

Introduction: From white cube to white noise: Pivoting on the nexus of cultural change

Teresa Marie Tipton

1- (Re)portraying art and Learning in the Mediterranean

Raphael Vella

2- Jia Zhang-ke's 24 City in the spotlight of the new urban cinema, rethinking a state of transition in today China

Tomé Saldanha Quadros

3- Ciberanthropophagy: Uirapuru, Pingbird, biobot and Eduardo Kac plus Oswald de Andrade

Paulo Celso da Silva • Miriam Cristina Carlos da Silva

4- Global Image Cultures. Identity Construction in Popular Imagery: Doing Gender – Undoing Gender

Reingard Klingler

5- Thinking Art for Generation Facebook – Where are the boys?

René Stangl

6- One image, one Virgin and one believer – proximity and change in the cult of Our Lady of Health

Pedro Pereira

7- The story of "Susanna and the Elders" revisited

Angélica Lima Cruz • M^a José Magalhães

8- Transgressions and narratives – a discussion around a perspective of the post-modern body or the post-human body. The importance of the curator

Genoveva Oliveira

9- Art of Change: the voice of Berenika Ovrčáková

Anabela Moura • Ana Camargo

10- Photography, identity and diversity - an artistic experience in teaching

Severino Domingos Mendes Fernandes • Célia Maria de Castro Almeida

11- Dance Education in the School System of Taiwan: The Reform and Future Prospect

JuanAnn TAI

12- "Child Art Liberation"- The rediscovery of Franz Čížek.

Rolf Laven

13- The memory in the construction of a route of art ... The lived and the living: reflection on time, space and image

Margarida Maria Moreira Barbosa Leão Pereira da Silva

14- Mediation and partnerships in the Educational Service of the Nogueira da Silva Museum

Maria Helena Trindade

15- Contributions of creative writing in fostering creativity and the love of writing and reading – an action research study at vila cova elementary school

Cátia Penalva

16- Art: voltage and impedance

Helder Dias

17- Repossessing narrative: a death save for valuing culture, creating cultural value

Teresa Tipton

18- Cultural Intermediation: cultural offer and cultural practices

Carlos Almeida • Manuel Gama • António Jácomo • Adalgisa Pontes

19- Culture and aging: the role of culture in successful aging

Manuela Cachadinha

20- There is a bit of white between my heart and my stomach in truth my work does not exist because it is not written anywhere

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Introduction: <i>From white cube to white noise:Pivoting on the nexus of cultural change</i>	
Teresa Marie Tipton.....	3
1 (Re)portraying art and Learning in the Mediterranean	
Raphael Vella	8
2 Jia Zhang-ke's 24 City in the spotlight of the new urban cinema, rethinking a state of transition in today China	
Tomé Saldanha Quadros.....	17
3 Ciberanthropophagy: Uirapuru, Pingbird, biobot and Eduardo Kac plus Oswald de Andrade	
Paulo Celso da Silva	
Miriam Cristina Carlos da Silva	23
4 Global Image Cultures.	
Identity Construction in Popular Imagery: Doing Gender – Undoing Gender	
Reingard Klingler.....	31
5 Thinking Art for Generation Facebook – Where are the boys?	
René Stangl	43
6 One image, one Virgin and one believer – proximity and change in the cult of Our Lady of Health	
Pedro Pereira.....	57
7 The story of “Susanna and the Elders” revisited	
Angélica Lima Cruz	
M ^a José Magalhães	61
8 Transgressions and narratives – a discussion around a perspective of the post-modern body or the post-human body. The importance of the curator	
Genoveva Oliveira	72
9 Art of Change: the voice of Berenika Ovcáčková	
Anabela Moura	
Ana Camargo.....	83
10 Photography, identity and diversity - an artistic experience in teaching	
Severino Domingos Mendes Fernandes	
Célia Maria de Castro Almeida.....	96
11 Dance Education in the School System of Taiwan: The Reform and Future Prospect	
JuanAnn TAI.....	114
12 “Child Art Liberation“ - The rediscovery of Franz Čížek.	
Rolf Laven.....	126
13 The memory in the construction of a route of art ... The lived and the living: reflection on time, space and image	
Margarida Maria Moreira Barbosa Leão Pereira da Silva	135
14 Mediation and partnerships in the Educational Service of the Nogueira da Silva Museum	
Maria Helena Trindade	153
15 Contributions of creative writing in fostering creativity and the love of writing and reading – an action research study at vila cova elementary school	
Cátia Penalva.....	159
16 Art: voltage and impedance	
Helder Dias	177
17 Repossessing narrative: a death save for valuing culture, creating cultural value	
Teresa Tipton	184

18 Cultural Intermediation: cultural offer and cultural practices	
Carlos Almeida	
Manuel Gama	
António Jácomo	
Adalgisa Pontes.....	204
19 Culture and aging: the role of culture in successful aging	
Manuela Cachadinha.....	210
20 There is a bit of white between my heart and my stomach in truth my work does not exist because it is not written anywhere	
Cristina Mendanha.....	220

From white cube to white noise: Pivoting on the nexus of cultural change

Teresa Marie Tipton

Introduction

Transponders are communication devices that interrogate incoming signals and respond to them by the emission of frequency signals. In satellites, transponders receive uplink signals and retransmit them as downlink frequencies so that they can be used by other devices without losing information. Electromagnetically speaking, however, the transmission process always encounters some form of resistance. As a signifier for the process of cultural change, as Helder Dias' metaphor exemplifies, norms of impedance and induction appear as factors of interference and opposition in the structure of communication. Transponders need to factor in both friction and power into the purpose of transmission, are as essential to the translation of information through cultural policy or contemporary which art, as they are for a satellite's communication system – metaphors apropos for the 4th issue of *Diálogos com a arte: revista de arte, cultura e educação*.

For this international edition in English, we must thank many hands and people. Behind them are professors, student volunteers, cultural organizations, community members, and businesses, who together produced the conference behind many of the articles here - the 9th International Conference of Art: Dialoguing with Inequality: The Role of Arts and Culture in Social Change that took place from May 27-28, 2014 at the Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo in Portugal: first to Anabela Moura for her energetic vision and tireless efforts to support and improve art and culture in education and practice by inviting many of us here, including my invitation to this issue's editorial board; to Carlos Almeida who leads a vibrant Master's program in art and cultural management and from which we are able to read the results of visionary student research in creativity; João Pereira who provided the journal's professional production; João Moura who contributed scientific expertise in review and translation; António Jácomo and Helder Dias who developed new norms in English; and Manuel Gama whose research in cultural (inter)mediation impels new master's training in higher education in Viana do Castelo. We give sincere thanks as well to those whose names may not appear here, but without whose presence these efforts could not be realized.

The selected articles and their distinguished authors offer fresh transnational perspectives, research, and strategies to invert resistance to systemic reform with cases of the portrayal of cultural critique, representation, and artistic best practices in schools, museums, communities, policy, and production. Contemporary artists and educators alike offer innovations reaffirming the significance of being in the avant-garde of today, and support creative, symbolic confrontations with diverse forms of taboo, often in opposition to status quo inertia. These studies offer antidotes to the critique of institutional and social practices in the arts, making a coherent case for new leadership in the cultural realm.

At a time when cultural and creative sector investments are at an all time low, we are called to new forms of activism, as the ECF budget interventions of 2012 illustrate. To lead progressive discourses on the development of culture's future is to reimagine the culture of everyday life, and mitigate the erosion of cultural investments with new strategies, such as crowd-investing. As many authors attest, the intersections between education, communication, politics, and policy, turn us to the need for new forms of social organization, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and its future development. As the new international Cultural Policy Database (IFACCA, October 2014) demonstrates, the interrogation of the knowledge-based economy's ideologies in the cultural and creative sector continues to evolve, not unlike the subtexts and iconotexts behind them. As Andreas Joh (2013) advocates, it is necessary to turn intercultural actions into policies.¹ These developments along with proactive strategizing at national and international policy levels, politicizes our own disciplinary methodologies as well.

Artists in the intersections between practice, community, and classroom, return the added-value paradigm as a métissage, where the metaphorical and actual found at the crossroads of identity and place, can open new imaginaries with(in) the hidden layers of difference. Vella's multi-layered discourse of la Méditerranée, with its transitional influences and histories in flux, reconstituting nationalities and cultures, uses the strategy of (re)portrayal as a 'con-temporary' artistic tipping point for creating new forms of identity exchanges. With an analysis of China's rapid urbanization cinematically, Tomé Quadros' investigation of Jia Zhang-ke's 24 City, shifts discussion of cultural pedagogy in art education into the consideration of paradigms, highlighting the role of Chinese new urban cinema in the problematisation of cultural change socially.

Diversifying the interdisciplinary potential for an ever widening added-value to culture's renewal, are hybrid, interactive media technologies for artistic performativity, as Paulo Celso da Silva and Miriam Cristina Carlos da Silva's interrogation of Eduardo Kac's artistic repertoire of 'ciberanthropophagy' reflects. Kac' biobot syncretizes the manifestos, critique, and vision of Oswald de Andrade in Brazil with his own cyber-human infusion experiment, using remote, local, virtual and physical scales simultaneously. Kac' A-positive brings critical enactments into the discursive and virtual understanding of being 'consumed' – as the €121 billion global market for human trafficking today, exemplifies.

On another scale, stereotyping and objectification in the design of gender representations in social media, structures the forms of social codes of desire, actions and behaviors in relationship to gender identities. As the social and media construction of gender identities and their narratives are deconstructed and undone, as Reingard Klingler's research exemplifies, (trans)gendered meanings that are constituted bi-directionally through new media platforms can be analysed and critiqued, bridging the gap between intervisual experiences and their signification. The complementary intertwining of text and images virtually, as René Stangl's research on Generation Facebook problematizes, allows for a multitude of identities and multi-localities to be re-imagined and re-identified. In order to reconstitute gendered meanings inscribed from the live-streaming of identities in media interactions, the spaces between social and cultural rituals and their practices can become sites for artistic experimentation and intervention. By problematizing identity interventions for adolescent males,

¹ Andreas Joh. Wiesand (ERICarts Institute) report, *Turning Intercultural Action into Policies* for the Culture Committee of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), November 2013, published online by the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research. Retrieved from http://www.ericarts.org/web/files/4/en/Turning_intercultural_action_into_policies.doc

Stangl equalizes identity discourses by giving attention to adolescent male gender identities and situating a new form of community initiation as intervention in the art classroom. As these authors critique, the impacts of social media on interpersonal attitudes and youth behavior, call us into teaching domain specific visual skill sets and analytical tools, especially for adolescent youth.

Pedro Pereira brings another dimension of anthropological investigation into proximity and belief with his research into the social practices of believers in the cult of 'Our Lady of Health' in Portugal. A dense religious landscape that has its roots in the Paleolithic era, the fundamental desire for iconic beauty, sanctification, and power in proximity to the belief in the embodiment of an image – has certain correspondences with the mystifying images of the advertising industry and the social expectations of Generation Facebook. Pereira's study offers multidimensionality to Helder Dias' question, What is the current power of art?

Angélica Lima Cruz and Maria José Magalhães further problematize issues of objectification in language and culture through the body, with their socio-anthropological approach to analyzing the historical painting *Suzanna and the Elders*. Critiquing the painting's genres and representations, the authors argue that reproducing its iconography influences social behaviors encouraging violence against women. Stangl furthers this discussion with the way in which males are represented aggressively in the media. Such transgressions of the post-modern or post-human body are investigated by Genoveve Oliveira through the importance of the curatorial role in her invitational exhibition, *Body and Bodies, transgressions and narratives (Corpo e Corpos, transgressões e narrativas)*, at the M|i|mo, (Museum of the Moving Image), in Leiria, Portugal, June 2013. Reflecting upon the body as cultural agent and its performance, with its recursive ambiguities and unmapped narratives, becomes a powerful strategy in the liberation from contexts of social and cultural control. These authors argue for the need to resist being complicit to the semantic and semiotic of stereotypes and their silenced taboos. By reframing identity role models and gender domains through new forms of interactivity, the analysis of intervisual experiences created by historical and media images moves us forward in establishing a more democratic, socially-minded (visual) culture art education, fundamental to the pictorial and digital turn.

Furthering the role of contemporary artists educationally, Anabela Moura and Ann Camargo's case study of Czech artist Berenika Ovčáčková supports the social dimensions of communication between artist, teacher and researcher. By using a narrative approach to ethnography, they deepen the use of the artists' perceptions in the classroom as a strategy for curricular change. Along with the action research study on photography from Severino Domingos Mendes Fernandes and Celia Maria de Castro Almeida, we find that the personal, in-class use of contemporary artists in primary and secondary education, especially through the inclusion of their artwork, photography, and moving images – is a powerful intervention for the diversification of identities and enactments in curriculum. As these authors argue, existing cross-cultural policies and pedagogical strategies can be contested and rewritten by art-as-research approaches to the creative revitalization of curriculum. By enhancing interactions with artistic and culture voice, the added-value discourses are substantively moved into the profile of people's lives, and not just their representations, empowering new forms of public participation.

On the other hand, the limitations of school reform can impede long-term strategies for change, as JuanAnn Tai's (Ann Hayward) study on the establishment of new dance education in Taiwan reports upon. Her research brings attention to the predicaments of preserving intangible culture in the

performing arts with visionary reform efforts to establish ‘real subjects’ of cultural education in schools. Tai’s research is a useful model for addressing the obstruction – and obfuscation – of cultural purpose in schools, highlighting the need to intentionally structure the mechanisms for infrastructure support in order to enact systemic cultural change. Her model is useful not only for schools, but for communities and higher education institutions as well.

Rolf Lavan provides a case of contemporary relevance in the debate for a pedagogy of creativity, with previously unpublished archives from Franz Čížek in Austria in 1897. Čížek’s influence on the Child Art Movement of the early 20th century, demonstrated that creativity is innate to the child, and its immanence is a matter of design. While forms of authority are ubiquitously culturally embedded and tend to suppress certain forms of visual and political content educationally – engaging youth in artistic production and its communicative dimensions, not only ensures our future cultural patrimony, but it can be seen as a de facto resistance to overt and covert forms of social control and its institutionalizing power.

Emerging and contemporary artists turn us as well to the uneasy and progressive discursive frontiers in the development of creative cities, clusters and networks, as the long-standing Bienial de Cerveira in Vila Nova de Cerveira, Portugal highlights. Margarida da Silva’s research on artist José Paiva and his contributions to the evolution of Biennial with site-specific community interactivity, supports the thesis that artistic practice is research, and its praxis in the community has an important role in establishing new routes to understanding – inventing creative methodologies for public interaction and understanding. Mediation in this realm, is a process of interpersonal as well as intervisual translation, negotiation, and recoding. As Maria Helena Trindade discusses, mediation involves complicated, transversal exchanges between cultural, educational, and social forces, for which our museums and cultural institutions have a formative role as partners to a larger, collective process of cultural education.

The development of creativity in primary pedagogy can be accomplished by using strategies of artistic experimentation from Portuguese avant-garde artists, as Cátia Penavla’s research study on the use of visual poetry in schools demonstrates. The integration of creativity within subject disciplines as Penavla designed in her case study, gives us a model of how to restore Čížek’s philosophy of ‘following the child’ – as yet to be fully realized in public education. Culture’s invocation calls us to another way of life than the enterprise culture, where resistance to old, outworn ideas can create new frequencies of transmissions for cultural sustainability and perhaps can even evoke a remedy for our own healing, as Helder Dias queries. In a *Death Save to Culture*, I follow his call for new leadership in EU cultural policy and argue against the added-value criteria through the ergonomics of Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* and the politics of Jára Cimrman, demonstrating how individually imagined and collective interventions can be a *détournement* to address our collective blind spots.

To pivot against the white noise of incoherency in the bureaucracy of culture, means to envision new strategies that move beyond interrogation of the defining nomenclature of policy and its added-value equations for the culture and creative sector. Considering the weight of school capital and cultural consumption through the Viana do Castelo School of Higher Education (VCHSE), Almeida, Gama, Jácomo and Pontes propose to enact cultural change in the Alto Minho region, by the development of a pilot for a new master’s program in cultural intermediation. Developing new forms of cultural mediation, their representations and networks, strengthens the potential to realize individual and collective ‘imaginaries’ and the trajectories of their effects. In these ways, all forms of cultural activities

animate the emergence of (as yet unknown) creative interfaces and encourage engagement with their constitutive properties. As the social aspects of culture continue to diversify, as Manuela Cachadinha's investigation into the relationship between personal well-being and migration suggests, new forms of communities are being built through evolving forms of exchange and interaction – answering Vella's query if education in the arts can be seen as a perpetual migration.

Leadership requires strategies to ensure culture's sustainability in societies today and the inclusion of diverse voices, standpoints and their technologies of representation. To create and sustain new forms of art, culture and education, will require redesigning the perceived and material value of artists, cultural enterprises, their managers, and producers. Cristina Mendanha gives us a new form of research following artistic practice with her *writingency*, performing the body | writing in the evocative, *There is a bit of white between my heart and my stomach: in truth my work does not exist because it is not written anywhere*. With authentic actions that mediate between counter-intuitive domains of reasoning and a sustainable future development, perhaps the artistic *phármakon* is culture's remedy, inspiring another route, so that we may heal our collective blind spots, as Helder Dias' question implies.

At a time when the social well-being of all is neglected in most societies today for the well-being of a few, the authors in this publication overturn dry, lifeless ideologies to affirm the personal ethnographies of cultural and artistic research, with its impedance and voltage – transducers to new forms of intervisual power. As transponders ourselves, we are each encouraged to retransmit and exchange the codes of a different dialogue: that in the matters of culture, *culture is what matters*.

1 | (Re)portraying art and learning in the Mediterranean

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Abstract

The Mediterranean is a region that is frequently represented in the media as a site of political struggle, civil conflict and irregular migration. This article presents a 'portrait' of the region by focusing on its 'migratory' nature and the difficulty of coming to terms with a 'final' image that could possibly represent the region's complexity and specific realities. It does this by analysing an educational project that has travelled between different countries in the Mediterranean and involved hundreds of children in activities that bring together an understanding of local and shared heritage and the media of drawing and photography. It concludes by stressing the 'unfinished' nature of the medium and consequently, the project itself, and sees this as the most constructive way of dealing with the subject in art education.

Keywords: Mediterranean, art education, migration, photography

The paradox of the Mediterranean

The other in all his or her forms gives me *I*. It is on the occasion of the other that *I* catch sight of *me*; or that *I* catch *me* at: reacting, choosing, refusing, accepting. It is the other who makes my portrait. Always. And luckily. The other of all sorts is also of all diverse richness. The more the other is rich, the more I am rich. The other, rich, will make all his or her richness resonate in me and will enrich me. (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997: 13)

The Mediterranean sea is perhaps the perfect example of a relational existence, a place where, as Cixous suggests above, 'I' can only be portrayed by the other's contiguous coexistence. This is a sea whose histories and cultures are founded on exchanges and transitional or transnational influences of all sorts. Yet, as we know, this Buberian, dialogical I-Thou relationship faces daily struggles in a region where psychological fears and cultural preconceptions play at least as large a part in the political domain as the actual physical consequences of civil war and sectarian violence. Art and heritage often reflect the paradoxical dynamics of this region: a recent manifestation of this was the inauguration in 2013 of the new *Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée* (MUCEM) on a historic pier of a city that perhaps best typifies cultural cohabitation and multiple historical, linguistic and religious layers that characterise the Mediterranean – Marseille. In artistic events and spaces such as this, one senses a marked articulation of "Mediterraneity" as a disjointed yet quasi-universalised artistic narrative. Mediterranean art is expressed as a mobile phenomenon, where the geographical reality of belonging to a shared sea is simultaneously shaken by the political tension of exchanges that occasionally seem to bring us face to face with irreconcilable differences.

It is essential that manifestations of contemporary art and heritage do not sweep the region's realities under the carpet by ignoring the kinds of tensions that abound around politically sensitive areas like

the Strait of Gibraltar, the island of Lampedusa and similar borders marking the passage of migratory communities between the south of the Mediterranean and the European Union. Scattered and radically diverse voices, viewpoints and locations struggle to frame the region in a variety of narratives and histories, pasts and futures, ambitions and illusions. Many of these different ideological positions and narratives – which some may unfortunately still refer to as a 'clash of civilisations' – remain little-known to other inhabitants of the same sea, often because they are deliberately ignored or misrepresented by the international media, particularly in the West. In spite of the antiquity and relative proximity of different cultures and territories around the Mediterranean Sea, there is still a great deal that we do not know about our neighbours.

Seeing eyes that see something we cannot see

What we know (or do not know) about our neighbours depends not only on what we see, but especially on how we choose to interpret what we see and what we choose not to see. In everyday language, seeing is often associated with learning and understanding. “I see” can simply refer to the act of observing something with one's eyes but it could also be another way of telling someone that “I understand”. Yet, what we understand and come to know and internalise also returns to influence new acts of seeing, as Gombrich (2000) showed in his well-known study of the psychology of perception. The idea that the visual and codes of visuality form the core of our understanding and our representations of the world has also had an undisputed impact on theories and practices of art education. Following Dennis Atkinson, we can define visuality as, “[...] the different visual structures and their respective hermeneutic frameworks” (Atkinson, 2002: 82); in other words, visuality is governed less by natural laws of optics than by cultural codes and conventions as well as the way our interpretations of these codes regulate our evaluation of behaviour and things. Formal education in particular is often regularised by visual conventions and hierarchies that define acceptable outcomes. Many art educators who have turned their attention to theories of visual culture during the last two decades (for example, Freedman, 2003; Eça & Mason, 2008) also acknowledge the fact that the mediated landscape we inhabit is predominantly visual in nature and that people, including children, tend to navigate their way through a variety of visual codes they find around them. We also know that codes tend to migrate between different interfaces, cultural contexts and histories, to the extent that artists today are being called “semionauts” - creative samplers of visual and cultural signs who imagine, “[...] the links, the likely relations between disparate sites” (Bourriaud, 2005: 18). Beginning with Duchamp and passing through the *détournements* of Situationists right up to a wide range of contemporary artistic practices, this sampling and networking of ideas now appropriates more than ever visual and cultural elements that are set apart trans-culturally and trans-historically.

It would appear, therefore, that the migratory movements that have always, but perhaps more insistently in recent times, left their mark on the Mediterranean sea; and already mirror this syncretic sampling of cultural codes, propelling a rather awkward fusion of art and life into the foreground. Historically, this constant uprooting and hybridisation of identity has been a distinguishing feature of the region, sometimes violently so; it also opens up, “[...] the space of *translation*”, which “[...] introduces the possibility of alterity, and of being 'othered'” by recognising “the perpetual translatability of the con-temporary” (Chambers & Curti, 2008: 390). How fitting would it be for us to think of the contemporary nomad who risks his or her life crossing over to Europe from the African continent as a semionaut who seeks a new life precisely in the possibility of connectivity and translatability that characterises both the contemporary art world and this maritime region? Indeed, could we also reverse that question and think of contemporary art and, by implication, an education in the arts today, (Figure 1), as an



Fig. 1: Photograph (2013) by Darrin Zammit Lupi © D. Zammit Lupi

expression of perpetual migration and hence an expression of something that is very 'Mediterranean' in spirit?

The possibility or the necessity of translation does not make it an easy process. The hybridity of contemporary art relies to a great extent on a certain familiarity with a wide variety of cultural objects, signs and narratives that is bred by a regular exposure to information technologies and sharing of content across virtual communities. Translation plays a central role in this process but we cannot forget that the very demand for translation is a result of an initial lack of familiarity with something, a gap that opens up between oneself and the other. It is one thing to navigate within a network of different zones that one is already familiar with and another to transplant oneself to a zone that looks, sounds and smells unyieldingly *alien*. This unsettling initial encounter with a cultural landscape that looks entirely foreign is unmistakably present in a striking photograph (Figure 1) by Maltese photojournalist Darrin Zammit Lupi, which shows a 17-year old immigrant from Mogadishu in Somalia on board a police bus in Malta soon after his arrival on the Mediterranean island in 2013. Through his camera lens, Zammit Lupi sees the 'other' for the first time at the same instant when this 'other' sees Europe for the first time.

What this portrait poignantly shows is that seeing does not necessarily lead directly and smoothly to understanding. The young man in the photograph, Mohammed, had just been picked up by a Maltese patrol boat as he and over sixty others were making their dangerous Mediterranean crossing on a rubber dinghy, that had departed from Libya in the direction of Europe. To Mohammed, Libya represented a terrifying place to escape from because it had become completely overrun by dangerous militiamen, while he dreamt of Europe as a safer destination where he could possibly find his parents who had gone missing some years earlier. What he found instead was a detention centre. Mohammed's gaze in this photograph is full of the uncertainty one would associate with such a moment of extreme transition, and perhaps even bears witness to the cruel realisation that reality does not always correspond with one's aspirations. A similar feeling was described by bell hooks when she discovered that the open-minded Europe she was searching for did not really exist, because it was not entirely free of the racism she had experienced in the USA.

Europe was a necessary starting place for this search. I believed I would not find there the dehumanizing racism so pervasive here that it crippled black creativity. The Europe of my imagination was a place of artistic and cultural freedom, where there were no limits and boundaries. I had learned about this Europe in books, in the writings of black expatriates. Yet this was not the Europe I discovered. The Europe I journeyed to was a place where racism was ever present, only it took the form of a passion for the “primitive”, the “exotic”. (Hooks, 2006: 10)

The round-edged bus windows in Zammit Lupi's photograph internally frame Mohammed's upper body along with three other ghostly figures but the detail that our attention keeps returning to is Mohammed's pair of eyes and face, enveloped by a red halo probably projected onto the glass by floodlights in the vicinity. What attracts us to this off-centre area of the image is not only the visibly unnatural colour combined with the man's piercing gaze, but the invisibility of what those eyes see at that precise moment. What we *do* see is someone caught in the act of seeing something beyond the frame, somewhat like Velázquez's self-portrait looking out of the frame in *Las Meninas*. The photographer's unposed portrait of Mohammed is therefore counterbalanced by the invisible, undepicted scene that Mohammed himself sees with eyes that, like a photographer's, scan the landscape outside the bus in an attempt to make sense of what presents itself to him at that moment. This agonising scene, which etches itself indelibly onto his solemn gaze, is probably supplemented by personal memories that represent the side of the African continent that photojournalism cannot capture, or else, that can only be shown indirectly. Like Gutete Emerita's eyes in Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar's installation showing slides of the eyes of one of the survivors of the Rwandan massacre in 1994, Mohammed's eyes do not only gaze into and around the photographer's lens, but at the interference of memory on the visible world. His eyes are tragedy's witnesses, not its image. As in Jaar's work, we could say that here too we, “[...] do not see the spectacle of mass death, we see eyes that have seen that spectacle. In a sense it is the political application of Mallarmé's principle: paint not the thing, but the effect it produces” (Rancière, 2007: 75).

Amidst scores of possible trajectories across the Mediterranean sea, the passage of the African immigrant perhaps stands out as the most notorious reminder of what we do not know and do not see in our neighbours. Zammit Lupi's image captures the tense dialectic of a pair of unknowing eyes looking into the similarly confounded eyes of the viewer. In the context of a geographical region whose parameters have been drawn and re-drawn by shifting sites of power, this image hangs on an edge where seeing has not yet led to translation or knowledge: an unsettling border zone where contrasting stories about a common sea have only just started to collide.

(Re)portraying the face of the Mediterranean in art education

Can education, and more particularly, art education, help us to move beyond this border zone? Indeed, as the editor of a recent collection of interviews with educators of the Mediterranean asks, how, “[...] can education be at one at the same time embedded in and 'speak to' local specificities, yet connect individuals to wider national, regional and global communities?” (Sultana, 2011: 4).

A French artistic and educational project that has connected hundreds of children, teachers and artists in various countries around the Mediterranean develops its activities around such a point of contact in an effort to (re)portray the many faces of the Mediterranean. *Dessine-moi*



Fig. 2 (top): Children with their drawings in Djerba, Tunisia; Fig. 3 (bottom left): Double-exposure image produced in Algeria; Fig. 4 (bottom right): Double-exposure image produced in Tunisia © S. Cailleux

la Méditerranée is an international project initiated in 2011 by *École d'art au village* (EDAUV), an association created by French photographer Sébastien Cailleux. The project has reached people in France, Italy, Spain, Malta, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and has been exhibited internationally at a variety of different venues. I was involved as educational coordinator for a whole year in the Maltese part of the project. In Malta, *Dessine-moi la Méditerranée* was introduced to groups of primary and secondary level students hailing from an independent school, St. Michael Foundation. The project culminated in a large-scale exhibition held at an important art centre in Valletta, St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, which brought together work by Maltese students with that of groups of children from other countries around the Mediterranean. The general aims of *Dessine-moi la Méditerranée* are to get local artists to collaborate with art teachers and children at both primary and secondary levels in different Mediterranean sites, to engage students in the use of soft pastels on black paper in order to create colourful images that refer to different landscapes, colonial intersections and other objects they associate with the Mediterranean and finally, the production of double-exposure photographs that combine the students' artwork with their own photographed portraits. Participating local artists helped out during many onsite sessions by giving technical and other advice to students involved in the project.

In each country, the project started with a discussion around the question, “*What does the Mediterranean mean to you?*” The goal of this question was to get children to reflect about their own identities and histories and about different aspects of their environment that linked them to the wider world. They were permitted to include or combine different elements from their daily lives, but were also taken to religious or heritage sites with multicultural connections, such as Villa Medici (which houses the French Academy in Rome), and important museums like the Picasso Museum in Barcelona. This allowed the project to evolve outside the context of formal schooling, within historic, artistic and religious sites that were occasionally places of dialogue and also hostility at the same time: on the island of Djerba (Tunisia), for example, a class of girls wearing Islamic veils visited and drew images inspired by Jewish religious symbols at El Ghriba synagogue, the ancient, sacred site of Judaism (Figures 2 and 4). Similarly, a rich diversity of historical and religious layers found their way into children's pastel drawings in Algeria: architectural details pertaining to the three main monotheistic religions as well as Roman remains and fragments from contemporary Algeria (Figure 3). In Malta, a visit to the Malta Maritime Museum located at an old British naval bakery facing a modern yacht marina captured the children's imagination by encouraging them to refer to the island's colonial past, war and the impact of seafaring on communities in the region. One Maltese girl even transplanted the past into the present by sketching the marina outside the museum and replacing its modern luxury yachts with old, traditional fishing boats found within the museum itself.



Fig. 5: One of the participating children's drawings of the sun, which doubles up as a metaphor of the Mediterranean Sea itself, a sea shared and enclosed by countries on all sides. © S. Cailleux

There were also remarkable similarities between some children's drawings from different Mediterranean countries: the sea, the sun (Figure 5) and coastlines appeared frequently in many

images, along with flat-roofed houses, windows and doorways, people, trees and animals. At the same time, many drawn details can clearly be localised within specific national contexts. For example, some drawings by Maltese children referred to the national flag, the eight-pointed cross of the Knights of St John and prehistoric spirals and statuettes found in local museums and heritage sites. Children in Tunisia incorporated local women's and men's dress, vessels and geometric patterns borrowed from woven carpets in their drawings. Architectural details and linear patterns as well as natural elements like palm trees were quite common amongst participants in North African countries, while students in Rome referenced local architecture and mythological creatures. The port of Marseille, with its surrounding buildings and ships sandwiched between a blue sky and a blue sea, dominated many drawings by students in that city.

It is important to note that despite the barrage of globalising forces around us, which evidently leave an impact on students' views and artistic work, many children involved in *Dessine-moi la Méditerranée* were influenced quite substantially by environmental and ethnic factors like clothing and buildings, and their approach to image-making tended to be descriptive in nature. This tends to confirm the importance of local cultures in young people's art and the necessity of "culturally responsive" approaches to art teaching that encourage culturally diverse curricula, incorporate local knowledge and frames of reference in educational settings and avoid decontextualised formulations of either the subject or a specific geographical region¹. While children in the project mixed a variety of cultural signs, reflecting to some extent Bourriaud's notion of the contemporary 'semionaut', many of them expressed their ideas about the Mediterranean by turning their attention to traditional or even ancient elements related to their own surroundings or history. This could be a result of ingrained stereotypical visualities based on history found both in local media and school textbooks but the predominance of such cultural elements in the drawings could also mean that students recognised the importance of inherited culture. At the same time, they occasionally included more modern elements and tended to express their visual ideas very liberally, opting for bright colour schemes and semi-abstract images that they executed rapidly. As already noted earlier, the sea itself – this vast liquid that connects all people who inhabit it to their ancient past and to each other – cropped up very often in images from each country.

The last stage of each national project combined the children's drawings with Sébastien Cailleux's photography. During this stage, Cailleux photographs each drawing, then photographs each child's face against a similar black backdrop, producing striking collaborative, double-exposure images which are neither wholly produced by the students nor by the photographer. In fact, Cailleux is actually guided by each child's drawing in composing his images in order to set in motion a process in which his own skill with the medium and use of natural lighting intermingle with the powdered pigments, accents and blended hues of the drawings. The children's photographed faces emerge from their own drawings of architectural fragments, objects, cliffs, historical sites and emblems, boats and other objects. As with Mohammed in Zammit Lupi's photograph, each child's eyes peer out of the photograph directly at the viewer, but this time, the environment their face hovers in is not the cold interior of a police bus but a drawing that tentatively feels its way around the *métissage* of elements they have put together.

Conclusion

In what way can *Dessine-moi la Méditerranée* be said to re-present or re-portray the Mediterranean sea? In spite of the very different scenarios characterising Cailleux's images and Zammit Lupi's photograph of Mohammed, they both refer to a passage from one state of being to another: Mohammed's face is captured at a moment of mental disarray, no longer in Africa but unsure of what awaits him ahead, while the double-exposure images refer to a transition between one medium (drawing) and another (photography). This transitory nature, comparable to the fluidity of the sea

¹ see, for example, Lai, 2012

itself, does not only pertain to the shift from one medium to another (which also permits participating children to see their own work through someone else's eyes) but lies at the heart of the medium employed by the children themselves: drawing. The French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (2013) has described drawing as a medium that is characterised by an “opening” of form: an opening in the sense of a departure or burst of energy and also in the sense of potential and intrinsic incompleteness. It tends to be a dynamic process in which the actual act of drawing visibly moves across the surface of the paper, *becoming* something at the same time as it leaves a trace there. Nancy weaves the word 'dessin' (drawing) into 'dessein' (intention, project, design): both words convey a thought process as it makes itself visible, a drive to show form in the process of being born as well as the infinite possibilities of form. This sense of suspension characteristic of drawing sets in motion a desire in viewers who find themselves enjoying the process of making sense of lines, smudges and shadings. For Nancy, this is not a desire for a final form but a desire for the indeterminate forming of form that is taking place before one's eyes, that is, a desire for desire itself.

