how children, when passing by a particular drawing of a spikey beech nut that is posted on the wall, play with its prickliness, gingerly touch the drawn lines, and jump back while exclaiming “Oww!! That hurts!”. It becomes a ritual on entering and leaving the studio. Collectively we consider the prickle -pod drawing and begin to wonder together about what drawings might tell us or prompt us to do. A child puts a stethoscope up to a drawing on the wall and listens. “It’s telling us we need to go outside to the playground!” which of course we do. To listen to a drawing means we take seriously what it says to us.



**Figure 5:** Drawing with stethoscopes



With a small hand-held recorder, we record the sounds around us and play back computer generated sound-segments. We listen to the sounds and draw in response. And we play with speaking into the stethoscopes - one child speaks into the chest-piece while another listens through the ear tips, drawing what they hear.

**Figure 4:** The prickly drawing, listening to the drawings



Some children, when hearing a recorded sound such as a dog barking, draw the dog while others mark the rhythm and tempo of the sound. It becomes evident that for many of the children sound cannot be separated from rhythm, cadence, and movement. It’s not just a sound listened to, but sounds move, invoke action, and resonate through and with a body. Attending to it is a bodied, rhythmic, haptic act.

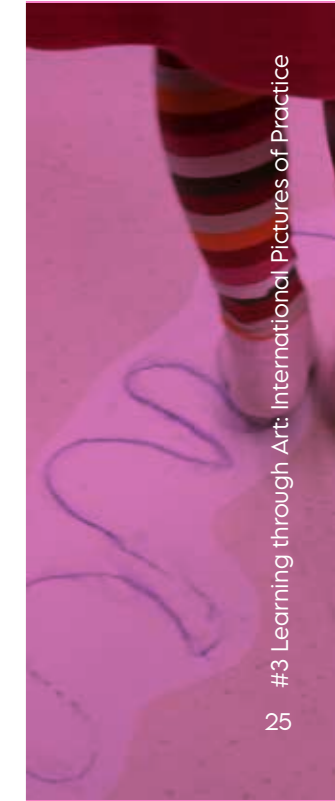
In response, and in an effort to amplify this, I lay out large paper lengths on the floor, turn on instrumental music with varying tempos and intensities, and invite children to dance and draw in response. We take time with this, dancing and drawing, marking the rhythms and movements in chalk pastel. Color is introduced at this point to draw attention to the textures and timbre of the music.



Figure 6: Dancing-drawing

After a time, in an effort to give shape to these experiences, I put up large sheets of paper on the wall and begin to record the movements of their dancing. I draw thick soft spiral charcoal lines to trace slow spins. Sharp graphite marks reflect vigorous jumping and the sounds of their feet. Skips, hops, leaps, twirls are given visibility. Soon a child joins me as I draw and begins to record the movements alongside mine. Over time I step back and the children continue watching each other dance while recording movements and sonorities.

Soon we have several large sound-dancing -drawings. In keeping the bodied connections alive we cut out the drawn dancing -sound lines and lay them on the floor so that children can respond bodily not just visually to the marks and suggestions. Children 'read' the lines and dance in response. Soon notations are combined and transitory arrangements begin to take shape on the floor. With the music still playing we dance the drawn lines and then begin to create more complex compositions.



#3 Learning through Art: International Pictures of Practice

Experimenting and reading back the sonorous-dancing lines as she composes, PJ brings a grouping of notations together and posts them on a large drawing board. Gathering other children around her she dances and quietly hums the composition. Soon other children join with this and create their own compositions and we dance and sing each other's notations.

The project concludes with these performative and sonorous drawings. The project has been a year in the making, a co-composition of inventions, propositions, and responses and has illuminated sound as a textured, bodied, rhythmic, dancing-drawing choreography.



**Figure 7:** dancing sound drawings

#### References

Ingold, T. (2007). *Lines: A brief history*. New York: Routledge

**NOTE:** Pseudonyms have been used for children's names except in instances where families have given permission for first names to be used.

# PLAY Studio at the Whitworth Art Gallery

**Lucy Turner** has been Producer (Early Years) at the Whitworth for 9 years. She specializes in Early Years education and is passionate about combining art and play to inspire curiosity, promote wellbeing and make positive social change. [Lucy.turner@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Lucy.turner@manchester.ac.uk)  
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Figure 1: The Whitworth © Michael Pollard

## Overview

*PLAY Studio* is a Reggio Emilia inspired Atelier space at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, UK. It was designed to create a space to engage the youngest visitors with the Whitworth's collection, its buildings and park, through hands-on play.

*PLAY Studio* is a free, weekly, drop in space for under 5s, combining art and materials within an enabling environment to encourage child-led artistic exploration, trying out ideas and playing with materials. It is not a classroom. There isn't a teacher or any pre-designed activities. It is simply a place where children can play creatively and follow their own interests.

*PLAY Studio* at the Whitworth, Manchester, UK

The Whitworth, part of the University of Manchester, is the city's gallery in a park. Together with local partners, artists and communities, the gallery uses art for positive social change. Aiming to transform the way that art is experienced and used, by using art as a tool to open up conversation, generate empathy and actively address what matters most in people's lives - here and now. The gallery's dynamic Civic Engagement & Education team has generated new approaches to working with non-traditional arts audiences from our diverse local communities.

*PLAY Studio* was first created and launched as part of the Whitworth's 2015 capital redevelopment, a transformation of the gallery that enabled new relationships and partnerships to flourish. These sessions offer a weekly, free, drop-in space for children under 5 which encourages child-led artistic exploration, trying out ideas and playing with materials.

*PLAY Studio* is based on the concept of an Atelier (or art studio) inspired by the educational philosophy of Reggio Emilia which uses a child led, creative approach to learning. It is not a classroom. There isn't a teacher or any pre-designed activities. It is simply a place where babies, toddlers & pre-schoolers can play creatively and follow their own interests.

As a gallery in a park, the environment plays a key role as part of this pedagogy. There is an emphasis on natural light, as well as access to the outdoors and space to encourage independent play. The Whitworth's *Clore Learning Studio* hosts huge folding doors letting light flood into the room and allows access straight out into a sensory Art Garden, extending the room and blurring boundaries between the indoor and outdoor play.



Figure 2: The Whitworth's Clore Learning Studio © Lucy Turner

*PLAY Studio* was designed with the aim of creating a space to engage the young visitors with the Whitworth's collection, its buildings and park, through hands-on play that explores ideas, materials and techniques.

**Figure 3:** Color Studio © Frances Walker



In *PLAY Studio* there are three main ingredients: **art, materials and provocations.**

**Figure 4:** David Bachelor 'Plato's Disco #2' 2015 © The Whitworth, the University of Manchester © Gemma Cowburn



**Figure 5:** Charcoal Studio © Lucy Turner

### Art

The studio space is skillfully designed and set up by an artist. Using an artwork(s) as a stimulus, the artist sets the space to be inviting, captivating and to encourage curiosity. Materials and resources are specifically chosen to allow children to explore concepts within an artwork(s).

Children explore David Bachelor's 'Plato's Disco #2' (See Figures 3 & 4). They explore concepts of color, color mixing, shape, layering, shadow and movement.

### Materials

Every week, *PLAY Studio* is filled with materials for children to choose from such as paint or clay one week, to cardboard or tape the next. Children have the opportunity to explore artworks from the Whitworth's collection through real art materials like charcoal (Figure 5), experimenting with the possibilities of that material, just as an artist would.





Figure 6: Paint Studio © Frances Walker

### Provocations

*PLAY Studio* combines art and materials within an enabling environment in which children can then explore for themselves. Provocations are used to provide an invitation, to provoke thoughts, ideas, and actions that can help to expand on an idea or interest. Provocations come in the form of tools or objects provided in the space, like the plungers and circular objects used to explore the paint in the image below. Provocations allow children and grown-ups to think independently, problem solve and explore their interests without being guided in a specific direction by an adult.

They are open ended, jumping off points for children to investigate, or prompt without a specific outcome.

### Facilitation

An artist is on hand each week to support participants. Their role is to guide and observe rather than teach. They may decide to become involved in the play themselves, often testing theories or wondering out loud, but it is important that the adult does not try to lead the learning with a specific outcome in mind.

The artist and other adult volunteers in the space take time to stand back and observe as the children explore and ask question. A Studio diary captures and documents photographs, videos, audio recordings, observation notes and feedback. This pedagogical documentation acts as a reflective tool that encourages dialogue and debate surrounding the children's learning. This reflective process is then used as a tool to carry forward in the planning of future sessions and as evaluation.

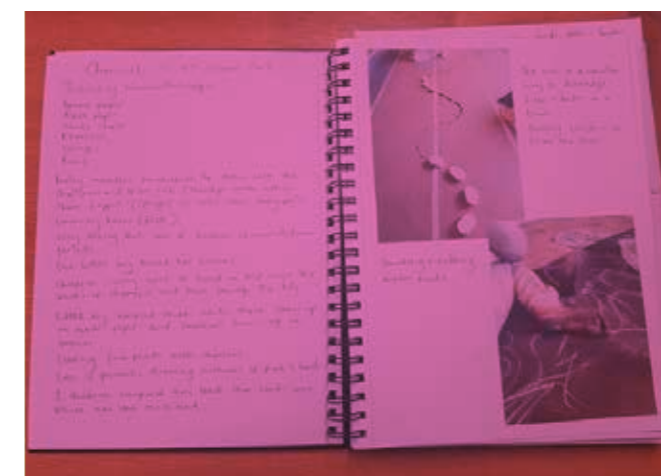
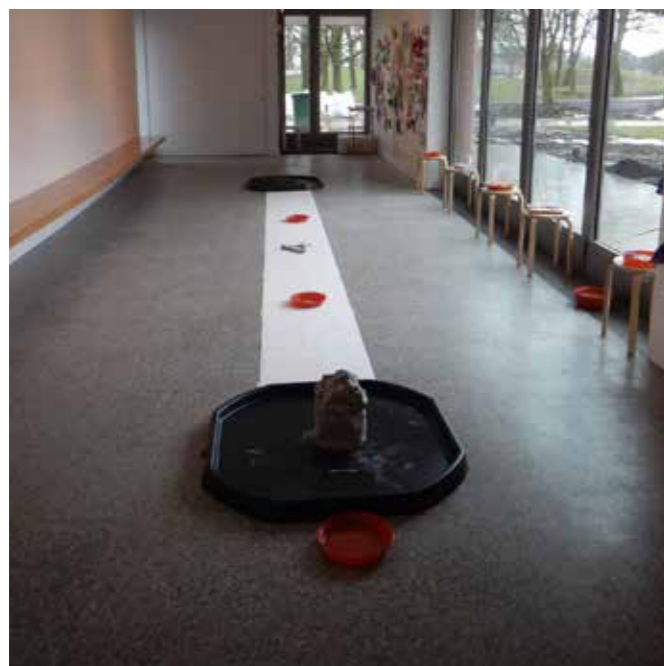


Figure 8: PLAY Studio diary

Much of children’s learning is physical. In the Studio children are encouraged to take off their shoes and socks, and sometimes their outer clothes too, this enables them to be less inhibited and explore the materials with their whole bodies.

The first ever *PLAY Studio* explored clay (image below). The idea was a simple one. A lump of clay in the middle of the room for children and their grown-ups to explore, however they liked.

**Figure 8:** Clay Studio © Michiko Fujii



**Figure 9:** Clay Studio © Annabel Newfield



Having a large, open and uncluttered space allows the focus to be purely on the materials and its possibilities.

**Figure 10:** Clay Studio © Keisha Barker



In the image below tools are used as provocations, for example, *what happens if rollers are combined with clay?* Here the clay has been mixed with water to create a clay ‘slip’ which can be used to paint with. Even a window becomes a surface to explore.

**Figure 11:** Clay Studio © Annabel Newfield



All too often art workshops for under 5s focus on the end product allowing little room for retracing your steps or reworking without completely starting again. For children still building confidence in both their own skills and style, this approach can be restrictive and demoralising, and may result in avoidance for fear of failure. At the Whitworth, by focusing simply on the process it allows there to be no right or wrong. Children quickly realize that the non-permanent nature of their creations allows them more freedom to change, to experiment and to explore, problem-solving and growing in confidence as they go.

Ongoing evaluation (undertaken primarily during sessions and recorded within the Studio diary) indicates that visitors participating in the program appreciate the Reggio Emilia inspired, play-based, child led ethos and how this can support children's confidence, creativity and self-expression.



Most other early years workshops are led, we love how *PLAY Studio* gives you the opportunity to explore for yourselves, together. I truly believe my child is more creative and curious about the world because of coming to these sessions.

*PLAY Studio* parent

In addition, the more relaxed, drop-in nature of *PLAY Studio* has also been acknowledged as important, allowing the activity to be adapted to a family's practical needs.



Because it's drop in it's nice to have the chance for him to go when he wants to go.