What *Dessine-moi la Méditerranée* re-draws for us is the desire to trace the shifting forms of the Mediterranean in a multiple mosaic of singular portraits. First of all, the project encourages individuals to put together their own visions of their physical and cultural environments by using the most ephemeral of media, pure pigment on paper. Each drawing is essentially the “thought of a non-conforming and unverifiable form, the thought of a form forming itself” (Nancy, 2013: 12). Moreover, the project's occurrences in different Mediterranean contexts permit it to avoid a monolithic or Eurocentric view of the region – this is particularly in evidence in exhibitions that have brought together works by children from different countries involved in the project. Finally, the result is itself a process based on a collaboration: a drawing that is revisited photographically then superimposed by a portrait that gazes out at us through a layer of sketched lines and hues. It is, in fact, absolutely essential that these double-exposure images are not entirely clear in what they portray; the ambiguity of the double image serves to keep the process of story-telling alive, a process initially propelled by the children's 'translations' of historic, colonial, religious and other fragments in their drawings and subsequently re-interpreted by multiple viewers around the region. In particular, the sea itself – whose waves embellish several images by the participating children – reminds us that this “belonging to everyone and to no one is an obligation to mediate, to hold lands together” while “the resemblance between places and bodies” is “capable of translating the knowledge of the border into permanent immunity against all fundamentalisms” (Cassano in Bouchard & Ferme, 2012: 142). Sébastien Cailleux, creator of the project *Dessine-moi la Méditerranée*, speaks of his travels to these borders and encounters with students as being motivated,

[...] by an intention to discover the other, each time totally immersed in a place where I ended up forgetting a part of myself. Finally, I understood one thing, a single lesson: Difference is not necessarily a struggle, it is rather a celebration of being able to define oneself in relation to another and to define the other in relation to oneself, or perhaps the desire to avoid a finality in one's own identity. Difference is a force built on respect for the other as well as oneself. (Cailleux, personal correspondence, April 2014)

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2 | *Jia Zhang-ke's 24 City in the spotlight of the new urban cinema, rethinking a state of transition in today China*

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Abstract

In the past thirty years, China has been through a spectacular paradigm shift and growth, from an isolated underdeveloped country at the end of the 1970s, to being today the world's second largest economy after the United States. The paradigm shift and growth has been translated into an accelerated urbanization process with all of the dramatic social transformations such a process implies. Despite the constraints of this context, since the late 1970s and early 1980s, Chinese cinema, labeled as the renewal or transition era cinema, has harbored the seeds of cultural change.

The new Chinese cinema shows clear evidence of Deleuze's idea on the "movement-image" and the "time-image"¹, when realism is the place to represent the dramatic transformation of Chinese urban landscape. The contemporary Chinese cinema shares this new cinematic landscape view – the new urban cinema (*xin chengshi dianying*) – and has been portraying the deep on-going social changes that have ensued, such as large scale economic liberalization through the work of the fifth and sixth generations of Chinese filmmakers, respectively headed by Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou for the former, and Jia Zhang-ke, Lou Ye, and Wang Xiaoshui for the later. The new Chinese cinema embodies challenging representations, lying between fiction and documentary, tracing tradition and modernity.

Among the disaffected and disillusioned youth, the contemporary Chinese cinema perceives the avoided reality, where, "film is a moving image of skepticism" (Cavell, 1979: 188), playing an invisible narrative through a certain kind of realism. In the eyes of Jia Zhang-ke's, *24 City*, this paper aims to discuss to what extent the new Chinese cinema may contribute to better understand this as a defined state of transition or latency, within a collective and individual memory representation in today China. Jia Zhang-ke's *24 City* portrays the struggles imposed upon the country's huge marginalized population, especially on the rural and migrant working classes – the floating generation.

Keywords: *cinéma vérité*, fifth-generation, latency, sixth-generation, urban landscape

Introduction: the new Chinese cinema and the emergence of a critical concept

In the past thirty years, China has been through a spectacular paradigm shift and growth, from an isolated underdeveloped country at the end of the 1970s, being today the world second largest economy after the United States. The paradigm shift and growth has been translated into an accelerated urbanization process with all the dramatic social transformations such a process implies.

¹ In Gilles Deleuze's (1986/1983). *Cinema 1. The movement-image*. London: The Athlone Press and (1989/1985) *Cinema 2. The time-image*. London: The Athlone Press.

Despite the constraints of this context, since the late 1970s and early 1980s, Chinese cinema, labeled as the renewal or transition era cinema, has harbored the seeds of cultural change. During this period, two crucial historical moments took place in China: Tiananmen democracy movement and its suppression (1989); and when Deng Xiaoping made his famous “tour to the south” (1992).

The new Chinese cinema is composed by all generations of filmmakers and all genres of Chinese cinema, since the late 1970s until today. Without the contribution and impulse of the fifth generation at the turn of the new economic reforms, transition or renewal era – the face of the new Chinese cinema would be different. The fifth generation of Chinese filmmakers led by Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou, and the sixth generation of Chinese filmmakers led by Jia Zhang-ke, Lou Ye, and Wang Xiaoshui, have made this the most important moment of cinema in China. The sixth generation of Chinese filmmakers mirrors today the best of the new Chinese cinema purposes, concerns, and aesthetics. It “went through the most important keywords from the past one hundred years of Western documentary - Direct Cinema, *cinéma vérité*, and the concepts of performative and reflexive documentary” (Berry, Lu & Rofel, 2010: 24). China’s visual culture today has found its roots during this time. Challenging representations, the new Chinese cinema builds cinematic city views of Chinese society today. Jia stated that, “surrealism is a crucial part of China’s reality. In the past 10 or so years, China has experienced the kinds of changes that might happen across a span of 50 or even 100 years in any normal country, and the speed of these changes has had an unsettling, surreal effect”² (Andrew Chan, 2009). In other words, the new Chinese cinema, and its new urban cinema (*xin chengshi dianying*) through the new documentary movement first appearing in 1992, is concerned with the human dimension of sweeping reforms by the Chinese government since the late 1970s, and the struggles imposed over three decades upon the country’s huge marginalized population. Mainly, on the rural and migrant working classes or the so-called, “floating generation”.

The main feature of the New Chinese cinema focuses the attention on the ‘*others*’, who can be defined as the ‘weaker’ or ‘disadvantaged’ social group (*ruoshi qunti*). They are suffering more from the consequences rather than the benefits of the rapid industrialization and urbanization, where “two Chinas seem to coexist: a China already integrated with the world market, and a China still unable or unwilling to enter the playground of finance capital, global competition, and neoliberal social policies” (Zhang, 2001: 6). Among the disaffected and disillusioned youth, the new Chinese cinema perceives the avoided reality where: “Film is a moving image of skepticism precisely because it does not resolve the stand-off between the desire to know the world and a sense of its retreat from us” (Davis, 2010: 155). In other words, tracing tradition (past) and modernity in today China (future), the new Chinese cinema lies between fiction and documentary. As follows:

Like the New Documentary Movement, they focused on contemporary Chinese reality rather than the ancient past. Furthermore, many of them shot documentaries themselves, and the themes, styles, and aesthetics of their features have genealogical connections with documentary filmmaking. Jia Zhang-ke and Zhang Yuan are representative examples.” (Berry, Lu, & Rofel, 2010: 26)

The new Chinese cinema plays an invisible narrative through a certain kind of realism, having the ability to perceive the voided reality, or the skeptic reality. The “sense of reality”, Cavell reiterates, “*cannot* from the beginning be real or have happened, except perhaps by the purest or most miraculous of coincidences [...]” (1979: 183). The new Chinese cinema emphasizes the intrinsic dimension of representation to reality, and fiction documenting reality through the use of new narrative structures, i.e. real and fictional atmospheres; elements and fictional realities; film spatiality and film observational narrative; film narrative and seeking for the truth of the human condition portrays modern China and Chinese society today. Jia’s filmography delivers the possibility to trace a trajectory of ambiguity and uncertainty: observing, revealing and portraying the dramatic transformation of Chinese urban landscape. The tension in Jia’s feature is often shaped by confrontation of the popular

² <http://www.filmcomment.com/article/jia-zhangke-interview>

culture and the political culture, (where/ from what), a society that allows its citizens to have flexibility and freedom to establish a way of living and to use the public spheres according to their needs. As Braester (2007: 162) follows, “The documentary impulse in the new urban cinema became a vehicle of criticism - not only by placing a mirror in front of a numbed society but also by foregrounding the limitations of documentation in the face of inevitable and sometimes partly desirable urban development.” Jia seeks a new cinematic paradigm through an innovative language mainly characterized by political concerns, focusing on the social and cultural development of China, at the turn of the twenty-first century. *24 City* shifts back and forward between documentary and fiction, where documentary plays the social role and fiction plays the psychological analysis. In the eyes of Jia Zhang-ke’s, *24 City*, this paper aims to discuss to what extent the contemporary Chinese cinema may contribute to better understand this as a defined state of transition or latency towards a new form of global hybrid cinema.

Jia Zhang-ke’s *24 City*: a state of transition or latency?

In China, the process of social reform started before in the 70s, has acquired today a surreal quality of cultural incongruity. The new Chinese cinema builds an invisible narrative based on a certain way of realism. In July 2005, Jia Zhang-ke gave an interview to *China Perspectives* concluding,

[...] when you make a documentary, and you want to raise certain questions, people do not necessarily want to talk about their private lives. There’s a danger of filming only appearances. It’s even more difficult with ordinary people, and they are the ones I want to talk about.” (Batto, 2005: 8)

The representation of reality at 420’s factory complex in *24 City* leads the spectator into a vis-a-vis of two different worlds made of realism and uncertainty, coexisting side by side. The ‘city’ inside the factory complex, and Chengdu as the representation of the outside world. Tradition plays the social role and represents a glorious collective memory. Modernity plays the psychological analysis towards an individual and prosperous future. *24 City* is not a film to inspire political activism, however it is politically meaningful, laying inbetween the social documentary and drama fiction. *24 City* is about faded and erased collective memory, and at the same time a reflection upon identity and modernity in post-Mao China with a city view of Chengdu as back drop. The 420’s factory complex it is now being transformed into a landmark of market economy: an apartment complex called “*24 City*”. Jia, plays a relationship between the city and his cinema, where, “Urban spaces appear in the film in two forms, either as not yet demolished structures or as yet to be completed new buildings” (Braester 2007: 167). *24 City* is composed by long shots, with hand-held cameras and mainly close-ups on body and landscape features. The full shots represent the “collective-social foundation” and embody the idea of portraying reality as it is – the memory and the future; and close-up shots represent the individual and their emotional side through their stories, and the idea of a timeless and place of emptiness is also inherent. However, the full-shots don’t look like empty. In an interview on March 2009, Jia Zhang-ke stated:

In my long shots and long takes, my goal is to respect the viewer’s agency, and even to give my films a sense of democracy. I want audiences to be able to freely choose how they want to interact with what’s on screen. But everyone’s reasons for using long shots and long takes are different; personally, I just don’t want my position as a director to become dictatorial, because I want my films to be governed by a sense of equality and democracy. (Chan, 2009: 11)

The main characters are workers or retired workers from the state-own military aircraft engines factory in Chengdu, given the name Factory 420 as an internal military security code. The narrative in *24 City* is made of their life experiences, and represents a crucial moment of China’s social reality today, showing “the quiet brutality of a regime that inculcates its population with the belief that the responsibility of each person is to the larger society, and then the family. Little is left for the

individuality” (Nochimson, 2009: 104). This film is a journey of a half-century’s fictional silence shedding light on its human dimension, which enables critical thinking to be built upon dramatic social change, which such a fast urban shift and growth process implies.

All over the film, the soundtrack is made of atmosphere and background sound; but when the characters are presented or when some moment is ending, there is a recurrent score, as if to announce something. Then, there are some recurrent visual elements, or recurrent visual frames, like the truck in the beginning and very near in the conclusion, or the main gate of the factory, illustrating and delivering the mood of floating time and space. The narrative is composed of multiple stories, namely the story of five female main characters – Hou Lijun, Dali, “Little Flower” or Gu Minhua, Yang Mengyue, and Su Na; and five male main characters – He Xikun, Master Wang, Secretary Guan, Song Weidong, and Zhao Guang. Hou Lijun, Dali, and Gu Minhua, personify the memory of post-socialist legacy. In counterpart, Hou Lijun and Gu Minhua represent the generation of migrants or the floating generation. Hou Lijun moved from rural countryside to Chengdu as a factory worker, and Gu Minhua, who graduated from Shanghai Aviation Academy, is placed by Beijing authorities to work at that time at Factory 420 as a high-qualified expert. Both never went back home, and are part of Chengdu’s memory city and examples of social transformation.

Gu Minhua remembers the times she arrived in Chengdu, and how the environment (and not to say society), was so primitive and closed. The young girl, Yang Mengyue, has both parents working at 420, but she has never been there. Yang becomes the exception when she studied in a school outside the 420 factory complex. Together with another female character, Su Na, they embody the generation gap; but at the same time, the future hope and a certain idea of modernity. *24 City* echoes women’s voice and their issues in modern China. Jia’s observational approach through the eyes of Su Na leaves many unanswered questions. On the other hand, Hou Lijun He Xikun, Master Wang, and Secretary Wang, represent the male voice of 420’s memory (tradition). Song Weidong, 420’s Assistant Director, represents tradition towards modernity. Zhao Gang is the anchor of the “News Round-Up” on Chengdu TV. Always believing in a better education to face a brighter future, Zhao’s character intends to preserve the memory of his own life’s learning experience, embodying modernity and perseverance.

24 City consists of an emotional thread that hold the different stories together: the workers’ ambivalent feelings towards the factory and its relocation. This is also what binds the two panels of the film together – documentary and fiction. Delivered in a rather random, impressionistic and elliptical manner, they do not establish any narrative relation to each other or form a coherent larger narrative. Jia is rather interested in exploring the life itself within individual characters as they are. As Jiwei (2011) writes:

Jia lets his camera roll on as silence dawns upon the person at the end of his/her interview. Silence sometimes permeates the whole scene. The idea of letting silence speak the ineffable comes from Jia’s real-life interviews, during which he intuitively feels that ‘more extraordinary stories of memory must have submerged into the silence, into the moments when these people finished telling their stories and probably those silences are the most important.’ (p. 31)

Jia Zhang-ke’s *24 City* mirrors this contradictory feeling – the outside world and the workers whom are isolated from it and cannot control their fate and future. As a result, any personal story in *24 City* related to the floating population can be read as a national allegory to a certain extent. It tries to reestablish an increasingly attenuated link and relevance between China’s recent past and its present by alluding to the broken promise and broken dream of socialism. In any society, the city stages the idea of modernity. In China, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the city leads the major role heading to modernity. In a certain way, the cities are the hub for significant modernizing efforts, including social and political stages. Tradition and modernity through cinema, “contributes to the experimental quality of their works through its open-endedness” (Tonglin, 2002: 13). The struggle for cultural identity which looked back to the past and history is today looking forward at a modern nation.

Conclusion: the new Chinese cinema towards a new form of global cinema

The main theme of the new Chinese cinema deals primarily with economic reforms implemented in the late 1970s; to be specific – the opening policy and its impact in the Chinese post-Mao society. With more emphasis in the late 1980s, Garry Xu stated, “A new paradigm of cultural production and consumption is taking shape in China” (Xu, 2007: 10). The new Chinese cinema portrays the daily life and individual characters as common citizens as they are for real. The floating population (those ex-farmers and peasants who left the countryside to look for better job prospects in cities, greatly contributed to building the urban China we see today through the new Chinese cinema lens. Namely, the sixth generation of Chinese filmmakers, being themselves part of this floating generation, have transformed the face of new Chinese cinema today into an observatory of social and psychological changes in Chinese society. This major contribution shaped the filming style of the new Chinese cinema’s visual language. André Bazin states, “The word ‘realism’ as it is commonly used does not have an absolute and clear meaning, so much as it indicates a certain tendency toward the faithful rendering of reality on film. Given the fact that this movement towards the real can take a thousand different routes” (Bazin, 1973: 85). Realism became the *leitmotif* in the new Chinese cinema. Jia evokes in his films the feeling of an everyday China, revealing the daily life in China today, representing its social issues, and laying between fiction and documentary film forms. As Visser suggests:

Most of the fiction, art films, and documentaries depicting China’s urban demolition share a gritty documentary aesthetic which addresses dislocation anxieties by deconstructing the present with a conspicuous absence of nostalgia. In postsocialist Chinese urban culture, nostalgia itself gets called up, exploited, and treated ironically. (2010: 36-37)

The realist impulse in the new Chinese cinema relates to the “modernization of cinematic language”. It emphasizes the intrinsic dimension of representation to reality, fiction documenting reality through the use of new narrative structures. Such as real and fictional atmospheres; elements and fictional realities; film spatiality and film observational narrative; film narrative and seeking the truth of the human condition. Jia seeks for the endless quest of truth and the meaning of humanity. *24 City* triggers realism to represent and portray social and psychological issues in Chinese society today. Jia embraces themes of social dislocation and the disaffection of urban youth, mirroring a new cultural and aesthetic meaning. Jia seeks a new cinematic paradigm through an innovative language: fiction with documentary effects, and documentary with fictional effects.

If individual memory is interdependent with social and collective memory, and if a film aims at evoking a common historical consciousness despite the actual multiplicity and diversity of experience, then the synthetic or composite memory may generate the same effects as “real” memory. Mainly characterized by political concerns, focusing on the social and cultural development of China at the turn of the twenty-first century, Jia stated the following:

Now I feel more of a sense of social responsibility. A movie can be a fantasy or it can be a realistic depiction of society. At the same time, a film is a memory. At this point, I’m most interested in emphasizing cinema’s function as memory, the way it records memory, and how it becomes a part of our historical experience. (Chan, 2009: 17)

Jia Zhang-ke’s filmography embodies a bold new style of urban realism within the bounds of the new Chinese cinema. The fast pace of urbanization at the turn of the twenty-first century results in fading and floating a collective memory, making this the crucial moment of social transition in Chinese contemporary history. The legacy of this memory has just been erased, leaving a sense of void and emptiness. The new Chinese cinema is characterized by a critical attitude towards the past, whether it would be the failures of nationalism and modernization, “Since Chinese literature is the major vehicle for the discursive practice of Chinese modernity, the postsocialist shift to the visual can be regarded as ‘postmodern’ ” (Xu, 2007: 12).

Modernity has as a commitment to give audiences a sense of belonging to a community to compensate for the traditional communities they have been disowned from. A concern or engagement with the future can be one way of correcting uncritical traditionalism and deepen one's involvement with the political status of the traditions of the defeated and the marginalized. Such engagements with the future may sometimes be episodic because they have to build upon an oscillation between the past and the future, and it's not possible to avoid the past when addressing the issue of modernity. The new Chinese cinema gave Chinese audiences how to know freely its own cinema – in some extent its own identity basis or nationhood. A 'cultural critique' is observed based on a 'historical reflection', shifting back and forth between the Chinese countryside and the metropolis. The new Chinese cinema 'nation' is not anymore national, because the emergent category of transnational Chinese cinema problematizes the traditional paradigm of national cinema towards a condition of global hybridity.

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3

Ciberanthropophagy: Uirapuru, Pingbird, biobot and Eduardo Kac plus Oswald de Andrade

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Abstract

This paper proposes a reflection on contemporary artistic production, evaluated in their relations with the media and new technologies. It is understood that as artistic production is analyzed here, let's think about the relationship between local and global from Latin America; more specifically, based on the cannibalistic thought (*Manifesto Antropófago*) of Oswald de Andrade. As an example, we discuss the artwork of the Brazilian, Eduardo Kac, seen here as the 'primitive' technical implementation; which, from local cultural references, with the use of new technologies, is able to communicate so – universally.

Keywords: art, media and technology; Oswald de Andrade; Eduardo Kac

*I will not be impartial.
I will not try being impartial. I am your son.
I will love you at times.
Other times I will hate you
Many things have united us.
Other ones have separated us.*

—Oswald de Andrade Filho (2004: 45)

By the end of 1990's, Werinton Kermes, a journalist and photographer was making arrangements for an event called, "*Terra Rasgada*", which was usually held in Sorocaba, a city in the country of São Paulo state. As part of his job, he asked Jonas, a homeless man who lived on the streets of that city, if he agreed to have some pictures taken for the event. As soon as Jonas heard the name of the event, he promptly answered, "I am *Terra Rasgada*"¹. The proposition of the event was as follows:

The "*Terra Rasgada*" proposes a further step concerning the consolidation of the proposal of giving support and incentive to the attempt of getting the universalization of mind and of artistic production in Sorocaba. Besides recovering aspects like history, everyday [life] and perspectives about the future of community, it is necessary to postulate the infinite dimensions of the expression, "*Terra Rasgada*" (*Furrowed Land*), and to elicit reflections on the problems, solutions, histories and dreams of the world from the artist's personal repertory, the people's everyday and the complex reality of Sorocaba.

¹ Interview with the authors, September 2012

From the complex connection between the everyday of Sorocaba and the global one, new routes are discovered and new knowledge is built and transferred to individuals by means of art, images, signs, symbols and information produced with liberty, creativity and commitment. The culture of both the individuals and the artist and also of the city is enriched; it is given a new spirit, a new vitality.

To conceive the world through Sorocaba, expressed from artistic interventions, debates, reflection, questioning and foremost, according to beliefs, ideologies and artists' particular methods, [is] emphasizing cultural, historic, social, economic and aesthetic data of Sorocaba everyday.²

From Jonas' immediate and irreverent answer to the institutionalization of culture, we can infer on one hand, that although Jonas can be more creative and natural; on the other hand, in the institutionalization, we have at least, the search for creative liberty. The first one is free, on the streets, living and recreating histories in the people's imagination about their origin. The second is institutionalized in the *Oficina Cultural Grande Otelo* [Cultural Institution Grande Otelo], which is promoted and sponsored by public and private corporations. Even so, it is out of the question to say who is greater or smaller, better or worse; they are different and each one gives their contribution to culture. Manichaeisms are absolutely useless on this matter. What they both can do is to move forward "to the Sun", as Oswald de Andrade wanted before dying (2004: 58). *To turn creativity into an anthropophagic local-global ingredient. Gluttony has no place in this anthropophagic practice. We are not culturally hungry; we suffer the effect of a cannibalistic ritual in which the local devours the global and is devoured by the local.*

This is the analeptic of Enrique Dussel – passing to Oswald de Andrade in the form of literature, Manifestos, e.g. *Pau Brasil* and *Antropófago* [Anthropophagic] in the early XX century. The philosophical proposal of Enrique Dussel aims for a production/reflection based on our own experience as Latin Americans – as Amerindians seeking an authentic thinking, whose attainment must be sought from the corporeal, the sensual, and not from the colonizing European logic. And the authenticity proposed by the Argentinean philosopher is always provisory, always a model to reconceive the world from America and not the opposite as it has always been made. This is or chance to revive subjectiveness, "Just the way we are".

That is a provisory open mind which makes itself upon and from the other, another metaphysics that is not ontological of the tropics, whose starting point is the oppression to Latin America. A release from the oppressive totality of the European philosophy which put (itself) as the core of the world. Empirical centrality inaugurated by Portugal and Spain, as the unique "effectively worldwide" history (Dussel, 1999: 38).

Not only is it necessary to deny that philosophy, but through a criticism of it, to construct something new for a new delivered man. The deliverance will not come from Kant, Hegel, or even Marx or Engels' philosophy, as some of them are creators, others are critics, but all of them did not break off with the excluding philosophy. The great possible conclusion: *A subject among subjects and no longer subject among objects or subjects—objects of someone else's thinking.* Both being and not being surpassed from the totality that socially inaugurated them.

At this extent, we can turn to Oswald de Andrade and review his book, *The Crisis of the Messianic Philosophy* [A crise da Filosofia Messiânica], published in 1950. We can also highlight the book, *Utopia March* [A Marcha das Utopias], a set of his texts published in 1956 in which he discusses, from the European philosophers, the matter of utopias and tropics. Nevertheless, *The Crisis of the Messianic Philosophy* is the philosophy of *Manifest of the Pau Brasil Poem* and *Manifest Anthropophagus* (1914, 1930 respectively). In these books, systematically, Oswald, opposing the group of cheerful academics

² <http://www.educlique.com.br/terrasgada/Oterra/index.htm>

at the universities, proposes that we set out from Brasil to the world, not the reverse. Oswald himself tells us that: "Only the anthropophagy unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically." (1978: 13).

The metaphysical operation connected to the anthropophagic ritual is of the transformation of the taboo into totem. From the opposing value to favorable value. Life is pure devouring. Along this devouring process that every minute threatens human existence, man should turn the taboo into a totem. (Andrade, 1978: 77-78).

It seems quite pretentious for a writer (regarded as cursed in 1950 and boastful in 1928) to want to rewrite the history of philosophy from a manifest – actually two manifests, if we consider *Pau Brasil* as a precursor of the Anthropophagus and propose an anthropophagic philosophy supported on the "technologized natural man", a synthesis of the natural man (thesis) and of the civilized man (antithesis) (Andrade, 1978: 79) that will be developed in a society, in a world where two cultural hemispheres predominated and "divided history into matriarchate and patriarchate. That is the world of the primitive man. This is the one of the civilized man. That one produced an anthropophagic culture, this one a messianic culture" (Andrade, 1978: 78).

Ferine as he is. Oswald stings and criticizes all the great names of western philosophy (he would certainly say that they are the pesky boys!) who lay down messianic bases independently on their methodology, whatever it is, idealistic or materialistic. Even if in some passages of the text, we see an apparent marxist materialism, e.g:

The rupture with the matriarchal world occurred when the man quit devouring his fellow to make him his slave: Friedrich Engels stresses the fructuous dialectic progress it means for humanity.

As a matter of fact, the division of labor and the organization of society into classes was derived from slavery. The technique and the social hierarchy were created. And the history of man became as Marx said, the history of the conflict of classes. (Andrade, 1978: 78)

Oswald does not spare anybody. From Socrates, who suffered from *midwife complex* – his intention of causing people to bear ideas - and tried to convince himself of the immortality of the soul on the *Fedon Dialogue* (Andrade, 1978: 95). He moves to Augustine, the African who brought a new spirit for a priesthood that was avid for power (Idem, 101). He compares the studies of Etienne Gilson about the Christian philosophy, as just like reading all those patriarchic adventures as in a true detective story (Idem, 102). Marx becomes a novelist when he describes the transformation of the peasant into a workman and the ascension of the bourgeoisie with its values, among which the monogamous family and the right of patriarchal heritage as opposed to the matriarchal blood inheritance.

Among the ones who were mentioned for Messianism are Descartes, Hegel, Spinoza, Lenin, Sartre, Husserl, the Marxist Leninist bureaucrats from URSS, Stalin, Freud, Jaspers, Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer. The conclusion is that in America, the future for the ludic and technologized world is open and, 13 items state the central thesis and in the 11th we have, "only the technologized restoration of an anthropophagic culture would solve the present problems of man and philosophy" (Idem, 129).

The previous experience of the Journal of Anthropophagy, precursor of the anthropophagic philosophy, had a melancholic end in 1929. In the foreword of the facsimile edition Augusto de Campos (1975, without nr) tells us that:

Raul Bopp relates that "The newspapers were returned daily as a sign of protest against the anthropophagic irreverences (the 2nd "dentition" was published on the *Diario de São Paulo* from 03.17.1929 to 08.01.1929). Unawarely and subtly the libido penetrated the anthropophagic paradise. The Benedictine working reputation suddenly stopped. It happened a general "*changé de dames*". One of them took the other one's wife, Oswald vanished. He went away to live his new romance on the seashore in the surroundings of Santos. Tarsila no longer stayed at home. The group was split. In October, 1929 it happened the crack of the stock market and the crisis of the coffee. *Oswald* and *Pagu* became members

of the communist party. And the creator of *Serafim Ponte Grande*, regarding himself recovered from the “anthropophagic plague”, became “iron coat in the proletarian revolution”.

Augusto de Campos completes the importance of the *Journal of Anthropophagy* and of the anthropophagic philosophy:

The ideas and conceptions of the Anthropophagy were put aside for a while. Only in 1945, after breaking off with the communists, Oswald, intellectually recovered, was willing to go deep on the anthropophagic themes. This is exactly what he will do in two studies: *The Crisis of the Messianic Philosophy* (1950) and *The Utopia March* (1953). It was then possible to understand, more precisely, the seriousness of Oswald’s thinking and of the anthropophagic thesis, conceived by him as “The social therapy of the modern world”. But the *Journal of Anthropophagy* remains as a living evidence of the first struggles, an even dramatic example of a battle that Oswald fought under the most difficult circumstances, practically isolated, with a few ones, against the general mess that ended up enclosing almost all his partners of the modernistic revolution. (Idem)

Besides this media experience, *Oswald* had already created the *Magazine Klaxon*, that circulated between May 1922 and January 1923, practically revolutionizing the format and designing, with that big A across the whole page. The following experience, in 1931, will be with the newspaper *O Homem do Povo* (the folk man) created and directed along with *Patrícia Galvão*, nicknamed *Pagu* who was his wife until 1935. In this pamphletary newspaper we find only the engagement that the second dentition of the *Journal of Anthropophagy* proposed; the anthropophagus became a militant, just some false propaganda and part of the text in some editorials resembles the former, technologized.

The influence that anthropophagy brought upon Brazilian literature and arts is incontestable. A lot was mentioned about the theme in the approach of tropicalia in the 1970’s, the concrete poetry with the brothers, *Augusto* and *Haroldo de Campos* and also *Decio Pignatari* and so many other works.

Here we want to establish a connection that, as far as we know, it has not been established yet: a first view of the work of *Eduardo Kac* under the perspective of the anthropophagy, chiefly recalling the primitive technologized. As his website describes³:

Eduardo Kac was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1962 and he graduated at social communication at the Catholic University of do Rio de Janeiro. In the early 1980’s he created several performances that had political and humoristic character, which were played in public areas like Cinelandia and Ipanema beach in Rio de Janeiro and in the stairs of Mario de Andrade library in São Paulo... In 1989 he moved to the United States, where one year later he got his master’s degree at plastic art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, institution in which he is an honorary professor. In 2004 he was awarded a doctorate by the Wales University in the United Kingdom... As a pioneer in the digital and transgenic art, from 1983 on, Kac conceived and developed the holopoetry, which is a new verbal/visual language that explores the formal, semantic and perceptual fluctuations of the word/image process within the holographic space-time.

From 1986 on, Kac proposed and developed the telepresence, by presenting a remote control robot through which the participants could interact during the “Brazil High Tech” exhibition in Rio de Janeiro. The art of telepresence, became internationally known through one of Kac’s project called “ornitorrinco” (platypus) developed from 1989 on. The art of telepresence, is a new area of artistic creation based on the shift of the participant’s cognitive and sensorial processes to a telerobot which is in a geographically distant space. For his work on holopoetry (term created by Kac himself) the artist received in 1995, the Shearwater Foundation holography award, the most important international prize in the field of holographic art, offered by the Shearwater Foundation in Florida.

Through the relation between art and technology the *carrioca* artist tries to transpose the ghettos that were created to allocate each of these elemental areas: art, technology, communication, media, Brazil,

³ <http://www.ekac.org/kacbio600.html>

genetics, and so many others that are stagnant in terms of theory/practice in Brazil. The Brazilian vanguard of the early XX century, of which *Oswald de Andrade* was a participant, attempted to fetch not influences, but the very Brazilian root which usually emerges when some people are living abroad. With Kac it happened just the opposite. The Brazilian socio-economic reality of the 1980s and the search for new routes to artistic expression motivated *Kac* to go to the United States. In his testimony to Reynaldo Röels, Jr. (Kac, 2004: 90-1) about the matter of vanguards, he denied vehemently the ones who wanted the end of vanguards because there was no longer anything new. These ones in his opinion were looking back to the past and as he used to say, “I am with my eyes and all of my senses turned to the XXI century.”

In order to produce as a technologized man of his time, he created the holopoetry to be perceived with the whole body, not just to be visualized. In 1986, there was the exposition, Brazil High Tech in Rio de Janeiro and Kac was assigned as the curator to the 13 artists who presented to a heterogeneous public, the results of their reflections on the possibilities of new languages, new interdisciplinary hybrid processes. “New languages no longer based on dematerialization but on the immaterial, no longer on the composition of static artistic objects but on the kinetic ones” (Kac, 2004: 59). Kac will propose and further make the Bioart. Nevertheless, we highlight the work *Uirapuru*, of 1999 which was presented at the ICC Biennale '99, in which he seeks one element of Brazilian mythology and transforms it to his own aesthetic and personal experience. Is it a retake of the *Pau Brasil* aesthetic experience? No formula for the contemporary expression of the world. To see with pure eyes (Andrade, 1978: 9). The *Uirapuru*, a typical Amazonian bird that chirps once a year, when it is making its nest and causes other birds to stop and hear it during this short while, is also in another version of the mythology, a human being who died and became a bird and has a new life in the forest. Kac creates his own mythology (Figure 1):

In my personal mythology, the *Uirapuru* is a flying fish that hovers above the forest, tweeting and bringing good luck for the forest residents. According to my version, the *Uirapuru* chirps when it hosts the spirits of the ones who are far away. *Uirapuru*'s forest is inhabited by “pingbirds”, fantastic creatures whose melody oscillates according to the rhythm of the global net traffic. The own *Uirapuru* spirit is hosted by a virtual fish that flies and interacts on line within the virtual space with other virtual fish. Thus, the *Uirapuru* behavior contributes to increase the net traffic and makes pingbirds tweet more frequently.⁴



Fig. 1: *Uirapuru* (1999), Eduardo Kac

The telerobotic flying fish can be controlled both through a local interface and the web⁵

⁴ <http://www.ekac.org/pingbirds.html>

⁵ <http://www.ekac.org/uirapuru.html>



Fig.2: Pingbird

The author explains it is a spatial and temporal experience that uses local, remote, virtual and physical scales simultaneously, moving the flying fish through Internet, at the same time in the Amazon virtual forest among trees where the pingbirds are (Figure 2)⁶

As a result, the Uirapuru avatar moves in the virtual space according to the movements of the telerobotic fish in the gallery. Video from the point of view of the telerobotic fish is seen in the gallery and is streamed live on the web. The telerobotic fish hovers above a forest that is populated by colorful pingbirds (right). Pingbirds are telerobotic birds that send ping commands to servers geographically located in the Amazon region (where the forest is located). The pingbirds sing the songs of real Amazonian birds according to the rhythm of global network traffic. There are three distinct areas in the physical forest. One area displays the live video from the point of view of the flying fish (full frame, 30fps) enabling participants to change the flight pattern of Uirapuru in real time, above the forest canopy. Another area shows the VRML world, allowing participants to see other avatars and to move in the virtual forest. The third area is found in the back: along a pathway, hidden within the forest, a bench awaits local visitors who may rest and enjoy the songs of Uirapuru and the Amazonian pingbirds.⁷

The establishment of the progress by means of catalogs and TV sets. Only the machinery. And the blood transfusers (Andrade, 1978: 17). Another means Eduardo Kac uses to manifest his art is the Bioart and the works of 1997, *A positive* – a literal example of the blood transfusers proposed by Oswald in the *Manifest of Anthropophagus*. In this work, as Kac describes:⁸

The work creates a situation in which a human being and a robot have direct physical contact via an intravenous needle connected to clear tubing and feed one another in a mutually nourishing relationship. To the new category of hybrid biological robots we ascribe the general epithet "biobots". Because of its use of human red blood cells, the biobot created for A-positive is termed a "phlebot".

⁶ <http://www.ekac.org/pingbirds.html>

⁷ Idem

⁸ <http://www.ekac.org/apositive.html>

The presented work has the following aspect:



Fig 3: A-positive, Kac and Bennett, 1997. Photos: Carlos Fadon and Anna Yu⁹

In **A-positive**, red blood cells carry oxygen from the lungs to tissues (sic), and then provide the remaining oxygen to the biobot. The biobot extracts the oxygen to support a fragile and erratic flame (Figure 3). Since the oxygen content of each person is different, each individual dialogue with the biobot will yield a unique flame with differentiated behavior and life span.

As he finishes his exhibition about the work, Kac indicates other possibilities that are open with the machine, because the equation master/slave is no longer fit at this cybernetic moment! What really matters is not what the machines can do for/to us, but what we can make up along with them, we are both using and being used by machines. For this purpose, the new ecosystem that is being opened is the post organic and its new creatures; “*biological (cloning), biosynthetic (genetic engineering), inorganic (android epistemology), algorithmic (life), biobotic (robotics)*” or *whatever* (Kac, n.d.).¹⁰

The poet is the annoying antenna

The Anthropophagy and the *Pau Brasil* left marks on the Brazilian aesthetic scenery. From the art on the supported screen, to one’s own body supports and other bodies, or someone else’s body – the way is open and we can infer the continuous search for the identity that Dussel talks about, i.e. the ethic/aesthetic of this tropical whereabouts that appear in 2011 as an economic, artistic and residual solution for the ‘former developed world’ we wanted to take part in. The connection sought by *Oswald Kac* has also a humoristic link. Anyone who is interested, should take a look at the 1983 *Albumanac Escracho*. There, it is possible to see a lot of the Oswaldiano style, to refute the, “low spirit of the *Marginal Poetry*... always between vulgar and refined, without any pornoscatological phobia” (Kac, 2004: 263-4). A proposal made to that century and the present one, and its second edition programmed for 2893: “The golden age announced by America. The golden age. And all the girls” (Andrade, 1987: 14).

The technologized savage travels around the technologized world preaching that, “happiness is the real litmus test” (Andrade, 1987: 18). And, in the world of several numerical Gs, our happiness is the test for the (G9) richest. From the political economy or not, to the arts, the technologized savage lives

⁹ Retrieved from <http://www.ekac.org/apicts.html>

¹⁰ Kac, Eduardo. ART AT THE BIOBOTIC FRONTIER Retrieved from <http://www.ekac.org/apositive.html>

to live, it is too much happiness to be understood with the, “Routes, routes, routes, routes, routes, routes, routes, routes” (Andrade, 1987: 5).

In the 457th year of the deglutition of the bishop Sardinha.

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4

Transcultural Image Worlds Identity Constructions in Popular Imagery: Doing Gender - Undoing Gender

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Abstract

Communication science today predicts a continuing acceleration of the pictorial turn. In the future, our system of letters will be decipherable only by a few scholars just as it is true for Chinese characters today. Writing will be for scholars only, whereas the masses will communicate via simplified icons. As Mirzoff states, "Modern life takes place onscreen. ... Human experience is now more visual and visualized than ever before from the satellite picture to medical images of the interior of the human body. In the era of the visual screen, your viewpoint is crucial" (Mirzoeff, 1999: 1).

This iconic or pictorial turn offers a wide range of interdisciplinary approaches to art education. Internet and telecommunications have made personal participation in public venues as easy as the next mouse click. Virtual worlds allow a multitude of identity constructions, that can be designed as well as re-designed, abandoned and resurrected offering multi-optionality as well as multi-locality. In the following paper I want to place visual culture and "picture theory" in the center of art educational teaching because the world as image calls for the distinct fostering of critical faculties in students. Supporting this educational argument, Mirzoeff states that it is exactly, "The gap between the wealth of visual experience in post-modern culture and the ability to analyze that observation (that) marks both the opportunity and the need for visual culture as a field of study" (1999: 3).

Keywords: transgender, visual frame, identity, pictorial turn, performative turn

*"In education, when we challenge an idea,
we suggest that there is room for imagining another way of thinking."
(Rogoff, 2008: 8)*

A Fundamental Change in Visuality

Communication science today predicts a continuing acceleration of the pictorial turn. In the future, our system of letters will be decipherable only by a few scholars just as it is true for Chinese characters today. Writing will be for scholars only, whereas the masses will communicate via simplified icons. The 'pictorial turn' therefore offers a key-position for a profound turn-around in the public's perception of Art Education and its contribution to general education¹.

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Today, we see a clear change in the use of image-text-relations. If, for instance looking at children's picture books from the 1960s until today, images used to illustrate information given first in texts. This has fundamentally changed. No longer are images 'nice' to have, but easily neglectable; i.e. additives for written facts simply duplicating information. In picture books today, more and more images stand alone on one page providing only visual information necessary for understanding textual information given on the next page. This complementary intertwining of image and text, a fact known as Iconotext,² is also what changes how children approach making sense of text and image relations today. Thus images are recognized more as relevant information sources in their own right. As we are moving from a mainly text-based society to a so-called 'iconic' society, the semantic dimension of how images work is also now in the center of current pedagogical and scientific interest.

The Essential Tool-Kit For Today's Visual Culture

This fundamental change in society also means a change in Art Education. Like in other scientific disciplines working in the field of culture, the 'performative turn' caused a fundamental shift in art educational theoretical discourse. Learning among others, from British cultural studies 'high culture' as well as 'low culture', holds valuable information looking at how contemporary images shape our thoughts, ideas and conceptions on socio-political issues. Working with the imaginary of a society as the art educational field of learning, means a theoretical shift towards a social issue-oriented Art Education. Visual/media literacy offers relevant tools for encoding and decoding phenomena in visual culture. 'Orientational' as well as 'contextual' knowledge helps build competencies allowing an informed and active participation in image cultures.

As early adopters of new technologies, children today self-educate themselves in special interest areas through all kinds of media. Computer-based multimedia processes of design and image generation open up new potentials in perception and interpretation. Art Education offers the essential versatile tool-kit for arriving at informed judgments about all kinds of images and visual phenomena, as well as their semantic decoding. A main referential science, visual culture art education focuses on the iconic experience of today's children and young people. Visual culture as a discipline explores the international infrastructure within the construction of the visual in our society, especially looking at new technologies as well as every day life. All cultural phenomena and their visual representations offer concepts of order, structure and organization, creating certain ways of perception and interpretation. This pertains to generated visibility, prevailing territories of bodily representations, the transformative processes of intermediality, multimodality and hybridity as well as their possible qualities for generating cultural meaning (Figures 1-2).

permission of the publisher.

² Vgl. Arbeit von Katrin Feiner

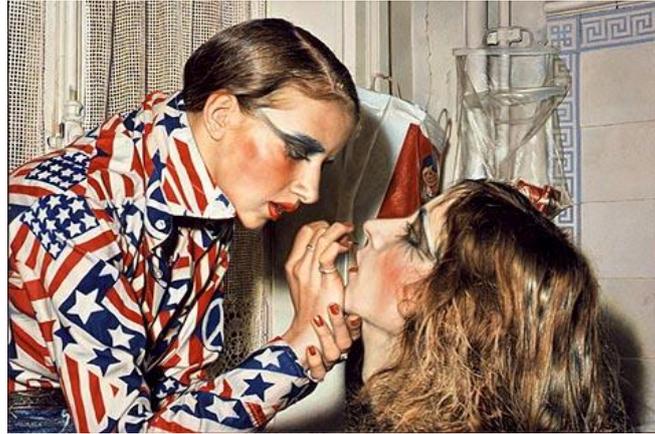


Fig. 1: Franz Gertsch, Marina schminkt Luciano (1975)³
Acrylic on Canvas, 234 x 346,5 cm, Franz Gertsch © Museum Ludwig

The make-up session shows how the transvestite artist Luciano Castelli being made up from a man into a woman by his girl-friend Marina.

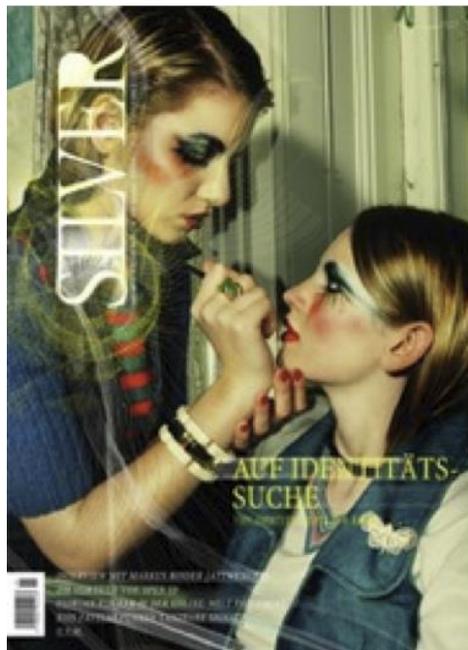


Fig. 2: Identity-Search, Silver Nr. 11, (April 2007)

This Make-up session shows two girls making each other up in reference to the painting by Franz Gertsch

³ Franz Gertsch, *Marina schminkt Luciano*, 1975, Acryl auf ungrundierter Baumwolle, 234 x 346,5 cm, Sammlung Ludwig, ML 1264 Bildzitat aus: Museen in Köln, Bild der Woche, 2.-9.2.2009. Funke, C.: Franz Gertsch, Marina schminkt Luciano: "Auf den ersten Blick erinnert Franz Gertschs Gemälde "Marina schminkt Luciano" von 1975 an Fotografien von Wolfgang Tillmans, Larry Clark oder Nan Goldin aus den achtziger und neunziger Jahren: gemeinsam ist den Werken das Interesse am Bild des Menschen, wobei es sich um junge Leute handelt, die nonkonformistisch leben und geschlechtliche Festlegungen in Frage stellen. ... Links auf dem Gemälde steht Marina mit zurückgekämmten Haaren und beugt sich über Luciano um ihn zu schminken. Zwischen 1971 und 1977 porträtiert Gertsch den Künstler Luciano und dessen Freundeskreis in zahlreichen Werken, denen jeweils Fotoserien vorausgingen. Trotz seines Interesses am Habitus, an der Ablehnung männlicher oder weiblicher Zuschreibung der einzelnen, der Lust an der Selbstdarstellung und Verkleidung, bleibt Gertsch eher der außenstehende Beobachter."

The 'image' of a nation, a person or a product, embodies visual information relevant for identity construction. From table decoration to the visual staging of sports events, from fashion to architecture, from politics, to science and entertainment, – all of these popular image-worlds offer lessons in understanding image and identity constructions as well as their cultural meanings. Image-worlds show us how we become 'happy' with a certain product; they 'prove' how an event happened, they enable us to create our individual image-worlds (Figure 3). Visual literacy teaches strategies for decoding visual communication; realizing image-generation methods; and recognizing implicit truths as well as contextual relations. It helps to develop an awareness for the fact that our understanding of the visual is shaped by presuppositions and visual conventions depending on gender, our ethnic and cultural background and our affiliation with a certain generation or time.



Fig. 3: Who am I? (Wer bin ich?) Identity as experiment
A&C Publishing © bob magazine, (2005)⁴

Images have never before had such a ubiquitous presence as today. Communication technologies and computer technology make this unprecedented dissemination and circulation of imagery possible and therefore have increased the influence and effectiveness of the visual in culture, society and science. Popular imagery is what shapes our understanding of the world and of ourselves. It is the place where we learn about beauty and romance, where we see what men and women are 'supposed' to be like. Imagery shapes our ideas about social behaviour, about politics and science; it is what forms first-hand visual experience in cultures. The visual is the operating field where social interaction as well as social belonging – like gender, ethnic, religious, political and national identities are constantly negotiated by being defined and redefined again and again. Images as representations of seeing and being looked at in the sociocultural realm is a venue where we learn about the 'dominant fictions' (Nierhaus, 1999) in our societies.

"Pictorial Turn is the moment when the icon ... becomes a frame. ...

⁴ Issue 01, May 2005

A frame for exploring social and political questions, as well as questions concerning the imaginary of a society and its history.”
(Mitchell, 2005: 1)⁵

The Visual - A Frame for Exploring the Cultural Imaginary

Popular visual culture represents the symbolic order of social and political issues in our societies. If we understand culture, as the symbolic praxis/operating field of social behaviour, (Breidenbach/Zukrigl 1998), it is a perfect description of today’s global image cultures. Understanding “authenticity” as a functional concept, the realm of symbolic image cultures offer a distinct possibility for creative freedom in identity constructions. Interactive web 2.0 applications foster a common generation, distribution and sharing of image-worlds globally. “We are what we make. Our YouTubed videos, Technorated blogs, Flickred photos, Facebooked pages, Amazonned reviews, and iPodded podcasts and playlists altogether are an expression of us,” says blogger-legend Jeff Jarvis (Mitchell, 2005: 1) ‘Identity’ is a lot more than username and pass-word, it is what we as active users of the internet present to the outward world. In this respect if in Art Education we look at global popular imageries, we look at the dynamic and complex processes of cultural production, distribution, circulation, consumption and reproduction (Figures 4-6).



Fig. 4: Painter and model. Piero Manzoni signing a living sculpture, (1961)

© Piero Manzoni⁶

Fig. 5: Designer and model, Karl Lagerfeld for H&M, (2009) Foto Reingard Klingler

Fig. 6: Painter and model, Yves Klein, Foto © MUMOK Insights Cover 4, März 2007

Images in art as well as popular imagery are where cultural territories of behaviour and thinking are spelled out.

Gender – An Analytical Frame of Looking

Everyday girls and boys learn what they are ‘supposed’ to look like, how they are ‘supposed’ to behave, what they are ‘supposed’ to be interested in. All this is not found in a textbook. Working with gender

⁵ In 1994, W.J.T. Mitchell coined the term ‘pictorial turn’, when in the same year Gottfried Boehm started talking about the ‘iconic turn’.

⁶ http://www.pieromanzoni.org/EN/Gallery_en/pop_225.htm

identities in popular imagery, gender can be seen as an analysing frame investigating the visual in culture. In itself, gender is a neutral category omnipresent in society. The fabric of gendered meanings constitutes itself in interaction –that means interactions of people with each other as well as interactions of people with products. Products, too, are embedded in the gendered meaning production in our societies. Looking at visual products, from their ‘image’ to the physical product, they hold actions – which again are gendered – ready for us to perform. Thus, gender aspects show up in all kinds of common products and their iconic representations, i.e. from toys to clothes, from cars to financial products, from scientific explanations, to spatial relations in architecture. Analysing gender domains and role models represented in popular visual culture opens up new perspectives on gender identities. Critical analysis of these visual performative instructions changes the perspective about social codes of desire, actions and behaviour. Questions arise of what is undervalued, what is overrated, what is misrepresented and what is not seen at all. Since gender is constituted through a process of interactions, it also changes in the daily practice of doing and undoing (Figure 7).



Fig. 7: Feminin Masculin, Project Paul(a), Christine Marneffe (1996/2005),
Foto © Delphine Merlato,

“What would I be if ...? With subtle changes Christine Marneffe makes the “masculine” in the face of a woman and the “feminine” in the face of a man visible.”⁴ What is really “masculine” or “feminine” nowadays? For the longest time now gender roles have been less and less clearly defined than they used to be. Boys are applying eyeliner, girls wearing pants with zippers. Paul and Paula are using each others gender attributes – a question of emotional self-presentation?

Popular Imageries As Cultural ‘Screen’

*“Popular imageries are the cultural ‘screen’, where social production and desire meet.”
—Gilles Deleuze (in Kuzma, M. & Gioni, M., 2004: 28)*

Images are a social, bi-directional ‘screen’ where cultural territories of behaviour and thinking are illustrated. On one side of the screen, the desires and interests of consumers as well as the advertising and marketing industries are mirrored. People show themselves in the global image worlds of web 2.0 applications on the other side; and both sides are in constant interrelationship. Weblogs, social networks, social bookmarking sites, wikis and all the developments of web 2.0, share one common characteristic: user-participation. ‘Identity’ is the key multiplier of its use in the world of cyber-based bi-directionality. Networking communities like *XING*⁷ or *MySpace* are unthinkable with anonymous

⁷ <https://www.xing.com/>

participants. Hitting the “like” and “dislike” buttons (along with all the other daily cyber-choices for our leisure as well as our professional habits) forms/constitutes the live-streaming of our identities. In the context of today’s information and communication technologies, the ‘image’ of oneself plays an active role in a social reality where identity is constantly being negotiated anew. The expanding realm of electronic and digital media are the ubiquitously stage of present social as well as individual power relations (Figure 8).



Fig. 8: Designer and model, Age-relations: Young & Old, H&M campaign with Karl Lagerfeld.

© REUTERS. Workmen putting up an advertisement: the image became extremely popular in no time at all⁸

The visual is therefore the venue where we learn about normative behaviour in all cultural fields. Looking at the issue of gender, it is a constant process where we learn about hetero-normative behaviour. Analyzing representations of the ‘nude’ through the ages until today’s popular imagery is therefore not simply looking at an art historical ‘genre’, but at the cultural territory where gender-relations are negotiated anew from day to day spanning whole generations.

If we think of popular imagery, it has a certain feel, rhythm, taste, smell, sound, look, and aesthetic – as it references the material side of life. If we think of the visual as a venue it has a certain geography; it contains the cartography of our behaviour. Even more importantly, iconic body-language contains the vocabulary of our emotions. Around 1300, Giotto’s *Lamentation of Christ* iconized the vocabulary for grief and mourning in body language for his contemporaries, as well as for generations to come. Just like Giotto, popular imagery today has a powerful formative status. Iconic body-language today contains the vocabulary of current human emotions and desires. Whereas Giotto’s vocabulary remained enduring for the longest time, we are constantly being updated by the acceleration of popular imagery in today’s iconic society.

The Visual - Implicit Forms of Knowledge

The global ubiquity of public and personal image-generation and consumption in everyday life, in advertising and entertainment, and in politics and science – marks a fundamental change in identity construction. Identities are formed in an individual as well as a cultural process, which changed dramatically, taking in and revealing all sorts of iconic influences in a fragmented process of identity formation. “The important quality in images is representation in the meaning of the Greek word *Deixis*.

⁸ http://www.pieromanzoni.org/EN/Gallery_en/pop_225.htm

Images represent implicit forms of knowledge. Images exist because the Imaginary can manifest itself directly.” (Gottfried Boehm, in Gerleit, 2005: 1)

Concerning the construction of gender-identity, when analyzed as cultural screens – images – provide the basis for various interdisciplinary approaches in Art Education. Being able to ‘read’ visual culture and artefacts is a central issue in Art Education. Because of easy access to image-production for children and young people, the educational field can be supplemented with the following: learning the vocabulary and grammar of visual culture artefacts; practicing critical thinking when looking at images; applying informed observations as to their context of origination; and relating them to one’s own creative design-processes.

BodyTalk - The Iconic is In Our Gestures

*“Iconic means that the roots of the icons are in our gestures and we are the actors.”
—W.T.J. Mitchell (n.d.)⁹*

BodyTalk was the title of an exhibit in March 2007 in Vienna showing young artists dealing with the body as the basic form of communication – since bodies communicate before words do¹⁰. Concerning the doing and undoing of gender, the critical strategies of image construction in this exhibition offered a rich repertoire for art educational teaching purposes. *BodyTalk* also means the mapping of social spaces, as well as a mapping of general socio-cultural behaviour for women and men, e.g. hetero-normative behaviour. Looking at gender identities in popular imagery mirrors the language our bodies speak.



Fig. 9: Austrian school exercise book, Foto Reingard Klingler (2009)
Fig. 10: Plate1. “Front” and “Home”: The Ideal Gender Division, Foto Reingard Klingler (2009)¹¹

Taking a mundane product like a simple exercise-book used in Austrian public schools, the body language in the imagery reinforces stereotypical gender roles for teenage boys and girls interpreted from a feminist point of view in a Western European country (Figure 9). The images are taken from the cover of an Austrian exercise book. The front cover shows a boy’s image, the back cover a girl’s image. The dreamingly introspective look in the girl’s eyes lets us assume she’s deeply involved in some kind of romantic pondering while she’s doing her homework - a nice romantic and responsible good girl.

⁹ <http://www.iconicturn.de/2005/04/iconic-turn-pictorial-turn/#more-328>

¹⁰ <http://www.fotogalerie-wien.at/content.php?id=64&jahr=2007&details=1&PHPSESSID=720bddbe3758350b927d2f8dd75fc82f>

¹¹ Image from postcard in author’s possession, available in: Maureen Healy (2004): Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 7

The boy shows his active physical presence interested in high-speed and skillful body-control roaming around in his free time occupying himself with sports. Looking at both gender roles for coolness they both work in stereotypical terms – romantic beauty versus sports ace. The image behaviour-code for the boy though can hardly be turned around: a beautiful boy lost in romantic dreaming diligently occupied with his homework does not exactly meet the expected hetero-normative gender code of male behaviour for coolness and power. It would also be interesting to see how much femininity the girl would be able to project if exercising the same kind of sport with equal intensity. The postcard next to the exercise book shows the long kind of tradition of stereotypical gender role models in the public domain going back to the time of the first world war. (Figure 10)

While this is an image from a schoolbook, its concurrence with images in the public domain demonstrates how advertising and especially fashion photography, are a large terrain/social playground where gender stereotypes are communicated via body-language.

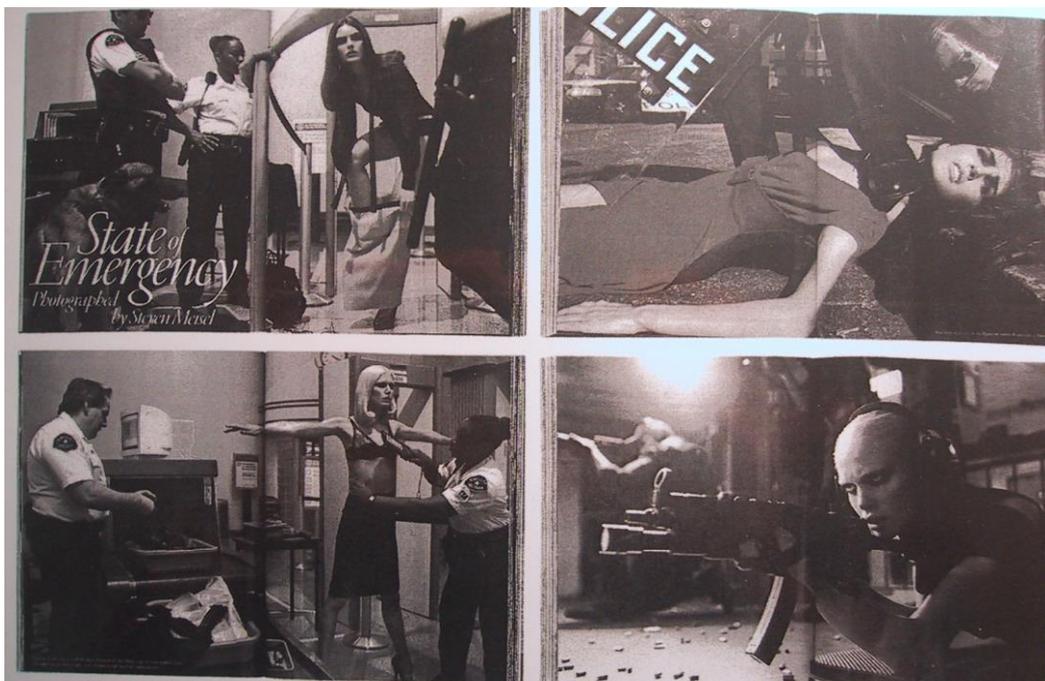


Fig. 11 - 14: State of Emergency, Vogue ITALY (September 2006)
© Stefan Meisel, Foto Reingard Klingler

The image, *State of Emergency* by Steven Meisel for Vogue ITALY, September 2006 (Figures 11-14), ironically takes up some of the Bush administration's security measures following the 9/11 terrorist attack as subject matter for fashion photography. The fashion shoot alludes to erotic scenes with torture role play, offering fantasmatic identifications with sexualized violence. As Joanna Bourke (2006) notes,

[...]the terrorist threat is a completely unreal woman. In contrast to the security personnel depicted, she is placed beyond the realm of the human. Her skin is as plastic as a mannequin's; her body is too perfect, even when grimacing in pain. When the model is depicted as the aggressor, she remains nothing more than the phallic dominatrix of many adolescent boys' wet dreams. In both instances, the beauty of the photographs transforms acts of violence and humiliation into erotic possibilities. (p. 2)

Erotic models, conceptualized death: the erotic sexualizing of violence is a dominant theme in this media landscape. Advertising campaigns play off of gender stereotypes enhancing them; and as in the case of the Dolce & Gabbana campaign in 2007, also to the point of public irritation (Figure 15).



Fig. 15: Dolce & Gabbana (Heute, März 2007) © D&G¹²
Highly controversial Dolce & Gabbana fashion campaign

Image – Memory – Imagination. Doing Gender – Undoing Gender

Images are not supposed to navigate us in our lives, and we are to remain the pilots deciding the course of our actions, says psychoanalyst Serge Tisseron.¹³ How is this possible with the iconic turn in our societies today – the benefits as well as dangers of “the world on screens” for our personalities? Our imagination may be a physical ability, but it is meant to free us from physical boundaries and enlarge our scope of behaviour and actions. Images can do both: if we are uninformed about manipulation and illusionary techniques, then images can take away our imagination. On the other hand, images can also encourage us to create the kind of freedom and autonomy we can activate and embody with the help of our imagination. Therefore, the question is not whether we are unconsciously drowning in the constant swirl of images. Instead, it could be very simple: images are what we are able to make of them or what we perceive in them. Serge Tisseron ironically states “Images don’t exist, only the emotions they trigger/activate in us.” In other words if images by the very embodiment of behavioural desire constitute our identities (T. Tipton, personal communication, November 2014) it is the task of art education to decipher this psychological mechanism otherwise it operates unconsciously.

A semantic effort is necessary. Wherever our information society hasn’t provided us with the fundamental training of the conditions of perception, image interpretation must be an active part of learning. To know oneself is a first step for learning about one’s behaviour, actions, and subconscious desires. Just as Heinz von Foerster states, “knowing yourself is learning to act.” As an informed way of looking, Visual Culture Art Education offers training the literacy conditions of perception – in this case, concerning the *BodyTalk* of gender awareness.

¹² image available from http://www.thinkfashion.com/blogs/stylosity_style_scene/archive/2007/03/07/110045.aspx

¹³ <http://www.culturemobile.net/visions/serge-tisseron-culture-numerique>, December 15, 2014, 23:10 Serge Tisseron ne juge pas ces grandes et petites révolutions, pour la plupart encore en cours. Il mesure à quel point cette nouvelle élasticité du monde des images et des identités multiples qui en sont le pendant porte le meilleur comme le pire : «*Internet est une sorte d'accélérateur de particularités : ils vous permet de satisfaire votre curiosité, d'être plus ouvert et épanoui encore si vous l'êtes déjà au préalable, mais plus replié sur vous-même ou manipulateur si c'est là votre mode d'être...*» D'où l'importance d'une éducation au décryptage des images mais également à la compréhension des écrans, de leurs bienfaits comme de leurs dangers pour notre personnalité. D'où aussi la nécessité, aussi, non de dissoudre la culture du livre dans la nouvelle culture des écrans, mais d'en préserver l'essence et les enseignements à l'école.

Shaping the Imaginary: Conclusions

Contemporary popular imagery has influenced and shaped our way of seeing, our pictorial memory of the past, as well as our consciousness of the present and visions of our future as never before. This ubiquitous immersion in contemporary image-worlds demands answers from Art Education. Therefore, visual culture as a discipline is the challenge of the future of Art Education. 'Imitatio' or appropriation; 'paragone' or image comparison are some of the main tools for understanding the social codes of images; comparing images as well as strategies of image construction from art history to contemporary art to popular imagery – all these strategies help open new perspectives for today's image-worlds. A wider perspective offers a greater number of choices on the 'screen' of imagined ideas, actions, behaviour and desires.

Visual and Material Culture Literacy

Teaching the lexicon of visual and iconic design vocabulary and its languages provides a substantial and relevant basis for participating in the imaginal society of tomorrow. A social issue-oriented Art Education using the analytical tools from cultural studies and visual culture, offers a wide range of interdisciplinary approaches to developing an informed way of understanding and participating in the image-worlds of today's societies. Cultural studies can contribute a lot of useful concepts towards understanding this process. e.g. Global cultures seen as a playful and identity fostering process; diversity concepts as well as the term 'referential system' (Breidenbach/Zukrigl, 1998: 209) taken from cultural studies help to see human beings as the animal symbolicum in need of culture as the system to articulate itself as an individual, forming its own identity.

The 'pictorial turn' offers a key-position for a necessary turn-around in the public's perception of 'Art Education.' The developments in the public school sector of most European countries – Austria included - show a continuing marginalization of the subject - against many findings and studies in education science. If 'Art Education' and its contribution to general education is to resume its position as a fundamental discipline in our iconic society there needs to be a profound change in its self presentation. The image of 'Art Education' itself needs a lift-up.

Renaming 'Art Education' to "Art and Visual Culture" is a starting point towards a more contemporary understanding of the discipline. Including the term *Visual Culture* as a referential science for Art Education turns the image of art education still present in many people's minds finally to include popular imagery as the educational mining field meeting the future challenges of today's iconic society.

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5 | *Thinking Art for Generation Facebook* – *Where are the boys?*

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Abstract

At this time, one is being covered by a flood of images from all sources of media and young people today are frequently forced to negotiate the borders of their identity. The gap between what adolescents experience in regard to identities or role models in their 'real life' and those found in media experience, like computer games, TV shows and the net, is growing. The negotiation of identity takes place in real time and oscillates between cult and compulsion. The flocking behaviour of "generation Facebook" communicates flows of identity that change at high speed. In a period of self-exploration and the search for meaning, art can provide a firm foundation. The act of the artistic exploration of one's self should be regarded as the culture of empathy. In the last decades, after extensive research and self-depiction of women in society, art and politics – it is interesting to look at the field of gender research on men and boys and to transfer it to the field of art. It gives space to dive into a sensual dimension that references "my" very existence.

This article argues that one can borrow knowledge taken from the practices of social workers in the area of 'boundary' experiences and 'risk culture' research and use it in order to lead Art Education into the direction of an initiation ceremony. Participation here means a weaving together of the rites of daily media practice with a meditative occupation with one's own identity. This article envisions how to put youth cultural behaviour into the context of a possible perspective of today's art practice for young men. By decoding media role-modelling in male youth culture today, identity explorations through art become a tool in the process of self-awareness. The article focuses rather on young people aged 12- 18. On certain level, it addresses specifically to young men. The social background can be located in the middle class of western society.

Key words: critical media studies, male identity, gender decoding, self-awareness

Identity

While growing up – particularly in adolescence – searching for one's own identity, being covered by a flood of images from all media means being capable of co-creating one's personality. Who am I? What do I want to be? One has to discover one's own strengths, to find the characteristics of one's idols in one's own self. The puzzle pieces provided by experience form the self/Self (Figure 1).

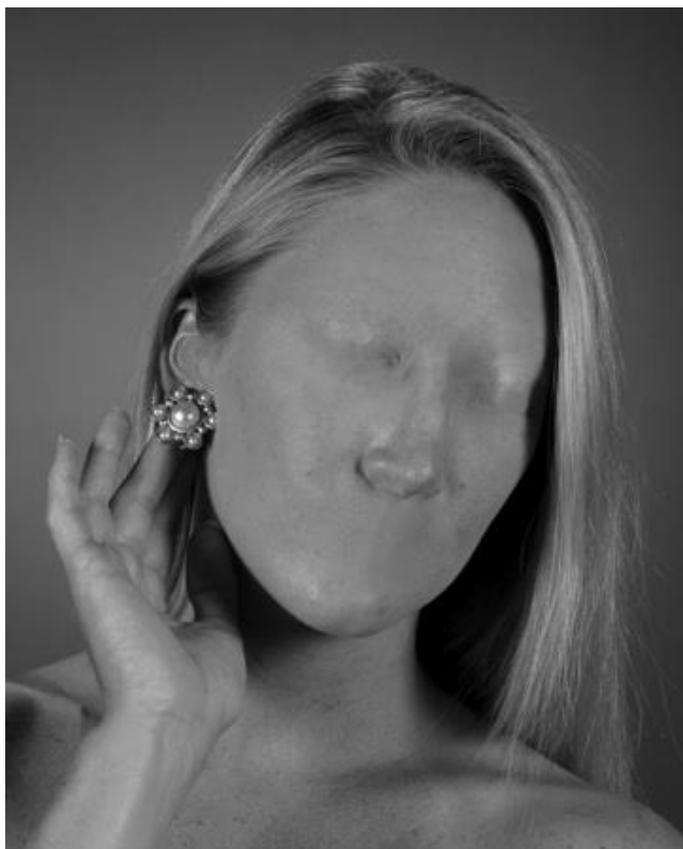


Fig. 1: aziz+cucher by chris (1994)
© aziz+cucher New York

Is there something like identity continuity?

Youth form their self-image through role models and idols, both in real life and virtually. The choices that the world of images supplies for use in creating a possible self-attribution, is quickly changeable. And the speed in which attributions can change and the range of what is provided – is determined like the cycles in a commercial environment and the market economy: in pop culture, in media identities, in the products on the supermarket shelves where these images are created and are constantly “styled”¹. It is enlightening to see that there is no ‘natural’ factor here. Identity continuity in a “natural way”, refers to development of ones skills and personal perception in the scale of time one needs; it does not obey the rule of usability of a market like the pop business. This product strategy forces a fast pace; and the styling of a product focuses on the sovereignty of branding –generally not on the quality or needs of people.

And it sometimes treats people like products. Young people often find themselves in the images of childhood branding” and unconsciously, their self-esteem becomes aligned with the status of brand items: The right outfit creates my image. Through this image I am a part of society. Consumption reflexively becomes a reflection of that in which one believes. That means that a human consolidation process (Nadel & Moscovich, 1997), which involves listening to one’s inner self and at the same time

¹ Styling = Through the compulsion to increase sales and the constant creation of new incentives for buying an alienation and a fashionable optionality of form occurs (after Günter Povaly). Using product design, the driving force – the operators which always stand behind the permanently changing new orientation of the “product”, are quickly submerged (Günter Povaly).

listening to the outside world and bringing these together in harmony – becomes increasingly difficult. The noise of the media and advertising is too loud. Identity continuity needs zones of peace and reflection. But the human consolidation process stands in conflict with the dynamics of advertising and social media today.

Speed and availability

Communication amongst young people – in particular young men – happens a great deal via machines and communication apps. As the talking to each other needs no physical presence and one can talk to many people at the same time, some qualities such as mimics and body languages are no longer part of this type of communication.

This means that personal communication moves towards the rules of advertising communication. Fast. Short. Spectacular. Communicating via machines insinuates also that when you are sharing personal information with somebody, you share virtually with the World Wide Web. It takes a lot of time to get deep into a relationship and by that to find out about yourself and your opposite person or friend. If that time is crushed by ubiquity, identity cannot unfold.

Why does a gap remain between the experienced identification models/role-models of a real world (family) and those of computer games, TV shows and the Internet? The flocking behaviour of “Generation Facebook” communicates identity streams, which change themselves at high speed. When viewed from outside, those people who follow the opinion leaders in Twitter or pant after “likes” on Facebook posts look like affirmation seekers.

When one speaks of online-cultures, one automatically starts talking about the results of web 2.0 – a social software-based environment, which permanently redefined text and image culture interaction. Image-based applications (WhatsApp, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Tumblr...) dominate here. But it is exactly this speed and the number of communication channels, which undermine the necessary slowness of face-to-face speaking. Speaking and listening, (one channel at a time) which are usually of great priority in normal conversation, are dismantled here. That is why my research shows evidence that increasingly, youth find it difficult to let other people finish what they are saying in real life situations – i.e. they assume they know how the thought will finish and jump ahead to the next ‘post’ or make a pause between two sentences. A person who is constantly sending has little time to receive. In others words, reception is experienced as a stimulus, but often not reacted upon. There are many such behaviours that can be documented that undermine communication as ‘shared meaning’.

In the online world, simultaneity is a requirement and sending is a sign of life. Whoever isn’t “on” is not perceived. And being “on” means posting, uploading and sharing at high speed. In order to be perceived, one must be available, accessible. It means being permanently active on-line in order to secure the attention of others. In the science-fiction novel, *Super Sad True Love Story*, Gary Shteyngart (2011) describes a character that works at a company which offers people immortality. People get points for their incessant online activity in a virtual ranking. As is common for products in various online portals (i.e. e-Bay), the characteristics of people are constantly being evaluated and made publically accessible. Before someone makes contact with another person, these rankings are evaluated in order to calculate a person’s personal validity, to see if it is worth the effort to make contact with this person. If the other person’s ranking is not good enough one looks with their “Äppärät” (comparable to a

hyper-smartphone) for people whose ranking is high, allowing for one's own ranking to improve if contact is successfully made with these people. The arbitration of one's own identity occurs in real time. It oscillates between the need to be able to be present everywhere via smartphone and the necessity for being permanently accessible.