*PLAY Studio* parent

*PLAY Studio* also benefits those who seek opportunities for messy play as they lack the time and space at home.



We love the space and that there's so much freedom to explore. We only live in a maisonette so I'd never be able to do things on this scale and this messy at home.

*PLAY Studio* parent

Evaluation has also suggested that this style of workshop also benefits:

- Those with two or more children who find it difficult to manage a led workshop and prefer a more relaxed, self-directed option;
- Those where English is not their first language;
- Home educator parents and carers who want to take part in social activities with their children;
- Dads who more frequently seem to prefer the flexibility and open ended nature of the session.
- Parents and carers with very active toddlers who are keen to explore and not sit still.

*PLAY Studio* attracts a large audience with over 150 children and their parents/carers engaging with the space each week which creates a lively, vibrant and buzzing atmosphere around the gallery.

Art galleries have not been traditionally seen as places to encourage young children to visit, an increasing number of cultural organizations are challenging this assumption and developing learning activities that actively encourage children's experimentation and creative thinking through play-based learning.

The importance of process and learning together, through making and doing, is not only practiced through the Whitworth's work with under 5s but permeates across all activity. The Whitworth is a place that puts art and creativity at the center of daily life. A place to experiment and learn, generate and test new forms of knowledge and offer up alternative ways of doing things. A space to actively learn from each other; re-thinking ways of living through exhibitions, the collection, public projects, research, teaching and collaborations.

# Through the Sands

**Luiza Americano Grillo**, Brazilian, from São Paulo, is a pedagogue, specialist in art education, teacher of early childhood education and an actress in a theater group. Passionate about childhood poetics, she works with all artistic languages in her practices, creating physical and imaginary scenarios where exploration and creation are protagonists.  
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**Jessica Oliveira Barros**, Brazilian, born in Manaus and resident in São Paulo, is a psychologist and art therapist. Immersed in Early Childhood Education, she believes that learning and affection are intertwined and that art is a powerful tool for the expression of children and adults who were once children.  
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#early childhood education #art-infused learning

## Overview

The article narrates our encounter with a group of 3-year-old children, welcoming their first experiences at school. We sought to build bonds with the children, with the themes offered which we called “Through” and “The enchantment of the sands and its chants”. While triggering invitations with materials, spaces and inspirations, we perceived the protagonism of children in their expressive and free games. We realized that the themes intertwined and ensured a path for many of the children’s acute senses within the collective. Just as the group was being formed and creating bonds during the year, so were the themes.



Figure 1: Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © GRILLO, L. (2019)

#working with themes

In our work at school we are like wanderers, not travelers heading towards a final goal: we have something errant, as Nietzsche says (2007), which has joy and change in the passage. We are crossed<sup>1</sup> by what happens to us in the experience with the children.

We work at a private school, called Estilo de Aprender, in São Paulo, Brasil. The public the school serves is upper-middle class and the school is located in a neighborhood where residents have this profile.

<sup>1</sup>In portuguese we use the same words for “through” and “across”, in this case we mean that the experience passes through us.



Figure 2: Luiza Americano Grillo and child. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)

In this scenario, we work with themes, freely chosen by each educator, according to their experiences and listening to the children's investigations. They last for one semester and take place in the encounter of the subjects of experience.

The inspiration for a theme can come from a game, from a song, or from a work of art, each educator has a unique process of authorship and performance. The theme is lived in an organic and poetic way in everyday relationships through multiple languages.

The course of the theme has no specific objective. The themes are invitations that we make to the children through installations around the space, atelier proposals, music, stories or other elements that relate to the theme. They seek to sensitize them so that they also incorporate knowledge and experiences without necessarily announcements, explanations or didacticization.

Space is a fundamental element for the development of these narratives that are being built over time. Considered as a third educator, when prepared with materials and elements, it becomes the scenario of the investigations that the children will do.

The themes we chose for our research in the first semester of 2019 intended to welcome and build the group of three-year-old children and two educators.



Figure 3: Light table and children. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)

Thus, the themes “Through” and “The enchantment of the sands and its chants<sup>2</sup>” were intertwined from the singular looks towards the group.

We both thought of themes that would reflect the welcoming we would like to offer to these children who arrived at school for the first time.



<sup>2</sup> “chants” in Portuguese is “cantos”, which also has a double meaning: “chants” and “corners”.

Figure 4: Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)

### Through

In our classroom there is a large window that faces the outside space of the school, where families pass to drop off the children. When looking through that window it is as if children are looking with a frame to a new world, full of possibilities, but also with the comfort of knowing that someone looks at them there, as if they were always on the other side, waiting for them and taking care of them.

Through cracks in the gate that delimits our space, they see this world, so big, so vast, but looking into them it seems smaller, the size they can handle.

A world that has become big through magnifying glasses; colored through cellophane; sometimes blurry through transparent objects; shiny and fascinating.

Figure 6: Intervention with ice and nature. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)



The theme “Through” took us to the universe of contemporary Brazilian artists such as Cildo Meireles, Lygia Clark, Helio Oiticica; South Korean Do Ho Suh; Argentinian Julio Le Parc among others.

The great inspiration for this theme was the installation of contemporary Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles “Through” (1983-1989), which is in the Inhotim museum, in Brumadinho, MG.

Figure 7: Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)



The installation presents a labyrinth with several transparent barriers, which we've related to the barriers and obstacles that we face throughout our growth, both the children in their development, and the families in this acceptance of their children's maturation.

This metaphor also took shape in the installations prepared in the room that involved translucent fabrics, projections of works (including that of Cildo Meireles), cellophane, overhead projector, sieves, bottles with colored liquids, frozen nature elements, etc.

Figure 8: Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © GRILLO, L. (2019)



We also played to cross barriers in a corporal game that we repeated some days of “Walking in the forest” and finding obstacles using our imagination, such as trees to climb, tall grass and river to cross, etc.

One of the children’s favorite songs from our collective moments in circle was that of the little windows - in which we make gestures with our hands closing and opening the window in front of our eyes -, exploring the musicality, the body and the

possibilities to see through the windows of the soul, our eyes.

Seeing and observing the world through other points of view led us to games of climbing the school playground’s equipment and the classroom’s furniture, to crawl on the floor, to lie down and observe the ceiling, to swing on a belly-down swing to make a painting and many other perspectives.

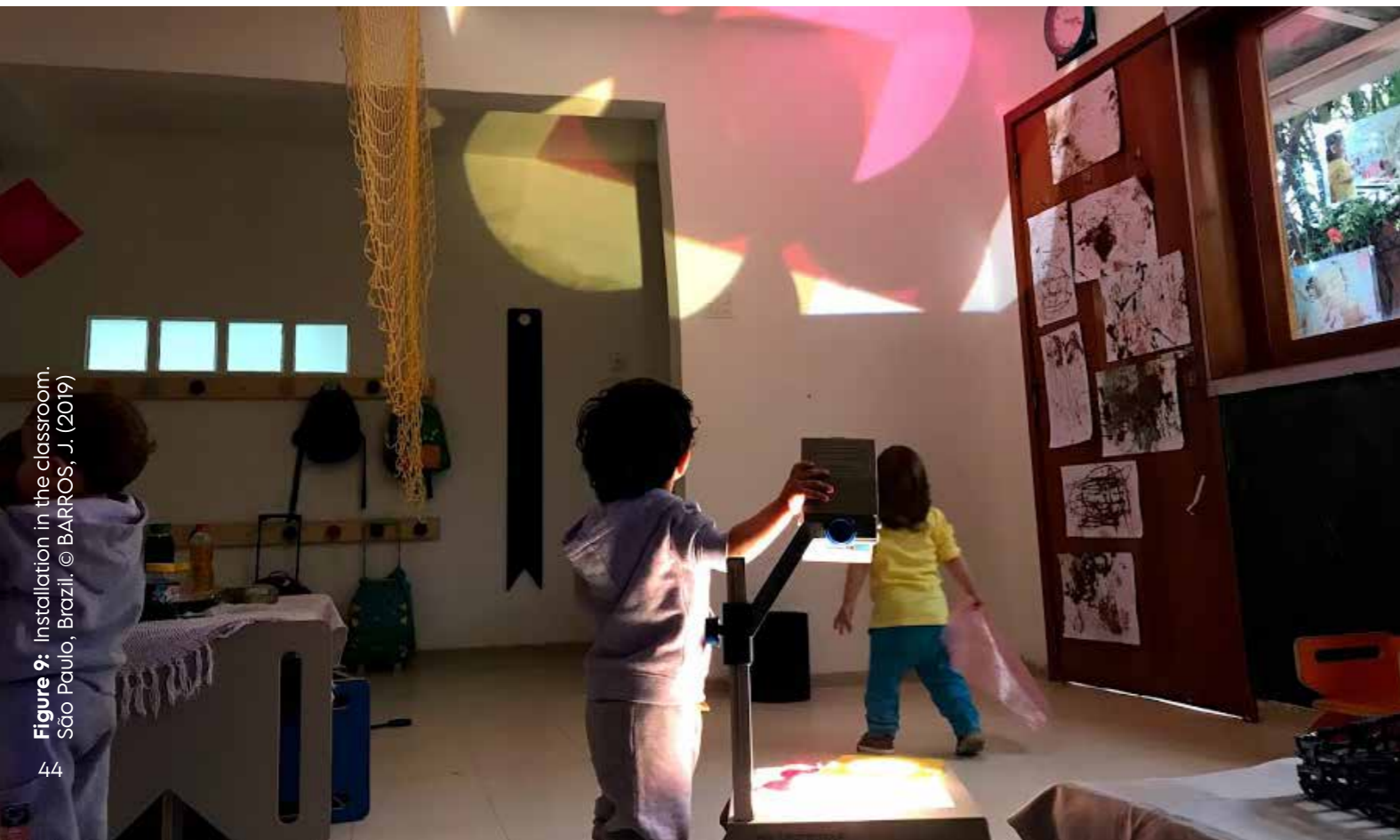


Figure 9: Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)



Figure 10: Playing with the sand. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)

### The enchantment of the sands and its chants

Another fundamental element for this reception was the sand, as there is a tank in front of the room and the windows lead us to it.

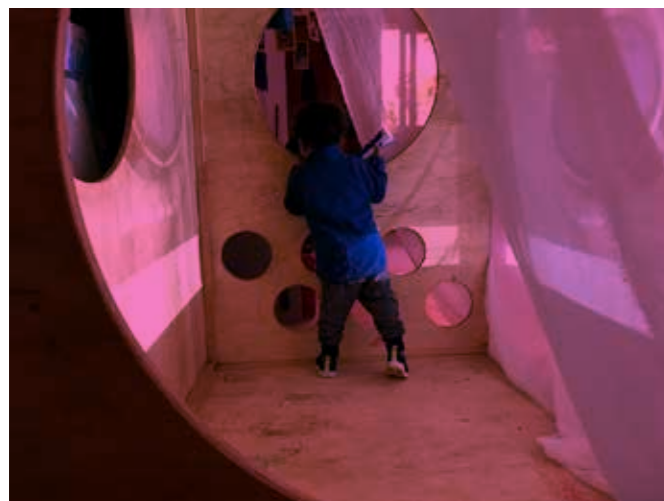
We noticed that in the farewell the sands participated in many symbolic games that involved families and children, carrying out investigations to build, destroy, hide and find treasures, which dialogued with the “magic” of appearing and disappearing from the families.

Along with the fixed spaces that symbolically represented our themes of “Through” and “Enchantment of the sands”, many elements were offered to sharpen the senses of the children’s research.

For the theme of Sands, different types of sands (fine, thick, colorful and from different places) made composition with objects that dialogued with the theme Through, such as sieves, transparent pots of different sizes, plastic and acrylic supports that offered visual perspective and movement.

With the repetition of these games, we built a bond that transmitted security to the children in this space, and so they began to ask for these elements.

Thus, we were able to follow how the themes enable children to become protagonists, leading us as wanderers along paths that are transformed over time, like the ephemeral marks in the sand.



**Figure 11:** Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)

As the theme transcends spaces and bodies, the children's investigations too, they were the authors of their small tracks that took the group to different routes within our school.

We were also able to share with elementary school children (children from seven to ten

years old) an experience with our sensorial installations of the themes of our group, with three year-old children.



**Figure 12:** Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © GRILLO, L. (2019)

Sharing the space with groups of children of other age groups offers an enriching moment for the children to make exchanges and appropriate a collective space with different singularities.

And so, we built our playful worlds and between each construction of experience, we saw children building their paths, their relationships, their ways of communicating, being authors of their unique ways of perceiving their surroundings and being together.

Among our sand collection for the theme with its diversity of tones, textures and origins, we had experiences with the sand that Gabi, co-founder and employee of the school, gave us from Riviera beach.

To discover where those grains came from, the children were able to visit her and her office became a fascinating corner to share travel experiences, with photos, videos and affectionate objects that accompany her on her comings and goings from this nature scenario that provided us with the creation of ours.

We played to discover secrets in the sand of the sea, discover hidden elements, find animals in the desert sands, slide in the dunes, surf in the waves of the beach ... Our games took us to many places in the world and provided us with a powerful imagination in which within our small collective of children, body movements were able to transcend and make way for more narratives in the exploratory paths.

In the ateliers, we saw inspiring videos by artists like Ilana Yahav and Delton Rios to use our light table collectively as support for the authorship of our students, opening the way to a powerful space for drawings in the sand, fascinating movement games between fingers.



**Figure 13,14:** Proposition with sand. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)





Works by Joe Mangrum, Sam Dougados, Marina Leal and Tibetan mandalas that use grains to symbolize the inconstancy of life, were references to broaden the look before the occupation of the floor of our daily spaces for mixtures, experiences and sharing.

Thus creating interventions and sand paths that are given for the use of everyone in the school and dissolve with time and with the encounter of those who make use of this space for encounters between children and their curiosities about the productions.

A little of the experiences made by the children were able to go home in the form of artistic productions and physical elements used for the theme, but were also taken to their house and to life what the eyes do not see.

What remains are the powerful marks of the children's memories and affective bodies, the ephemeral productions that were made and undone, scenarios built, destroyed and built again, the dancing movements of the body, the sensations of textures, surprises, strangeness, spontaneous laughter, the search for warmth and the other.

Thus was our work in a sensitive partnership: a path that from grain to grain, from window to window, took us to the immensity of what fits in the hand and hides the feet, that transforms the look from its many narratives.



Figure 15: Installation in the classroom. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)



Figure 16: Proposition with intervention drawing. São Paulo, Brazil. © GRILLO, L. (2019)



Figure 17: Child playing with sand. São Paulo, Brazil. © BARROS, J. (2019)

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# How 5 to 6-Year-Old Children Master the Challenges of Drawing Animals

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## Overview

This article depicts several lessons in art education at Swiss kindergarten. The documented tasks prompted the children to draw cows and other farm animals. The data that record the learning setting in this article were gathered as part of my dissertation. The study pursued the question of how 5 to 6-year-old children act when asked, at set times, to draw a defined motif. The investigation, which employed the “videography” research method (cf. Tuma et al. 2013), is now complete (Morawietz 2020). Therefore, besides the visualization of the teaching, verified statements are also possible concerning the children’s mastering of the challenges of drawing animals.

In diesem Beitrag zeige ich mehrere Unterrichtsstunden aus der Kunstpädagogik des Schweizer Kindergartens. Die dokumentierten Aufgabenstellungen regten die Kinder dazu an, Kühe und andere Bauernhoftiere zu zeichnen. Die Foto- und Videodaten, die das Lernsetting in diesem Artikel nachzeichnen, wurden im Rahmen meiner Dissertation erhoben. Die Studie ging der Frage nach, wie 5- bis 6-jährige Kinder agieren, wenn sie zu festgelegten Zeiten aufgefordert werden, zu einem bestimmten Motiv zu zeichnen. Die Untersuchung, die sich der Forschungsmethode der «Videographie» (vgl. Tuma et al. 2013) bediente, ist unterdessen abgeschlossen (Morawietz 2020). Es können deshalb neben der Veranschaulichung des Unterrichts auch gesicherte Aussagen zum Umgang der Kinder mit den Herausforderungen des Tiere-Zeichnens gemacht werden.

## #social interaction

Figure 1: To draw a cow and build a farm for it; task 6 © Anja Morawietz 2019



### Art education at Swiss kindergarten

*Teaching at Swiss kindergarten and learning to draw*

Swiss kindergarten constitutes part of the mandatory school time and is established in the new Swiss German Curriculum 21. The various teaching methodologies provide for learning opportunities for

young children beyond reading, writing and calculating, and seek forms of learning tailored to the specific addressee groups (cf. Rossbach et al. 2010: 46).

Drawing with a view to portrayal is the focus of the teaching expounded here. It plays an important role at kindergarten age (cf. Schäfer 2014: 170), since it enables 5 to 6-year-olds to process and

communicate experiences and ideas outside linguistic expressive forms. Further, one must consider that an array of cognitive process dimensions, defined Anderson et al. (2001), operate during drawing. These are Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating and Creating, which makes drawing a major education opportunity.

### *Teaching and its theoretical foundation*

In the teaching expounded here, drawing was understood as an image-finding process. Consideration was taken of cognitive, emotional and graphic development at age 5 to 6 years. And, not least, teaching was performed based on a relational understanding of teaching and learning (cf. Krautz 2015).

### *The children*

The kindergarten group comprises nine boys and thirteen girls. At this time of year, the children are all 5 to 6 years old. Two of the group speak little German. The learning level survey revealed that all children were capable of drawing with a view to portrayal.

### *Process monitoring by the teachers*

The teachers' principal task was to initiate the drawing processes, i.e. structure the teaching so that the act of creating

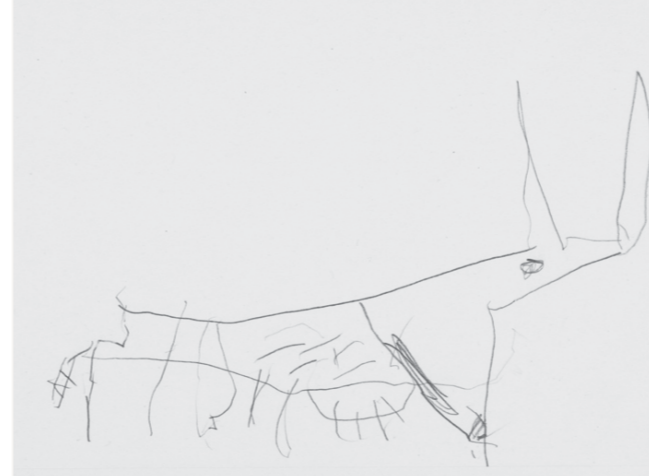
was always preceded by exploration of materials, experiences, perception, stories, etc., in order to stimulate the children's imagination and desire to get creative. In practice, it was important to encourage the children to arrive at their own drawing solutions and, if they had difficulties, support them with individual coaching; however, one-size-fits-all solutions were foregone (cf. Morawietz, 2020: 68-71).

### **Tasks, process and products. A visual story.**

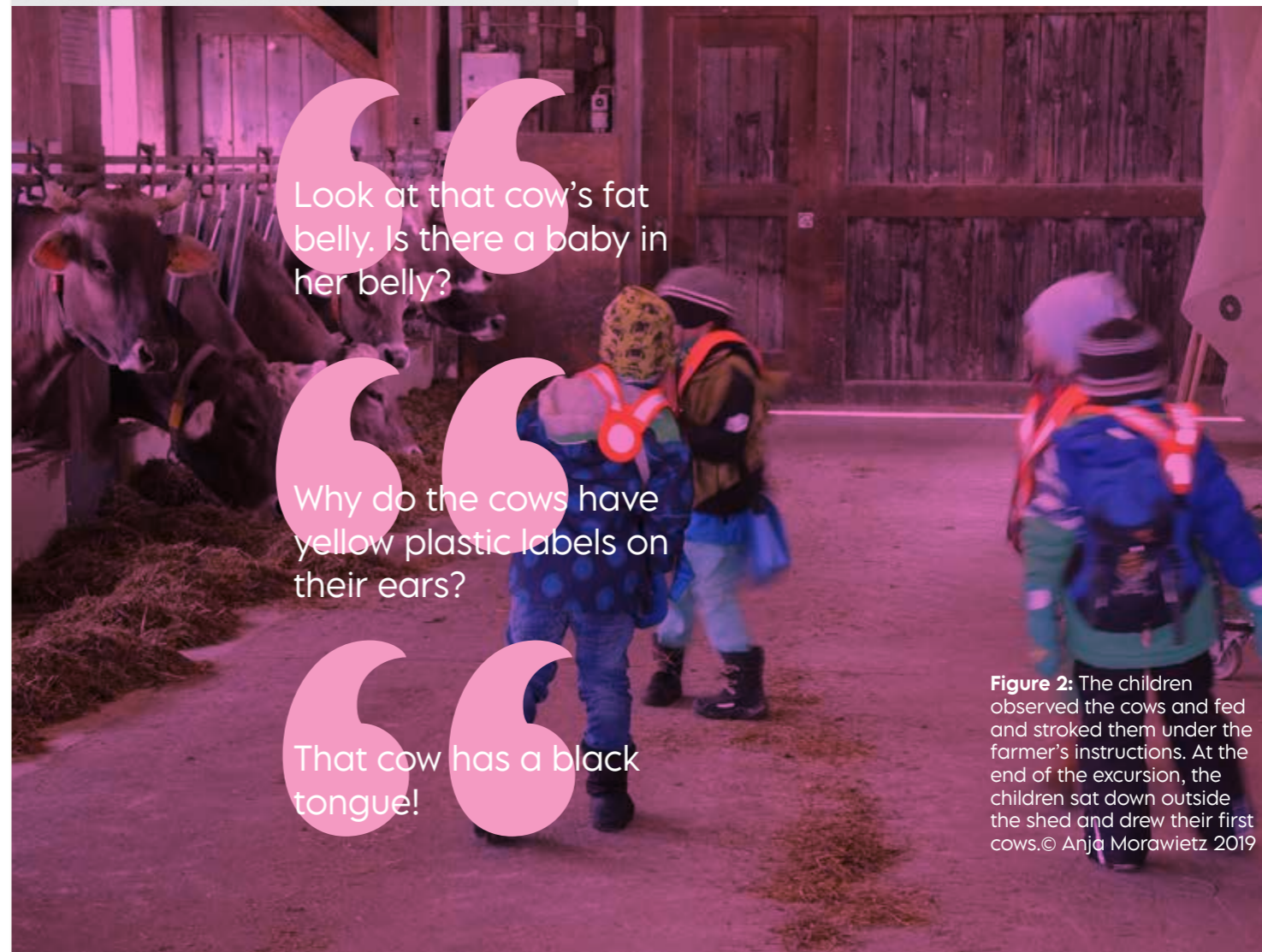
I extended the teaching documented here across several tasks, aimed at prompting the children to work on ways of depicting cows and other farm animals. To keep the children motivated while drawing cows repeatedly, an emotionally or cognitively activating departure point was intrinsic to each task. This could be a farm excursion, play with figures, large paper sizes, a picture-book story, attractive drawing material, or an exciting question.

#### *Task 1*

During their first visit to the farm, the children sketched cows. Black felt pens, pencils and A4 paper were available. The close encounter with the cows moved the children emotionally and conveyed an idea of the cows' life on the farm.



**Figure 3:** Drawing a cow. Here, particular value was placed on the sharp horns, fur and udder.  
© Anja Morawietz 2019



Look at that cow's fat belly. Is there a baby in her belly?

Why do the cows have yellow plastic labels on their ears?

That cow has a black tongue!

**Figure 2:** The children observed the cows and fed and stroked them under the farmer's instructions. At the end of the excursion, the children sat down outside the shed and drew their first cows. © Anja Morawietz 2019

## Task 2

Back at kindergarten, the children prepared collages that depicted memories of the farm. They received pre-printed collage elements, for example tractor, wheelbarrow, farmhouse or dog, and real hay. Children could use colored pencils to add individual visual elements to the collages, while having the option to draw cows too.

### *Discussion and communication after the excursion and the first two tasks*

We looked at the initial drawings, noting the cow's striking features. Additionally, the difference between a cow and a bull was raised during the excursion, and later explained in the classroom.



**Figure 4:** This representation shows routes and places we experienced on the excursion. © Anja Morawietz 2019

## Task 3

After the play with figures, about a cow that wanted to explore the world, the children drew a dancing cow. They were given A3 sheets pre-printed with a “cow herd” and either a colored pencil or a felt pen. For the depiction of the dancing cow, the children were again required to solve problems of depiction.

## Task 4

The children examined various artworks featuring cows. These were Stephan Balkenhol, “Man with Cow”, 1995; Alexander Calder, “Cow”, 1926 and Rudolf Koller, “Cow in the Herb Garden”, 1929. Subsequently, the children drew a cow, drawing inspiration, if they wished, from the artistic portrayal.

## Task 5

Following an introduction to handling charcoal and erasers, the children were asked to form groups of four and draw the farm visit with many cows and children on large formats.

## Task 6

A second farm visit enabled the children to develop an emotional tie to other farm animals. After the excursion, the children were asked to sketch various farmyard animals.

The final task consisted of creating farmyard scenes with a cow on corrugated cardboard. The children were given stiff paper, cardboard, wood remnants, fabrics, natural material, wax crayons, colored pencils, scissors, PVA glue and hot glue.

The task was completed on a voluntary basis in the context of free play.



**Figure 6:** Communal drawing on one format is not always easy. © Anja Morawietz 2019



## Findings from the research: How children master the challenges of drawing animals

The exploratory study on how children act in the learning setting presented above (Morawietz 2020) demonstrated that the 5 to 6-year-olds often enthusiastically got involved with the drawing processes.