While the storyline is imaginary, the novel demonstrates how the point of view on communication technology has changed. Some parents use the smartphone, something which children and youths see as essential, i.e. as a control instrument with which they can always know where their children are. For youth the main question, like the novel, is: *Which image or images of myself should I show on my platform?*

How much of myself should I show? What should I show?

How should I advertise myself in order to be as attractive as possible to my peer group? In a market of superficiality, the content level retreats behind the design and the surface and packaging step into the foreground. Vacation and party photos are the image indicators of “being there”². It is the direct descendant of lomography with the quality of tabloid press. Self-portrayal turns from artistic image aesthetics in the direction of the catwalk and advertising aesthetics (selfies). Here, there is only a beautiful, smooth, colourful and entertaining world. Smiling and being there is of the utmost importance and is the incitement for acting and being “liked”. Being fit, athletic, available and active, is an unspoken motto. Quiet creates disconcertment. When the basic noise level, which is produced by the information overflow, stops it becomes clear that the chance of having a large community, which such platforms can offer, has committed itself to the logic of the entertainment industry.

In this context, physicality is two-dimensional and moves from being a question of self-experience or self-perception to being a factor of publication or appearance. The cult status of the body emphasises *appearance* on the net. In actuality, the body is advertised also as ‘social’ capital and is placed in the showcase. The individual, with his/her imperfections has very little place here. The fine line between art and pornography quickly becomes blurred in advertising aesthetics, as well as in lifestyle shows (i.e. Germany's Next Top Model³). What is important here is similar to that which is important in Facebook, (i.e. likes, sharing...) *How many people followed me (today)?*

The aesthetics with which youth are familiar are strongly dependent on the socio-cultural environment. The exposure to characters and idols from popular culture, such as in games and mangas, TV series, and sports is a natural consequence. The access to ‘high culture’ is fundamentally more cumbersome. On this subject, Beate Großegger (2013)'s research on adolescent culture found that non-academic or culturally disinterested youths are most likely to be reached by adolescent culture programmes combining multimedia or also performance oriented competitions with low-threshold and unconventional ‘products’ from the established culture.

² Television show based on the novella and 1979 movie of the same name.

³ Seasonal reality television show since 2006, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2s_tmJ2es

Are there aesthetics without styling?

At the moment there are trends in the creative fields in youth culture which display a strong force. “Cosplay” or costume play (Takahashi, 1984)⁴ is one of these. When one looks closely at *Cosplay*, one sees that this trend involves the further development of already existing characters from mangas, animes, computer games and TV series through a performance done in which these characters are played out personally through costumes and public performance. It was at first a costume trend in Japan and the USA the 1990s. Through wearing the costumes and performing, these characters were to be imitated as exactly as possible and one received a prize for the best imitation. Young people from 15-25 years of age attend conventions in which these humorous competitive comparisons are played out. In Austria, *Cosplay* still appears to provide an opportunity for people from outside the scene with the exploratory creativity of the amateur to interact with the positive strengths of those competing (S. Samek, personal communication, September 20, 2014). Even if the origins are commercialised products (i.e. TV series, science fiction or mangas) the competitions are more importantly focused on, supporting a public forum for creative play.

In “fantum”, an enthusiastic identification fantasy, an interlacing of pop culture characters and creative practice takes place, and forecasts how its practice could look. The culture of Cosplaying weaves fanart, fantum and fanfiction together. As Zaremba (2012) writes:

Which view does a discipline like art education, which deals primarily with forms of creativity, have? ... With the key word ‘fanart’ one can find hundreds of thousands of voluntarily (!) produced designs and scenic works including detailed descriptions, comments and tips from like-minded individuals or personally produced tutorials in respective internet portals. (p.4-5)

The playful, at first mimetic contact poses the question: *Does imitating pre-fabricated design constitute a creative act?* Here, art education cannot just fall back on a direct art historical paradigm of self-reflection, but rather stays contemporary if it remains true to its responsibilities. That means that it positions itself in a space between product-orientation and self-reflection. The opportunities to conduct action-research on identity in the aesthetic field of art are quite good. What does this mean? It means giving the search for meaning a stronger basis through self-awareness in artistic work. “Adbusting”⁵, for example, uses brand logos or brand names and changes them into artistic and political comments on public media and consumer goods like t-shirts. The statement can vary from critical to ironic flattering.

In her works *Untitled A-D* (1975) and *Bus Riders* (1976), Cindy Sherman used the aesthetic of the B-movie film style from the 1940s and 50s, in order to strikingly place herself in the roles of the stars in the film. In her photo series she conceptually dealt with the subjects of identity, role models, physicality and sexuality (Bronfen, 2002).

⁴ Twenty years ago, the first fan costumers were seen in Japan at a small comic expo known as Comiket* or Comic Market. They were simply wearing t-shirts on which they’d drawn their favorite characters. The following year, 1983, the first actual costume was worn by someone dressed as Lum from Urusei Yatsura which was airing in Japan at the time. In 1984, Mr. Takahashi was sent to Worldcon in Los Angeles to cover the events for various magazines back in Japan and eventually coined the term ‘cosplay’ to describe it. See <http://millenniumcg.tripod.com/glitzglitter/1002articles.html>

⁵ Adbusting is a strategy taken from the Canadian non-profit, Adbusters Media Corporation (Adbusters), founded in 1989. See <https://www.adbusters.org/>



Fig.2: *Untitled (#216)*, (1989) Cindy Sherman
© MOMA⁶

In Sherman's *History Portraits* (1988-1990), she applied her central theme of costuming and role-play to art history. The makeup is often intentionally applied very coarsely; for naked breasts she tied on prostheses. She positioned herself in the cultural field of Appropriation Art, a field in which artists copy the works of other artists intentionally and with strategic deliberation, whereby the act of copying and the result itself should be understood as art.

In *Cosplay*, this can occur through the OCs (own characters). Here Sherman's 'OCs' are created and leave the level of recognition. Which aspects of a personality can I take from an artificial figure and give to myself? Artificial figures are fascinating because partial aspects of identity can, however, originate from the change of diverse identities. In the true sense of the term "Appropriation art" is when artists copy the works of other artists intentionally and with strategic deliberation, whereby the act of copying and the result itself should be understood as art, whereas in other cases this would be considered to be plagiarism or forgery. Strategies include borrowing, stealing, appropriation, inheriting, assimilating, being influence, being inspired, being dependent on something, being hunted, being possessed, citing, rewriting, adapting, resigning, revising, re-evaluating, varying, making new versions, interpretations, imitations, approximation, improvisation, supplementing, augmentation, prequels, pastiches, paraphrasing, parody, piracy, counterfeits, homages, mimicry, travesty, Shan-Zhai, echo, allusion intertextuality and karaoke⁷. Appropriation art not only allows for the freedom of creative production per se, but also for the act of creation as a part of self-classification. In other words, personality can be played with. The fascination is created, in part, with the materiality of the

⁶ Museum of Modern Art image, Retrieved from <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/cindysherman/gallery/7/>

⁷ For more information on Appropriation art, see <http://www.kettererkunst.de/lexikon/appropriation-art.ph> and <http://www.uni-koblenz-landau.de/landau/fb6/kunst/mitarbeiter/christoph-zuschlag/aufsatz-zuschlag-deja-vu.pdf>

production of the costume and its use. *What exercise in personality development can be provided by art?*

In the framework of literary event, “Slam Poetry” has created an open relationship with various forms of language. From storytelling, to experimental poetry forms, to beatboxing, everything is found in the positive climate of competition. *Slam Poetry* is not formed by profit as a monetary target objective, but rather by an idea of pleasure-oriented productivity and a friendly, democratic measure. *Slam Poetry* events are open to participants of all ages. There, with platforms for creative and collective personal development. The question to what extent we should call this art, could perhaps be answered posthumously by the cultural activity.

Where should art education take on its role as a mediator? Where are the structural deficiencies in art education?



Fig.3: Mrs. Doubtfire (1993) Still image⁸



Fig.4 Terminator 2 (1990) Still © Ken Yamamoto⁹

In the field of the deconstruction of identity in the media, Art Education could play a stronger part through role modelling. Image analysis in the sense of visual literacy brings the living environment of youth into the pedagogy of schools and onto the stage in the sense of an art laboratory. Here, there could be a transfer of knowledge from youth to educators and vice versa. Here is a place where there still can be the sensual contact to the body, to space and to materials. Art practice can be lived out only with the experience of the senses.

Role Models

The choice of images for one's current “I” correlates strongly with expectations which one projects in their circle of friends. This goes for boys as well as girls. At first the orientation within one's own peer group is important; in the following moment this position needs to be set apart from the peer group of the opposite sex: i.e. all I found out about what I am supposed to be as a boy/girl in my own peer group has been developed by constantly negotiating my position. This result will be re-evaluated when I act in the way my personality is and my peer group experiences are towards the opposite sex. This process starts from the birth being treated as a boy/girl and it goes on for a lifetime. The focus is on

⁸ <http://flickout.com/movies/102945-mrs-doubtfire>

⁹ http://motorcycletravelamerica.com/movie_motorcycles.php

the determination of one's own gender identity, to become confident in this position and to secure this position. Then one tests this in experiments with others. But the world of youth is also saturated with the political ideas of the society in which they live. Finding one's position as a girl/woman or a boy/man is oriented on gender role-based behaviour.

Gender is a technical term for "Geschlecht" in the German-speaking context. The current research points out that gender means the influence of social, cultural, biological, and political components in addition of being male or female that can change under historical influence. (Becker - Schmitt/ Knapp, 2000)¹⁰. In "gender mainstreaming", equality among the sexes means to consider the different situation of men and women about social and political intentions. Gender mainstreaming is based on the awareness that there is no gender-neutral reality to men or women. They can be affected in different ways of political and administrative decisions. The guiding principle of justice/equality among the sexes obliges politics to design political decisions in that way that they foster men and women to a factual equality. Since 2008, the EU has determined the obligation to "gender mainstreaming" in the Treaty of Lisbon to be used as a neutral point of view for looking at various needs and divergent lifestyle concepts (Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend auf einen Blick, 2014). In the context of art and education, the relationships to role and their gender-based attributes are content that the women's movements and feminism continue to deal with. The strategies used by art to sensitize the public to such topics started with performance artists who spoke out actionistically against the roles which the public and politics imposed upon them.

Valie Export, Birgit Jürgensen, Marina Abramovic, the Viennese Actionists (Brus, Nitsch, Frohner) to name a few, put their bodies into the centre of conflict. They revealed how the lack of self-determination over one's own body, as a well as the social point of view of submissiveness was a main concern. Normative methods of approach and ways of thinking concerning how a person makes an appearance with his/her body, or even how he/she should feel with this body, and how they form these bodies were revealed through decoding gender codes. (*Genital panic, Tapp und Tastkino, Wiener Spaziergänge*) Current trends emphasize the topic of transgender tendencies (Figures 5-6).



Fig. 5: Valie Export, *Tapp – und Tastkino*, {*Touch Cinema*} (1965) © Valie Export



Fig. 6: Günter Brus, *Aus dem Zyklus 'Wiener Spaziergang'* (1968) ©Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz¹¹

¹⁰ The gender identity is consequently seen as a social reality and not as a naturally given fact. This form of gender emerges and changes socially, through the interaction between individuals, groups and the society as a whole. Through gender mainstreaming an attempt is being made to institutionally and legally ensure the equality of males and females and to do this in a way which can be monitored and politically controlled through data collection.

¹¹ Retrieved from <http://www.kultur-online.net/?q=node/3075>

Examples of transgendered art are: Hans Scheirl, Conchita Wurst or the Neobaroque Society Event “Lifeball” in the centre of the artistic field of action. Socially hot topics are brought into the spotlight in the framework of artistic action allowing for increased social attention. Andrea Braidt (2014) writes about this in, *Tabu-Geschlecht-Kunst (Tabu & Gender & Art)*:

The ‘inverted’ world of carnival can be seen as a moment of infraction and of re-interpretation of upper/lower relationships in the entire social structure. In carnival a temporary freedom from the existing truths of ruling order is celebrated...The image of this infraction in the grotesque realism of carnival...it is a ‘hybrid creature, which grows disproportionately and exorbitantly up over itself...and depicts a figural and symbolic resource or parodical exaggeration and inversion’ (Stallybrass & White, 1986:9) For it is in the grotesque that the illusion of the autonomous, integrated self is trespassed, the ousted and fetishized are projected in exaggerated forms. (p. 1)

Art as an icebreaker for avant-garde presentations or is it media hype from marginal groups? Do such sub-culture movements play a role in the lives of youths and their identity development?

Youth culture involves using marginalisation as a mechanism of orientation for personal development. The introduction to deviance phenomena in the area of art can mean deliverance for some – and the assurance of belonging to society after all. In any case, it is certainly not mainstream. In contrast to this, the adolescent Cosplayer operates in his/her Fantum like a fan of a football team. *Or perhaps not?* Some conventions are even accused of being sexist, because the participating females “trivialize” themselves in their own role-play, or because they go back to their childhood by creating a fairytale-like fantasy world. They put their role a females under the “guise of a comic figure. The artistic strategies which are borrowed from mangas can be decoded in photographic stagings of *Cosplay* only with close inspection, such as in sekaiichi hatsukoi (“first kiss”), where the role behaviour of youths is put into pictures (S. Samek, personal communication, September 20, 2014).

Boys/Men - Art Research

The roots of gender research lie in decades of women’s politics and feminism. After comprehensive research on women and their role in society, art and politics many men have put themselves in the position of observers. Systemically everything changes when one part changes. At this point, it is interesting to look at the field of gender research on men and boys (socialisation of boys) and to transfer it to the field of art. It is crucial to stay not only in the field of science but to create a research approach in artistic practice. It is about reflective self-experience in the way art offers it, which is different than in science.

What do the developmental tendencies of male adolescents look like? How can art education accompany them in their development?

When one looks at socialization the point of departure for boys and male youth¹² is a rough and brittle field in which they must find their way and which they have to accept. This essentially has something to do with an unexpressed tension which adolescent males can feel. Like being introduced into an “identity”; it is the attempt to integrate one’s self as a man in a group made up exclusively of men. That means digging out positive fragments from this collection of characteristics and images and comparing them with one’s self and trying to find similarities between one’s own character and these characteristics. In this one finds the possibility to develop one’s own identity. Beyond the trivial myths (i.e. film...), whose influence should not be underestimated – one needs real, active men. These male role models should be there with youth in real life; i.e. they need to make themselves accessible in person. Their behaviour is written subconsciously in the inner handbook on how to be a man, and should be activated when necessary.

When children and youths look at the places in which they can develop self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, they find three main pillars: 1) the family and relatives; 2) their circle of friends; and 3) the school and the media – which today are generally the dominate fields of observation and action. I refer to these as the three pillars of socialization and self-development. The availability of positive action scenarios for children and youth, in particular those of young men, should be secured. They receive the least of this in today’s society. Who should do this and why? According to Andreas Landl, Head of the ZIMD Centre for Interaction, Media and Social Diversity in Vienna, boys refer to the following pattern of constructing their “self”: *Boys/young men base their identity more on their affiliation to a collective and define themselves less through personal relationships. Boys accept hierarchies and boundaries more easily when they are clearly formed.* (A. Landl, personal communication October 15, 2009)

This framework of clear boundaries accompanied by the simultaneous presence of male role models is present within the family and provides one of three pillars of identity development. Here there would be the longest continuity, unfettered by outward influences. School policies do not provide an adequate environment for the development of boys (i.e. there is no target group-oriented movement concept; there is a lack of male teachers; and teaching is based upon female actions and age-group development). The drawing of boundaries for behaviour in a group is softened or even non-existent and in any case not by any means suitable for boys. School policy doesn’t want any reflection on the topic of quotas (men) who are otherwise quite present on the management level. It is even less interested in actively promoting strong, masculine teachers, since this would entail financial and institutional efforts to be made. With this, the second pillar is weakened.

I think that the most stable pillar is the circle of friends; here the possible development horizon is lacking due to the age factor. *Which perspectives or life experience can be offered by peers of one’s own age?* The pillar of media (advertisement, film culture, computer games, TV shows, internet communities, etc.) is, in contrast, flourishing. It is most avidly accepted by male youth. Here a differentiated examination is necessary. The possibility of being able to design one’s own living environment in the area of communication creates autonomy. That’s good. The topic of media violence

¹² Boys are defined as young people of male gender under the age of 15. Male youths as young men between the ages of 12-25 years.

alludes to the fact that aggression increases when people are disembodied and deprived of experience with a real person as a counterpart, and its imagery and actions can be increased into something terrifying – with no relation to life reality. Boys decide with a mouse click over virtual life and can “kill” numberless people in computer games. They rule over empires, and can execute resources like food and traffic. In their real life, it happens more and more often, that they fail in a simple conflict to explain with words their inner needs and feelings. The strangeness to their own body shows in along a scale from fear of contact to aggressive behaviour. This is when art education comes into importance. Work with boys or young men is not art therapy. It should establish the perspective that aggression represents primal energy. On this topic Landl (2010) refers to the way in which aggression is a form of vitality, rather than its general use in a negative way as destructive. It is a topic in our society to depict certain kinds of men as aggressive and dangerous. It shows in the typical male “offender”, female victim topos. Landl (2010) points to aggression as a vital premium, like sexuality. But if young men have no meaningful perspective in their life and if they are not taught to convert and unfold this aggressive power, it can weaken their character. That is why in these cases, they cannot promote their own creative potential. Art education should be active on various sensual levels.



Fig. 7: Graffiti Donaukanal Vienna (2007) © René Stangl

On the one hand, as the accompaniment of physical exercises demonstrate, this primal energy can be redirected as a tool used by art teachers to transfer this energy into using visual media. Here, the aim is to gather the power/energy and to be able to express it: to bring it to a material level and mould it. There, power obtains a masculine softness, a self-involvement. On the other hand, it needs intelligent, critical media education that allows through image and film analysis, role-play, etc., for the illusion of trivial myths to be experienced in order to be deconstructed. Media can mostly not provide this without an artistic self-reflection and role-model mentor. Topics such as: dominance behaviour, assertiveness and excessive risk behaviour – characteristics which are most often attributed to males – should also be able to be experienced within an educational art- media laboratory.

Here, one can borrow ideas or approaches from social work practices in the field of borderline experiences or in research on risk culture in order to also understand how art education can go in the

direction of initiation competence. Gerald Koller, is a leading trainer in Austria that works in the field of prevention of addiction and risk behaviour. He is doing workshops with young people as well as with teachers or disseminators in youth work. In his work he dismantles why we want to take risk and how this risk is seen in context of society. The playful, but content-related contact with subjects that engage the interest of youth deep down inside (e.g. Rap), as well as that which moves young men must be found at the centre of a critical media education analysis. How actively one can deal with this topic can be seen in Koller's (2004) work entitled, *Risflecting*¹³:

The fearful conservation pedagogy...which offers only abstinence and pseudo-security... (so 'risk' – therefore insecurity – generally equated with 'danger'- is made equal to the threat of existence) – therefore a pedagogy which, as a reflex, fights against risk– this would surely not help us.

The first goal of every kind of risflective pedagogy should be to give people the chance to ride the wild animal. Because only those who are able to keep balance, between ecstasy and abstinence, security and danger, chaos and order... can survive the adventure which can be found in every substance and every risky experience which is waiting for us. Whoever thinks that taming can rise above rationality is wrong. In order to compete in the rodeo one needs a net consisting of good friends who can catch you, a feeling for one's own body. And sensitivity for the where to, how much and what for. (Chapter 2: para. 9-12)

Youth need a group constellation to learn masculine behavioural norms, because group discussions, as well as competition, should be seen as collaborative work. As Landl (2010: 12) asks: "Who stands where in the group? Who has to do something for the others? Who is allowed to take something out for themselves."

These questions are added with the following topics: proximity – distance or what does strength mean? This contradicts the logic of computer games in which youth remain dependent on their own abilities. Self-awareness must be given more room in the area of artistic practice. The artistic exploratory action – in particular through itself – can and should be seen as a culture of empathy. A re-orientation is to be strived for, one that deals with traditional masculine terms of identification and identity terms in a conciliatory way, while still strongly questioning the validity of these terms. In terms of art education participation, one should be able to offer the medial rites of daily life along with a meditative activity with one's own identity.



Fig. 8: Risflecting Ashoka –Workshop Setting (2004) © Gerald Koller

¹³Risflective © (Protected term) is a research approach concerning the personal intoxication and risk management. In the research approach according to Gerald Koller the brain research found out that just the learning brain builds synapsis when joyful actions take place. <http://www.risflecting.at/konzept#chapter-4>

Conclusion

A starting point to address the question of mediation would be for Art Education to place more emphasis on the field of a critical media education. If Art Education in schools is meant to establish itself more solidly in the fields of media education and cross media work, legislative authorities and districts must actively want this to happen. If the present situation continues to be ignored, the fascinating offers in this creative field could soon be covered by private institutes. They offer courses in image postproduction and video editing as well as web site design. Public schools do not have such offers in the curriculum except for schools with art subject at school. But that also means that the current situation, as it is legally organised in a new school-leaving examination, gives knowledge transfer in the higher grades priority over practical artistic practice. Here, there is a need of a reform to the reform. In addition to ensuring adequate facilities (in the field of art education), not just time-limited access to IT rooms, there should be provided an art department with its own, unlimited access to these facilities. Both of these areas need to be established: a strong, subject-oriented advanced training opportunity which is integrated into the teaching schedule of students and art educators would provide for a liberal image-mode of operation in art classrooms.

Supporting my research findings,¹⁴ I continue to investigate how the artist uses media to enhance their body functions, especially the practice of young people in secondary school and their approach to using media in daily life. In this field of media use of juveniles, I combining both the approach of art education and the use of media technology, puts the emphasis on youth culture and the awareness of today's popular and media culture imagery inside of art practices for young people. My research findings support the pedagogical value placing creative art practice inside of the investigation of one's personality and the formation/consolidation of identity awareness. My ambition is to deepen research in this field and to be able to do scientific field studies, taking part in networking and deepening my efforts within an academic framework.

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¹⁴ My diploma thesis reported on research about body extensions of media artists during the decade the 1990's till 1995.

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6

One image, one Virgin and one believer – proximity and change in the cult of Our Lady of Health

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Abstract

Set in the religious landscape of the cult of the Virgin Mary as “Lady of Health” in Portugal, this anthropological research intends to discuss the nature of proximity between Our Lady of Health and believers in this entity, as well the links between them to the materialization of this invocation of the Virgin. If we placed ourselves within the Portuguese religious space, in addition to several female saints, nearly 1000 invocations of the Virgin Mary can be found. Although it does not show the centrality of Lady of Fatima, it can be said that the cult of the *Lady of Health* is certainly the largest in the country, lying scattered over more than three hundred places, being present in other Mediterranean countries such as Spain, France and Italy, or on the other side of the Atlantic, in Latin America, in countries like Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Mexico.

Our Lady of Health is part of a dense female religious landscape that goes back to the Paleolithic era, and is noticed in the cult of the Great Goddess through small statuettes, the Venus from the Aurignacian culture period (Leroi-Gourhan, 1987), or throughout the cult of the Mother Goddess, both of whom have been dominant at least until the Neolithic period (Lévêque, 1996). This paper argues that in this cult, a double movement is present: *humanization* of the Lady of Health and *sanctification* of believers.

Keywords: Cult of the Virgin, proximity, invocation, icon, anthropological research

Introduction

Set in the religious landscape of the cult of the “Lady of Health” in Portugal, this anthropological research intends to discuss the nature between Our Lady of Health and believers in this entity, and the link between them to the materialization of this invocation of the Virgin. This paper will argue that in this cult, a double movement is present: humanization of Our Lady of Health and sanctification of believers (Pereira, 2014-a)

Our Lady of Health is part of a dense female religious landscape that goes back to the Paleolithic era, and is noticed in the cult of the Great Goddess through small statuettes, the Venus from the Aurignacian culture period (Leroi-Gourhan, 1987), or throughout the cult of the Mother Goddess, both of whom have been dominant at least until the Neolithic period (Lévêque, 1996). Since then, although the cult of female entities may have lost some prominence, it never disappeared (Przyluski, 1950; James, 1960; Neumann, 1963; Loraux, 1990; James, 1994; Markale, 1997), leading some to say that

the Mother Goddess was indeed worshiped at all times and everywhere – with the exception of our modern society (Verez, 1995). However, if we specifically look to the catholic religious landscape, we can see that some of the main places of worship are Marian shrines, so with the invocation of a female entity, for example, we can find Guadalupe (Wolf, 1958), Czestochowa (Niedzwiedz, 2010), and Lourdes (Harris, 1999). If we placed ourselves within the Portuguese religious space, in addition to several female saints, we found nearly 1000 invocations of the Virgin Mary, with unavoidable emphasis to the Lady of Fatima (Pereira, 2003, 2005).

Although it does not show the centrality of Lady of Fatima, it can be said that the cult of the *Lady of Health* is certainly the largest in the country, lying scattered over more than three hundred places, being present in other Mediterranean countries such as Spain, France and Italy, or on the other side of the Atlantic, in Latin America, in countries like Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Mexico.

The first reference to an image of the *Lady of Health* dates from the twelfth century, in Porto (Santa Maria, 1716); but it was from Lisbon (Pimentel, 1899; Rodrigues, 1993; Gil, 2003) in the sixteenth century that the cult of the *Lady of Health* expanded to other regions of Portugal (Vasconcelos, 1996 and 1998). The diversity of images of the *Lady of Health* is great, not only by the large number of places of worship, but also because in some places there is more than one image of the *Lady of Health*, as well as the iconographic diversity of images relating to this invocation of the Virgin.

The materialization of the *Lady of Health* appears in images which favors the physical proximity of believers with the invocation of the Virgin (Turner, 1978; Leach, 1992). The proximity between believers and the *Lady of Health* can be seen through the *humanization of images* of the *Lady of Health* (Pereira, 2014-b), starting by the invocation of the movement of her hands, by emphasizing the affective dimension of her mouth, as well as the expressiveness and beauty assigned to images, particularly on feast days, and translated into statements like, *she is very beautiful, the Lady of Health*.

Despite images depicting *natural* beauty, there are also diverse representations of the Lady of Health including *dressed up images*, sometimes *lonely images of the Virgin*, sometimes *motherly images of the Virgin*. The Virgin recurrently appears in a pink dress and in a blue mantle, her child is dressed in white colours, beige or blue, but he also appears naked. In this case, a blanket, a diaper or a ribbon often breaks his nakedness.

This beauty is not only contemplated but is also touched (Meslin, 1988; Sanchis, 1992). Believers, especially mothers, and children encouraged by the former, try to touch the image of the *Lady of Health* with their hands. There are women who pick up the image to their lap and others that kiss her. In fact, the cult of the *Lady of Health* is predominantly female, in particular developed by mothers. After motherhood, believers share this condition with the Virgin as well as the suffering due to the suffering of their children (Cutileiro, 1977; Pina-Cabral, 1989; Kitinger, 1996; Sobral, 1996; Segalen, 2001).

In summary, in this cult we can observe two movements. On one hand, the humanization of the Lady of Health through its embodiment in an image that displays human elements like natural hair, clothes, earrings and necklaces and which is lauded for its beauty and expressiveness. In addition, believers seek for physical proximity with the image of the Lady of Health by touching her, hugging her, kissing her, catching her in their arms, and crying with her. This physical proximity is an expression of

emotional closeness and the confluence between both transforms an image into something more than an image.

On the other hand, there is the movement towards the sanctification of believers. Believers consider that the motherhood assigned to the Lady of Health is an ideal to be achieved. The mother-believer share with the Lady of Health her own motherhood experience and the suffering for her children, and is willing to sacrifice herself for the wellbeing of them, like a good mother should. Believers decentralize the lives of themselves to live for the family, even considering that a mother in a house is a Lady of Health.

In this double movement one can notice a figuratively intermediate point, illustrated by the cult of the Lady of Health in Bustelo (Penafiel). On her feast day, the queue to touch the image of the Lady is long. Usually women, mothers and children, who facing the inaccessibility of the image – have to be carried by their mothers. This gesture, made with functional naturalness of belief, allows the children to touch the image, the mothers believing that this contact will protect them from the vast and unknown dangers of diseases. Figuratively, this belief translates into the embodiment of a mimetic image of the Lady of Health, which also has her child on the lap.

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7 | *The story of “Susanna and the Elders” revisited*

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Abstract

On the bases of representations of the biblical theme, *Susanne and the Elders*, this article analyses the objectification of women and the social construction of myths around violence against women. It also discussed how images participate both in construction of social representations of women and gender identity. Using a critical visual analysis articulated with a socio-anthropological feminist approach, this paper deconstructs ways of seeing how women have been constructed as objects of voyeurism and on occasion, as seductive, provocative and wishing to be gazed at, harassed, and even violated.

Key words: art; women; power; symbolic gender violence.

Introduction

The theme for this communication has its origins in a conversation about art and gender issues in the context of an ongoing research about art and gender symbolic violence against women. The theme “Susanna and the Elders” was suggested following a discussion on image analysis. This same topic was also chosen by Berger (1972) to deconstruct some ways of seeing.

After realizing that many people were unaware of this topic, we decided to unveil this matter by first telling the story in the Holy Bible - Old Testament, book Daniel, in chapter 13:

There was a man in Babylon, called Joakim: and he took a wife, whose name was Susanna. Joakim was a great rich man and had a fair garden joining unto his house. Meanwhile were appointed two of the ancients of the people to be judges.

Susana went into her husband’s garden to walk. And the two elders saw her going in every day, and walking; so that their lust was inflamed toward her. And they pushed this out of their minds, and turned away their eyes, that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgements. And albeit they both were wounded with love of her, yet durst not one show another his grief. And the one said to the other: "Let us now go home: for it is dinner time." So when they were gone out, they parted the one from the other, and turning back again they came to the same place; and after that they had asked one another the cause, they acknowledged their lust: then appointed they a time both together, when they might find her alone.

And it fell out, as they watched a fit time, she went in as before with two maids only, and she was desirous to wash herself in the garden: for it was hot. And there was nobody there save the two elders, that had hid themselves, and watched her.

Now when the maids were gone forth, the two elders rose up, and ran unto her, saying: "Behold, the garden doors are shut, that no man can see us, and we are in love with her; therefore consent unto us, and lie with us. If thou wilt not, we will bear witness against her, that a young man was with her: and therefore she did send away the maids from her."

Then Susanna sighed and said: "I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing it is death unto me: and if I do not do it, I cannot escape your hands. It is better for me to fall into your hands, and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." With that Susanna cried with a loud voice: and the two elders cried out against her. So when the servants of the house heard the cry in the garden, they rushed in at a privy door, to see what was done unto her. But when the elders had declared their matter, they were greatly ashamed: for there was never such a report made of Susanna.

And it came to pass the next day, when the people were assembled to her husband Joakim, the two elders came also full of mischievous imagination against Susanna to put her to death.

And the elders said: "As we walked in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, and shut the garden doors, and sent the maids away. Then a young man, who there was hid, came to her and lay with her."

Then the assembly believed them, as those that were the elders and judges of the people; so they condemned her to death. Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said: "O everlasting God, that knowest the secrets, and knowest all things before they be." And the Lord heard her voice. Therefore when she was led to be put to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a youth, whose name was Daniel: who cried with a loud voice: "Are you such fools, that without examination or knowledge of the truth you have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return again to the place of judgement: for they have borne false witness against her." Wherefore all the people turned again in haste, and the elders said him: "Come and show it us, seeing God had given you the honour of an elder."

Then said Daniel to them: "Put these two aside far away each other, and I will examine them." So when they were put asunder one from another, he called one of them, and said to him: "Under what tree did you see them copulating together?" Who answered: "Under a mastic tree."

So he put him aside, and commanded to bring the other, and said to him: "Under what tree did you see them copulating together?" Who answered: "Under an holm tree."

And they rose against the two elders, for Daniel had convicted them of false witness by their own mouth: and according to the law of Moses they did to them in such sort as they maliciously intended to do to their neighbour: and they put them to death. Thus was innocent blood saved the same day.

Many versions of this theme have been created by European artists over the years. We present 6 of the 50 representations we gathered¹:

¹ See locations and information at <http://www.mheu.org/en/bathing/exhibition-works.htm>;

<https://artsy.net/artwork/annibale-carracci-susanna-and-the-elders>;

http://www.wga.hu/html_m/b/badalocc/susanna.html; and <http://www.bmcphotoart.com/susanna-and-the-elders/>



Fig. 1: Jean Manscel, Fleur des histoires, Susanna and the Elders (séc.XV)
© Bibliothèque Nationale de France



Fig.2: Tintoretto, Susanna at her bath (1555) © ARTOTHEK



Fig.3: Annibale Carracci , Susanna and the Elders (1590)
© National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 4: Sisto Badalochio, Susanna and the Elders (1609)
© Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota



Fig.5: Bem Morales Correa, *Susanna and the Elders* (2013)
© Bem Morales Correa



Fig. 6: Pablo Picasso, *Susanna and the Elders* (1955)
© Museo Picasso Málaga

The biblical story of *Susanna and the Elders* represents the moment when the two elders go to Joakim's garden to seduce his wife Susanna. Few artistic themes have offered the opportunity for legitimized voyeurism like this one. Besides voyeurism we can notice here the objectification of women, as well as perpetuation of patriarchal violence. This theme has been approached by artists as a means of exhibiting the female nude body, and in many cases the erotic appeal of nudity is highlighted, "by the

presence of two lecherous old men whose inclusion is not only iconographically justified but also pornographically effective” (Garrard, 1982: 150). This is a theme of untamed male ego that shows how female chastity can become in painting a celebration of sexual opportunity or as Mary Garrard described Rubens’s version, a “gallant enterprise mounted by two bold adventurers” (Garrard, 1982: 150).

The voyeurism, lust and abuse of power by the old judges, turned this episode into one of the most popular themes of the Old Testament, although it belongs to a book that some consider apocryphal. Although not related to faith and ‘good habits’, the European male public has always enjoyed watching the naked female body and we find it fewer times in the Bible than in the Greek-roman mythology. Probably there are fewer opportunities of exhibiting male naked bodies in the Bible.

Painting and gender identity

Gender identity plays a central role in the way a person experiences and conceives the world Butler (1990). In every society children learn cultural stereotypes related to female and male roles and characteristics. The word gender is used in this text to refer to the feminine or masculine, once the word. By *identity* we mean to say the social attribution of a male or female gender or their combination. In each society, behaviours and attitudes of genders are defined by the culture.

As people, we construct our identity during our lifetime, within which *context* is very important. Along with ethnicity and social class, gender is one of the most significant elements of analysis to integrate the process of identity construction, knowing that those constructions have configured the collective imagination of different generations throughout western European history. This imaginary idea is made up of asymmetric and hierarchical rules when it comes to attributing certain characteristics to women, men and their genders. The most important thing is not the differences, but the way they are hierarchically classified, meaning that what is associated with the male world is considered superior and socially more desirable than the one traditionally attributed to women (Cruz, 2010).

Language and culture construct identity and the body is partially their product (Bordo, 1993; Weitz, 2001). Tradition shows us our place in the world: the family, the social status, legal rights, official culture and images. The role of images is unquestionable, be they artistic or those which appear in the mass media. They work as transmitters of the ways of seeing the world, from the point of view of several societies, providing us with an imaginary of each time, desires and social models (Hall, 1997). The social imaginary involves the dialectic between the genders and the subsequent cultural construction. If we study the history of western painting, we can see the way many societies promoted different models of identity and gender roles (Parker & Pollock, 1981). Some examples of paintings can help us to understand the prejudice against women.

First of all, we can say that the western painting denied women the place of subjects in such a way that they are represented as objects based on a dominantly male perspective. It is through artistic representations and the production of senses based on those representations that power is exercised; and that power influences our way of seeing and understanding gender issues and even sexuality. In western history, nude female art is a recurrent theme, with paintings and sculptures constructing a male point of women.