On one hand this was detected in scenes, in which the children worked on their depictions cheerfully and with good humor. On the other hand interest in the challenges of drawing was determined, when children focused to annoyed grappling to get the depicted animal's shape "right". Active efforts to overcome difficulties during the drawing process were also visible when they repeatedly stepped back from their drawing to appraise it from afar, or when they got irritated if the mental picture failed to match the depiction on paper. The children were often observed to express their depiction problems and potential solutions in words in conversations with peers as well as by talking to themselves.

Further, it became clear that social interaction was crucial to solving pictorial problems. For example, there were loose conversations, during which the children reassured themselves that they were not alone. Further, the children employed mimesis and mimicry in order to gather information about the drawing.

In close collaboration, consisting of suggestions, questions and associations, the children progressed their drawings together. (Cf. Morawietz 2020: 337-356)

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# We are Part of Nature: Discovering Glaciers Through Play

**Jelena Bjeletic**, preschool teacher; I love Nature, arts and I stand for Education for Sustainable Development. This is enough per se, to be and stay creative. As a preschool teacher, I put an accent on performing art (happening), which is a method of teaching, learning and creating.  
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## Overview

The paper presents a part of the emergence of an eighteen-month-long kindergarten project focused on exploring the beauty of the glaciers and how climate change has affected them. The project is conducted by four- and five-years old children in Sæborg, Reykjavík. It is based on The National Curriculum which emphasises sustainability, creativity, interdisciplinarity. Thus, highlighting art activities that nurture children's relationship with nature. They got to discover magnificence of nature through experimenting with varied materials and embodied learning in creative environment. The children expressed their opinions and made their voices heard in society as defenders of nature and artists.

Í þessari grein er kynntur liður af upphafsáfangna átján mánaða leikskólaverkefni um fegurð jökla og áhrif loftslagsbreytinga á jökla á Íslandi. Verkefnið er unnið með 4–5 ára börnum á leikskólanum Sæborg í Reykjavík. Það er byggt á aðalnámskrá leikskóla sem leggur áherslu á sjálfbærni, sköpun, þverfagleg vinnubrögð. Þannig er lögð áhersla á listsköpun í því skyni að efla tengsl og samband barna við náttúruna. Verkfaeri fagurfræðilegrar upplifunar á náttúrufyrirbærum eru tilraunir og innlifað nám í skapandi umhverfi. Börnin upplifðu sína eigin rödd og stöðu í samfélaginu sem listamenn og verndarar náttúrunnar.

Рад представља почетне кораке у развоју осамнаестомесечног вртићког пројекта фокусираног на истраживање лепота глечера и утицаја климатских промена. Пројекат спроводе деца узраста четири и пет година у вртићу Sæborg, Рејкјавик. Пројекат је заснован на Националном оквирном курикулуму који подржава развој образовања за одрживост кроз креативно и интердисциплинарно образовање и васпитање. Акценат се ставља на уметност као медиј за неговање дечјих веза и односа са природом. Кроз експериментисање различитим материјалима и „учење кроз тело“ у креативном социјалном окружењу, деца су пружене осмишљене прилике за откривање величанствености природе. Деца су доживела сопствени глас и положај у заједници као уметници и заштитници природе.

58 #performance #embodiment learning

On January 8<sup>th</sup> 2020, many of my students came to school scared. They were tired and overly excited because on that day the forecast predicted a severe storm and dangerous weather. This meant that all the work had to be done indoors. I tried to create the atmosphere which dealt with what the children were thinking and make them understand their thoughts through the body. On that day I saw the opportunity to explore with children how nature affected us and how we could experience nature with creative energy, not fear.

We started working with different energy as we worked with our stance on weather and nature. We discussed that we needed to be careful and at the same time to welcome nature with open arms. I wondered how I could teach the children to actively participate in the realm of life, do something about it and enjoy all

the phenomena in nature as much as possible. That included the storm which could be a funny subject like darkness. We discussed what effect nature had on us; we commented that we could not exist without nature, and that nature could exist without us; therefore, we need to protect it. The National Curriculum in Iceland is focused on strengthening our relationship with nature.

We imitated wind and its wonders using a fan and paper. Coincidentally, pieces of “wind paper” landed on the light-table. “Look, there is a glacier on the light-table”, said one child. “It looks like Snæfellsjökull”, said one of them.

Through spontaneous play the children were sensing the joy of being part of nature and the world. We did experiments with paper, stones, sand, and various materials on a light-



Figure 1: Imitating the wind through play with fan and paper. © Jelena Bjeletic, 2020.



Figure 2: The very first glacier on the light table. © Jelena Bjeletic, 2020.

Figure 3: Boys installation -paper, stones, dust.  
© Jelena Bjeletic,2020.



table. This gave the children a chance to experience shape, colors, and movements of the glaciers. The children changed the form of glaciers and their details, and fixed the paper with sticky threads, cut it out and moved to other places to make new lines and forms: breaks, hollows, holes, caves, and peaks. I allowed the children to follow their interests as the curriculum emphasized student driven initiatives.



Figure 4: Girls insatallation -paper, textiles, wool.  
© Jelena Bjeletic,2020.

While most of the boys used paper, sand and stones, girls continuously added materials such as textile, wool and shining paper. The boys were concentrated on cracks and borders of the sculpture, the girls were preoccupied with its texture and had the need to decorate it as much as possible.

In the next phase the children took close-up photographs of the paper installation and we made a stop motion film “The performance of the glaciers” that was exhibited at the Children Cultural Art Festival at Reykjavik City Art Museum. The children become participants of The Reykjavik City project Artistic Call to Nature wich is the part of its The Strategy for Education 2030.

The installation was alive for three months, changing every day. The teachers were observing the group and how the children connected with installation. They have diverse cultural backgrounds, have lived through different experiences and some of them speak more than one language. This has resulted in every child developing a personal style and sense of creativity.

Why did the children long to experience glaciers? What did they want to know and feel? I wondered how I could help the children to find and discover their answers and to preserve the joy of discovery and creativity.



Figure 5: Stills from video. © Jelena Bjeletic,2020.



Figure 6: Dancing on the top of the glacier.  
© Jelena Bjeletic, 2020.



Figure 7: Producing the sound of glacier.  
© Jelena Bjeletic, 2020.

*“I have big questions because the glaciers are big. I want to know many things”,* said one girl.

Experimenting for a long time and “socializing” with the installation resulted in the creation of personal connection with glaciers. Exchange of information and experience within peer groups and with teachers strengthened this connection. Teachers learnt a lot about each student, creative learning process and glaciers.

We also approached the phenomenon of glaciers with a theoretical viewpoint where the phenomenon was experienced through dance and movement, recorded, and projected on a big screen.

We created movements that mimicked the shape, lines and changes that were taking place on melting glaciers in Iceland due

to climate change. When we projected the video of glaciers on a large screen, the children wanted to show various weather conditions on the canvas. The children from Africa in our kindergarten performed African dances on the tops of glaciers, and their mates from Europe connected African drum music and dance with ice melting. *“Are there glaciers in Afrika like we have in Iceland?”* wondered children.

The children also produced the sounds of glaciers using their bodies and movements. This kind of embodied experience was especially important. I see embodiment as a root of learning process, where the movement is a tool of embodiment.

Our visit to Reykjavík Art Museum where we went to see an art installation by the influential artist Olafur Eliasson was informative and empowering for us. In the installation he showed photographs of melting glaciers in Iceland. During their visit, the children made many philosophical statements related to global warming. In the hall of Museum, we gave a live performance. Every child and their teachers were playing the glacier getting bigger and smaller. One of the boys said

that he wishes the glaciers “glacier love”. It is especially important to teach children to use their voices in connection to developing values.

We worked on topics from the existence of wind to the existence of glaciers. We worked on problems in the community that we tried to solve in preschool. We reflected on issues from reality through creation and performance.

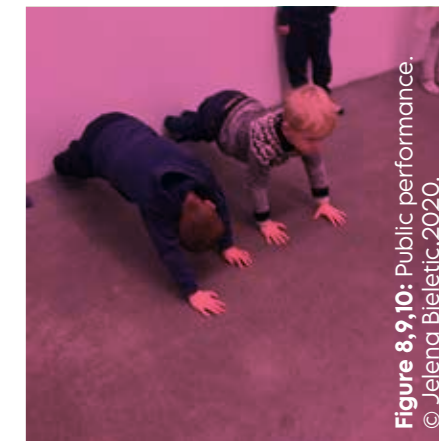
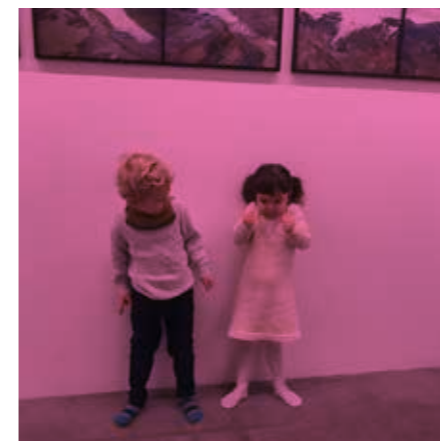


Figure 8,9,10: Public performance.  
© Jelena Bjeletic, 2020.

We also worked with dance and theatrical expression, which we are still working on today. The children titled the performance: *“Is the Sun Coming?”*. They performed transformations of glaciers caused by climate change.

*“I’m Vatnajökull about to explode... I’m troll-glacier formed from a flowering-glacier... I’m a sibilings-glacier... I’m a dangerous crawling-glacier on my way to the village... I*

*am white water with rocks and puddles... I’m a glittering-glacier... I’m big and move to the side... I’m like a shell, going inside myself... I can grow and shrink... A hole formed on my top... I have big pieces falling off me... I’m an ice cave... I am just one line.”*, expressed themselves living glacier sculptures.





**Figure 11,12:** Glacier living sculptures. © Jelena Bjeletic,2020.

We worked with mythical stories about trolls that lived in a glacier. The children learned poems about the Troll and learned to sing it in an old, traditional way.



**Figure 13:** Fairytale world. © Jelena Bjeletic,2020.



**Figure 14:** Story from the sagas. © Jelena Bjeletic,2020.

Most of the children believe that “The Earth will be saved” because “The Earth has power to protect herself”. I believe that it is important to foster respect for nature and other people through play and creativity.

## The Drawing Garden

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### Overview

The *drawing garden* is a play – based project, designed and implemented collaboratively by university-based researchers and two teachers, to encourage participatory art activities. The art project took place in two early year public schools (Nicosia, Cyprus), involving forty-six young children (aged 4-6). The design of the project consisted of three phases: 1) observation and exploration of place 2) creating an art center (the drawing garden) and 3) the elaboration of exploratory play in the drawing garden. The *drawing garden* emphasizes practices that are more open and playful and includes observations, installations, ephemeral and collaborative drawing, as well as other multimodal ways of art learning.

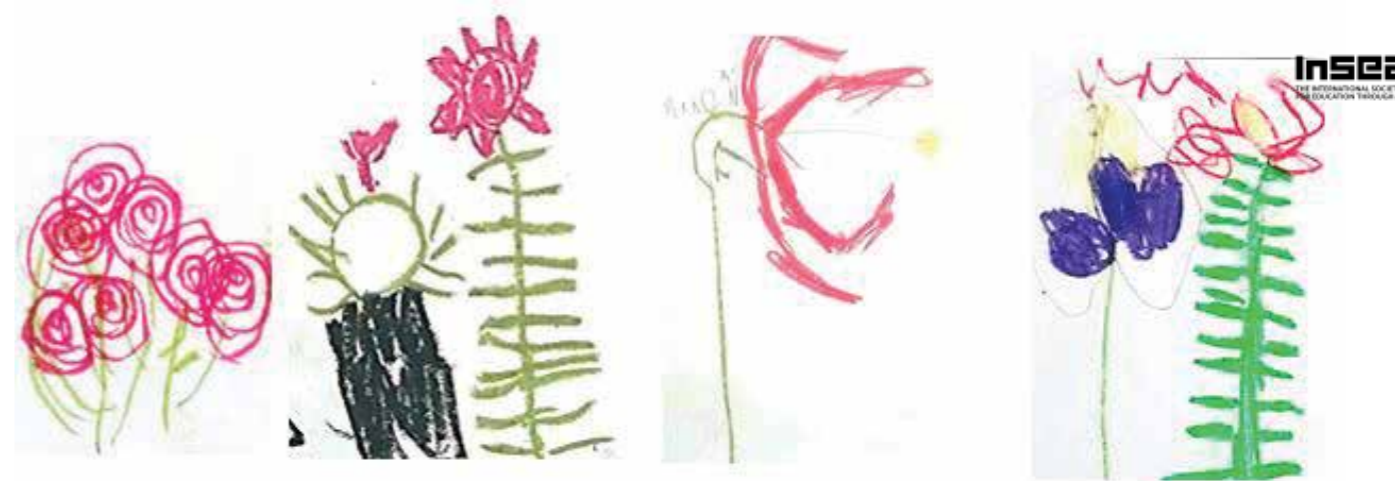


Figure 1: Children's drawings of the flowers in the garden. © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.

Ο 'Ζωγραφικός Κήπος' αφορά στις εφαρμογές εικαστικών δραστηριοτήτων μέσα από μία θεματική ενότητα, α) οι οποίες σχεδιάστηκαν και υλοποιήθηκαν με τη συνεργασία δύο ερευνητριών του Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου και δύο νηπιαγωγών, β) έλαβαν χώρα σε δύο δημόσια νηπιαγωγεία της επαρχίας Λευκωσίας με τη συμμετοχή σαράντα – έξι (N=46) παιδιών, ηλικίας 4 -6 χρόνων.

Οι δραστηριότητες επικεντρώνονται σε συμμετοχικές πρακτικές και στο παιχνίδι και πραγματοποιήθηκαν μέσα από το σχεδιασμό τριών φάσεων: Α Φάση: Παρατήρηση και εξερεύνηση χώρου, Β Φάση: Δημιουργία κέντρου μάθησης στα Εικαστικά (Ζωγραφικός Κήπος), Γ Φάση: Η εξέλιξη του εικαστικού παιχνιδιού στον Ζωγραφικό Κήπο. Η πραγμάτωση των δραστηριοτήτων μέσα από τις τρεις φάσεις αναδεικνύουν μία πολυτροπική προσέγγιση του εικαστικού παιχνιδιού η οποία εμβαθύνει σε ανοικτού τύπου, παιχνιδιάρικες δραστηριότητες και περιλαμβάνει την παρατήρηση, την εγκατάσταση στο χώρο, και το εφήμερο και συνεργατικό σχέδιο.

#παιχνίδι #συμμετοχική τέχνη #προσχολική αγωγή

## Inspirations

What does playful learning and teaching look like in a school space? The early years classroom is organized into learning centers (separate spaces), where children are free to make choices and explore materials individually or collectively (Bottini & Grossman). The centers allow children to construct their own knowledge while teacher acts as a collaborative member of a group, helping through scaffolding. The Drawing Garden is an example of how playful ways of making and viewing art can develop learning in an art center in early childhood settings. The process is based on authentic, participatory, and place-based art leaning (Savva & Erakleous, 2018) and employs methods of action participatory research (Baker & Davila, 2018).

The *drawing garden* is a project inspired by art play books (e.g. Herve Tullet) and Anna Bruder interactive installations (see <http://www.annabruder.com/about/biog/>), and is designed by teachers and researchers to encourage children to experience drawing as a transformative practice. The following narration is based on our visual evidence and incidents throughout the learning process.

## The beginning of the story: an authentic garden

This is a story about a garden. The garden is outside the school. We do not know what is inside that garden. Today is a good day. It is a garden day. The teachers invited children to take a walk: “*Let’s visit the garden... put on your explorers’ hats and go and see, smell and touch*”. After the walk the teachers suggested: “*And now it is time to draw: the different shapes, sizes and textures. The round flowers and the big cactuses, the tall and the tiny flowers. Take a look*” (see Figure 1).

## The garden inside our classroom

Researchers and teachers thought that in order to enhance children’s interest, they needed to create an observatory learning center about the flowers. Mrs. Flower (the researcher) and the teachers installed an overhead projector in the classroom and introduced to the children an observational drawing activity (see Figures 2 & 3).

Today, Mrs. Flower is playing with us ... She brought many flowers to us. “Oh! the light of the projector makes the flowers look bigger and bigger. Placing and tracing the flowers is fun!”

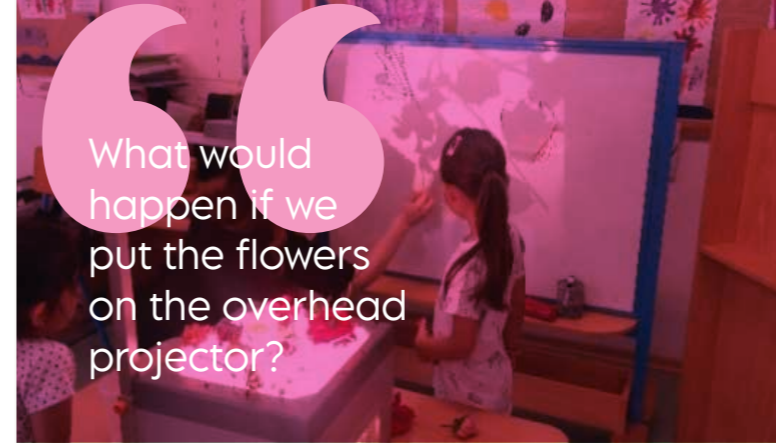


Figure 2,3: Flowers projected with Overhead Projector. © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.

Tracing organic shapes initiated an artistic dialogue that was enriched and inspired by the artist Herve Tullet (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWdv-REoylo>) who draws his own organic shapes called “Blops”.

Sometimes, his blops are transformed into beautiful butterflies, and other times blops are transformed into big flowers. Children viewed the artist’s transformations, listened to the sounds of shapes, and created their own blops (see example in Figure 4).

Figure 4: The children’s blops © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.



Mrs. Flower (the researcher) holds a surprise box and asks:

- *What is inside this box?*

“Oh, inside there are some shapes, our shapes, the flowers, the shapes we traced yesterday, the shadow shapes, the organic shapes. And now listen to the sound ... something like: blop, blop, bloppppp!”

- *What does this shape remind you of?*

The teacher transforms a shape ... “Lets transform our shapes, our blops “Oh, this blob is transformed to a wonderful butterfly with a big smile”

## The white space and the blobs (the art center in the school)

A white space, with flowers in pots and blobs emerged in the school. The space is covered with magic whiteboard paper to allow all the participants to draw, erase and draw again.

In Figure 5 Mrs. Flower draws a giant shape. Then the children draw many other blob-shapes, creating and recreating stories in the garden.

Mrs. Flower invited children to play inside the white space:

*“Look, the giant blob is here. Is it a giant flower or something else? Can we draw inside that space? What would happen if this space transformed into a drawing garden?”*

*Let’s draw ...”.*



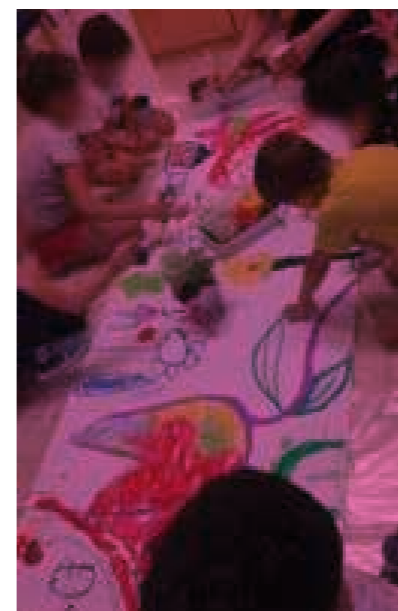
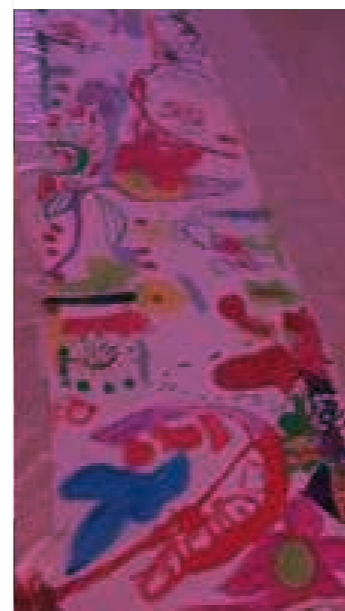
**Figure 5:** The blops in the art center (space in the school). © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.

## Drawing and installing blops in the drawing garden

Children decided that their garden needed more colors and many other things and thus the teachers along with the researchers organized more collaborative painting activities (see Figure 6).

The story goes like this:

*“The next day, Mrs. Flower visited our school bringing colorful markers, tempera paint and pots with flowers and started drawing with the children. She invited children to take a closer look at the flowers...and asked them: How about making everything bigger?... Just like that Now, we can play together and draw big and colorful shapes of flowers...”*



**Figure 6:** Teachers, Mrs Flower and the children collaborate to draw big flowers. © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.



**Figure 7,8:** Installation of objects in the drawing garden (art center) © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.



**Figure 9,10:** . In children's own words: «We will probably need some more soil to plant our flowers. We need a car to carry all these ...» © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.

The flowers, butterflies and different shapes were installed in the “drawing garden”. The garden was coming to life. (see Figures 7&8). The space, objects and drawing activities stimulated the imagination and play in the drawing garden. The children responded by creating stories.

### Stories emerging in the Drawing Garden

Stories emerged during the play and dialogues occurred between the children. The first story was about planting more flowers in the garden (Figures 9,10). The second story was about taking care of the plants in the garden (Figure 11) and the third story referred to a picnic taking place in the drawing garden (Figure 12).



**Figure 11:** The second story: Flowers and plants needed water. © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.

A dialogue between the children (Figure 11):

- *We need water. Let's draw a faucet so that we can have plenty.*

- *We will also need watering cans and hoes in order to take care of our garden. It is a lot of work, but we can do it!*



**Figure 12:** A picnic in the drawing garden. © Savva, A., Erakleous, V., Rossidou, S. and Vasiliou, C.

A Dialogue between the teacher and the children (Figure 12):

Teacher: *Now, let's all enjoy what we have created.*

Child: *How about a picnic? We will need a table cloth, some plates, glasses and cutlery.*

Teacher: *The weather is so good*

## End of story... and the beginning of a new one!

The children thought to extend their play by inviting others: “*You know what? Our parents and other children in the school may enjoy playing in our drawing garden. We should invite them*”. The learning process on how the drawing garden was created, was documented and presented to others. Visitors were invited to play in the garden to contribute with new ideas to the children’s stories and let to the closing phase of the project.

## Reflections

The children’s creative and artistic outcomes (ephemeral and permanent) were made and presented through embodied connections with the materials, objects and the space/place. Learning was reinforced by using senses, possibilities and processes (e.g. transformations, elaboration, visualization), and meanings were constructed through multiple interactions with others (children, teachers, researchers). The project reinforces the view of those who insist that for young children, as for many artists, art and play are integrally connected.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to express our special thanks of gratitude to the teacher Constantia Vasiliou for her exceptional efforts to collaborate with us, and all those children who offered us such a joy and creative moments. This paper and the research behind it would not have been possible without the support of the schools and the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.

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# Romare Bearden Neighborhood Collages

**Emily Higgins** is an art teacher from Massachusetts, currently teaching at Endeavor Elementary School in Brooklyn, NY. When Emily is not teaching, she is pursuing her own artistic endeavors in painting and sculpture, and is constantly inspired by colors and textures found in nature.  
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## Overview

Community Pictured Through Collage brings you into a Brooklyn, NY elementary art classroom as students learn about native New York artist Romare Bearden and explore the art of collage. In this lesson, students reflect on their community while simultaneously building a stronger classroom environment through shared materials and peer-to-peer feedback. Students work to complete their artwork over the course of 3 weeks, and the culminating critique at the end allows for students to see each other's art as well as talk with their peers to gain a deeper understanding of each individual's unique community.

In the lesson I present here, children ages 4-7 in a diverse Brooklyn, New York school created neighborhood collages inspired by the African American artist Romare Bearden. These young students who descend from Ghana, Jamaica, Haiti, and Guiana amongst other places, learned to share materials with peers and work together to create artwork in creating a healthy and sustainable learning community. Previously, students learned about the elements of art: shape, line and color, and they will now be incorporating these elements into the new art form of collage.

To begin, I introduced scholars to Romare Bearden and his collage work. For my younger students, this was the first time they learned about an artist and his work, and then created their own art based off of what they learned.

I chose Romare Bearden because he was an African American Artist and I wanted to teach my children about artists who look like them. I also chose to study him because he grew up in Harlem, New York, not far from where many of my students live, and similar to the communities they are growing up in. Since this was their introduction to collages I showed students different examples of collage to better their understanding. We then looked at Romare Bearden's neighborhood artworks to give them a context for their work. I

prompted students to talk with each other about their thoughts of Romare Bearden's collages, discussing what they noticed in his work and drawing comparisons between their communities and the ones Bearden depicted.

When engaging in discussion, students were encouraged to build off each other's ideas and explain their reactions. For example, if a student looking at Bearden's collage pointed out that they noticed he included a lot of people on the street, I might prompt another student to build on this observation. For example: *"From what we know of our own neighborhood and community, and knowing Bearden also lived in New York City, why do you think he included a lot of people on the street?"* *"What does that tell us about where he lived?"*

After engaging in these questions students began the creation process of their own neighborhood collages. This project spanned a total of three weeks, with one forty minute class per week. It is broken up into four parts: background, buildings, finishing details and a final class critique. For the background, students used oil pastels. They were given free reign to color the background as they would like, however, they needed to fill the background completely. Older students were also given the option to create a pattern for their background. (See Figure 1)



**Figure 1:** A first grade student chose to create a striped background. © Emily Higgins, 2020

On the second work day, students looked at pictures of our school community and identified shapes that they saw in the buildings pictured, such as rectangles and squares. Students learned about shapes in both art and math class, and so when talking about shapes they were able to identify shapes based on the number of sides/corners, along with the length.