Thus, artists used female naked bodies to represent Beauty, Love or Truth through a *male gaze* (Rose Mulvey, 1975). In the case of *The Toilette of Venus*, by Velázquez, for example, the female body offers itself to the spectator for contemplation, hiding the woman's face, reducing her to corporality (Berger, 1972). In many cultures the reflection of a person's face in a mirror was used to symbolise their soul, so that in this painting the vague face that we see in the mirror reinforces the idea of the female body transformed into an object.

When the painting tradition became laic², other themes offered the opportunity of painting the nude. Nevertheless, in all the paintings we reviewed, the awareness of being watched by the spectator is implicit. The majority of the artistic pieces of the past were ordered by men, be they religious authorities, kings or aristocrats and rich bourgeoisie. In the same way, the majority of the artistic works of the past – mainly until the 20th century, were conceived of and made by men. This fact contributed decisively to the visual arts' exclusive representation of the male point of view for men's desire (Robinson, 1995). In fact, the museums and art galleries of the past are full of female nudes and we almost cannot find nude males. Actually, they exist, although in a small number: during Ancient Greece and the Renaissance.

The most significant aspect of the most famous images in western art history assumes a male spectator. These images are intended for an average spectator, so the look of the women represented in the paintings addresses to him and their bodies are exposed to his delight. For the art education teacher, it is important to challenge this way of seeing art history that naturalizes men as leaders of artistic movements and women are represented more frequently as a theme, rather than as artists. It is this thesis that prevails in the most popular textbooks, including those intended for children.

“Susanna and the Elders” and symbolic violence against women

Returning to our story about *Susanna and the Elders*, accurately called ‘the innocence of Susanna’ which has a happy ending for Susanna; but probably the usual end in the ancient world would be her death. Even today, the number of women murdered by intimate and ex-intimate partners because of ‘jealousy’ is still very high (Wilson and Daly, 1998; Magalhães, 2010). It is an instance of the *modus operandi* in violence against women in patriarchal society (Lavolette and Barney, 2000). Susanna was a victim of the violence by the elders. Then she is threatened to accept their lustful desires. When she said *no*, both elders together (and here we can talk about male fraternity, but also about criminal association), accuse her of bad, immoral behaviour. Because they were judges, Susanna's husband believed them, and not his wife. So she was condemned to death. These offenders knew they had all the power and had nothing to lose. In the same way, nowadays, the offenders more commonly happen to be men with power — economic, social and intellectual power — in addition to patriarchal power. This makes it very difficult to believe the victims (Dobash et al, 2000).

As this story shows, women victims of gender violence belong to every social class like the offenders (Pais, 2010). Although there are many changes happening in society, i.e. legislation, social policies, shelters — there is still much to do. Every woman, ‘chaste’ or not could be believed when she

² Referring to laïcité, that is the separation between the State and the Church.

denounces her offender, even if he is a medical doctor, an academic, a judge or an influential politician. The intervention by Daniel can be read as a positive sign that it is possible to unveil, to denounce and to condemn women's offenders and that is possible to change patriarchal and prepotent judgement which relies on the word of people with power.

It is no by chance that the *saviour* in this story is a man, who was also the carrier of the "word of the lord". If it had been a woman, even an enlightened one, she would not have been believed and Susanna would have been killed. As many feminist authors point out, gender violence against women has its roots in ancient messages of women's subordination, and this theme recurrently used in painting, shows the continuous reproduction of patriarchal values and the male gaze about the world and the life over time.

Another myth about gender violence against women is that in the end, they like being battered. The same can be seen also in discussion about rape, i.e. the woman provokes the violence. Finally, she liked it, because if not, she would not consent and would fight against it (Magalhães, 2010). In the representation of Susanna in paintings, we can observe, in most cases, how the consent is represented, as she appears to be delighted by the harassment of the elders, reinforcing this myth. The feminine 'look' in this theme appears different — we can see the example of the painting suffering the elders' attack. The opposite can be seen in Alessandro Allori painting (Figure 8), where Susanna is delighted by the elders' approach.



Fig. 7: Artemisia Gentileschi, *Susanna and the Elders* (1610)
© Schönborn Collection, Schloss Weissenstein in Pommersfelden



Fig.8: Alessandro Allori, *Susanna and the Elders* (1535- 1607) © Musée_Magnin, Dijon

When we speak about gender violence, from men to women, it does not mean considering all men in a homogeneous group. It is not only in the example of Daniel, but also in gender studies or feminist studies and in the social intervention, that there is the acknowledgement of different masculinities (Connel, 2005).

As a sign of social change, we would like to finish our paper with a different view of the old theme of *Susanna and the Elders* by Andrew Folan (Figure 9). Here, Susanna is not the object but the subject.



Fig. 9: Andrew Folan, Fotografia, 2001

Folan (2007) writes that the reasons for having selected this topic is to introduce a contemporary woman in the role of Susanna, who has been (re)presented as a passive subject for centuries. In turn, he reverses the 'male gaze', to be either the subject of the looking or the subject of the gaze. The author states his ongoing work with this theme of art history because of its contemporary relevance.

Conclusion

As noted by Anna Lisa Tota (2000: 177),

[The] feminist deconstructionism re-acquired, in many and various ways, a culture and art thought of in a male manner. Deconstructed those canons that traditionally excluded all women, or at least the majority of them, transforming artists' talent, poets, writers and scientists into of inspirational mute muses.

Fine art, as put forward by Teresa De Lauretis (1987), as well as with other media is a gendered technology since art works as the place where we structure our female and male identities. The art reveals itself sexualized on the poetics of which it is made, managed and consumed (De Lauretis 1987; see also Tota 2000).

In our research, *Susanna and the Elders* is a recurrent theme in European mainstream painting, representing the women in an objectified and alienated way. In almost all of the 43 paintings of this theme we have gathered, Susanna appears delighted by the harassment of the elders. With some exception like Artemisia Gentileschi (17th century) (Figure 9), almost all of the paintings perpetuate a culture of tolerating violence against women, reproducing the myth that they (in the end) like to be

harassed. Another finding is that while the women have been subjected to the 'male gaze' and although not easily identified, sometimes it can be more violent.

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8

Transgressions and narratives – a discussion around a perspective of the post-modern body or the post-human body. The importance of the curator

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Abstract

Contemporaneity gives us the legacy of a discussion around a perspective of the post-modern body or the post-human body. The body is one of the last frontiers to cross or to decode. This essay is about curating an exhibition, *Body and Bodies, transgressions and narratives (Corpo e Corpos, transgressões e narrativas)*, at the M | i | mo, - Museum of the Moving Image, in Leiria, Portugal from the 18th of May until the 29th of June 2013. Held from a feminist perspective of the body, this exhibition selected works by artists Andrea Inocêncio, Carla Cruz, Isabel Lima, Maria João Franco, Nelson Dias, Alexandre Baptista Helena Beatriz, Jochen Dietrich and Filipe Curado – which appeal to the definition of a human being whose identity is always a work-in-progress and interconnected to a cultural context. The artistic experiences of guest artists in interaction with the museum collection not only reflect a conceptual and formal investigation, but also narrate a new way that opens itself to the exploration – of the bodily dimension and its performance; a construction that sometimes is ambiguous and codified in its appearance, due to several social discourses.

Keywords: gender, curatorship, mediation

Introduction

The body is a cultural agent. It is a powerful and symbolic form; a surface where the central norms, the hierarchies and even the cultural metaphysical commitments are engraved and reinforced that way through the concrete body language (Bordo, 1988: 626-629). Contemporaneity leaves us a discussion about a perspective of the post-modern body or the post-human body. The body is one of the last frontiers to cross or to decode. The anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu (1990: 52-65) and the philosopher Michel Foucault (1975: 120-140) among others, reference that the body is a practical and direct place of social control. The collective exhibition of contemporary art, *Body and Bodies, transgressions and narratives (Corpo e Corpos, transgressões e narrativas)*, appeals to the definition of a human being where identity is always in progress and interconnected to a cultural context. Sometimes bodies reflect a plural dissonance, an unbalancing balance; sometimes, they are androgynous bodies, enthusiastic on the gestures, inspirers of sexual suggestions, but aesthetically positive (Alexandre Baptista's work). We may approach sexuality under an immensity of perspectives, such as the restlessness of feelings, actions and meanings looking overwhelmingly for desire (Maria João Franco, Filipe Curado and Nelson Dias' works).

The exhibition revealed five media: painting, sculpture, photography, dance, and video. Five experiences of guest artists and artists – whose work incorporates the museum collection – reflecting a conceptual and formal research; but also narrating a new way for the exploration of the bodily dimension and its performance (Helena Beatriz/Annarella School of Dance; Jochen Dietrich, Maria João

Franco, and Nelson Dias' works). It is sometimes an ambiguous and codified construction as the varied social discourses are concerned (Alexandre Baptista and Filipe Curado's works). The woman's role sometimes as the heroine – sometimes as the anonymous and the omitted character – is analyzed and reflected as an issue for physical and psychological violence. Some others gender themes are also evident in Andrea Inocência (Figure 1)¹, Isabel Lima and Carla Cruz's works, where the symbolic and clearly Portuguese references are present as an integral part of our contemporary society's urgent challenges. Sometimes, the discourse is also an allegoric construction – referring to a technological intervention over the human body where it stimulates a rhetoric that measures the level of privacy invasion and questions the limits of the public and private sphere, allowing the space to be a web of action plans where each one works with simplicity and meaningfulness (Paulo Henrique and Robert Flynt's work).



Fig. 1: Andrea Inocência, *The adventures of the super artist*
Vídeo and Photo

© Photo: Caesar Baetulo 2009 © M|i|mo Museum

M|i|mo Museum

M|i|mo was developed in 1996 in Leiria, Portugal, by the time of the celebrations commemorating 100 years of cinema in Portugal. The Museum was established after the city hall meeting in Leiria on the 22nd of January 1997, and by that time José Lúcio da Silva's Theater was suitable². The Museum has toys, maquettes and historical optical instruments; its archive has an illustrative asset of the technological, historical and documentary evolution concerning photography, cinema and pre-cinema, owning nearly 10.000 photographic images, 500 film specimens and almost 500 magic lantern glasses. Now-a-days, M|i|mo is installed inside the ancient medieval wall near St. Peter's Church in Leiria, in a three-story building that once had been the Royal Palace stables, Miter's cellar and the 4th Artillery Regiment.

¹ <http://genovevaoliveira.wordpress.com/2013/05/04/body-and-bodies-transgressions-and-narratives-corpo-e-corpos-transgressoes-e-narrativas-may-18th-mimo-museum-leiria-portugal-2/>

² <http://mimo.cm-leiria.pt/secao/historia-museu-42>

The museum asset integrating the exhibition *Body and Bodies*

A new reading on the M|i|mo Museum's asset was given by the exhibition, *Body and Bodies, transgressions and narratives*, articulating pieces such as a zoetrope, photographs, video, pasteboard placards from the 30s until the 80s, and stereoscopic images with the invited artists' works, giving the possibility to new interpretations. The historical narratives of male and female body images begins with a stereoscopic device (France, 1880) showing the image of a female body wearing a bodice. On another device, from the 20s of the 20th century, a stereoscopic naked female image can be seen. A zoetrope from 1867 shows an image of a couple, as well as two others of a dancing boy and two black men swinging on a trunk. Including these images and objects from the museum asset in the exhibition entrained the dialogue with the contemporary masterpieces; as organizing the space like the way it was done, gives the possibility to have not only a chronological narrative, but also to have various interpretations crossing each other on a timeline. According to Deleuze (1992: 3-7), the purpose of keeping the masterpiece unity must be destroyed in order for the other readings emanating from the image itself to be intensified. The set up in connection with form, spectator, and the inter-image dialogue, are essential to these new readings. The stereoscopic device appeals to the idea of voyeurs watching a female body at the end of the 19th century. About this theme, Cristiane Demarchi (2010: 143) states: "The pleasure to see an image activates a kind of looking differently to each culture and towards each subject. But such a potential desire invades the erotic, the transgression and the impulsive field and reaches the wish of watching the forbidden in all of us."

The pasteboard placards taking part in the exhibition, represent the final phase of film's production circuit and are made by distributors to promote and to divulge the films. In this context, the placards are films – actors and actresses visual memory, from a distant time until today. The pasteboard placards are a former means of divulgation whose support is the pasteboard, a resistant material, where the movies' promotional photographs were adhered and had the same function as that of movie posters³. We chose pasteboards placards from the 30th–50th years of the Portuguese cinema because they transmit an idea of the body as an image of a society marked by a political dictatorial system that defended, "God, Fatherland and Family" ideals; when the Portuguese woman had an almost invisible presence in societal participation and in political power, taking over the wife's and the mother's duties, being a time when women's numbers were reduced from educational access and in participation in several social fields. These remind us of some Portuguese actors and actresses who characterized a Portuguese cinema generation such as Mirita Casimiro, António Silva Costinha, Hermínia Silva, and Alves da Costa, among others. One of the pasteboards placards was selected because it had a PIDE (Portuguese Political Police during the Estado Novo) stamp, meaning that this film had been approved and had passed through censure and was allowed to be shown to the Portuguese public.

Other pasteboard placards were selected from the periods of the (19)60s-80s, broaching different body perspectives, namely the ones from the films for the over eighteen. Some of them didn't exhibit any photographs, others did; but they had frankly explicit messages such as, "sex on a jet plane" or "sex at the breakfast" (Figure 2). The pasteboard placards, though they place on a historical time, as the female and male body image is concerned, tell us other tales regarding the graphic design and the materials which marked not only an age of the Portuguese social and political history but also movies history.

³ See <http://mimo.cm-leiria.pt>



Fig. 2: Pasteboard placards “Sex at the breakfast” - 1960s-80s
Museum Collection

Contemporary artists and their works: The body on the collective imaginary⁴

We want to emphasize one of the first participations, Jochen Dietrich, a German artist who graduated in plastic Arts/Art education. In Leiria, he participated in the exhibition at m|i|mo with a group of works called, *All of them were beautiful...* belonging to the Museum asset (Figure 3)⁵. It is the title of a group of reduced-size paintings, made between 1994 and 1995. They paintings were acrylic on xerography of poster board photographs. These photos were found on some German cigarettes marks, between the 20th and the 30th year of cinema and they were hand-painted with transparent albumin colors. They represent movie stars from that time, many of them from the UFA – a big German pre-war cinema company, that the artist found at an antique fair. The frames, which are an integral part of each work are also photocopies. The principle aim is to achieve a completely “talmi” look – faked, cheap, worn, pretended. But the initial painting, as a result of a manual intervention, or even a hand-made one, seems industrial and careless. It is mingled with a new layer of paint, careless as the first one. The resulting images are no longer idolatry objects, before worshiping unknown and/or forgotten people: the stars that shine no more. The erotic and the mythic are personified on movie stars feeding the collective imaginary. Quoting Barthes (2004: 165) the construction of the desirable myth is a transformation from the private body to the public image, made by the erotic look. Le Breton (2006) recognized in the 60s that the body sociology appears from a phase of ruptures and crisis of institutions. So, the body as an “institution” loses its former legitimacies and opens itself to new perspectives that in turn modify social behavior.

⁴ The active form of the Portuguese phrase, ‘collective imaginary’ has been retained here over the common English translation, ‘collective imagination’.

⁵ <http://genovevaoliveira.wordpress.com/2013/05/>



Fig. 3: Jochen Dietrich, “All of them were beautiful”, 1995
Acrylic on xerography of poster board photographs
© M|i|mo Museum

The erotic body

Three artists whose works represent the erotic body were chosen. Alexandre Baptista, graduated in the plastic arts - Painting. His works, *Untitled #6, 8, 11 and 12* (Gouache on paper), reflects his concern not only about a sexual and physical body, but also about a social body delineated by auto-compliant bodies, full of desire and graphic elements that metaphorically can be mentioned as similar representations. Baptista reveals a detailed research about the human figure, drawing on a duality that seems to reinvent a hetero.bi.homosexual or hermaphrodite union where the sexuality can be broached under an infinity of perspectives.

The two other artists who complete this dialogue about the erotic body are Maria João Franco and Nelson Dias. Their works intersect by a created dialogue and personify identity through the erotic body. Maria João's, *Penelope*, (acrylic on canvas) and, *Backwards to the mirror*, (mixed method on canvas) and Nelson Dias', *The body and the scream 1*, (graphite and color pencil on Fabian paper) and, *The body and the scream 2*, (graphite and colored pencil on Fabian paper) – reveal a discourse of imaginaries and memories marked by a research of self-knowledge. On one hand, Maria João Franco's works have a discourse of a kind of violence; on the other hand, there is an intransigence of her body representations. For both artists, the human figure, female or male, is represented with an unusual strength of a transcendental eroticism. The human body is not idealized to show its seduction; on the contrary, the exercise to examine that body sometimes visible, sometimes invisible, lies with the observer.

Social constructions and visual representations

Developing this kind of exhibition in a museum, integrating its asset and the masterpieces of guest artists, intended to imply a transformation of meaning. To offer this analysis not only materialized by the expositive discourse, but also by the guided visits for different publics, is an example of the process

of how putting various contemporary critical discourses together can produce a comprehension of the subtle and sometimes unconscious role of gender symbolization and reproduction. It is necessary to think over certain coercive, enslaving and even deadly conditions imposed on the human body, female and male, and that are nevertheless experienced as liberating and transforming ones.

Alison Jagar and Susan Bordo argue that it is not mainly through “ideology”, but through the organization and the regulation of time, space and movements of our daily lives that our bodies are prepared, shaped and marked by predominant historical configurations of individuality, desire, masculinity and femininity. In a historical perspective, the discipline and the standardization of the female body into categories and different forms depending on age, race, class and sexual orientation – must be recognized as a remarkably lasting and flexible strategy of social control.

Regarding our contemporariness, there is a concern related to appearance that affects women in a more accentuated manner than men, revealing a narcissist and visually focalized culture, influenced by Hollywood culture around the ideal of a perfect body. Perpetuated by the Portuguese television’s soap programs such as *Morangos com açúcar (Strawberries with sugar)*, or the reality show, *Big Brother*, it is possible to see through the power of publicity using the phenomenon of baking that still reinforces gender configurations against any attempts to replace or to transform their social power relations. Female bodies pronounce the need of a reduced body configuration and the use of a closer male clothing style. Our female bodies are becoming more and more used to control and self-control to “male” virtues.

For this purpose, the artists Andrea Inocência, Carla Cruz, Isabel Lima and Filipe Curado have been invited to broach the issues related with social constructions and visual representations around the body. Andrea Inocência is a Portuguese visual artist and a performer. She has been presenting her performances and has been exhibiting her works inside the country and abroad since 1996. *Woe, the super unknown artist* (mixed technique) and *Woe’s adventures! The super unknown artist* (photograph, digital support, loop) reveal her multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary facet, dealing with different artistic domains such as photography, performance and installation. She has been working on the image of heroine woman through photography and plastic arts, and on collaborative art projects analyzing and reflecting about violence against women, as well as other gender problematics. In the works of this exhibition, Inocência questions the connections between female social constructions and visual female representations, emphasizing the indubitably Portuguese metaphoric symbols, so visible on her works – such as typical earrings from northern cities like Viana do Castelo; a Coimbra student’s cloak; the galoshes and socks representing various country places or even the Portuguese seaside. The corporal posture is the one of a brave woman emanating a rebellious energy and a striking combative wit – the desire not to be smashed by patriarchal power. As the curatorial text stated: “The preoccupations that are felt in the field and the outstanding problems of our present society such as gender issues, the psychological and physical violence of a global world emerge and materialized themselves into the artist’s works in different forms leading the diverse publics to see and to reflect rather than to look” (Oliveira, 2013: 1).

Carla Cruz’s photographs from the performance, “*Maintenance Art: Homage to Mierle Laderman Ukeles*” and the serigraphy “*To Conjugate in the Plural*”, intensify, once again, the female position. In her first work, in an homage to the North American artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles, who brought the home space to the public one by washing the museum floors, gives visibility to the cleaning team⁶. Cruz’s performance took place in Guimarães, in a space run by artists – the *Arts Laboratory (laboratório das artes)*. Cruz’s work, *To Conjugate in the Plural*, in collaboration with Dayana Lucas, from the *Arara workshop (Oficina Arara)*⁷, as the draft and the printing of the poster are concerned, came from a very specific invitation from the exhibition curators, “*Behind the words*”, in 2012 at the Espaço Campanhã

⁶ http://www.feldmangallery.com/media/pdfs/Ukeles_MANIFESTO.pdf

⁷ <http://www.oficina-arara.org/about/>

in Porto. This work is also a contribution to all artists who participated in the project, “*All My Independent Women*”, which has been developed since 2005⁸.

Isabel Lima integrates this Portuguese female artists group too. She graduated in Painting from Oporto Superior School of Fine Arts. In the video, “*Intersections on the mirror*”, Lima depicts the national Portuguese identity, specifying the feminine example. She starts from some elements that identify the northern of Portugal women. According to her words: “I explore thick and fluid environments, taking advantage of an iconography associated to the northern identity woman – linen, veils, embroideries, jewels which are mingled with ethereal and thick, dramatic surroundings that sometimes meld with the woman/girl, doll who plunges on the gloomy and violent swamp of her existence where inhabit desires, dreams and fears” (I. Lima personal communication, 2013).

Finally, there is Filipe Curado’s sculpture, “*Naked I*” (marble, sculpture) and “*Naked II*” (polyester / sculpture). The perfection and the imperfection of a female body in *Naked I* and in *Naked II* reveal a “social” and metaphoric body as a symbolic image of a Portuguese and a global history full of cultural codes, but also a description of women’s aesthetic and contemporary ideal. This objective became an obsessive quest turning to a central torment in the life of many of them. In such an epoch, we desperately need a political and efficacious discourse about the female body, a speech adequate to an analysis of the insidious and often paradoxical ways of modern social control. Making the feminine body more and more erotic with its visual explorations, often contributes to intensifying a diminishing female vision that remains in our contemporary society today, in spite of the history of the feminist movement, revealing the conquests that allow women to claim a central place as a body and as a being, owning specificities and the protection of human rights.

The body as a performance

The young student and dancer, Helena Beatriz (acting under the name of Annarella School of Dance, Leiria), was present at many moments of the exhibition, from the inauguration until guided visits, performing for different publics. This interactive part of the exhibition created a visual and dialoguing effect in conjunction with Paulo Henrique’s choreography work. It integrates one of the curator’s objectives of conceiving dialogue between different artistic expressions in an exhibition space (Figure 4)⁹.

⁸ <http://allmyindependentwomen.blogspot.cz/p/about-amiw.html>

⁹ <http://genovevaoliveira.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/pedro-ferreira.jpg>

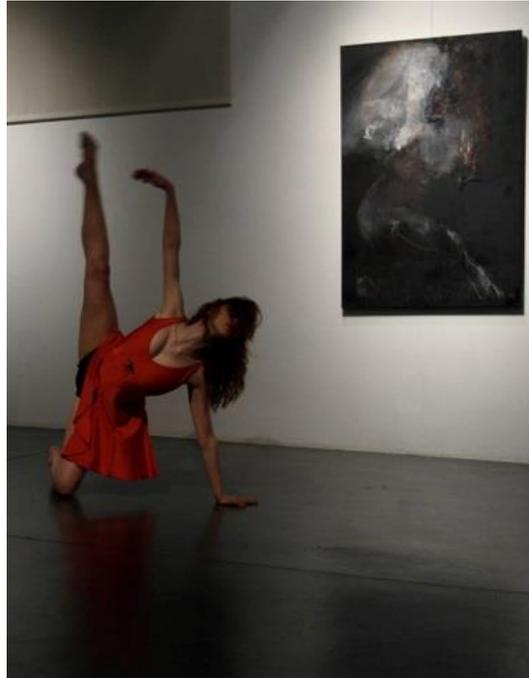


Fig. 4: Helena Beatriz at M|i|mo, May 2013
© Photo: Pedro Ferreira

Paulo Henrique's work is the result from his multidisciplinary interest and from his participation in projects where the body is a support to several abstract, symbolic, poetic elements meeting new technologies. The video, "*Minimally Invasive*", (*Photograph from the American Robert Flynt*), represents his work in this exhibition and it is an integrant part of the M|i|mo asset (Figure 5)¹⁰. Paulo work is in a hybrid or interposed shape moving from the stage to the installation, including video and technological devices as the body is concerned in a relationship and identity issues endless production, sometimes activated by the public.



Fig. 5: Paulo Henrique, "*Minimally Invasive*", model-dance artista, 1998
© Photo: Robert Flynt
M|i|mo Museum

¹⁰ <http://genovevaoliveira.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/minimally-invasive.jpg>

The curator as communicator

During the exhibition set-up phase, an active participatory process where all elements were discussed and given reasons to place the art pieces within a definite narrative, using the temporary exhibitions' historical room because of its pavement – particularly bent with many columns and arches. The specificity of the room allowed us to conceive of different narratives intercepting between the use of the historical objects with the contemporary artistic elements. I had no intention to establish a single chronological narrative; rather, I wanted to intercept interpretations between the different artistic domains and historical epochs which were represented by the objects – with the necessity to create a permanent reflection about gender issues leading to the construction of a true human *Being*. Near the final organizational phase, an open visit-workshop was made for all the elements – from the coordinator to the cleaning team in order to explain the exhibition objectives and to provide them with the information for the public. In order to make the dialogue more interactive, this formation was followed by numberless, historical images of Portuguese artists which allowed the team to establish comparisons with different historical times and to dialogue about the stereotypes and notions of the political body/social body/aculturated body. During the exhibition period, I guided several visits by Portuguese and international publics, allowing the discussion about the display to be widen and giving a large contribution to its divulgation.

The work of these contemporary artists is a dynamic combination of materials, methods, and concepts that challenge traditional boundaries. They give voice to the varied and changing cultural landscape of identity, values, and beliefs. They explore ideas, concepts, questions, and practices that examine the past, represent the present, and ideate the future.

There have been dozens of murders of Portuguese women by their husbands/boyfriends every year. It is underscoring the 'necessity' for this permanent reflection on the state of gender affairs/issues in Portugal and the world. Gender-based violence reflects and reinforces inequalities between men and women. It constitutes a breach of the fundamental right to life, liberty, security, and dignity, equality between women and men, non-discrimination and physical and mental integrity. Art produced by contemporary artists and art exhibitions organized by museums can be a powerful strategy of rethinking social stereotypes.

Final Reflections

Body and Bodies, transgressions and narratives wished to create ruptures, but above all it is our wish to understand the importance of the artistic work as a mean of social deconstruction in conjunction with the history of the arts, and the importance of mediation around that work. On this context, the curator role was fundamental – as well as the artists' presence through their interaction in museum activities with the public.

Art is a mean for doing politics, each work, each exhibition, each text is a crossroads, a beginning of a debate, allowing us to know that 'the other' is a challenge that constantly enriches ourselves. Our way of doing curatorial work and museum education intends to develop the concept of mediation with art as an auto-reflexive and participative practice. Our influences come not only from museology and critical pedagogy, philosophy, feminism but also from practices related with projects with different publics. We incorporate the trends of the art world in a deconstruction perspective. The field of the art institutional mediation is open at the same time to artists, curators, artistic educators and teachers

and reflects upon the possibility of a more equitable society through artistic and educational practice and the utilization of the museum resources.

The interest of intercepting art mediation as a curatorial practice that questions the finality of the museum and that transforms it – is a purpose in itself. Museums are not always innocent or highly open-minded places able to change public opinion; because they are places whose roots and collections appear sometimes in contexts of power, sometimes in violent contexts (either colonial stories or the power of an organized art system according to the rules of capitalism or even the combination of both). Their works expose institutional practices that try to modify, create or maintain, sometimes violence relationships. The auto-reflexive and critical mediation may contribute to carrying out possibilities of action and of reflection – in which museums can also be change agents.

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9

Art of Change: The Voice of Berenika Ovčáčková

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Abstract

This article emphasizes issues rarely addressed within art classrooms by Basic Education art teachers in Portugal, initially introduced in the project (2008-2010), Image and Identity (<http://www.image-identity.eu/>). It describes the encounter between Berenika Ovčáčková, a Czech artist, whose work has inspired students and teachers participating in the Creative Connections (CC) International Project (2012-2014) (<http://creativeconnexions.eu/pt/>) and two researchers from the scientific areas of arts and sociology, who decided to reflect together on the social role of art in the production of the 'subject'. They based their work on the art of Ovčáčková, as they understood it would help to look at a real world full of secrets, fetishes and consumption and often the grotesque.

The analysis of this artist's work made it possible to question the personal and social spheres through contemporary art, as her artwork revolves around the concept of daily life and the ironic readings of *status quo*. This interactive dialogue serves as a narrative inquiry into the usefulness of such encounters, emphasizing the need to open the social and political fields to questions of production and polysemic meanings, as well as the dissemination of the significance and meaning production processes.

Key Words: Art; Cultural Studies; Creative Connections Project

Introduction

It seems to me that the grounds for art education in the twenty-first century are no longer something that exclusively relate to art. As I understand it, due to the complexity of our forms of social organization and production of our existence, art education takes on a significant portion of the critical task of contributing individual thinking. I believe that in order to provide an enhanced experience of learning, in which teacher and students share how they came to be how they are, we must return to the aesthetics of art education. By doing this we will be venturing into perpetual adventure and exploring the endless relational field between education and art.

(Vilella, 2010: 78)

In order to approach how things came to be how they are (Vilella, 2010), we have chosen to work with the artistic production of Berenika Ovčáčková. Ovčáčková is an artist born in 1964 in Ostrava, Czech Republic who currently lives in Prague. From 1978 to 1982, she studied at Ostrava High School in Ostrava. Between 1986-1991, she attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague devoting herself mainly

to graphic arts. Ovčáčková has been drawing since the age of 3. At age 10 she began producing her own journal (Fig. 1) entitled DL (Dětské Listy, which means 'child newspapers'), that included her drawings (Fig. 2) and poems.

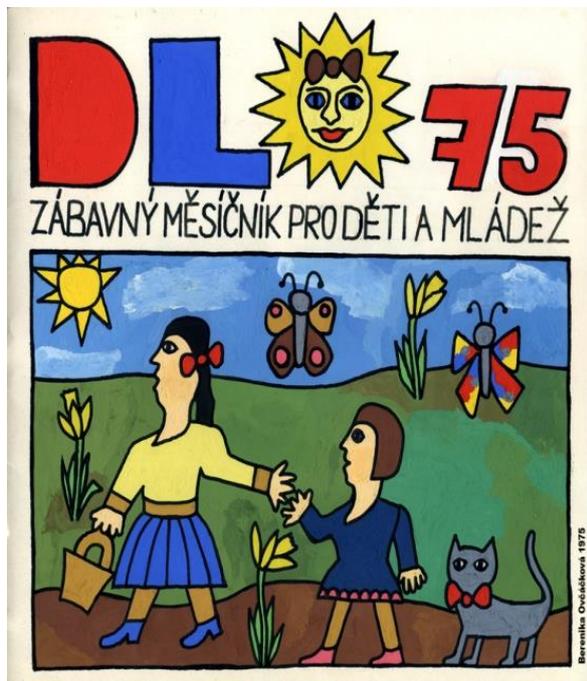


Fig. 1: Front cover of DL (Dětské Listy /Children's newspaper), ink on canvas, 1975,tempera colours on paper & Indian ink, Collection of Berenika Ovčáčková, © Berenika Ovčáčková

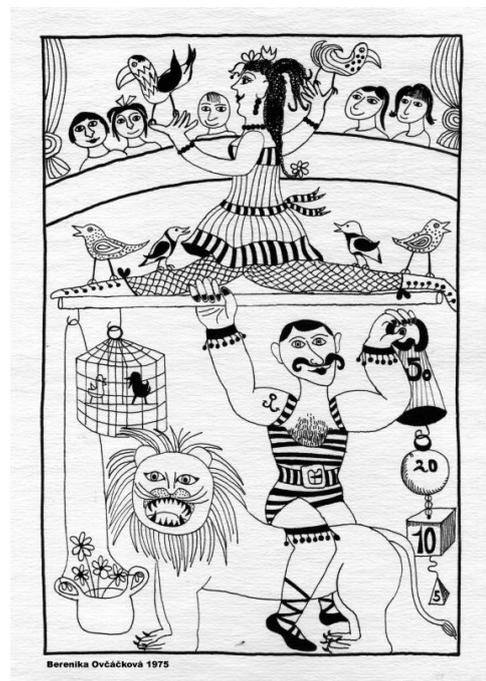


Fig.2: drawing made with a pen and Indian 70cm x 50cm, 1975 Collection of Berenika Ovčáčková, © Berenika Ovčáčková

Poem 1:

Anděl letěl pro akát,
že prý si s ním bude hrát.
Už je večer andílku,
ustel si svou postýlku
a jdi pěkně spát.

The angel flew for acacia
so that he may to play with it.
It's evening already, dear angel,
make your bed and go to rest.

Poem 2:

Bledule kvetou v naší zahrádce,
vypadá to tam jako v pohádce.
Kloboučky mají bílé
a podobají se lesní víle.

Spring snowflakes blooms in our garden,
one feels like in a fairy tale.
Their little huts are white
and look like dryads.

—Berenika Ovčáčková, (11 years old)

The work of Berenika Ovčáčková, was chosen from the website created under the international project Creative Connections (CC), which interconnected 25 schools from six different European countries. The schools selected in each country included both primary and secondary schools, located both in rural and urban settings. Five quad Blogs, and one Quint Blog were created in order to manage the written word and visual communication between the 25 European schools. CC aimed to explore and develop ways of strengthening the understanding of elementary students about European identity, linking art

and education. Students were encouraged to examine their lives and identities, through an European perspective and to use aesthetic as a starting point for a cultural, social and / or political reflection.

Issues that are rarely addressed within the classroom art (<http://www.image-identity.eu/>), (<http://creativeconnexions.eu/pt/>) were emphasized. In the Portuguese case, the personal and social spheres were questioned through contemporary art. Part of Ovčáčková's work turns the concept of the everyday life and ironic readings of the *status quo* around. Because of that, it has also inspired the writing of this article, as we discuss the social role of art in the production of subject. We understand that addressing this issue in the playful shape of her prints when dealing with real world full of secrets, fetishes and often grotesque, could help us pedagogically (Figures 3, 4 & 5).

Her art production focuses on the practical realities of life, using a variety of techniques to translate her relations with the world. In her art-works Ovčáčková portrays her resolved and unresolved childhood experiences with the human world in a tragic content and sense of the absurd. As Deleuze and Guattari (1977) argue, art should not be limited to interpretation, but rather look for other conceptions of art, because we must understand that an artistic production is not proposing an imaginative fiction that needs to be analyzed by its author. On the other hand, an artwork does not match a symbolic model of transposition, leaving the task of finding an eternal question of the 'other'. Art works in a different way. Artworks are living places for many different living experiences. In this sense, a work of art is able change whoever is observing it, by transforming their own experience and building new ways. In that sense, it is not an interpretation, nor a metaphor, but rather a metamorphosis; or in other words, a new experience that comes together to create new meanings.