For example, if a student shares out that they see a building that looks like a rectangle, I would ask them how they know, and students would be able to say, “I know because it has 4 sides, two short sides and two long sides.” Students transferred this recognition when selecting and cutting-out papers on a shared table. They then pasted these cut outs to build background that formed their neighborhood. (See Figure 2)



**Figure 2:** Kindergarten students working to cut out shapes to add to their collage. © Emily Higgins, 2020

Throughout this process, students learned to share materials such as paper, glue sticks, scissors and oil pastels and make use of paper that may have already been used by other students. Sharing the same paper and reusing materials is a new concept for some children; many think that once a paper is cut into and used by someone else, it is no longer a feasible option for them to use that same paper for their work. However, students learned to share materials, be inspired by others, and use and reuse paper. On the third and final day, students were encouraged to add finishing details to their collage such as windows and doors to buildings, plants, and other various pieces that might give the viewer a better sense of the student’s neighborhood. (See Figure 3)

Before jumping into work time, students look at some pictures of our school neighborhood and pull out the details that they notice, and which they believe they can add to their own art. Some examples of these details are cars on the street, trees, signs on buildings, etc. I noticed that students found purpose for even the smallest pieces.

On the board I recorded student collective responses to capture a list of potential details students could add to their work and that they could refer to and pull from during work time.



**Figure 3:** First grade student added details to their collage by cutting out flowers and adding windows and doors to the buildings. © Emily Higgins, 2020

Students returned to their seats to finish their collage. (See Figure 4)



Figure 4: A kindergarten student works to add the finishing details to their collage. © Emily Higgins, 2020.



Once a student guessed correctly we spent a minute looking at the chosen artwork, discussing its features and continued with the game. Students enjoyed this process to look at artwork as it gave each of them an individual voice and broadened their ability to talk about art. Students learned to use descriptive language; through talking about each other's artwork they were able to gain new perspectives, and learn from their peers about the different art making decisions and skills that were used.

For example, during the critique a student might say, "I spy a collage with a striped sky and seven tall buildings." The remainder of the class would then search for that work of art, and once it was found and the creator had been identified, the artist had the opportunity to share out more about their neighborhood and why they may have chosen to create a striped sky and seven tall buildings.

This time also allowed for students to resonate with each other, and pull out similarities between each other, for example, another student might also live in an area with tall buildings lining their street, or a community garden next to their apartment.

At the end of class, students engaged in a group observation game where the artwork was spread out on the floor and students observed and talked about each other's work. (See Figures 5 and 6) I led them through a reflective process game called I Spy. I started by saying, "I spy an artwork with...." and then list 3 details I see on a particular piece. If students knew who's work I was talking about they raised their hand for me to call on them to take a guess.



Figure 5: Finished student works are laid out on the carpet for a whole class critique. © Emily Higgins, 2020



Figure 6: Student's participate in I spy game to talk about and comment on peer work. © Emily Higgins, 2020

The various steps to this project created a sense of community in the classroom where students learned to show compassion and empathy to one another through their discussions about the artwork and the constructive feedback they give each other.

## Contemporary Sculpture as a Creative Practice for the Little Ones

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### Overview

Creative development has been the main theme of this artistic education project entitled “Contemporary sculpture as a creative practice for the little ones”. It was carried out in the non-formal artistic education school Lapis de Buxo (Vigo-Spain) with a total of 20 organized boys and girls of 3 and 7 years of age. The objective has been to promote creative thinking skills through the work of Niki de Saint Phalle, Takashi Murakami, Juan Muñoz and Julio González. The results had great potential for learning through artistic inquiry. Participants were able to recreate their own narratives through the work of these artists.

El desarrollo creativo ha sido el tema principal de este proyecto artístico de educación que lleva por título “La escultura contemporánea como práctica creativa para los más pequeños”. Se ha realizado en la escuela de educación artística no formal Lápis de Buxo (Vigo-España) con un total de 20 niños y niñas organizados de 3 y 7 años de edad. El objetivo ha sido promover las habilidades de pensamiento creativo a través del trabajo de Niki de Saint Phalle, Takashi Murakami, Juan Muñoz y Julio González. Los resultados tuvieron gran potencial de aprendizaje a través de la indagación artística. Los participantes pudieron recrear sus propias narrativas a través del trabajo de estos artistas.

In school there is a general trend towards normative learning with a series of objectives and competencies that must be met. A predominant artistic approach in early childhood education where art is sometimes limited to pictorial and drawing processes through reproduction parameters, traditional skills and practical applications that invite little reflection. This hegemonic trend in children’s artistic education becomes a grammar of manual skills and abilities that, at times, have a superficial and decontextualized exercise. The work presented tries to imagine another way of approaching art and learning from the experiential and artistic

creativity. The project challenges us to go beyond established teaching and learning processes looking for other formulas to approach art.

The work project presented is entitled “Contemporary sculpture as creative practice for the little ones.” It was held in the non-formal artistic education school Lapis de Buxo located in Vigo (Spain) for approximately three months in the 2015-2016 academic year. The project was carried out with a total of 20 boys and girls organized in groups of different ages between 3 and 7 years.

Figure 1: Class of Lapis de Buxo (Vigo-Spain).



The context of this school has an impact on promoting active, personalized and affective learning of teaching, in a way that allows students to learn-enjoying artistic practice. Something that is more or less easy for teachers when parents and students are looking for this type of alternative teaching-learning of creative leisure.

The work experience takes as a starting point the need of the little ones to expand their knowledge of art, sculptors and their works.

The project begins by opening a conversation between the students and the teacher. A conversation where dialogue becomes a mediator of learning and reflection. In this beginning, motivations and prior knowledge about art and sculpture are perceived. In addition, it serves the teacher to ask the students about how sculptors create different works. This question will help us to raise the main idea of the project, the notion of artist and creativity to understand that there is no single art, but many arts and different ways of approaching sculpture. For this, the sculptors Niki de Saint Phalle, Takashi Murakami, Juan Muñoz and Julio González were selected, all of them good examples of what diversity of views and openness to new creative discourses means.

The initial question - how sculptors create different works - is posed as a sharing where girls and boys can express their feelings and ideas around sculptural works. These ideas are collected in writing, arranged and grouped by subject: styles and techniques, current and past sculptors, and creative expression. Based on these themes, students are asked to look for images of the works of these sculptors and to select an image to explain to others.

The presentations of the works guarantee that the boys and girls express with their language, the most significant.

The following activity emphasized the differences and similarities between the sculptors' works, helping us with explanations and video films to better understand the sense of authorship, the representations and the artistic techniques used.

These initial activities of pedagogical dialogue in the classroom were complemented by artistic creation activities. Now was the time for boys and girls to act like artists. The challenge was to sculpturally capture what was learned and investigate the creative possibilities of sculptural procedures.



Figure 2: Student sculpture "Nana".

For this reason, we opted for each girl and boy to have the freedom to give meaning to their experience, without imposing a specific time or sculptural project. The goal was to enable pleasant and emotionally significant aesthetic experiences.

From this premise, the artistic process acquires importance not only from the formal perspective of creation, but also from what it embodies at the identity level. We wanted the students to be the ones to lead the exploration process and to create sculptural works inspired by two of the proposed sculptors. The role of the teacher was of mediator and agitator of possibilities.

The part of artistic design started from the realization of pencil sketches on paper where the ideas were given abstract or figurative form, and the sculptural materials and procedures were studied. Here, doubts and questions arose about the size of the sculptures, about how the sculptures would be on all sides or what techniques would be more suitable for each design.

The processes of sculptural creation had a great potential for learning through the investigation of techniques with recycled material, the creation of papier-mâché, assembly or painting on volume. In addition, the participants experimented with three-dimensional creation by

combining basic shapes, sizes, and textures. The key point that we observed and that illustrates the idea of learning were the actions of exploration and expressive and conceptual search carried out by the boys and girls.

The sculptures of the “Nanas” by the artist Niki de Saint Phalle (1930-2002) and Takashi Murakami (1962-) were the most successful among the students. Many chose these works motivated by their marked playful expressiveness and emotionality. The lullaby sculptures made by the girls and boys are simple structures created with recycled material where an attempt was made to shape the notion of femininity and body canons outside the normative frameworks.

At a technical level, the figures were built with cardboard and papier-mâché (Figure 2) covered with gesso, and on top, they were painted with acrylic paint.

The figures inspired by Takashi (Figure 3 and 4) were invented showing certain characteristics related to Japanese popular culture and manga and anime images. These figures were made with clay and the use of color as an expressive complement.

The sculptures based on the work of Julio González (Figures 5<sup>o</sup> and 6<sup>o</sup>) used flat cardboard structures assembled and painted with acrylic paint imitating metal.

Figure 3,4: Student sculpture “dragon”.



These approaches were aimed at a representation of complex and imaginative forms made to be seen from different points of view and try to achieve what González calls “drawing in space.”

The results were unique experiences for many girls and boys who were able to recreate their own narratives through the work of these artists.

Thus, the creative process constituted a learning process in action (Atkinson: 2012) that implied a transition from information to sculptural production, allowing to experience different artistic stories and to confront these representations with their own.

**Figure 5.6:** Student sculpture “structure” and “Bird”.



In short, the project has been a creative learning process that tried to expand the ways of seeing, speaking and doing about art and life. We begin by facing the question of the diversity of languages and we continue to explore in search of answers and meanings through artistic research.

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# A Study of Awareness and Empathy: Where did all the Yellow go?

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## Overview

Where did all the yellow go? An art based inquiry into a singular color created an opportunity to promote awareness and empathy within the everyday lives of young children. Public-school art educator, Gigi Yu, and early childhood classroom educator, Mary Bliss, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, United States collaborated with preschool children (4-5 year-olds) on an emergent study of yellow as a transformative color. To structure the emergent study, the phases of a reflective planning cycle were employed. Throughout the process, the concept of empathy emerged. Visual art materials were foundational to children’s thinking, theories, and socially constructed knowledge.

Drawing attention to a singular color created an opportunity to promote feelings of empathy and caring within the everyday lives of young children. A public-school art educator, Gigi Yu, and early childhood classroom educator, Mary Bliss, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, United States collaborated with preschool children (4-5 year-olds) on an emergent study of the color yellow in their environment. The study emerged over 5 months, giving time for the children to develop an awareness of yellow by exploring in-depth its attributes, qualities, and contributions to the classroom.

To structure the emergent study, the phases of a reflective planning cycle were employed: *observation, documentation, collaborative reflection, planning, and relaunching*. The educators worked together to create suggestions, possibilities, and encounters with materials and ideas. These initial choices were not fixed determinations of what would happen. Rather, the children’s unique responses informed the next steps, taking us to places we never imagined.

Heightened observations through visual arts experiences called attention to yellow’s unique qualities, identity, and connections to our world. The children and educators developed a sense of empathy towards yellow as a color that represents change and transformation.



Figure 1: Reflective Planning Cycle. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

## How the inquiry began: Where did yellow go?

Within the first few weeks of the 2017 school year, Mary noticed that the children’s paintings were absent of the color yellow. In addition, the yellow watercolor and tempera paints seemed to have disappeared. Yellow was used the most in comparison to the other colors. In addition, yellow was mixed in with other colors, losing its own identity in the process. Mary brought this to the children’s attention, asking:

“Where did all of the yellow go?”



**Figure 2:** Yellow found in the school garden.  
© Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



**Figure 3:** Walking the yellow line.  
© Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



**Figure 4:** Yellow composition from classroom objects. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

The question contributed to a deeper investigation into yellow's disappearance. Mary decided to take the children on a yellow hunt, noticing all the places yellow existed within the school environment.

Next, the children searched within the classroom for objects that were yellow. Compositions were created of found yellow objects. When only looking for one color, other colors also became more noticeable.

Mary shared the observations with Gigi, the visual art educator who visited the classroom weekly. Together, they constructed a research question that was also shared with the children and informed the next steps of the study:

*How can we further explore yellow's identity?*



**Figure 5:** Children's observational photographs of the color yellow. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

## Relaunching new ideas: Studying yellow's identity

Next, Gigi organized an opportunity for a small group of children to explore the identity of yellow through a range of mark making materials in the art studio, including oils pastels, colored pencils, chalk, and watercolors.

**Figure 6:** A provocation with yellow materials in the studio.  
© Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



As children encountered the materials, they began to create their own understanding of yellow's unique qualities and potentials.

**Figure 7:** Investigating the unique qualities of yellow mark making materials. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



Figure 8: Comparing and contrasting yellow mark making materials. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



**Lily:** *The chalk is fuzzy. It makes a lot of yellow. It is foggy. This one is so light.*

**Devin:** *It gets all over my hand. The chalk is light. The oil pastel is dark.*

**Andrew:** *If you paint over the markers, it turns yellow. You should try this!*

Each material highlighted yellow's distinct attributes. By comparing and contrasting, we soon discovered that no two yellows were the same.

### Collaboration: Bringing together two colors

Mary organized a small group experience inviting the children to paint with yellow tempera paint and a large piece of paper. The children began by working alongside each other, yet individually.

Each child developed a relationship with the color yellow. Yellow brought to life the children's individuality and imaginations through representation of their favorite subject matters.



Figure 9: Painting with yellow. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

**Ana:** *I made Minnie Mouse.*

**Chloe:** *I'm making a rainbow.*

**Ronald:** *It's a dinosaur.*

**Hannah:** *It's a person.*

**Jay:** *I make yellow.*



Figure 10: Children's representations with yellow paint. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss





Figure 12: Child paints with yellow and orange. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

**Ana:** *Yellow and orange and white. It turned into a very pretty color. It turns to orange now. It is back to orange. Ice cream cone yellow. It is smooth.*

Soon the children covered the whole paper, working collaboratively to fill all the spaces with the new color combination. As the children mixed the paint, they discovered that yellow changes orange and orange changes yellow. Together the colors worked together to create something new.

As a surprise, Mary introduced another color to the children's work. What would happen if orange joined yellow on the paper?



Figure 11: Orange joins yellow. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



Figure 13: Yellow changes orange. Orange changes yellow. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

## Relaunching a new idea: Yellow in transformation

We wondered about the transformative properties of yellow. What happens when yellow changes and transforms? For our next encounter with yellow, Gigi brought a small group of children outside to gather and investigate natural yellow materials from the environment. It was a warm fall day and there were lots of leaves that had fallen to the ground as the seasons were changing.

Using their hands, the children explored the textures of yellow. They tore, crushed, and manipulated the materials on a large sheet of paper. The large paper allowed them to notice the subtle and striking differences in the textures and variations in colors.



**Figure 14:** Exploring the texture of yellow leaves. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



**Figure 15:** Corn silk yellow from the garden. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss



**Figure 16:** A composition of yellow natural materials. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

## Reflection: Bringing the outdoor experience inside

The outdoor experience was very exciting. The children wanted to share their work with the other children in the class. We projected the images taken outdoors on a large screen so that the group could revisit the experience together.

Mary and Gigi worked collaboratively to support a 45-minute large group discussion that revealed the children's theories and interpretations regarding the transformation of yellow.



**Figure 17:** Reflection on the transformation of yellow. © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

“what do you notice about the different yellows?” while Mary recorded the conversation.

**Carl:** *Cause they're dying. The brown ones are dying. When they're brown they die. I learned that in my magazine. When they're brown they are super dead. Yellow is almost dying.*

**Maria:** *They were a different green in the trees before they got red.*

**Carl:** *That leaf looks different than on there (pointing from the screen to the paper). It goes darker, darker, darker.*

**Kami:** *This one turned light to orange.*

**Lily:** *They change color because of the sun. The sun makes the leaves turn yellow and the wind makes the leaves die at night.*

**Terry:** *They grow step by step.*

**Jane:** *The leaves are light. Those leaves are dark.*

**Gigi:** *How do you think the light changed to dark?*

**Lily:** *They changed. That is how God made it in this world.*

**Ana:** *They changed color but they are the same one.*

**Tim:** *Jesus was changing them out of colors.*

**Maria:** *Like the lizards change colors.*

**Roger:** *Lizards change colors because some of them camouflage.*

**Tim:** *All of the colors are mixing. They are getting yellow to yellow to yellow. The leaves are falling into the sky and then they are dying.*

**Roger:** *The leaves are falling down and dying. They are going back to heaven and then they have to come back to fix them.*

**Lily:** *The leaves are going to turn yellow. I have a ladybug at my house and the leaves turn yellow.*

**Laura:** (turns to Lilly), *I like what you said.*

**Vana:** *The yellow leaves are so beautiful and I touched them softly.*

**Dominic:** *They go to heaven and they grow new.*

## Collaborative documentation and display

A collaborative documentation panel was displayed in the classroom highlighting the many and varied experiences and wide range of materials used throughout the entire study. The documentation panel was like a living document. We witnessed yellow's natural transformation over time as the leaves attached to the collage gradually changed from yellow to brown before our eyes.

For all of us, the study of yellow brought about a sense of empathy, a heightened awareness of the potential that exists within one color.

**NOTE:** Pseudonyms are used for names



**Figure 18:** Documentation Panel: Where Did All the Yellow Go? © Gigi Yu and Mary Bliss

## Drawing That Photograph you Hear

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### Overview

We introduce an educational experience in a bilingual teaching context in which visual creation fosters the integration of contents and promotes languages as a way of communication and expression. This engaging proposal pursues a collaborative visual representation by enhancing the visual imagery through the sense of listening, and also encouraging children to express themselves orally and with gestures. The photographs of Chema Madoz were chosen as cultural references as well as for their simplicity and symbolism. The results shown the importance of fostering interdisciplinary approach from artistic practice.

Presentamos una experiencia educativa en un contexto de enseñanza bilingüe en la que la creación visual integra contenidos y fomenta los lenguajes como vía de comunicación y de expresión. Esta atractiva propuesta consiste en una representación visual colaborativa potenciando el imaginario visual a través del sentido de la escucha, al tiempo que promueve la expresión verbal y gestual de los y las niñas. Las imágenes de Chema Madoz fueron elegidas cómo referentes culturales, por su simplicidad y simbolismo. Los resultados evidencian la importancia de favorecer practicas interdisciplinarias desde la creación visual.

#dibujo colaborativo #diversidad cultural #interdisciplinarietàad

#lenguajes #sentidos



This practice was developed with 1<sup>st</sup> grade students from Harry C. Withers Elementary School of Dallas Independent School District of Texas (United States). These children were enrolled in the Dual Language Program (DLP), a bilingual initiative of the District in which each grade level has two general teachers, one for each language and the classrooms were organized in such a way that half of the students were Spanish native speakers, and the other half were English native speakers who really wanted to learn Spanish. All of this offered a multicultural landscape enriched by languages, by the cultural roots of the families themselves, who came from Latin American countries and also by my own Spanish culture that I taught as a bilingual teacher from Spain.

The group of students and language of instruction vary depending on the subject taught. According with DLP, Science and Social Studies are always taught in Spanish, so children who are English speakers are being helped by their Spanish partners. Regarding Art as a subject always is taught in English and outside the general classroom by an Art educator. However, as a bilingual teacher I firmly believe in art as a powerful visual language of expression which can be easily integrated into any other subjects from an interdisciplinary approach.

Under these assumptions we integrated artistic practices into our lessons introducing art thinking in the learning process integrated with content required to be taught. Particularly this experience was initially designed for a Science class trying to foster observation reinforcing our senses while using the vocabulary learnt in our weekly lesson plan about the weather. Among all pictures, we selected those from Chema Madoz's artwork, because of their simplicity and narrative quality, which also contained visual elements about the weather. By choosing a contemporary Spanish artist in our lessons, we were also relating content in Spanish to contemporary art cultural references, expanding the notion of culture to language and art.

Let us begin by giving details about the session and the characteristics of our participants. Children had been grouped in bilingual pairs, which were integrated by an English and a Spanish native speaker. These bilingual pairs had worked together during a six-week period, so one could easily perceive how they knew each other quite well by that point.



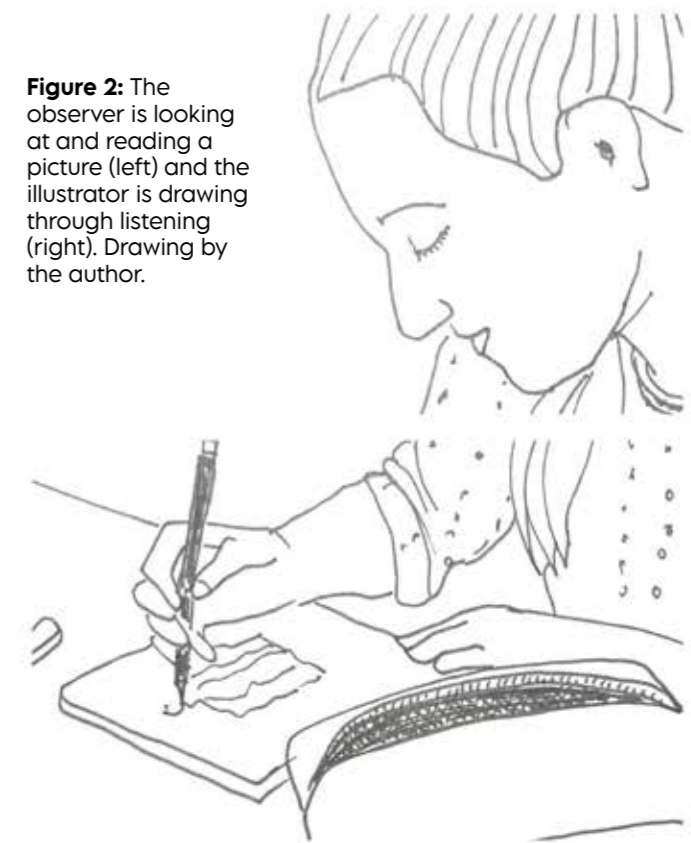
Based on that pairing, then we should be clear enough giving instructions about the role each kid plays during this art practice, either as an illustrator or as an observer. Observers would be placed facing the screen while the illustrators would be sitting back to that projection, but both together and one in front of each other. On the one hand, the role of observers is crucial because it involves describing what they are seeing in the projection image using all the vocabulary learnt and making any gestures needed in order to make themselves understood. This means being able to read pictures and to express the main features of those images in Spanish. On the other hand, illustrators give their back to the screen and are not allowed to look at the projected images. That way, they should prick up their ears to enhance their sense of listening. Illustrators may ask any question to their partners

and all these queries help observers to be more precise in describing the image. Thus, there is a close relationship between languages and expressions, whether oral or visual. An image is transformed into an oral expression to be later drawn as a visual representation. By using words from our newly acquire Spanish vocabulary they build a visual description and develop oral skills as questioning to get a deeper description of the image.

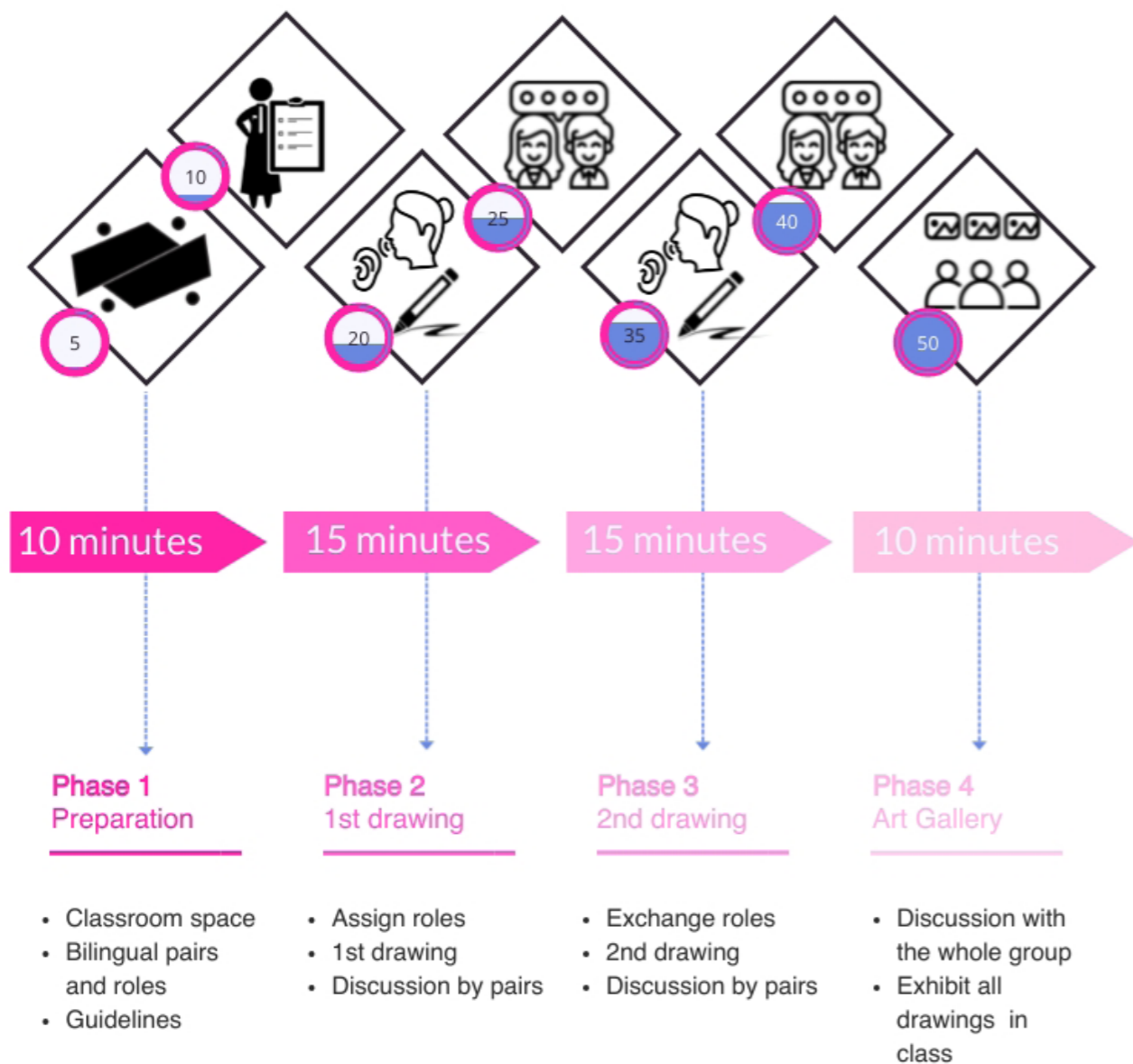
**Figure 1:** Drawings by the author inspired by selected photographs of Chema Madoz.