The Voice of an Artist: Berenika Ovčáčková

It's a good feeling to know that somebody is looking at my art and doing his/her best to reveal a story hidden inside the image. Everybody has a sovereign right to his/her own interpretation. For me it would be interesting to listen to what the children and educators feel and think of my artwork. I am sure that some of the opinions would be surprising for me! It's always a risk to release one's artwork to the public. But if an artwork is true and strong in its substance then it will preserve its original energy and idea (punch-line). In any case I feel greatly honored by their attention paid to my art. (B. Ovčáčková, personal communication, October 19, 2014)

The real art world of Ovčáčková shows the secrets of life in terms of the grotesque, fun games, playful humor and fetishes. She states, "my artwork always reflects the adventures of daily life, existential questions and feelings overlapping in the field of the social and political. The question is what is real: our inner world or the world outside us? Can I change reality by changing my thoughts and feelings? I am sure I can! Everyone is a creator of their own 'reality' and 'existence' " (B. Ovčáčková, personal communication, October 19, 2014)



Fig. 3: Child with boat, serigraphy, 2000, 100 x 70 cm
Collection of Berenika Ovčáčková © Berenika Ovčáčková

In this picture (Fig.3) we can see a child who follows a toy like it is a guide. The artist said that this image was firstly made as an etching (the size of a metal plate was about 20 x 14 cm), and later it was converted into a colorful large-sized serigraphy print. We invited Ovčáčková to comment Figures 3, 4 and 5 and she said:

In the years 1997-2001 I began to use a photography as an initial point of my inspiration. The photos came from my private collection or some of them were found by chance. At that time my key theme was a childhood which offers a lot of sub-themes: child and the world around it, aloneness, lostness, attention seeking, way finding etc. I am working with my own feelings and memories. For me it was a sort of retrospective analysis. CHILD WITH BOAT (Fig. 3) shows a little boy or girl who tries to find its own way in a life. In the past we could see children dragging a toy behind them. Such a toy was usually leashed like a cat or dog. (B. Ovčáčková, personal communication, October 19, 2014)



Fig. 4: Oven Greetings, serigraphy, 1999, 70 x 100 cm
Collection of Berenika Ovčáčková © Berenika Ovčáčková

This image was also firstly made as an etching and later remade by serigraphy technique. Besides civil photos I was inspired by old-style advertising, commercial photos. On this picture we can see an elegant lady leaning towards the kitchen-range and shaking hands with the oven. This work belongs to the series

called "INTERIORS" made by me in 1999 (the others are displayed in my catalogue where they are called Interiors I, Interior II and Interior III). It is rather a grotesque scenery which is playing with the real and fantastic aspects. Can a human being communicate with an inanimate nature? Why not? The works from series "INTERIORS" are full of surprise and absurdness ... and the hidden danger. Nobody knows what comes in the next moment (B. Ovčáčková, personal communication, October 19, 2014).



Fig. 5 My Ego On Pan, serigraphy, 1999, 100 x 70 cm
Collection of Berenika Ovčáčková © Berenika Ovčáčková

Here I used my own photo from age of 6 years. This work presents myself in an indefinable, dreamy space. On the left there is a chair and a spoon floating on air and a cat on the pot lid on the right. Above my head there is a glass turned-up and emitting the light rays. In the middle of the scene a river of bubbles flows. I am standing at attention as I were reproached for something. It seems I feel guilty. Isn't this feeling very familiar to every child? Guilt (or compunction) is a widespread experience which is common to all children (B. Ovčáčková, personal communication, October 19, 2014).

The images by the Czech artist reflect on the relationship between matter and the creator in reference to culture. They are understood as a product of culture and when they were introduced in the project of *Creative Connections* (CC), students and their art teachers understood how these and other works of art can challenge contemporary viewers. By keeping the ability to establish a balanced magical, transcendental and spiritual relationship with the subject of the artwork, contemporary artists create a distant enough version of the world in which we are involved.

For Almeida (1994), [...] *they bring to school what it refuses to be and that could turn it into something living and vital: active and creative participant in the movements of culture and not a repeater and disseminator of mass knowledge, [that] often has deteriorated, lagged and [is] inadequate for the education of a person who is already immersed in the seemingly chaotic lives and culture of modern society* (pp.49-50). Thus, working with images in education and schools can help us look for other meanings for the world, for life, i.e. working with an image in an educational setting can establish relationships between education and culture, deepen our relationship to citizenship.

In schools, we often work with the homogenization of meanings that are constructed in relations with the subject and with each other through disciplinary pedagogical practices and subjective devices in a normative manner. Working with contemporary images helps us produce other subjectivities and can create other ways of understanding schools, recreating teaching process and practice. In the CC project, image analysis was intended to be a means of introducing students and art teachers to developmental education, with a particular focus on teaching and learning the strategies of citizenship. Writing about the situation in Portugal, Moura (1993) pointed out the training of art teachers has been weighted heavily on the side of producing practical artwork to the detriment of examining content and meaning. Twenty years later, in many educational contexts in Portugal, this situation remains the same. However, according to Allison (1982), the perceptual, analytical and critical domains, as well as historical, cultural and productive domains are “unavoidably interdependent and inter-active with each other” (p.62). Allison argues as well that the recognition of historical/cultural meaning in art forms can be dependent upon the abilities fostered in other domains of learning. Further, the critical domain develops the skills of analyzing, interpreting and evaluating aesthetic qualities. The perceptual domain is the one that is related to the development of competencies which, “Expand the capacities to see, feel and comprehend form, color and texture as part of the encounter with the visual/tactile environment and which are fundamental to aesthetic experience.” (1982: 62)

For this reason, during the action research conducted within the CC project, the teachers in Portugal used several resources that increased awareness for social and aesthetic issues on the participating teams. The interactive reading of images helped the participants develop visual, linguistic, aesthetic and other creative skills that are needed in curricular planning and that enable dialogue and discourse within and across the different cultures and countries involved. According to Foucault (1999), to problematize, discuss *how* and *why* our relationships are established, constituted and institutionalized, makes it possible to give another meaning to school, education and teaching. And rethinking established truths is rethinking places of production of subjectivity - that is, to refuse them.

It is our task and our job, as educators and critical educators, to open the social and political field for productivity and polysemy, for ambiguity and indeterminacy, for multiplicity and dissemination of the process of signification and production of meaning. (Silva, 1999: 9)

Reconstructionist Curriculum

The Portuguese action team of CC was particularly influenced by the social reconstructionist model of art education proposed by Cahan and Kocur (1996) and the way they encouraged their students to intervene in the resolution of social issues through practical art activities. The schools’ environment gave students the tools to understand and analyse how familiarity and “otherness” are created in culture, as the aims of this international project were:

- To create a platform to promote students’ voices across Europe;
- To use of art citizenship lessons to increase students and teachers perceptions of connectedness;
- To explore how European identity is understood and expressed at different stages of schooling and in different locations (rural and urban); facilitate conferences (with digital catalogues) to disseminate the project work to a wider audience; and
- To produce digital guidance for teachers to facilitate pupils’ trans-European discussions about cultural identity and cross cultural understanding

According to Moura (2000), including art critique in the Portuguese curriculum could easily contribute to develop awareness and understanding of social issues and cultural concepts in an interdisciplinary base. On the other hand, Hargreaves (1998: 27) argued that schools and teachers have been strongly influenced by the demands of an accelerated postmodern world, whereby schools ‘continue to be modern institutions forced to operate in a complex, postmodern world’.

During the action research developed in the CC by the four participant Portuguese art teachers, some aspects arose which may be relevant to the study of the relationship between the work of contemporary art by European artists and the lives of students. Berenika's art work was selected as it made students aware of their own identity, and how to understand the motifs of their own existence. The Portuguese teachers who participated in the project understood that art enhances the critical, creative and participative behaviors of individuals; they also realized that it could contribute to individual development and to the establishment of cultural identity, both because art favors the construction and sedimentation of affections, and because it empowers men and women, helping them understand themselves as individuals within a sociocultural group, broaden the grasp they have on their place in the world.

The use of the works of European artists in the digital, virtual gallery of the *Creative Connections* website, (<http://creativeconnexions.eu/dc/>), was undoubtedly an innovative way of using visual resources and one that enabled students to find artworks that were a stimulus for expressing, documenting and making sense of their own world. The CC website and the media stimulated children to read and analyse them through dialogue, reconstructing new meanings. Chalmers (1996) states that it is important to help students understand the functions of art in different cultural contexts, as well as understand and appreciate, through art and culture themselves... (p.7). This feature also put the focus on controversial issues in an interdisciplinary way, involving knowledge of history, social studies, art criticism, visual arts, technology. The project website works to meet this goal through its manifestation as an intercultural and international communication forum (Tavin, 2014).

Culture, Curriculum and Art

To problematize the interdependent and interactive forms of interpretation that we, as researchers and teachers experienced using contemporary works of art as forms of intercultural dialogue, we triangulate our observations with a critical context of our perceptions and cognitions.

It was throughout the second decade of the twentieth century that the most serious cracks in a homogenous concept of culture took place. The initial questions arose in the field of anthropology, linguistics, and philosophy; and then part of sociology put into question the idea of a monocultural epistemology. More recently, the field of cultural studies was particularly efficient in the deconstruction of the modern concept of culture and showed that it is better to speak of 'cultures' rather than of a unique 'culture'. With this new understanding, the monocultural epistemology splintered into multicultural trends. Indeed, cultural studies was wary of universalizing knowledge, which reduces an institution, status or human need to formulas that intend to provide standard, invariable and definite answers. Currently, ahead and around us, reality arises from a sense assigned to it by the person who experiences it. In modernity, far from having one single fixed reality, we live a liquid reality that it is arranged according to a rationalized form that focuses on it (Bauman, 2000).

Thus, working with cultural issues means talking about a game of differences, about social struggles regarding power relations and these, as interpersonal relationships, may be changed permanently in such a way that new subjects and new practices are settled in the social sphere. We can say that if mono-culturalism emphasizes the humanistic approach and is largely a structural aesthetic, multiculturalism is a procedural one, focusing on values and difference in relationship to power. And if the attribution of significance is always and at the same time, an epistemological and a power issue, certainly it also is a political issue.

Culture¹ within a post-structuralist perspective is understood as a set of representations that are

¹ The term "culture has different connotations and meanings in the different strands of critical and post-critical educational theory. For the neo-Marxist analysis, culture is analyzed as part of the superstructure, i.e. as belonging to those social spheres that distinguish the economic base: the legal and political institutions, ideology, and education. The different neo-Marxist perspectives are distinguished by greater or lesser autonomy granted to the superstructure relative to the economic base. From the perspective of Bourdieu, the culture, defined by tastes and forms of aesthetic appreciation, is central to the process

manifested in speeches, images, artifacts, codes of conduct and narratives produced in socially relationships influenced by the exercise of power. In the words of Hall, "*culture is one of the constitutive conditions of existence and of every social practice and every social practice has a cultural dimension. Not that there is nothing beyond discourse, but that every social practice has its discursive character.*" (Bauman, 2000: 33). Cultural studies sought to organize the social field of knowledge and for that, provoked the movement known as the cultural shift that abandons the concept of monoculturalism and goes on to consider a multiplicity of domains of cultures. This movement occurred simultaneously within the linguistic field, being known as the linguistic turn, which brings forth a new understanding of language.

Language is essential for interaction and understanding among human beings and it was, for a long time understood only as a way for people to communicate. However, the linguistic turn has shown that language is not just about communication; it is also a discursive practice that shapes individuals and objects. And if reality is shaped by language, we can argue that the discourses produced are always identified with institutions or social situations. From this viewpoint we can say that through language, humans become interpreters and transform reality, giving meanings to the world and also creating and transforming it. This is because meaning is not in the things. They are individual constructions and the outcome of the speech he/she listens to, speaks about, practices and discusses. Therefore, the meanings of a language are not fixed or natural, or normal, or logical, since these categories are arbitrarily imposed by and connected to power systems. Popkewitz (1991), inspired by Foucault, argues that ideas are not just ways of expressing the meaning of the world, but systems that demarcate and define 'reasonable' chances of seeing the world and to see oneself in the world.

From this perspective, discourses are inextricably involved in what things are, and language not only describes or says things, but also establishes them. When addressing culture, cultural studies consider that the elements of social life are discursive and linguistically constructed, i.e., language is a discursive practice that produces facts, objects and subjects. More than a tool for reporting facts, it is perceived "*[...] as acting in its construction and that with which it gives meaning to things, are produced meanings are formed networks and practices of signification and exchange process [...]*" (Wortmann; Veiga-Neto, 2001: 108).

To deconstruct the domination of both the scientific knowledge and the practice of an exclusively epistemological field and bring these discourses into everyday life, it is necessary to draw upon analytical tools - not for establishing "absolute truths" about school; breaking binaries showing that school does not do "this or that", it does "*[...] this and that; they are not even within the scope of Sciences themselves to be described, discussed and problematized much less, under what may be called intuitive, trivial or common knowledge*" (Costa, 2001: 23)².

In other words, language does not exist as essence. It is always situated and contingent; and yet, there is a margin of uncertainty in all things said, which does not compromise the possibility of meaningful discourse. But, more importantly, we do not speak of a neutral place outside language: "*[...] and we are always hopelessly immersed in a language and culture, so that what we say about them is never*

of domination: it is the imposition of the dominant culture, as being the culture that makes the dominated classes attribute to themselves the subordinated position not to the pure and simple imposition, but to its supposed cultural deficiency. School has an important role in the reproduction of this relationship of cultural domination. In the theory introduced by cultural studies, particularly that inspired by post-structuralism, culture is theorized as a battlefield between different social groups around the signification. The education and the curriculum are seen as areas of conflict around the two central dimensions of culture: knowledge and identity" (Silva, 2000: 20).

² According to Costa (2001: 30) "*[...] there is no doubt that it is Wittgenstein who better embodies the abandonment of the pretense of a sufficient structure and philosophy of science - turning to the analysis of the relationship of language to himself and the relationships between language and the world itself, and thus decisively contributing to the so-called linguistic turn. It comes to understand the rationality of science as something that is engendered historically and socially. This means a shift of emphasis and perspective for the description and analysis of knowledge and scientific practice.*"

exempt from themselves" (Veiga-Neto, 2003: 14).

Curricular Trends

Analyses of education show that the concept of curriculum has been associated with ideas of control of the educational process; prioritization according to the purpose of education, to the intended audience and the actors' interests in dispute; ordering, sequencing and number of the teaching contents.

In the history of education, there are three distinct trends in relation to the emphasis on the organization of the curriculum. However, regardless of which educational theory guides the construction of the curriculum, its function is to discipline knowledge, or rather the knowledge that can be transmitted, what can and what cannot be part of a curriculum. Here it is worth drawing attention to the word "grid", whose literal meaning is: nothing comes and nothing goes into the established curriculum. Moreover, we must remember that in electing certain content and not others, the educator is prioritizing one knowledge over another, thus not having neutrality in the curriculum.

Here is where we connect culture studies to curriculum; for speech relates to traditional theories of transmission of knowledge and all trends can still be found in public schools today on more or less degrees of implementation. The first trend – is authoritarian and worried about "what" to teach and especially "how" to teach, establishing strict standards of evaluation that allow to precisely achieve the proposed objectives. This curriculum serves a guided education underpinned by the psychology which prevailed until the 1960s.

In the traditional view, the curriculum is designed as a set of facts, knowledge and information, selected from the broader cultural stock of the society, to be transmitted to children and youth in schools. In the conventional view, as well as the common sense view, it is a process that is not problematic (Silva, 2000). It is assumed: 1) a consensus of knowledge that should be selected; 2) a match between the nature of knowledge and culture of the "source" and the nature of knowledge and culture of the school, admitting only a difference of degree and quantity; 3) a passive relationship between those who "know" and knowledge; 4) static and inertial nature of culture and knowledge. In the history of Western education, this view is shared by educational ideologies as diverse as traditional humanism and technical.

Curriculum design in traditional theory is rationalistic. Its basic assumptions are traditional culture, the classic western, namely the logical organization of content, the teacher as the center of the educational act that imparts knowledge and the student who receives it passively. The fundamental concerns are: teaching, learning, assessment, methodology, didactics, organization and planning goals.

According to Apple (2000), the second trend of critical theories involve the following questions: Why and how are particular aspects of collective culture presented in school? As factual knowledge? As goals? What kind of knowledge can add value to set itself up as unquestionable? Why not distrust the status quo so strongly stirred by the traditional theories? So even more important than worrying about the technical curriculum design, is to develop concepts that allow understanding of what makes a curriculum become the way it is.

For Silva (1999), power is the central idea of the critical curriculum theorizing. In this conception, the vision that education and the curriculum are deeply concerned about the power that gives the same a fundamentally political character.

[...] the school and the curriculum should function as a 'democratic public sphere.' The school and the curriculum should be places where students have the opportunity to exercise the skills of democratic

discussion and participation, questioning the assumptions of common sense of social life. On the other hand, teachers cannot be seen as technicians or bureaucrats, but as people actively involved in the activities of criticism and questioning in the service of emancipation and liberation process. (Silva, 1999: 54, 55)

The third trend corresponds to the post-critical theories in the analysis of the concepts of culture, language and power from cultural studies and the perspective of Foucault's ideas relating to micro-power. The fundamental concerns of this trend are identity, otherness, difference, subjectivity, meaning and discourse, knowledge-power, representation, culture, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and multiculturalism. The ideas and concepts that guide this tendency to think about the construction of curricula refer to the metaphor of the rhizome, which is a myriad of small tangled roots that intertwine and pitted.



Fig. 6: Rhizome, photo courtesy of Ana Camargo

In the post-critical perspective, the idea is to think of a rhizomatic curriculum i.e. the acquisition of knowledge does not begin and end, always being somewhere in the center, between things. What matters are the intersections between knowledge. That idea of curriculum also refers to the thousands of possibilities that ICT has given Internet users who disseminate information through sites and social networks, in which knowledge is diffused in the network and intertwines without a pre-established beginning, middle and end.

When one of the participant teachers in the CC Portuguese team was questioned by the Portuguese coordinator if the artists of CC image bank/ images had influenced her students in how they interpreted themes of identity and culture, she (MD) replied,

In national terms I understood that it would be more appropriate to use a national and local artist, with emotional connections to school, but this artist was not included in the database. After receiving information that this artist, Manuel Barros Lima, could be integrated into the database, I decided to include him. The study of this artist was not done in isolation from the European context. So, after consulting selected artists from the database, like Berenika Ovčáčková, Markku Laakso, Sonia Pulido and Michael Brito, the key issues selected triggered the discussion of various concepts, which are consolidated by the reading and interpretation of the works of the above-mentioned artists.

In the *The Butterfly Girl* (Fig. 7) of Berenika Ovčáčková, the concepts of identity, culture and heritage were worked with the students and gave rise to comments like: 'The idea of this image is that the girl has no

freedom and wings give the idea that she wants to fly, if you want to break free and enjoy every moment. The girl wants to leave the sadness. The butterfly wings are the only colourful things in the girl who wants to fly to a more cheerful place’.

After image analysis, made by students, the interpretations of some artists about their own work were read, raising much curiosity in children. In the case of Berenika, one of the interpretations presented resembled enough to the comments made by the students, leaving them very excited and motivated for further analysis. (Field notes, MD, 2012)

Ovčáčková’s following statement on artwork sheds some light on her major sources of inspiration within a larger social and historical context:

The image of the Butterfly Girl was inspired by a documentary photograph from pre-war Vienna. One of its interpretations can be found in its connection to the holocaust, which, however, was an unknown term for the later Jewish genocide when the photograph was taken. Back then, Czechs, Germans and Jews lived together in the central European space. The wings can also represent the desire for freedom and the escape of death, as well as death itself (the soul flies to heaven). Another interpretation, freed from all historical experience, may be a simple depiction of a sensation felt by an abandoned or rejected child who would like to go somewhere else (to fly away) or to return somewhere. The image of a little girl refers to the theme of childhood and the experience of it from a time distance. It can either be a memory from childhood or a story about us that someone told us. Memory is a recorded family event and is also the consequence of great historical events. (B. Ovčáčková, personal communication, October 19, 2014).

The previous comment of the art teacher together with the artist’s statement reinforce the concerns of several educators, such as Allison (1982) when he stated that critical/analytical, productive /expressive, perceptual and historical/cultural domains of the art curriculum can help to develop fundamental capacities, as being the concern of enjoying, experiencing and communicating about the content and form of art and design.



Fig. 7: *BUTTERFLY GIRL*, serigraphy, 2000, 100 x 70 cm
Collection of Berenika Ovčáčková © Berenika Ovčáčková

Conclusion

In summary, speech is, formally, a set of higher verbal complex that can be identified with the social institutions where it is delivered and emphasizes rhetoric and expressive resources for certain and expected social effects with a clear concern with the connections between discourse and power. Thus, for our purposes, Fehr (1994) states that decoding visual and written texts through a semiotic approach, using a social contextualization and anthropology of art, reflects a new western paradigm (In Ferreira, 2003).

The Creative Connections Project attempted to promote projects generated by children and young people that combine visual arts with education for citizenship. This project resulted in the creation of educational resources (<http://creativeconnexions.eu/>) that promote the voices of their users. It allowed the collaboration not only between students and teachers, but also with artists as is the case of Berenika Ovčáčková. CC promoted art projects generated by primary and secondary education students. From this project several education resources were developed that give voice to all of them.

Therefore, it is not necessarily a matter of giving voice to young people, but young people finding and managing the conditions to manifest their own voices. Thus the voice is not something that is given, but it is taken. It is necessary to call into question to say that voice 'is given' when in fact this is utilized as a strategy to legitimize processes to reduce facts according to the intentions of researchers or teachers but not according to those who generously as Black (2007) says, give us their voices (Hernández and Bertoni, Creative Connections, 2014).

Just as the different courses that make up the curriculum, art education also underwent the hegemonic and alienating system that produces empty stereotypes and passing falsely conception of creativity. Thus, the prospect of multiplicity and dissemination become an illusory, apparent, flighty and uncommitted training. And art is treated in school as an ornament, a decoration. (Vilella, 2010)

If art education is resisting the use of art as discourses, art won't be found in classrooms being used to tackle social and cultural issues. All this emphasized the need to find answers to key issues in Portuguese society, most specifically in education (Moura and Gonçalves, 2014). For within citizenship, namely regarding the issue of civic illiteracy, there is a lack of professional training and the need to evaluate the meaning of strategies that have already been successful in other countries, and also in Portugal.

We agree with other educators that citizenship education that includes a cross-cultural curriculum approach with a vision of art grounded in an empowering social and historical perspective can strengthen and reinvigorate the role of art. The Creative Connections program linked artists, students, teachers and researchers across Europe through sustained collaborative projects furthering an appreciation of the cultures of others. In this article we express the need for educators to work with the students' experiences, where education is understood as a mutual process from each other, and a way by which the learner (adult and child) becomes aware of her/his own needs, beliefs, values about reality. Further studies would benefit more art educators who want to engage in critical pedagogy and educational theory.

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10

Photography, identity and diversity - an artistic experience in teaching

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Abstract

The article reports on an ethnographic action research study developed from the perspective of multicultural/intercultural arts education¹. Photography was chosen to work with the project's central theme: identity. The idea of using photography as a resource for studying the subject 'identity' came with the observation that as cultural representation, photography allows for the construction and transmission of a certain image to oneself and to others (Caetano, 2007). A project of pedagogical intervention was offered in the subject, Visual and Technological Education, to the 5th grade (2nd and 3rd cycles) of the Basic Education School of Briteiros, Portugal. This project was intended to get answers to these questions: *Is the concept of identity likely to be understood by students aged between 10 and 12 years-old? Can self-awareness and understanding of 'otherness' contribute to a better living in the society to which they belong? Can a photograph contribute to an understanding of self, the concept of identity and to the appreciation and respect for social and cultural diversity?*

Data was collected and analyzed on field notes with seventeen students using participant observation, questionnaires, video recordings, photographs and texts produced by students and researchers. Research findings demonstrated that photography sharpened the students' aesthetic sense; facilitated their understanding of concepts related to what constitutes identity and otherness; as well as helped them to accept, respect and appreciate all forms of diversity and its manifestation in contemporary society. Therefore, as a tool for the construction and perception of identities, photography is a powerful resource for an arts education which intends to contribute to the formation of citizenship.

Keywords: art education, identity, photography, citizenship

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of art education to the formation of children, youth and adults, whether in general education or schooling, is recognized and valued throughout history as a key factor to humanization,

¹ The research resulted in Master's Dissertation of the first author, supervised by the second author.

especially because it is a tool to understand oneself and the other, as well as interactions between individuals and their socio-cultural environment. In the globalized and culturally diverse world in which we live, providing education that produces citizens capable of establishing responsible and ethical relationships with their social context and their historical time, is a pressing concern. The school needs to be able to work with uniqueness, individuality and personal characteristics in a close relationship of understanding and acceptance of difference, diversity, and multiplicity, providing training that fully respects the cultural identity of learners (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2001).

Educators around the world have been striving to develop solutions to contemporary social needs and challenges. These include the challenge of living with cultural diversity. On the one hand they propose reflective and critical pedagogies. On the other hand, they suggest that these new pedagogies be linked, so that students can better express themselves in a world and explore this world that is increasingly diverse multiculturally and also technologically. In this context, art education teachers are urged to develop cultural and educational strategies that support and convey aesthetic values and identity which can promote and enhance cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2006). Globalization and the rise of compulsory schooling in Portugal have attracted to school, "students from disadvantaged classes in rural areas, urban areas, fishing areas and Gypsies, [now] more and more regarded as an important part of the student audience" (Stoer & Courtier, 1999: 17).

In order to meet "[...] the basic educational needs of all individuals" and provide "[...] an openness to cultural values of coexistence and tolerance, as well as education that allows people to be full citizens, being able to act constructively in the society in which they operate", in 1991, the Portuguese government created the Coordinating Secretariat for Multicultural Education Programs (Despacho Normativo n. 63/91, 1274). Ten years later the National Curriculum of Basic Education ([CNEB] Decreto Lei 06/2001)² recommended that throughout basic education, arts education in schools must be addressed as a playful discovery of oneself and the natural, social and cultural world in which one lives.

Despite these guidelines however, as Afonso and Cavalcanti (2006: 12) argue, the Portuguese school system is still "[...] indifferent to difference", "[...] immune to these challenges," enacting its "[...] neutrality". According to Stoer and Cortesão, (1999: 20), this is so because, "both the school and teachers themselves (as citizens and as professionals) have been conceived at an intersection of contexts that does not allow them to be sensitive to the explosive social and cultural diversity which is increasingly present within the school context to be dealt with." Undoubtedly, an increasingly globalized world marked by social injustice and cultural and ethnic inequalities requires an inclusive approach to education. Some refer to it as multicultural education and intercultural education by others³. Moura (2001), however, warns that the theories and practices related to arts education in Portugal are governed by ethnocentric values. Portuguese society is still waiting for pedagogical approaches that will take into account cultural rights and respect for diversity.

² This document which was made effective from the school year of 2001/2002 was repealed by Despacho n. 17.169/2011, published on December 23, 2011.

³ Due to the limited number of pages allowed for the article the discussion on how these conceptual differences will not be addressed.

Photography in action research: the construction and perception of identities

In order to face this challenge, action research⁴ was planned with a photography project and its central theme of identity⁵. Its goal was to build teaching and learning strategies that promote better understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity. The design and practice of this particular pedagogical intervention was guided by studies of identity, multiculturalism, multicultural and intercultural education, and photography. The project intended to find answers to the following questions:

- a) Is the concept of identity likely to be understood by students from the fifth year of basic education? Can it help them acquire a better understanding of their own identity?
- b) Can self-awareness and understanding of otherness⁶ contribute to a better living in the society to which they belong?
- c) Can a photograph contribute to an understanding of self, the concept of identity and to the appreciation and respect for social and cultural diversity?

The *locus* of the research was in the Basic Education Portuguese School of Briteiros (2nd and 3rd cycles). The school serves residents of eight villages located in the North of Portugal. In these villages, a rural subsistence economy or market - sometimes accompanied by work in factories (textiles and cutlery), are predominant forms of survival for the population. The school has been open since 1994. Since then, the number of students has decreased not only as result of a decrease in population, but also due to emigration resulting from lack of work in the region. In the academic year (2010/2011) in which the research was made, there were 556 students in the school. Research subjects were seventeen 5th graders (seven girls and ten boys), aged between nine and twelve years old (most at ten years of age). The subject the research took place in was Visual and Technological Education (EVT)⁷.

The research was conducted in collaboration with the second EVT teacher for this class who not only participated in the planning of the activities proposed to students but also played the role of participant observer, collaborating in the collection and analysis of posts in a field journal, video recordings and in artistic photographs. Data collection was also done from photographs and texts

⁴ According to Elliot (1994), this research has been conducted with the purpose of improving the quality of education and enhancing professional development of teachers. Focused on individuals, circumscribed and singular cases, requires a collaborative work of people who are interested in contributing to the resolution of immediate practical concerns. In the model formulated by Elliot, theory and practice are inseparable: the teacher researcher collects data, evaluates and makes questions about his own practices, in a dialectic relation between reflection and action. This is a continuous, systematic, flexible and adaptable process in all stages of the action in order to find sufficient and concrete data to complete the study.

⁵ The analysis of some manuals for EVT indicated the prevalence of drawing, painting and sculpture, overlooking engraving, woodcutting, photography or new technologies; some manuals even made reference to photography.

⁶ The consciousness of self is only possible as opposed to another. As Vygotsky (1987), the uniqueness of the self is always marked by the encounter with the many others that characterize the culture.

⁷ After the Despacho n. 17.169 / 2011, EVT discipline was replaced by Visual Education and Technological Education, each with specific programs.

produced by students and with three questionnaires containing open and closed questions — one aimed at parents, and two targeted at students.

The essential parts of the video and audio recordings were transcribed. The records were analyzed during the entire development of the project, which allowed for comparisons to clarify meanings and corroborate results — giving greater credibility to the study. Constant reflection on student performance and outcomes in activities allowed for the definition of procedures and implementation of strategies that were better suited to the motivations, needs, problems and interests of students.

Different points of view — from the teacher-researcher and from the teacher who acted as an observer, as well as from parents and from students — permitted triangulation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This design reduced the subjectivity of the analysis and provided a detailed overview of the entire process, conferring reliability to the study.

Critical perspectives in identity and multiculturalism

Daunis (2000) believes that identity, "expresses the fact that every individual is oneself, lives in certain continuity with oneself and is aware of it" (92). Giddens (2010) explains that the concept of identity is formed from the understanding which people construct about who they are. This understanding is in turn formed based on certain attributes such as gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity and social class. Hall (2005) considers that the construction of the subject's identity takes place while the subject interacts with the social environment. Lipiansky et al. (1990, cited in Moita, 1992) and Santos (1995) make a distinction between personal and social identity: personal identity refers to self-awareness and awareness of one's relationship with the world; while social identity refers to the characteristics that people attribute to a subject.

Multiculturalism was approached from the studies of Rosa, Hall, and Gonçalves and Silva. Rosa (2007) defines multiculturalism as a philosophy that underpins strategies implemented in multicultural societies, aiming at safeguarding the specificity of minorities in a multicultural society. Hall (2003) suggests that strategies of multiculturalism and political processes are still being incubated. On the other hand, Gonçalves and Silva (2000) argue that multiculturalism is a proposal for resistance to cultural homogeneity; i.e. a fight against ethnocentrism and a defense of the plurality of cultural experiences which permeates social interactions.

Regarding the prospect of an artistic education based on the ideals of multiculturalism, the theoretical framework was sought in André, Mason, Moura, and Richter and in UNESCO documents from the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture [OEI], and the CNEB.

André (2009) believes that the diversity and fragmentation of cultures in contemporary times have caused great changes in social relations, which requires rethinking the role of the arts in education today. She believes this is vital to the relationship between the arts and cultures because arts education can be a powerful instrument of affirmation of one's uniqueness in diversity. To this end, the author says it is essential that teaching practices take into account the cultural practices of the social contexts in which students live; embracing them, valuing them and incorporating them into educational projects.

According to Mason (1999:7), "cultural diversity should be present in school [...] for the children to know, learn, accept and value the society in which they live". She invites arts teachers to address artistic productions of popular culture, especially those related to topics of student life, which in her view, would lead to recognition of and respect for cultural differences (2001). Richter (1999) recommends that multicultural education not be conceived only in the ethnic sense, but that teachers also bear in mind the various subcultures present which are related to social class, gender, religion, age, etc.; and that a community's cultural and aesthetic standards along with those of the family are respected and valued. Moura (2000, as cited in Torre, 2007: 11) proposes to seek, "a set of organizational, curricular and pedagogical strategies [...] whose purpose is to promote understanding and tolerance among individuals of different ethnic origins by changing their perceptions and attitudes."

UNESCO also discusses the role of education in relation to cultural diversity. In The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001) it states, "everyone has the right to quality education and training that fully respects their cultural identity" (Article 5). The final document of the World Conference on Arts Education (UNESCO, 2006) points to cultural diversity as an emerging theme in education and acknowledges the need to develop cultural and educational strategies that support and convey aesthetic values and identity that promotes and enhance cultural diversity

In Portugal, the CNEB points to the need for educators to collaborate for, "the construction and awareness of personal and social identity⁸, respect and valuing diversity of individuals and groups" (Decreto Lei 06 / 2001: 15). It also highlights the importance of the arts for the construction of personal and social identity as, "they express and they shape national identity and allow understanding of other cultures' traditions and are an area of choice in a life-long learning process."(149).

The idea of using photography as a resource for studying the subject 'identity' came with the observation that as cultural representation, photography allows for the construction and transmission of a certain image to oneself and to others (Caetano 2007). Barthes (2006: 89) adds that photography began, "as personal art: one's identity, marital status; an art of what might be called in every sense of the expression, what-concerns-one's own". Yet, other authors have contributed to the assessment and analysis of photographs.

Facing the challenge: the pedagogical intervention

Before starting the pedagogical intervention, two meetings were held with parents to place them alongside the project and get permission to do it. All of them attended the two meetings and expressed a welcoming attitude towards the project. They also positioned themselves as facilitators of the process, allowing not only the use of images and students' work, but also the use and public display of students' and their families' photographs, allowing cameras and mobile phones to be used by children at home and at school. Students' parents also collaborated by answering a questionnaire about their family's habits concerning the act of photographing, and the uses they make with these photographs. Their answers indicated that photographing is a common practice and photographs were taken mostly

⁸ Personal identity refers to the subjective perception that an individual has of his individuality, while social identity refers to the characteristics that people attribute to another person. There are therefore two inseparable faces of the identity phenomenon (Lipiansky et al. 1990, cited in Moita, 1992).

on special occasions, i.e.: birthday parties, children's births, baptisms, communions, weddings, holidays, and parochial or school parties. Photographs are used as decorative elements and as a reminder of important moments experienced by the family. These answers from the parents were valuable for the planning of the activities with the students before starting the pedagogical intervention.

Activities were proposed to enable students to: *a) understand the concept of identity and become aware of their own identity; b) interact with cultural and aesthetic values of family and community; c) appreciate and respect cultural diversity; and d) master the theoretical knowledge and technical capabilities of digital photography.* The activities proposed to students included appreciation of artistic photographs, production of self-portraits (in photography and written text), and the production or collection of photographs which represent social and family events they participate in. With parental consent and the approval of the school board, the pedagogical intervention was conducted in eight classes (four sessions of 90 minutes each, three in December 2010 and one in January 2011).

Artistic photographs and cultural diversity

From the beginning, students were motivated and sometimes eager to start the project. In the first two classes (first meeting), students watched two movies (about three minutes each) made with images taken from the Internet: first, a brief history of photography; the second focused on evolution of the camera. At the end of each film, students made comments and asked for clarification on the content of the films. Shortly after, students were presented a brief biography of António Moreira dos Santos (2010), and then 20 photos from his exhibition *Eye to Eye* were shown (Figures 1 and 2).

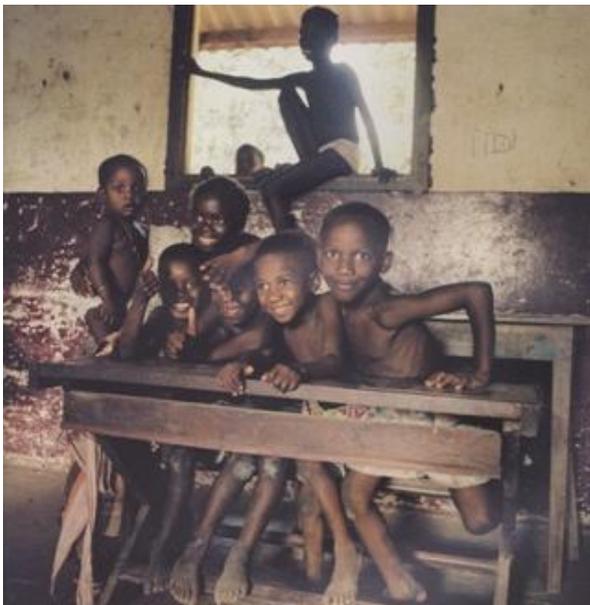


Fig. 1: António Moreira dos Santos
Bafatá/Capé. Guiné Bissau, 1998, 1x1m
Photograph
© António Moreira dos Santos



Fig. 2: António Moreira dos Santos
Pisac. Perú, 2007, 1x1m
Photograph
© António Moreira dos Santos

The photographs aroused great curiosity among students, by depicting people of different ethnicities and cultures⁹, which led to a reflection on cultural diversity and the need to respect differences, as is apparent from the comments and questions from students¹⁰:

There are people who eat dogs and snakes, some I even have seen eating skewered scorpions and lizards. Once I saw them eat sea urchins and other animals we do not eat. (A3)

When I went to France with my parents, I saw many people praying in the garden, with some rugs. My father told me they were Muslims and prayed many times a day. Each one has their religion and should be respected. (A15)

My neighbor is from Romania and lived in Bucharest and there they do not celebrate Christmas on December 25, only in January, because he is not a Catholic. (A13)

Along with the discovery, interpretation and discussion about different cultures and different realities of today's world, the photographs also awoke feelings of sympathy, tenderness and compassion:

My family usually participates in collecting goods to send to the boys who do not have school supplies [...]. (A5)

In my country there is a place, kind of a recycling center, where we put clothes to other countries [...]. (A15)

This year in Catholic Moral and Religious Education, we collected clothes to send to the boys who go cold [...]. My mother said it was great to do it at school. (A16)

The photographs also fostered discussion about peace and the rights of children, as can be seen in the dialogue between four students:

- There are many boys who, instead of going to school, are in the war. (A13)
- There are important people who give them weapons for real to fight. (A8)
- There are countries where children start to work before being ten years old. (A5).
- I've seen them make shoes, sitting on the floor. (A15)
- But if everyone who makes the laws abided by them, all the people and the children would be happier. (A12)

At this first meeting, students were asked to answer a questionnaire in order to provide information that would supplement the planning of the subsequent classes. To the questions, *“Do you ever take photographs? In what situations or places do you do it, and which device do you use?”*, all students reported photographing with the phone, at school, at home, on the street, being alone or with friends, especially at parties; only four also mentioned using a digital camera. To the question, *“At home, do*

⁹ Inhabitants of: Cambodia, Dakar, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Bigajós, India, Myanmar and Senegal.

¹⁰ The speeches of the students were transcribed from the video recordings.

your parents use pictures to talk to you about the traditions of your family or your country?," four answered "yes", and thirteen responded "no", eleven of whom said they would like that to happen.

Who am I?

Students attended the second meeting (third and fourth classes) with their mobile phones or digital cameras. Before using them, however, they watched a film providing guidance on how to shoot with mobile phones and digital cameras. The teacher supplemented the guidelines by explaining what adjustments were needed to obtain a photograph of good technical quality.

After that, two teacher's self-portraits were shown and students were asked to reflect on which of the two photographs best showed the identity of the person depicted. Next, students were asked to discuss the potential of photography to answer the question, "*Who am I?*" considering objective data — name, age, physical characteristics such as eye color, hair, skin etc. — but also as a starting point for the interpretation of more subjective data. Afterwards, they were asked to explain what was meant by identity and to reflect on which of the two pictures best communicated about the identity of the person portrayed. Then they also discussed the role of legends and compared the self-portrait with a description of a person in oral and written language. The students concluded that language can go beyond the description of physical characteristics by detailing aspects of personality as well.

Finally, students were asked to perform an activity at home, answering the question, "*Who am I?*", by making a self-portrait (or selfie) and describing themselves in writing (Figures 3-6). The results were presented at the next meeting (fifth and sixth classes).



Fig. 3: Student A5, *Self-portrait*, Photograph



Fig. 4: Student A8, *Self-portrait*, Photograph



Fig. 5: Student A13, *Self-portrait*, Photograph



Fig. 6: Student A15, *Self-portrait*, Photograph

At this meeting in addition to having their photographs and texts in which they spoke of themselves, students, discussed the concept of identity from the description and reflection on physical and subjective attributes that contribute to the construction of identity (Hall, 2005). That is what they say in their written narratives. It is interesting to note that all of them begin by saying their names, which corroborates Giddens (2010: 568) when he states that, "an important marker of identity of an individual is his name and naming is also important to group identity".

I am C... I am ten years old, I'm female and I was born on August 7, 2000, at 12h43. I have blue eyes, light brown hair; I am small and thin. I now weigh 29 kg and I measure 1m and 33cm. My shoe size is 33, 34. [...] My favorite food is "pica-no-chão"¹¹ and what I hate most is baked potatoes. My favorite color is black. I Like school, I like PE ... I thought a little about me. (A5)

I'm A... I'm 12 and I weigh 70kg. I am very active and what I like most is working with computers. Computers are very important and we can accomplish many tasks with them. I don't apply myself very much [...] sometimes I'm too busy. (A2)

I am P... and I am ten years old. I am playful and get bad grades. All my classmates find me like this. Sometimes in class I behave badly, sometimes well, I struggle [...]. I am sad when I do something bad, and sometimes I'm happy when I do well or say the right things. In classes I talk a bit with classmates when I laugh or do stupid things, I take notes [to the parents]. I have brown hair, dark green eyes. I would like to improve my behavior, grades, and difficulties and always be joyful and give peace and happiness to my parents. (A12)

I'm F... I am female so I am a girl, I'm 10 years old, I am Portuguese, and I have brown eyes and brown hair. I have my nails polished, I measure 1,39m and weigh 34kg, my shoe size is 34, my clothes size is 10/11. I am very bubbly and talkative; I'm a good student, studious and funny. I am joyful in school, singing in the music club, I'm a gymnast in PE, a painter in EVT, I eat a lot in the cafeteria, in the playground I am playful, a photographer and now a writer. (A8)

Talking about themselves was not an easy task, according to students, by the perception that their identities unfold and change as life goes on (Hall, 2005):

¹¹ Same as Stewed Rice, that is a traditional dish of Minho (rice cooked with chicken and mixed with the animal's blood).

Sometimes it seemed that within me there were two "selves." (A3)

I thought it would never end, whenever I thought about me, there were new features [...] sometimes it seems easy but it is very complicated. (A11)

In the project I learned that our identity can change, and I found this exercise very difficult. [...]. Even with the help of photography this year was very difficult because sometimes my characteristics changed and I do not know quite how to answer the question. (A6)

Despite difficulty, they mentioned they enjoyed the activity and the learning that it gave them (Figures 7-8):

During this project I learned that our identity is an aspect of our life that will be changing over time and so we should think about us. (A10)

I was also to learn that our identity is diverse and can be changed over time. (A14)

We can learn to think about us and how our friends are, and it concerns our identity [...] (A9)



Fig. 7: *Who am I?*
Presentation of Student A10

Fig. 8: *Who am I?*
Presentation of Student A1

Who are we?

With recess for Christmas and New Year holidays, it was suggested that students photograph or collect photographs among the family to illustrate the theme of, "*Who We Are: traditions of my family and of my country*", and also that they write something about the topic.

Back to school, among several photos collected or produced by students, they had to choose one to be presented to classmates. At this presentation, students engaged in dating pictures, identifying places and explaining parental relationships. They talked about the experience of portraying or collecting family photos and talked about particularities of their encounters with older family members, comparing customs and traditions of the past with the present. The students' enthusiasm was enormous; everyone wanted to share their experiences. In this activity students had seven photographs taken by themselves; others opted for pictures gathered with the family (Figures 9-10).



Fig. 9: *Who are we?*
Presentation of Student A3

Fig. 10: *Who are we?*
Presentation of Student A16

Students brought pictures of birthday celebrations, beach holidays, rites and religious customs, especially Christmas holidays:

I brought this photograph that shows my first communion party. It is a tradition of my land: when the boys and girls are seven they have the first communion. In it there are my godparents, my grandparents and my siblings. My father is not there, because he dislikes being in pictures. It is the church of my land, and the altar for Our Lady of Fatima. At the end the [palm] branch goes to the altar. (A15)

At Christmas we formerly sent cards, now we phone or use the Internet. (A3)

At Christmas I like potatoes with cod, in the time of my grandparents it was only potatoes [...] there were many siblings and there was no money for more. (A9)

At the time of my grandparents, Christmas was poor; they had no cakes or Christmas ornaments. The table was a towel on the floor with a bowl of food, and they had to get from what was there to get. But there were only potatoes, wine and rarely some "formigos"¹². They all lived together, and in the end they went to the midnight mass and when they returned, they played the top and then slept. (A13)

My parents, when they were children, celebrated Christmas almost like us. Traditional foods were the same. On the table there were noodles, scrambled eggs, candy and French toast. In the slipper there was just a gift, but they valued it more than us. My grandparents' Christmas party was celebrated in religious acts. On Christmas Eve they only ate the food, no sweets or gifts. (A11)

In my family [on Christmas] we also eat cod with potatoes, noodles and scrambled eggs. [...] My grandmother told me that the traditions of my country and my family changed a lot. Formerly Christmas was expected because people wanted to have some new "socos"¹³, or a blouse. They ate only potatoes and some cod, sardines sometimes. After praying to Baby Jesus, they walked the roads all singing while

¹² A typical Christmas dish from in the North of Portugal.

¹³ Wooden clogs, widely used in rural areas; fallen into disrepair.

going to church, to attend mass. But now, on Christmas, people no longer go to Midnight Mass. There are few traditions left. There are many plastic toys and many things just to spend money on. The nativity scene was made with a pine cut from a "bouça"¹⁴ and moss from walls. Now everything is bought, the ornaments, puppets and trees are plastic. (A7)

I took this photo on vacation, because I don't know if my kids are going to grow to make a nativity scene. Now I know what the nativity scene is, and then I can tell them how it was. The scene has a lot of clay figures [...] there is moss and pine. I took this photograph very carefully, so it would be great and people could see everything. (A17)

The photographs brought to reflection the issue of cultural diversity. Teacher and students reflected on the similarities and differences of customs and traditions of families, on the importance of understanding different cultures, different traditions, and also about the cultural richness brought about by multiculturalism and the need to respect 'otherness' (Figures 11-14). Students concluded that many of the customs and usages of Portuguese families are common, "because we are all neighbors and we live on the same land" (A16).

What pleased me most was to find that in my family and the families of my classmates there are many things in common as well. Despite differences we also have much in common. And we saw it in the pictures we brought from home. (A12)



Fig. 11: *The Christmas' Night*
Student's A16 photograph



Fig. 12: *Nativity Scene*
Student's A4 photograph

¹⁴ Term used in the Minho to designate a delimited field where pine trees, eucalyptus, and other trees or bushes along with plants and thorny undergrowth was.



Fig. 13: *Beach Holiday*
 Photograph collected by Student A5

Fig. 14: *Birthday Party*
 Photograph collected by Student A1

The teacher spoke about the need to preserve community's remarkable cultural features and contribute to the construction of one's own identity and the one of the Portuguese people. He was also emphatic about the need to understand and accept differences in order to coexist peacefully and in a constructive way.

While researching and photographing social practices such as weddings, baptisms, Christmas traditions etc. students came to understand photography as cultural representation, such as memory and record of, "customs, housing, monuments, myths and religions" (Kossov, 2001: 28). By sharing, they took the role of agents of diffusion of local culture.

I chose this photograph because it was taken at my parents wedding and also because my grandfather is in this photograph and he has already passed away. I like that my parents got married, and as my grandfather is in the photograph, too and I love him, I brought it [...] he told me many things when I was little about how things used to be. I miss my grandpa and talking to him, so this photograph is very important to me [...] so I don't forget my grandfather. (A3)

As the encounters took place, students' awareness of photography's potential as to how to convey world representation was raised. They gradually realized that photographs are conveyors of meaning: they inform and communicate (Sontag, 2007); they tell and retell stories, offer unprecedented insights, enable everyday experiences to be redefined and that are so often regarded in a careless and distracted manner (Kachar, 2009). Anyway, as one student pointed out, "this project helped me learn that photographs can accomplish many things I was not aware of." (A13)

At the last encounter, the photographs of António Moreira dos Santos returned to the debate; parallels between representations of his photographs and the cultural reality in which students are located were compared (Figures 15-16). The photographs brought to reflection the issue of cultural diversity. Together with the students, the teacher reflected on the similarities and differences of customs and traditions of families, on the importance of understanding different cultures, different traditions, and also about the cultural richness brought about by multiculturalism and the need to respect differences.



Fig. 15: *My First Communion*
Photograph collected by Student A15



Fig. 16: *The Baptism*
Photograph collected by Student A2

The meaning of the experience

Students were always interested, active and orderly while taking part in the activities proposed: i.e. they endeavored to perform them, asked questions, exposed their doubts and described experiences. This positive assessment on the part of researchers was supported by students in a questionnaire answered at the end of the project, in which they affirmed having enjoyed all the activities, especially the Portuguese traditions research:

What pleased me most was researching about Christmas, about my family. My grandmother told me things I didn't know. (A4)

What pleased me most was to learn about my family traditions because I had the opportunity to look for photographs and learn interesting things about my family and also about me. (A5)

What I liked most was looking for photos at home, so my parents would tell me things about them and my family and about my country. As my father was on vacation, because he came from France, [...] he helped me and told me what he did as a child. (A15)

Although the use of digital cameras had been anticipated, it became apparent as the project went on that students prefer to use their phone cameras:

It was very good, because then we could do different tasks and not just draw or paint because I don't like these activities very much. (A16)

What pleased me most was being able to take photos with the phone and use these photos to think about me. Mobile phones are banned in class, but they are useful to do the photography project. (A8)

Many mentioned that they enjoyed reflecting on themselves and learning about their classmates and from their pictures:

What pleased me most was taking pictures with the phone, I was already used to it, but this time there was a very good reason –to think about me. (A3)

What pleased me most was to be able to talk about myself, but at first there was a lot to think about, because it's hard to talk about myself in front of the class and the teacher. (A7)

The activity that pleased me most was taking photos of me and thinking, and then speaking to the class, because I used to speak only to my friends and now I talked to everyone and everyone got to know who I am. (A11)

The one activity that pleased me most was me taking my pictures and then talking about me in class and listening to my classmates. (A13)

In their answers to the question, *"What did you learn from this project?"*, they mentioned some technical knowledge about photography:

I could understand why sometimes pictures don't turn out well. [...] To transfer my photographs to the computer I needed a cable, because this camera has a different card and you cannot fit it in the computer. My brother lost the adapter. (A1)

[...] to take good pictures you need to know some techniques, because of the light, and we also need to get the image quality right. (A13)

Many students have shown assimilation of technical guidance on how to get artistic pictures: the poses and facial expressions used, the scenarios, angles and cutouts chosen, ordering first and second plane frameworks, the balance of colors and light and shadow.

Mobile phones and digital cameras were handled by students with dexterity and ease, even when these devices needed to be coupled to a computer:

They also mentioned having learned, *"what is identity,"* i.e. *"that we have an identity that can change with time and depending on where we are;" "the need to respect other cultures, respect differences,"* and *"some of my family and my country traditions."*

This dialogue between two students recorded on video and transcribed below, illustrates their degree of participation and involvement in carrying out the activities:

A2: The teacher told us to shoot or look for photos while on vacation. I went to my grandparents' house and there were a lot of very old photographs.

A4: Did you bring them?

A2: No [...] my grandmother did not allow me, but I photographed them and I have them on my phone.

A4: What will you do with them?

A2: I'll keep them, because I can use them later to talk about my grandparents. And it may even be good for when I'm big.

CONCLUSION

This action research study highlighted the key role of the teacher as an element of change, provided that teachers are able to get out of their comfort zone to try out new pedagogical practices, use new resources and new materials in order to meet social needs and challenges of today. The objective of the research was to transform teaching practices according to contemporary theoretical guidelines, on how to promote multicultural/intercultural arts education. This purpose has been reached, since the goals set for the pedagogical intervention have been fully achieved. In summary, what we found out with this action research study is as follows.

Centered on the concept of 'identity', anchored in photography, and backed by a theoretical framework focused on issues of multiculturalism – the project helped students acquire a better understanding of themselves and the other. The process not only sharpened the students' aesthetic sense, but also facilitated their understanding of what constitutes identity and 'otherness'. Through visual analysis of the selected photographs, the economic, historical and socio-cultural contexts were revealed. It was an important step towards the acceptance and respect for differences and to relate personal forms of diversity to those manifested in contemporary society. Asked to reflect on the meaning and value of differences, students demonstrated not only curiosity, but also made efforts to understand and accept diversity. Thus, reflection on contemporary issues such as inequality, indifference, and intolerance, linked EVT teaching to the problems of contemporary society and showed that photography can be a valuable tool for political awareness and civic-building.

The production of digital images with the help of mobile phones has made learning playful, interactive and contemporary. The self-portraits presented to the class not only boosted knowledge of oneself, but also knowledge of others. Having become aware of themselves and different identities which are present in a socio-cultural group, students also learned to value cultural diversity. They realized that, despite one's uniqueness and individuality, some features are common to everyone in the class. From this dialogue and constant contact between 'self' and 'other', they were able to learn acceptance of what is different and accordingly, the principles of an inclusive school were also valued.

In this globalized world, where processes of cultural exchange widen and intensify, where the notion of identity tends to be blurred, but also where specific and particularistic identities tend to proliferate and multiply – as a form of art and an instrument of world representation, photography presents itself as a powerful resource for an arts education intended to contribute to greater social cohesion.

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11

Dance Education in the School System of Taiwan: The Reform and Future Prospect

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Abstract

This research paper highlights significant topics underlying the theme of reform in dance education in Taiwan's under the implementation of *Guidelines for a Nine-Year Joint Curricula Plan for Elementary and Junior High Schools* made in 1998 (Huang, Lin and Chang, 2010). The first section outlines the background to changes in dance from a physical education subject in Taiwan's school system to the performing arts, and its relationship to the study's research questions. Section two contains an analysis of the old and new forms of dance education in schools and limitations of the reform system. In the third section, there is a discussion of expectations for dance education in the Education Reform movement of Taiwan. Section four looks at current difficulties of dance education in the school system under the plan of the Education Reform. The fifth section discusses the implications of dance education in the country. The sixth section contains a discussion of mixed opinions on the effects of globalisation on dance education and the decreasing percentage of students entering successively higher levels of dance education. Through the analyses, this study aims to review the impact of reform efforts for dance education in Taiwan's school system and discuss its future development.

Keywords: dance pedagogy, education reform, integrated learning

Introduction

Since the announcement of the implementation of *Guidelines for a Nine-Year Joint Curricula Plan for Elementary and Junior High Schools* made in 1998 (Huang, Lin and Chang, 2010) dance education in Taiwan's school education system has undergone tremendous changes (Table 1). The Guidelines changed the curricula from an old compulsory (Table 2) to a new curriculum (Table 3). It also changed the subject of dance from being a physical education course to become part of the performing arts in the Arts and Humanities. Thus, a new opportunity for incorporating dance in the education system as a professionalizing subject has emerged.

Table 1. Structural account of Taiwan's school education system

School education system in Taiwan					
School levels	Nursery	Kindergarten	Elementary School	Junior High School	Senior High School
Ages	3 - 5	4, 5 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18
Note			Compulsory	Compulsory (1968 -)	Transition to Compulsory (2014 -)

In the new curriculum plan (MOE, Curriculum outline, 2014), there are seven major learning areas: Language, Health & Physical Education, Social Studies, Arts & Humanities, Natural Science & Technology, Math, and General Activities. The learning areas of Arts and Humanities include visual arts, music, performing arts (drama and/or dance), and other art forms (MOE, Arts and humanities learning area, 2014).

Table 2. Old Curricula

Elementary School	Courses							
1 st grade & 2 nd grade	Chinese	Math	Natural Science	Physical Education	Music	Arts & Crafts	Ethics	
3 rd grade 6 th grade	Chinese	Math	Natural Science	Physical Education	Music	Arts & Crafts	Ethics & Hygiene	Social Studies
Junior High School	Courses							
1 st grade 3 rd grade	Chinese & English	Math	Natural Science	Physical Education	Music	Arts & Crafts	Ethics & Hygiene	Social Studies

Table 3. New Curricula

Grades	Learning Areas						
1 st grade & 2 nd grade	Language	Health & Physical Education	Cultural Classes		Knowledge for living	Math	General Activity
3 rd grade 9 th grade	Language	Health & Physical Education	Social Studies	Arts & Humanities	Natural Science & Technology	Math	General Activity

Taiwan's education system consists of six years of primary school (starting from age 6), three years of junior high school, and three years of senior high school. The nine-year compulsory education system (elementary schools and junior high schools) started in 1968 and has continued on until the last academic year (ending 2014). During those years, critical examinations were imposed on students before entering colleges and universities, and before senior high schools as well. In this academic year (2014-2015), a twelve-year compulsory education system has just started its transitional period. Therefore, parents are concerned about how the Education Reform would affect their children's future development and educational opportunities. We, as dance educators, are keeping our attention on the opportunities for dance education in the new system for students between grades ten to twelve.

Besides dance education in the school system, some students take dance classes outside of the school regardless of having had dance classes in school or not. This situation is rather unique in Taiwan and may be found in other Asian countries as well. The relationship between teachers in private dance schools and their students is somewhat like that of the mentor-pupil relationship. Therefore, for some students, even if they have enough dance training in their schools, they still take classes with teachers in private schools to maintain their relationship with the teachers. Many private dance schools can be found in each city and county in Taiwan. Traditional dances are the most popular classes. Ballet is

taught as an additional class among the schools usually dominated by traditional dances. Creative dance class and modern dance classes can also be found in the private dance schools' curriculum.

1. Research questions

Although there were significant changes in professionalizing dance education from integration into physical education classes into the performing arts as a subject, there are difficulties for dance to remain permanently in this area. As one of my professional duties is to train dance teachers (in the schools and communities), I am always concerned for dance education in the schools, communities and higher institutions. For this reason the following qualitative and quantitative research questions were developed, the results of which will be explained in the next sections:

- (1) What affected the development of dance in school education in Taiwan?
- (2) How will school dance in Taiwan be involved in postmodern Asia?
- (3) What are the standards for school dance education in Taiwan and what is being taught?
- (4) What are the qualifications for a dance teacher and who teaches dance classes in schools?

2. Dance education in the school system and its limitations

Dance education in the school system can be divided into two parts. One is for the talented students and the other is for the general students. The dance classes for the general students can be offered in different learning areas but it has certain limitations and these will be explained as follows.

Dance classes for talented students

In each city and county, there are three schools, one from each of the three levels below college: elementary, junior high and senior high school. Chosen by the Ministry of Education, these schools offer talented-in-dance classes for special students. There is one such class in each of these schools. Students in these classes usually take some general courses such as Language, Sciences and other academic subjects along with six hours of dance technique classes each week. The dance courses, including Creative Dance, Improvisation, Ballet, Modern Dance, Traditional Dance, and Production, are offered at different levels. Around May or June of each year, auditions are held for interested students. Students who graduated from any of the school levels of these classes have to take the audition again in order to enter a higher level of dance classes for talented students. For example, a student who graduates from the dance class for talented students in a junior high school will have to participate in a new audition at the senior high school level. The purpose of the system is to train professional performers for the future.

Dance classes within the school curricula

In the old school system, dance was only considered part of the physical education curriculum. In the new Nine-year compulsory education system, dance can be taught in more than one learning area including Health & Physical Education, General Activities, and Arts & Humanities.

1) Health & Physical Education

As in the old system, dance was included as part of the Physical Education curriculum. As part of this curriculum, the stress is on how dance could improve one's health.

2) General Activities

This area is meant to let teachers have the freedom to design class content on their own. Therefore, if the teacher is willing, dance could be included as part of the syllabus.

3) Arts & Humanities

Since dance is part of the performing arts section, it is more or less taught in this area. However, there are difficulties for dance to remain permanently in this area, the reason for which will be explained in the next section.

Current limitations

Dance finds its unique place in the area of Arts & Humanities but also encounters difficulties in having to compete with the drama courses in the same area. In Taiwan, the Ministry of Education allows each school to decide if the performing arts section offers drama only, dance only, or drama and dance in alternate semesters in one school year. Some people argue that in the training of drama, dance is included, therefore, it is not necessary to have dance classes on their own. At the present time, one can find schools in Taiwan having different curricula for the performing arts of Arts & Humanities. Some offer dance only, some offer drama only and still some offer both. The research study strove to understand if these rationale were beneficial to dance education or if there were other guidelines that need to be adopted for the implementation of dance education curriculum.

3. Prospects for dance education in the reform system

Using the theory of Howard Gardner as the underlying structure for pedagogical change, Education Reform stresses an interdisciplinary curriculum (Y. Y. Huang, 1998). As a result, it is possible to compare the previous charts (Tables 1-3) and see how the old compulsory system and the new system align. It is possible to discern that Education Reform shuffled the arrangement of subjects taught in school and the reform intended to connect the curriculum from grade one through grade nine. Currently, experiments on a new, twelve-year curriculum reform are being carried out. In the new curriculum, the focus of the reform is placed on the main subjects such as Language, Science, etc. Unfortunately, dance is not included as a subject for study in the twelve-year curriculum yet and so close observation will be continued for future research.

In the analysis of the first phase of the reform, there are three main areas of discussion. First of all, some reformers advocate that dance should be recognized as an independent subject (C. S. Chang, 2007; 2011). In her opinion, Chang Chung-shiuan, Professor of the Dance College at Taipei National University of the Arts, proposed that dance be included in the learning areas of Health & Physical Education, Arts & Humanities, and Integrative Activities (C. S. Chang, 2001). C. S. Chang raised this issue out of concern that dance be recognized as a "real" subject instead of simply being part of other subjects. In the initial *Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines (1998-1999)*, drama was the only subject that fell into the category of performing arts. As a result, through C. S. Chang and many other dance educators' collective efforts, dance has become a subject of the performing arts also. The category of performing arts now includes "all sorts of expressions through body and sound and artistic performances", for grades 1-9 (MOE, Arts and humanities learning area, 2014).

Secondly, the reform movement viewed dance as a mandatory subject. When dance was part of physical education in the old compulsory curriculum, dance class was only optional. Making dance a mandatory subject is not a radical idea; but a revival of its role as traditional dance performance in ancient China, however, is controversial. Scholars of Chinese dance history, Wang Ke-fen (K. F. Wang, 1991; Wang & Su, 1996), Peng Sueng and Yu Ping (Peng & Yu, 1991), Yin Ya-zhao (Yin, 1991), and Su Zu-qian (Wang & Su, 1996), gave vivid evidence of the educational function of dance in ancient China. The educational function of dance was distinguished from its recreational, ritual, social, and military functions. For dance to be considered a performing art is a contemporary idea. Making dance a performing art subject that is mandatory in the school system is to link the ancient and the contemporary view of dance together pedagogically.

Thirdly, dance should be open to everyone regardless of social or economic status. Education Reform in 1998 has its focus on the Nine-Year Compulsory Education System which guarantees every child an opportunity for education for at least nine years (the transitional reform has been extended to twelve years) (MOE, Educational System, Educational System, 2012). For dance to be a subject in the compulsory education system, will change the social value of dance. As a means of teaching dance appreciation for all, it will bring justice for dance. It also means that perceptions of dance will change; ballet will no longer be seen as a recreational activity for upper class children. In the educational institutions, dance will no longer be taught only to 'talented' students or college dance majors only; it will be taught to all children attending school classes so that boys and girls will dance together each year of their compulsory curriculum. Consequently, dance will no longer be considered a 'girlish' activity. Dance will be available to all in the school system. Therefore, dance education in the reformed system is expected to find a clear definition, efficient functions and equal opportunities for all students.

4. The predicament of school dance education in transition

Dance education in the reform system still has some predicaments. People in the dance field were excited about the initial plan but soon found the situation more complicated than ever. The main problems come from two aspects: teacher training and qualification, and curriculum design and the teaching of dance classes.

Teacher training and qualification in dance education

Since the beginning of the Nine-Year reform process teacher training and qualification for dance educators has remained uncertain. The Ministry of Education in Taiwan developed a few solutions hoping to solve the problems of the current situation. However, the decisions did not seem to be able to solve the problems permanently. The first problem comes from the qualification of dance major graduates. They are the ones that spent most of their time learning and improving their dance skills. Most of them have trained in basic dance techniques, choreography, and related theories. Unfortunately, few of them succeed in passing the exams for acquiring teaching credits that are crucial in becoming a qualified school teacher. The main reason is because the graduates are not familiar with the subjects tested in the exams such as Philosophy of Education, Educational Psychology, and Principles of Instruction.

In order to solve the problem of insufficient teaching staff for special classes such as performing arts, English, and native languages, the Ministry of Education announced a project for county education departments to recruit people with special talent and grant them certification in order to offer classes in the school system. Although being certified, they are not considered "teachers" but "educational human resources teaching staff" (MOE, Plans and Objectives, 2012).

The second problem comes from school teachers who were not trained to teach according to the concept of curriculum integration. Curriculum integration is one of the major issues in the Education Reform. The issue is that interdisciplinary committees and team teaching are required (Y. Y. Huang, 1998). Educators who support the Education Reform agree that students would benefit greatly from the idea of curriculum integration. Lin Kung-chin, chairperson of the music department at the Taipei Teachers College, asserted that the idea of curriculum integration is based on a central logic which relates to most learning areas and it is from a real experience of our social life (K. C. Lin, 2001: 62). Therefore, he believes that arts and humanities could become one subject and that music, art, sculpture, drama, and dance are appropriate to be combined into one area (K. C. Lin, 2001).

However, most school teachers are trained to teach each subject individually; yet now they are expected to expand their teaching capacity into other subjects. Therefore most of them are suffering from teaching anxieties and depression that caused many of the older teachers to file for early retirement. In the research for Lin's thesis (2002), *The Investigation of Teachers in Elementary Schools in the First Grade on the Concept of the Performing Arts, the Types of Implementation Activities and the Problems*, she found out that at least one third of school teachers were not clear about the concept of performing arts. In order to solve this problem remedial classes for teachers are sponsored by the Ministry of Education. As for the field of dance education, which has not yet been an independent subject in the official curriculum at any of the Teachers' Colleges, the art teachers and the music teachers were required to take intensive training in order to teach dance classes. For example, I had been one of the professors that taught the intensive dance classes for the art teachers and music teachers from junior high schools in southern Taiwan. This problem has been solved after many dance and drama major students were selected to study for additional education courses and become teachers of performing arts.

Chang Chung-shiuan suggests using DBAE, Discipline-Based Art(s) Education, as an example for restructuring dance curriculum in Taiwan (C. S. Chang, 2000). In her study, C. S. Chang (2000) explains, the beginning of the DBAE movement developed in the United States, could be traced back to the 1960s when scholars like Manuel Barkan, Harry Broudy, Elliot Eisner and Ralph Smith advocated that arts education should provide the chance for students to experience the process of creativity, respect creativity in oneself and others, and, understand and respond to the development of arts in history and cultures. Later on, the same concept found its reflection on the field of dance as well. C. S. Chang then used the four dimensions that DBAE stressed on, Aesthetics, Criticism, History, and Production to be the basis for her proposed reform of dance education.

According to C. S. Chang (2000), unlike the traditional skill-oriented curriculum, the ideal training for both students and teachers of dance must include artistic, educational, and social dimensions in the curriculum. From my own experience of teaching dance in higher education, I found that current dance curricula in most colleges emphasize the artistic dimension much more than educational and social dimensions. Therefore, we have produced many dancers and choreographers but not enough educators and researchers in dance. On the other hand, many graduates find it difficult to survive in the market of performing arts, and look to teaching dance classes for a living. As a consequence of not having enough background in education, they fall into the cycle of teaching dance with the styled techniques that they have learnt. Interdisciplinary dance classes are too abstract for most dance majors to achieve under these conditions. C. S. 's analysis and proposal corresponds with many educators' opinions, and therefore many colleges are starting to implement curriculum reforms in dance teacher training. In addition, some educators in Teachers' Colleges urge their students to take creative dance classes, which might in turn enrich their teaching (Y. C. Chen, 1998). Many examples of how to design dance classes for the elementary students were provided by the experienced teachers (Cheng, 2000; Liao, 1994).

Curriculum design and the teaching of dance classes

In this section, the curriculum design and the teaching of classes refer to dance classes where dance is recognised as one of the performing art subjects in the *Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines*. Nevertheless, it has not been made clear how dance should be taught under the new curriculum plan. For this reason, problems have arisen regarding curriculum design and the teaching of dance classes in the school system during the reform implementation.

Although publications about how dance can be taught in the Education Reform have been available over the last decades, the curriculum design for dance lessons remains ambiguous. Chang Li-chu suggests that the curriculum design for dance in Education Reform should give the students opportunities to experience the following four dance areas: visual appreciation, physical participation, exploration, and composition of dance vocabulary, and verbal interpretation of dances (L. C. Chang, 2003: 32). However, without a proper curriculum design, the teaching of dance classes and other art forms have become a puzzling task. When school teachers try to teach performing arts, most of them are distressed by the lack of teaching materials (T. I. Lin, 2002). This is in part due to fact that most of these teachers did not receive proper performing arts training from the Teachers Colleges.

At present, dance teachers seek solutions through collaborations. For example, Chuang Yi-chu, a dance major graduate, had designed and co-conducted a dance program with two school teachers while writing up her thesis (Chuang, 2002). This collaboration helped the teachers to collect their own teaching materials. In my intensive dance classes for school teachers, most of them follow the textbooks to teach classes. Unfortunately, through my inspection, none of the textbooks so far give clear instruction for dance lessons. For the dance majors who were granted teaching certificates, they teach dance lessons based on their own designs. It is not certain if all of them design dance lessons that followed the general curriculum of the seven learning areas. In this concern, it is necessary for a 'Standard of School Dance Education Competence' to be formed and institutionalized.

In her published research, Chen Chiung-hua (2002) suggests that arts teachers start with an assessment strategy in order to design curriculum for learning subjects in Arts and Humanities, in which music and performing arts are included (C. H. Chen, 2002). Her idea of *Backward Design* came from the ideas of Grant Wiggins (1998) and also from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's (1998) studies. The steps of backward design are identifying desirable results, determining acceptable evidence, and planning learning experiences and instruction. In other words, it begins with setting learning outcomes to achieve before choosing methods of instruction and assessment. As teachers are trained with Instructional Design Theory, Backward Design Method could also be introduced to them. I found the concept of *Backward Design* quite interesting. This concept could also be followed by dance instructors.

Chappell, Craft, Jobbins, and Rolfe (2011: 105-106) propose forming teaching partnerships between school teachers, dance educators and dance artists, stating that, "[...] the mutual engagement of partners allowed for complimentary approaches to emerge, drawing on what partners do and know, as well as connecting with what they don't do or know." In other words, giving and sharing between different talents will bring the best results and the greatest efficiency for teaching dance to school children.

5. Benefits of dance education in Taiwan

The benefits of the reform effort in dance education in Taiwan lays in four dimensions. First, educational opportunities in dance gives people the opportunity to appreciate the nature of the body. Second, it is one of the mediums for integrated learning. Third, it is a way to preserve one's culture.

Fourth, it is a chance to improve gender equality. The importance of dance education for school students is not an issue that has just been mentioned recently but it has never been seriously discussed until the start of the Reform Education.