**Figure 2:** The observer is looking at and reading a picture (left) and the illustrator is drawing through listening (right). Drawing by the author.



**Figure 3:** Timeline of our artistic practice in four phases.



Once students have learnt what their roles are, we would start by giving them certain guidelines like the drawing is based on the description given by the observers, keeping in mind that illustrators were not able to turn around to look at the projection, and observers were not allowed to draw anything either. We also encouraged those students who play the role of illustrators to ask questions for those details missing on the description given. The estimated time to make the drawing you hear was approximately ten minutes, although each pairing of children needs their own time (see details of the full practice in figure 3). Thus, it seems appropriate to emphasize the importance of an active collaboration in this practice because no matter who is drawing, both are creators of the same piece.

The teacher should show an enthusiastic attitude to get the children involved and maintain their interest throughout the activity. When all the children's eyes are caught, that means it is time to start. The photograph is projected on the screen and observers begin to describe what they are seeing, while illustrators carefully listen to them and start their drawings. During all this process, as educators we should encourage questioning as a strategy for solving issues and completing missing information on their drawings. For instance: *What is the weather like? What is the color of the sky? Where is the cage hanging*

from? *How big is this cloud?* Practicing new vocabulary using those questions and looking for words posted on our class' word wall are recommendations we might suggest to our students. During all this process we realized how engaged children were, since illustrators were very attentive to the description given by observers.

As educators, we must take advantage of these moments to observe how children communicate with each other by expressing themselves through words and gestures. We should also pay attention to drawings and how illustrators were able to transform that description into a graphic representation. I realized that most of the visual descriptions were focused on giving a mimetic representation of what they observed, without paying attention to the visual connotations of the artwork. Although we used a regular pencil to draw, some children were really interested in giving the precise color details. Once children finish their drawings, they might look, compare and discuss their drawings while looking at the screen for about five minutes. The excitement is palpable in the atmosphere and curiously we observed how children use visual comparison as an intuitive strategy to appreciate the quality of their drawings. Those conversations among both children are really smart because they check by themselves those easily observable details that were previously described with so much difficulty.



**Figure 4:** Children's drawings (right) from a photograph by Chema Madoz, represented by means of a drawing by the author (left).



After that, children exchanged positions so that each one played the other's role. This way, everyone experienced being an observer and illustrator in order to understand the challenge of both roles. Another picture is selected for this second turn and we followed the same procedure we did with the first picture. Once all children shared their thoughts with their peers, we let children discuss the full experience with the whole class. Finally, we created an Art gallery in our class showing all the drawings made by all children, so they felt more than proud when their drawings were being exhibited.

Talking about the challenge of being either an observer or illustrator open up possibilities for our teaching practice and helped us realize which abilities and skills need to be reinforced for future practices. This one, as an interdisciplinary lesson, shows how art could interrelated with other subjects such as Spanish language and Science. However, thanks to its versatility, it would fit in any other subject matter. This engaging practice pursues a collaborative visual representation by enhancing the visual imagery through the sense of listening.



**Figure 5:** Children's drawings (left). Drawings by the author inspired by Chema Madoz (right).



# Trees & Animals : Art and English as a Foreign Language

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## Overview

*Trees & Animals* is a sub-project of an early years education project of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and Art, carried out in Zagreb, Croatia. Besides the appropriate strategies and methods of EFL learning-teaching to very young learners, used in the first 45 minutes in each workshop, I have used suitable methods and strategies in teaching Art in the last 15 minutes of each class. The purpose of the Art Time for the children, besides repeating and consolidating the acquired FL content through a relaxing activity, is to adopt some elements of visual language and to enjoy the very act of creativity and collaborative socializing when drawing in groups.

*Stabla i životinje*, podprojekt je projekta *Rano učenje engleskog jezika i likovna kultura*, kao kraćeg programa odgojno-obrazovnog rada s djecom predškolske dobi, koji sam provodila u englesko-likovnim radionicama u dječjem vrtiću „Potočnica” u Zagrebu. U radu s djecom, u cilju dječjega primjerenog usvajanja jezičnih sadržaja, u uobičajenom vremenu od 45 minuta predviđenom za „engleski” koristila sam sadržaje i odgovarajuće metode i strategije ranog učenja stranog jezika, a u dodatnom vremenu od 15 minuta nadovezala sam likovne aktivnosti, uz prikladne metode rada. „Vrijeme za likovni”, uz aktivno ponavljanje i usvajanje sadržaja engleskog jezika u opuštajućoj aktivnosti, ima svrhu usvajanja elemenata vizualnog jezika i uživanja u samome likovnom stvaranju te u druženju pri grupnom radu.

#cross-curricular teaching #group artwork #early years education

I held my “English & Art” workshops with groups of kindergarten children in “Potočnica” (Forget-Me-Not), an early years education centre in Zagreb, Croatia. My project *English & Art for Children* was partly based on the national *Early Learning of English as a Foreign Language* (English as a Foreign Language – EFL) school program, and included in the optional educational programs of the Centre.

The one-month long subproject *Trees & Animals* was carried out from February to March 2014, organized in 60 minutes workshops, twice a week, for 14 children (coincidentally, only girls) aged 3 years 11 months to 6 years 5 months.

Since children at that young age have no ability of abstract thinking, I have used the appropriate teaching strategies and methods of EFL learning/teaching: play-based learning, role play, songs and rhymes, and storytelling, with an emphasis on three most specific methods – Responding through doing, Learning through doing, and Total Physical Response (TPR). However, I have put a strong accent on a less usual, yet my favorite method, a cross-curricular one, Learning EFL through Art.

The first 45 minutes in each workshop were spent in various short term activities with the aim of acquiring EFL vocabulary. So, short animal rhymes were learned or revised (*Two Little Birds; Little Bear, Little Bear, Turn Around; Rat-a-tat-tat! Who is that?; Baa, Baa, Black Sheep; Mary Had a Little Lamb*). Also, games were played, for example, *Pretend to be a...* (plant/animal) or a guessing game based on animal shaped mini biscuits, gladly consumed afterwards ...

Other teaching materials – picture books (with visually appealing illustrations!) – were read (*Good-Night, Owl!*; *The Enormous Turnip*<sup>2</sup>) or just revised through discussing the inspiring illustrations (*The Three Bears*<sup>3</sup>; *Jack and the Beanstalk*<sup>4</sup>).

The last 15 minutes of each workshop were exclusively planned for art activities (whereas in EFL teaching they are usually used only as short follow-up activities). The purpose of the Art Time was to repeat, consolidate, adopt and solidify the acquired language content through an appropriate relaxing activity, to adopt some elements of visual language, and finally, to enjoy the very act of creativity and collaborative socializing when drawing in groups.





Figure 1



Figure 3



Figure 6



Figure 5

**Figure 1:** Children drawing, Group 1, phase 1, age 3 years 11 months – 6 years 5 months

**Figure 2:** Group 1 children's collective drawing, phase 1

**Figure 3:** Children drawing, Group 1, phase 2

**Figure 4:** Group 1 children's collective drawing, phase 3

**Figure 5, 6:** Two girls drawing, Group 1, phase 3

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In their group drawing activities, the children were divided into two groups of 4 – 5 (Fig. 1 – 6) and 7 – 8 children (Fig. 12, 13). The drawing materials they used were colored felt-tip pens and two large scale heavy-weight white papers, approximately B2 and B1 size, placed on the floor, while the children sat, kneeled or lay on the rubber puzzle mats, so they could enjoy the freedom of movement and had a new experience of drawing and expressing themselves.



Figure 2



Figure 4



Figure 12



Figure 13

Figure 12, 13: Group 2 children's collective drawing, phases 2 and 4, age 4 years 5 months – 6 years 4 months  
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One of the girls first organized the space of the future picture by drawing two straight border lines for herself and her friend (Fig. 1), while the majority of other participants, the girls in both groups, created their personal image space spontaneously and unrestrictedly (Fig. 2, 12, 13). Later on, another border line appeared in Group 1 when a girl was coloring the background yellow (Fig. 4).

Unfortunately, our spacious workshop room was unexpectedly occupied as many as three times for some official kindergarten events, so we had to organize the activities in a very small room with tables and chairs. On these occasions, the children made individual pencil drawings on white or tinted/pink A4 papers, ordinarily placed on tables. The topics were, for example, an early-blooming tree in the kindergarten yard – drawn from observation, as viewed through the window, or a tree inspired by a picture book they had just read (Fig. 7 – 11). Another disadvantage for the planned group art activities was that several girls were occasionally absent from the workshops.

Regardless of that, each time we made a small exhibition, either on the rubber mats on the floor or on the tables joined together.

**Figure 7-11:** Early-blooming/Tree, individual pencil drawings on white/pink A4 paper, age 5 years 9 months – 6 years 5 months  
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In the end, the two big drawings were not entirely finished. However they could show the way of children’s visual thinking and the process of creating an artwork, their paper space organization as well as the cooperation with peers, and after all, their fun and enjoyment in art activities, especially when drawing freely in an informal body position, on unusual, large paper formats with thick felt-tip pens. The advantage of drawing in such conditions is that it allows unhindered movements and experimenting with naturally flowing bold lines, big and non-stereotyped, fresh shapes, and intense colors.

Both children participating in the EFL & Art workshops and their parents expressed their wish to take their drawings home, especially the big ones, to share them



with the rest of the family, put them on the wall, and preserve them as keepsakes. Instead, I was very happy to remind them successfully of the earlier agreement about our monitoring and praising the artistic progress, i.e. about the following procedure:

During the Art Time, I tried to take the photos of most interesting scenes, that is the characteristic moments in the phases of the children’s individual or group artworks; each time we made an exhibition to celebrate the diversity of artistic expressions; if desired, the parents could take photos of their child’s exhibited artwork. After everyone had left, I regularly photo-documented the exhibition as a whole as well as photographed or scanned all or only the selected individual drawings which could show the specific artistic development of a particular child; I also photographed the phases of the group artworks in progress. At the end of the school year, each child got a folder with the whole collection of his/her individual artworks, the cut out individual segments of the group drawings (which were sometimes impossible to recognize or separate precisely!), a CD with all digital photographs and scans with relevant data, and a printed diploma with a decorative border of scaled-down most distinctive images.

The children felt very proud because of the quantity, size, and quality of the artworks from their final collection, which they could only now fully self-evaluate, show off and enjoy.

**References**

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- <sup>3</sup> Galdone, Paul (1979) *The Three Bears*. New York: Clarion Books/Houghton Mifflin Company.
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In this book, the third in the *Learning Through Art* series, we present 48 visual essays exploring the notion of ‘learning through art’, from the point of view of art educators working with students at all ages pre-university, in addition to a selection of essays that focus on issues of art-infused inclusive educational practices. Featuring the work of teachers, artists, museum educators and artist-educators, each contribution presents a ‘picture of practice’ that tells the story of what learning through art might mean in the classroom, studio, gallery or community.

Drawing on projects, interventions and lessons by 57 authors from 28 countries, this book truly is an international snapshot of what is going on in education through art around the world in early education, elementary, high school and inclusive education. Each visual essay has, where appropriate, an introduction in the first language of the authors. The first three sections focus on the pre-college or university years (3–7 years; 8–11 years; 12–18 years) and the final section is not linked to age groups, rather it focuses on issues of inclusive education. The contributing authors provide richly illustrated, personal and first-hand accounts of current practice. This book will be of interest to a wide audience including, for example, pre-service teacher education students, elementary and high school teachers, artists, designers, art educators and museum educators in addition to those with a general interest in art education.