Dance Inculcates Appreciation of the Body

In Wang and Su's (1996) study, dance was an important study subject for the nobles in the ancient period but the value of dance was no longer appreciated over time due to social changes such as wars and economic crisis. Since the fall of the ancient practice of dance as an important subject in education, dance no longer maintained its social value and bias against dance was brought by the early settlers from China to reside in Taiwan (Tai, 2009: 70-75). Instead, long-term traditions have caused most people to become reserved in body movements and nonverbal expressions. Rigid and uncoordinated body actions are normal signs among the people in this society. While dance has lost its value in our society, its importance was increasing in other societies. An article organized by Chung Meng-ling from the lecture of Liu Mei-chu, asserts that oriental culture has great impact on the study of Somatics (Liu, 2001: 50-53). Liu pointed out that the essence of Somatics, an alternative treatment, methodology and theory that includes therapies such as Feldenkrais Method, Alexander Technique, etc., which was developed in the West, could best be presented by the Body-Mind philosophy of the East (Liu, 2001: 51). Unfortunately this nature of the body that was discovered by our ancestors is losing its function in modern days.

For the purpose of revitalizing the spirit of dance, dance education is essential to educate people to appreciate the nature of the body. Huang Su-süe, the founding director of the dance department at the Tainan University of Technology experimented with creative dance classes with a group of senior elementary female students in 1991. From evaluating their movement experiences she discovered that their achievement in dance matched their learning performance in other subjects; therefore she suggested that dance classes be incorporated into the school curriculum for the best results (S. S. Huang, 1991: 93-95). Under the Education Reform, more students will be able to experience dance classes than ever before. This is an opportunity for students to experience nonverbal expressions and nonliteral communications. Then we may expect to see freer body actions through movement experiences in this society.

Dance is a Medium for Integrated Learning

Integrated learning is one of the main goals for curriculum reform. When dance was included as one of the subjects in the learning area of Arts & Humanities, its value in education was put at a higher level than ever in Taiwan.

The history of dance education in Taiwan, both in the school level and in higher education, has in part been linked to or is under the system of physical education or music (L. C. Chang, 2001; Tsai, 2001, 2003). Therefore, it is a familiar task for dance to cooperate with other subjects. Nevertheless, dance has also shown its quality of being a dominant subject while improving other learning areas. In an experiment that I conducted with assistance from school teachers, elements of the major learning areas were introduced through dance lessons (Tai, 2003). It shows that the concepts of subjects such as languages, mathematics, natural science and social studies could in some cases be better conveyed through movement experience rather than through verbal teaching.

Although not weighted as an important subject for study as the ancient times (Wang & Su, 1996), dance in curriculum reform has becoming highly valued. Being a medium for integrated learning allows dance to be recognized for its educational value in the way it was once treated in ancient times.

Modern education proves the wisdom of our ancestors and recalls the importance of dance education based on its integrating quality.

Dance Education Preserves the Heritage of Intangible Culture

The definition of intangible cultural heritage, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s Convention (2003) preserving and revitalizing our intangible heritage, is as follows¹:

The intangible heritage might be defined as embracing all forms of traditional and popular or folk culture, i.e. collective works originating in a given community and based on tradition. These creations are transmitted orally or by gesture, and are modified over a period of time through a process of collective recreation. They include oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivities, traditional medicine and pharmacopoeia, the culinary arts and all kinds of special skills connected with the material aspects of culture, such as tools and the habitat.

As this definition includes the performing arts, dance education is essential for preserving an intangible cultural heritage. Although not a respected profession in the older tradition, dance has been an important part of rituals, ceremonies, festivals, and social recreation. The folk dance forms became less practiced as new dance forms such as ballet and modern dance have become popular. In recent years, the preservation of folk dances has become a new goal for dance educators in Taiwan. Teaching folk dance to school children is thus a way to preserve the heritage of our intangible culture.

Dance Education is a means for Gender Equity Education

Through the collective efforts of dance pioneers and dance educators, dance has become an accepted activity by the end of the twentieth century. However, dance is still considered a feminine activity by many people. Chang Shu-sia, in her article for the journal, *High School Education*, pointed out that gender difference stereotypes are still strongly influential in the beginning of the twenty-first century, and therefore affect male participation of dance activities and career decisions (S. S. Chang, 2000). Yunyu Wang has admired contributions from female choreographers and dancers to the development of Chinese dance history and contemporary dance history in Taiwan (Chou, Frangione, & Wang, 2002; Y. Wang, 2002, 2004). However, she admitted that the success of females in the field is due to the gender bias and stereotypes of a dancer's social status.

When the Ministry of Education announced the *Grade One-Nine Curriculum Guidelines* in 1998, the issue of Gender Equity Education, along with concerns for Technology, Environment, and Human Rights, were slated to be incorporated within the Learning Areas. Many of the schools are thus using dance as a way for educating students of both genders to respect each other on an equal basis. For example, Wulin Elementary School in Kaohsiung and Chongming Junior High School in Tainan, have posted their curriculum designs for Gender Equity Education on-line for the purpose of sharing. Wulin Elementary School directs students to learn the concept of Gender Equity by means of acting, singing, and dancing. Chongming Junior High School guides the students to equally interact with others of the opposite gender through dance classes.

Dance education in Taiwan provides opportunities for both males and females to participate in dance activities and pursue professional careers in dance.

¹ Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00002>

6. The concerns of globalisation and declining birth rate

There are many other concerns within the field of school dance education that are discussed but are rarely presented in written forms. Within these concerns, I pay special attention to the issue of globalisation and the declining birth rate in Taiwan, for they are potentially important for my research findings.

The effects of globalisation on dance education

Though Education Reform was proposed before Taiwan became a member state of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, the effects of globalisation were not significantly realized until then. For the trading market in Taiwan, the effects are two-fold: both beneficial and detrimental. For education in Taiwan, especially arts education, globalisation seems potentially a 'saviour' to a certain degree. Siao Ping-chin, director of the Research and Promotion Division at the National Taiwan Arts Education Centre, pointed out that the functions of arts education were not seriously noticed until Taiwan entered WTO (Siao, 2003: 70). From his perspective, Siao sees globalisation as a way of promoting the competitive quality and aesthetic appreciation of a nation. The pressure that Taiwan faces from entering WTO forces the government to reorganize its future plans.

The creative function of arts education plays an important role in the, *Challenge 2008 - National Development Plan*, announced by the Executive Yuan of Taiwan in 2002 (J. S. Chang, 2004: 141). The plan's ten major investment projects are infused with the themes of culture and quality. A feature of the plan is to transform culture, creativity, and quality into economic industries (J. S. Chang, 2004: 148). One of the strategies for the Cultural and Creative Industry Development Plan is to, "cultivate art, design and creative manpower" (J. S. Chang, 2004: 140-141). Siao believes that for this reason the function of arts education is prominently mentioned in the, *Challenge 2008 - National Development Plan* (Siao, 2003: 70).

As David Birch, Tony Schirato, and Sanjay Srivastava analysed in *Asia: cultural politics in the global age* (2001), "globalisation has in a sense replaced, or is in the process of replacing, modern Asia with postmodern Asia" (2001: 58). Their observations identify that some of the changes in Asia due to globalisation are unconventional even in modern Asia. This aroused my interest in examining the effects of globalisation on the development of dance. How school dance education in Taiwan will be affected by the trend of globalisation and how it will be involved with the postmodern Asia will be my concerns for further studies.

The declining birth rate and the population of dance majors

The population of students taking dance as a major for their degrees is always a serious concern for dance educators in Taiwan. However, there are few studies about this issue. In his thesis, Lin Cheng-lung (1998) investigated the number of students in Taiwan who continued to study dance as their major choice after they graduated from the talented dance classes in the elementary schools. He came up with the average percentage figures as follows: 40.0% of elementary graduates entered the talented dance classes in the junior high school; 22.7% of the same group entered talented dance classes in the senior high schools or vocational high schools; 17.8% of these entered dance departments in the colleges, and 3.3% entered graduate schools for a master's degree in dance (C. L. Lin, 1998).

From Lin's survey in 1998, the decreasing figure of dance students in each successive level can be considered a warning sign. It reveals that the social value of choosing dance for career pursuits is still low. Since the guidelines of Education Reform granting performing arts as part of the Arts and Humanities Area was announced in 1998, more dance instructors are in demand for teaching in the

schools. However, the population of dance major students has not increased due to the decline of birth rate in the last two decades. How this problem continues to be serious should be a closely watched issue for future studies.

Conclusion

In my study of school dance education in Taiwan, I have come to understand that collective effort is crucial to its development. As the twelve-year compulsory education system has just started its transitional process, adjustments are being made in the teaching of dance classes in the school system. Whether or not the adjustments become a good cause will probably only be revealed in the future. Thus, further studies will be carried out on the reform of school dance education in Taiwan and more will be discussed, such as creativity explorations, gender issues, identities, and curriculum designs, in the near future.

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12 | “Child Art Liberation”- The rediscovery of Franz Čížek.

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Abstract

Franz Čížek (1865-1946) is regarded as a prominent reformer of art pedagogy. His Vienna art classes for children established in 1897, became the centre of an international, long-term reform movement. His educational principles were based on the freedom of development of children's creativity. As his international exhibition activity made his classes particularly well-known in Great Britain and the USA, he changed art teaching in state schools and met with a multifaceted response – such as from Maria Montessori, Johannes Itten, the Child Art Movement, the Group of Seven in Canada, and in the teaching and writings of Mark Rothko from the late 1930s. This article, Laven charts an overall picture of Čížek's work and impact against the background of contemporary pedagogical positions and was also able to draw on the largely unpublished material in the Čížek Archives¹ in Vienna.

Key words: child art education, artistic development, pedagogical reform, avant-garde

“Make your schools into gardens where flowers may grow
as they grow in the garden of God”.
–Franz Čížek²



Fig. 1: Franz Čížek's on his 70th Birthday (1935)
Photo by Rudolf Johann Bohl © Wien Museum³

¹ There exist three main archives dealing with the Cizek heritage: the Čížek Archives are located in the Wien Museum, in the Wien Bibliothek and in the Archiv of the University of Applied Art Vienna.

² Wilson, *A Lecture by Professor Cizek*, p. 2

³ <http://www.wienmuseum.at/en/>

Introduction

In 1886, while still a 21-year-old art student, Čížek obtained financial support for his private drawing and painting classes, from the Secessionists, *7er Club*. By 1895, at the age of thirty, Čížek completed his formal training at Vienna's famous Academy of Fine Arts. After he won the Master's Prize, he was a frequently commissioned painter of historical scenes and portraits. The Emperor Franz Joseph commissioned a portrait from the promising young painter. However, for Čížek's creative spirit, a career as a "court painter" was not sufficiently life enhancing. (Laven, 2006: 83f)

In 1897, at a new private art school in Vienna, children were educated to enable the emergence and flowering of their innate creativity. The founder of this exhilarating pedagogy was Franz Čížek, a preeminent pioneer in the development of visual art education for children. Within a very short time his experimental classes became very popular. By 1904, his classes were integrated into the then Vienna School of Arts and Crafts (now the University of Applied Art); they remained there until 1938.

In honor of Čížek's 70th birthday on June 16, 1935 (Figure 1), the outstanding culture critic and journalist, Max Ermers (1935), wrote in [then] one of Vienna's leading newspapers, "Whenever they install the pantheon of great Austrians who have significantly enriched their homeland and the entire world, Franz Čížek must be included."... "Like [Johann] Pestalozzi in Switzerland and Maria Montessori in Italy, Čížek freed children from the strictures of the old pedagogy."⁴ His reforms reached their zenith between 1918 and 1938 (Figures 2-5).



Fig. 2: Franz Probst, 15 yrs. *Fight* (1918) linoprint, 23x43 cm
© Wien Museum



Fig. 3: Gretl Hanus, 15-yrs. *First step* (1919) linoprint, 20x20 cm
© Wien Museum



Fig. 4: Marianne Mendl, 16 yrs. *Tramps in Moonlight* (1914) woodprint, 18x16 cm
© Wien Museum



Fig. 5: Burgi Lakner, Gouache on paper
© Wien Museum

The life span of Čížek (1865-1946) encompassed many watershed events, including the decline and dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; World War I; the founding of the first Austrian Republic; the 1930's policies of "Red Vienna"; the 1938 Anschluss; World War II; and its aftermath. Although Čížek's new methods had received worldwide acceptance, by the time of his death in Vienna, he had slipped from the radar screen and his work was no longer recognized or acknowledged. In 1946 at 81, Čížek died blind, alone, and impoverished. Today, in Vienna, his contribution has been almost forgotten. Such a fate would have been unimaginable in 1900 when Vienna was the center of visual art education for children. (Laven, 2006: 113)

⁴ *Wiener Tag* ['The Day' in Vienna],

Čižek's Influence on the Artists and Intellectuals of his Time

In the 'salon' of Bertha Zuckerandl⁵ and in the circle of the educational reformer Eugenia Schwarzwald, Čižek met others who shared his outlook - the Secessionists Gustav Klimt, Otto Wagner and Koloman Moser; also, the well-known psychologists Charlotte and Karl Bühler, who sent their daughter to Čižek's classes. In 1912, when Rudolf Steiner first saw the work of Čižek's pupils at the Fourth International Congress of Art Educators, he could not believe that such exciting and compelling work had been produced by children. Subsequently, Steiner adopted some of Čižek's ideas. In 1926, after Maria Montessori visited Čižek's classes, she integrated his approaches into her renowned "Montessori Method."

During his Vienna years (1916-1919), the Bauhaus artist and teacher, Johannes Itten, also reflected Čižek's influence in formulating the underlying principles of his teaching and his philosophy of art. Later, in his Bauhaus years, Itten again was both challenged and moved by Čižek's approach with former Čižek students, including Friedel Dicker and Franz Probst serving as conduits. After the traveling exhibition (1924-1927) of the work of Čižek's pupils were shown at the Art Gallery of Toronto – the principal art museum of Canada, the famous Canadian painter, Arthur Lismer (*Group of Seven*), founded experimental schools of visual art for children in Toronto and Montreal. Lismer's school still exists in Toronto along with the Child Education Gallery of Ontario.

The American painter Mark Rothko (1903-1970), recorded that he was directly influenced by Čižek in the late 1930's when Rothko was writing his thesis and beginning to teach. Rothko used Čižek as a model in his never published, *Scribble Book*. Rothko accepted Čižek's educational motto: "Let the children grow – flourish and mature according to their innate laws of development." Rothko's commitment to the continual exploration of new media also can be traced to Čižek. (Breslin, 1993: 132)

Children Are Artists - The Beginning of Some of Franz Čižek's Educational Reforms

What were some of the components of Čižek's new approach? How did his ideas that shook the world of children's visual art education emerge? Čižek knew that the active participation by his pupils in his program for the visual arts was fundamental to the healthy development of their minds and spirits. Almost all of the remaining Čižek pupils tell us that his approach facilitated the full blossoming of their artistic and creative imaginations. His method enabled each child to embrace the freedom to create in their own unique way. When necessary, he reached into his own pocket to waive the tuition for underprivileged children.

In Čižek's classes, children from the age of four on up could freely experiment with different media to do their own drawings and paintings (Figures 6-9). They were not inhibited by the then 'customary' formal approaches of most art schools. Čižek had only one rule: his pupils were given a general subject but were never told how to paint. Čižek trained his assistants to consider themselves as 'accompanists' who remained in the background. The aim of Čižek's approach was to nurture the development of the innate power of creativity in children; they were encouraged to be independent and self-reliant.

He knew they would devise their own techniques to achieve their inner-directed objectives.

⁵ Same location where Alma Schindler met her first husband, Gustav Mahler



Fig. 6: Free plaster sculpting in the Čížek Class. Photo: Rudolf Johann Bohl (1934)

© Wien Museum



Fig. 7: Robert Ullmann in the juvenile arts class. (1917)

© Wien Museum



Fig. 8: Animals made from wire and plasticine by 8 yrs boy. Photo: Rudolf Johann Bohl (1934) © Wien Museum



Fig. 9: Handycrafts in the Čížek Classes. Photo: Rudolf Johann Bohl (1934) © Wien Museum

The significant difference between Čížek's view and that of the traditional art educational approach at the time was that they later saw children as small adults who did not yet have distinctive personalities and had to be guided systematically to become orderly and dutiful citizens. (Key, 1903: 122) Thus, they copied plaster casts of old masterpieces of sculpture as well as of specific examples of colors and decorative art. The traditionalists believed that this approach would promote orderliness, neatness and cleanliness to meet the needs of the 'bourgeois state. Neither the psychological roots of artistic creation or the innate creativity of children was then acknowledged.

Čížek's classes were completely different. His pupils had total freedom to pursue their imagination; and they were encouraged to develop their own unique techniques and media. To stimulate the imaginative forces of his pupils, Čížek originated the use of collage and linoleum block printing as teaching methods. He was also responsible for the idea that children should be left to work alone as adult artists were. The unusual and exciting works produced by Čížek's pupils strongly reflected his faith in the innate creativity of children. Hence, the concept of 'child art'⁶ was given further weight. Gustav Klimt at a meeting of his colleagues in the Café Museum after viewing an exhibit of work by Čížek's pupils, reportedly said: "Give up painting; the kids can do it better." (Čížek, 1942: 43)

In 1925, the work of Čížek's pupils was shown in Paris at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and thereafter at meetings of art educators. Over the years, hundreds of artists, art educators and researchers from China and the Americas visited Čížek's famous children's classes in Vienna; thus he was able to promulgate his far-reaching ideas. From 1923 to 1927, the Rockefeller Foundation organized and financed an exhibition that traveled for years to all the larger cities in the United States and Canada highlighting work from his Juvenile Art Class and the Neo-Avant-Garde of the Viennese Kinetism (Figures 10-13).

Franz Čížek was a distinctive educational phenomenon whose phenomenon whose teaching found a home all over the world. He saw his classes as a center of a radiant sun that spread its creativity throughout the human universe. His school helped to fulfill this mission by sending exhibitions of the work of its pupils to Holland in 1933-34; and to South Africa, Scotland, Wales and Switzerland in 1935.

⁶ visual two and three dimensional art objects



Fig. 10: Exhibition of the Čížek Class in Metropolitan Museum, New York (1923)
© Wien Museum



Fig. 11: Exhibition of the Čížek Class in Balboa Park Museum San Diego, (1925)
© Wien Museum



Fig. 12: Hertha Zuckermann, 15 yrs. *Spring*. Gouache on paper, 50 x 50 cm (1919)
© Wien Museum



Fig. 13: Running into the class with the assistant Rudolf Hockauf. Photo: Rudolf Johann Bohl, (1934)
© Wien Museum

Čížek enjoyed having pilgrims from all over the world come to study his methods and the work of his pupils. He pursued research in the newly developing field of child psychology in addition to art education. Between the two world wars, Otto Glöckel and Victor Fadrus (whose son also was a pupil of Čížek's) took over the successful integration of Čížek's methods into the curriculum of Vienna's public schools. Although Čížek's work interested "the powers-that-be", he was never coopted.

In 1932, the City of Vienna officially recognized Čížek's contribution to the reform of visual art education by making him an honorary citizen. In 1946, at his honorary gravesite in Vienna's famed Central Cemetery, Culture Minister Victor Matjeka spoke of Čížek as,

[...] the founder of the modern recognition of the organic growth of the visual spirit who passionately awakened the creativity of children and bravely fought against the old inhibitive rules and standards. He dedicated all of the days of his life and all of his thoughts to the eternal spirit of children; he not only discovered the originality and beauty of their drawings and paintings and promoted it enthusiastically, but also protected it like a father. All of the children of Vienna and his pupils mourned in spirit at his grave, as he had given them so many of their happiest hours and freed them to be themselves and express their innermost thoughts and feelings. (Matjeka, 1946)

Recently there has surfaced, like the tip of an iceberg, a renewed international interest in the methods, principles and approaches pioneered by Čížek. Again and again, scholars and child development practitioners and teachers from all over the world are seeking the methodologies described in the writing of Čížek and the works of his classes. One of our biggest challenges today is to find ways to reach young people whose cultural development is most at risk due to economic or social circumstances. Čížek knew that a participatory approach to learning is the most direct way to capture the imagination of children and enlist an intelligent response.

The nurturing of children's authenticity and innovative methods of expression continues to be even more important in today's technological and media world, than it was in Čížek's time. At least today, as a result of his pioneering work, the artistic creativity of children is accepted as self-evident. This truth has stimulated important research in the psychology of child development and education – as already evident in Montessori education. Fortunately, a few assistants and some of the pupils who knew him personally were still alive in the 2000s.

Avant-Garde – Theory and Practice of the Viennese Juvenile Art Class

Now at the beginning of the 21 Century, Vienna is beginning to spend more of its time and resources on its great artist and teacher, Franz Čížek, as it appraises the value of his legacy. In his will, Čížek left

to the City of Vienna over 100,000 student works; all of his writings (personal as well as professional); his art collection and his extensive library – all valuable resources for further study in the authentic expressions in the visual art of children. His work and his memory as the "great liberator" still has to be eloquently celebrated in a large exhibition; hopefully, it will be possible to organize this exhibition and tour it around the world again.

The magnificence of Čížek`s living contribution should also be memorialized by a research institute and youth art center, organized along the lines of the Lawrence Batley Archive for Children`s Art at the University of Leeds⁷, or the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood in London`s Victoria and Albert Museum. A Franz Čížek Institute not only would be an appropriate living memorial but a fertile meeting place for artists, teachers, and researchers-and could in the future bear fruit from cultivating die creative potential of the children in Vienna. [A full-re-encounter with the life and work of Franz Čížek, once again would restore Vienna as the world center of children`s visual art education.]

Innovative Aspects of the Project

This author proposes that the archival and research work begin with an in-depth study of materials from the estate of Prof. Franz Čížek, the initiator and *spiritus rector* of Viennese Juvenile Art and Kinetism. Along with the professor`s entire private library are letters, diaries and notebooks, paintings, drawings, sketches, sculptures, and the whole collection from Čížek`s estate in the Vienna City Library and the Archive of the Wien Museum. Furthermore, the surviving correspondence of Prof. Čížek will be examined from the point of view of database development, reconstruction, replication, and networking.

Some 2500 letters to Franz Čížek have been preserved. Most of these letters are located in the Archive of the Wien Bibliothek (Handschriftensammlung) in Vienna. In addition, there are about 300 letters in the archive of the Wien Museum. To date, only a few of these letters have been published. It will be the task of this project to translate and find if there are additionally other letters. Letters included in the project will be published in English translation so that they will be accessible to researchers who are not proficient in German. The empirical research needed for the annotation of these letters will clarify in detail the scholarly knowledge of the Austrian and international relationships of reform pedagogical of the Avant-Garde in Vienna from the inter-war period.

Beginning in 1920 and extending into 1946, numerous photographs document the exhibitions of the art classes. This database will serve as the basis for the reconstruction and development of a complete catalogue of the works of the *Avant-garde Viennese Juvenile Art Class*. In addition to identifying and dating specific objects in the exhibition photographs, it will also be possible through an analysis of stylistically comparable drawings and graphic works from the collection of the University of Applied Arts Vienna and the Wien Museum to make new attributions. Detailed attention will also be paid to the question of the ways in pedagogical ideas shaping reform were adopted in the Čížek`s class. This project will create an opportunity to critically review the child art research field from the contributions of the Avant-garde, and if need be, to re-evaluate it.

Data pertaining to the following areas will be entered into the database: key players and their biographies; institutions; societies; movements; exhibitions; lectures; matinees; venues; key publications; texts; manifestos; publishers; galleries; reviews; and receptions (i.e. foreign media). The creation and development of a topography of the Viennese avant-garde would include all important people, events, venues, works and dissemination in Vienna from which key works (art, theatre,

⁷ [visual]

architecture, film, dance) could be developed. On the one hand, it would close gaps in information; and on the other, make replication possible by networking and communication strategies.

Importance of the Project: Benefits and Implications

Research on *Čížek's Avant-garde Art Education* continues to be quite difficult due to the broad, interdisciplinary approach encompassing issues related to culture, the arts, literature, politics and sociology and necessity to collect all significant data on the reform pedagogies and child art avant-gardists. Publication of the correspondence of the central figure of the Austrian Avant-Garde in Vienna will significantly advance the research. The project's findings will contribute to a better and broader understanding of Čížek's central artwork and his cultural influence in the 1900-30s and later on.

Translations of Čížek's work primarily related to his Juvenile Art Class and the Neo-Avant-Garde of the Viennese Kinetism – both of which took place in the inter-war period – will complement related analyses of child art, which to date have remained fragmented; and in cooperation with a group of international art historians, will link up with a worldwide effort for pedagogical reform in art education. With respect to the involvement with *the Juvenile Art Class* and *Kinetism* in the archives of the Wien Museum, a closer look will be given to the Viennese Avant-Garde from the perspective of the history of the reform pedagogy and networking. This should make it possible to position Franz Čížek as an important Avant-garde *artist/educator* in Austrian cultural history.

Conclusion

My research project is primarily focused on the history of art and pedagogy. Its primary goals are to develop a database of Čížek's reform pedagogies, exhibition materials, and research archives; and make them accessible to a broader scientific community by means of its orientation towards cultural studies and will encourage further interdisciplinary work, such as research on cultural migration and cultural sociology.

Analysing a part of the legacy of Franz Čížek, one of the main protagonists of the Avant-Garde in Vienna, will make a significant contribution to the evaluation of cultural developments in Austria in the inter-war period. Publishing key texts of the artistic and literary Avant-Garde and putting empirical materials compiled during the course of the research project online, will provide a foundation for future research work. Ultimately, the findings of this project should create direct points of contact for interdisciplinary researchers worldwide.

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13

The memory in the construction of a route of art ... The lived and the living: reflection on time, space and image

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Abstract

Through the study of the artistic creation process, we can observe a close relationship between artistic production and its context, which performs the functions of perception, memory, imagination, creativity and expression. The development of creative activities, and the learning context where they are developed, is considered crucial for an analysis of the artistic research process. This paper seeks to address some of these themes found in José Paiva's (2009) PhD thesis, which are revisited in my doctoral research entitled, *The Biennial of Cerveira (1978-2007) – memory and uniqueness*, developed at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Oporto in Portugal. The subject of my investigation is an analysis of procedures and methods of work of participating artists in the Bienal de Cerveira ateliers, workshops and symposia and their interaction with the visitors in Vila Nova de Cerveira to determine the added-value for the community as a stimulus for new knowledge in this context.

My analysis will also focus on the most striking facts of the activity of the Cultural Association, *PROJECTO-BIENAL DE CERVEIRA*, as a resource for investigative artistic research. My methodological approach – narrative inquiry between Paiva's reflection on experiences and the context of his activities – has allowed me to inquire into the aspects of developing artistic knowledge in interaction with others. Through the ethnographic approach, topics of knowledge become more alive, more sensory and more contextualized than abstract issues, because the former are more active and more attractive, as they are full of elements gathered throughout the observation of the artistic process. This research aims to contribute to an understanding of the added-value and importance of artistic actions managed through a private cultural organization in the community.

Keywords: time, space, image, artistic research

Introduction

Starting from the idea that a community is shaped by things and that they are offered to the perception of the artist as images, authors such as Argan (1995) propose an appropriation of the image by the community, by assigning images to things. Thus emerges the importance of the contribution of the artist and the art in the process of the reflection and management of the community.

This paper addresses some themes of José Paiva's PhD thesis, which are revisited in my doctoral research entitled, *The Biennial of Cerveira (1978-2007) – memory and uniqueness*, which is being developed at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Oporto in Portugal¹. My investigation of the context in which these actions are developed is through an analysis of the narrative and artistic work

¹ My dissertation analyses the procedures and methods of work of the participating artists, their interaction with the visitors, and the added-value for the community as a stimulus to new knowledge through artistic practice in this context.

of Portuguese artist, José Paiva and the most significant events of the association, *PROJECTO-Núcleo de Desenvolvimento Cultural/BIENAL DE CERVEIRA* in Portugal.

In the case of Vila Nova de Cerveira's Biennial, the study focuses on the analysis of prime productive sectors within the Bienal de Cerveira organized by a group of artists and creators in collaboration with other artists². The physical product of these actions has always been developed in the village and the community has always enjoyed them. In reference to the Bienal de Cerveira we must recognize the importance of the earlier International Meetings of Art, organized by Egídio Álvaro (1937-) and Jaime Isidoro (1924-2009), whose fifth edition gave rise to the first Biennial in 1978 (Bienal de Cerveira)³.

With the case study, it is possible to achieve a more authentic knowledge, because descriptive narrative is more vivid, more sensorial than abstract knowledge, since it is a reflection of lived experiences; and more contextualized. In these ways, narrative inquiry within the case study method is more active and more attractive because it is full of elements of observation and reflection of the artistic process and its context. The purpose of using the case study methodology is to completely and literally describe the situation investigated. Hence, the description of interviews and data of the process proposed for analysis is essential (drawings, notes and other materials for understanding the final work), because they give specific elements for the reader's comprehension of the phenomenon studied.

The research aims to contribute to the production of new knowledge and understanding of the importance of managing a private cultural organization as opposed to the management of public bodies. The independence of management, bureaucratic and institutional standards, and hierarchies needed in the private sector allows the creative capacity of the organization to invest in projects that are valued for their cultural importance and not according to political significance. Therefore, my analysis is based on three of the themes explored in José Paiva's PhD thesis, namely:

1. The importance of community (i.e. 'of others') in the development of José Paiva's individual route;
2. Solitude in the creation process and transferring the acquired knowledge;
3. Art as empowerment and social development.

1. The importance of community (of others) in the development of José Paiva's individual route

Observing a community and living it through artists, makes us more aware of its nuances, and the visual data of the community brings out in each individual different symbolic values. The function of the artist in the community works to establish their own symbolic codes; to prepare, and to interpret the meaning of their own individual experience, because it is representative of the artistic process, and can present numerous points of convergence with the community. In a path of storing several experiences, Paiva tries to get inside himself to examine his roots, his deepest recesses, putting in artistic expression elements of his environment, the images of his dreams and the remnants of his memories. Therefore, the artistic creation appears full of specificities of daily life, of those who practice, who chooses to partner with his artistic construction. His works suggests that the artist has a non-linear method through the entire process of their creation. One can follow different tracks left as a puzzle to understand what is used as references.

² Project-Center for Cultural Development Association, established in 1994, with the purpose of organizing the Biennial. For more information on its relationship to biennials see <http://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/bienal-de-serveira-portugal/>

³ <http://bienaldecerveira.org/en/home/>

Through the study of the creation process, we observe a close relationship between artistic production and its context, which performs the functions of perception, memory, imagination, creativity and expression. The development of creative activities, and the learning context where they are developed, is considered crucial for the analysis of the research process. According to Paiva (2009: 9),

The study focuses on the intimate space of an artist, precisely the author of the thesis, to present more accurately the authorial sense built on collaborative engagement fostered with other artists, teachers and students of art, cultural authors and promoters of the development of communities and populations in different geographic places (Mozambique, Cape Verde, Brazil and Portugal)...

If we observe in José Paiva's work a focus on a deliberate interpretative action marked out by the community, the same happens with that of the Bienal de Cerveira. All the actions taken during the Biennial were open to the public, to the community – at times interacting with the artists, socializing with them and talking about the work they were developing, and sometimes experimenting, especially in ceramics, printmaking and painting. Cerveira, due to its privileged geographical location, constitutes a place for reflection and analysis of the underlying artistic specificity, of each author, and also for comparing ideas with other authors' criteria (Figure 1).



Fig 1: IX Biennial (1997) Free Painting Atelier: direct-intervention of the visiting public
© Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)

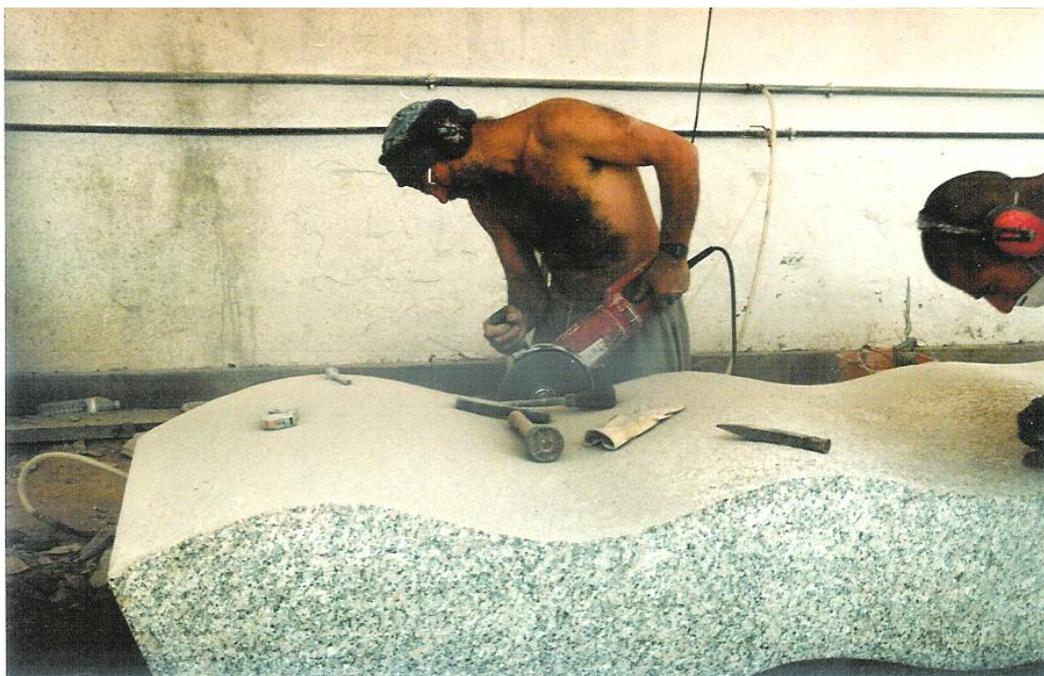


Fig. 2: The Galician sculptor *Silvério Rivas*, accompanied by Rui Ferro
(at that time, 1996, a student of sculpture at FBAUP)
© Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)

This was the case of the Association *PROJECTO-NDC*, created in 1994, with the clear goal of organizing the Bienal de Cerveira and to promote actions inbetween the years of the Biennial, such as offering painting and printmaking ateliers, symposia, workshops, exhibitions and courses. As a result of their efforts, the cultural growth in Cerveira became evident in the spread of initiatives in the social sector, with the installation of artists in the region, the creation of institutions such as, for instance, the Senior University; *Porta Treze* (Thirteenth Door), as a club of poets⁴; the Gallaecia Higher School (Escuela Superior Gallaecia)⁵, with courses of Architecture and Urban Planning, Graphic Design, Industrial Ecology and Environment, and Arts and Multimedia; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, besides the institutionalization of the Biennial itself, with the creation of a permanent entity, the *PROJECTO-NDC*. In this regards, it was possible to observe both individual collective movements through forms of research that address a group of artists who joined with the Bienal de Cerveira with the purpose of designing an ideal and art as empowerment and social development.

For example, during the Symposium *Encontro com o Granito* (Meeting with the Granite), in 1996 (Figure 2), all participant sculptors had the support of students of Arts in Granite, from the Cooperative of Masons (Oporto), as well as two students of sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts - Oporto University (FBAUP), including Marta Lima and Rui Ferro.

2. Solitude in the creation of the thesis or in the process of transferring the acquired knowledge

If the creator falls in love with an idea and focuses all of his or her personal and professional experience to live and share it, they start to direct their choices, interests and time, due to the need to learn and teach. Artists who investigate a particular goal of knowledge or artistic activity like any other researcher, appear to stand aside from their social environment for an unlimited period. In José Paiva's case, however, he speaks about the sublime influence that society exerts in its institutionalized

⁴ <http://portatreze.wordpress.com/>

⁵ <http://www.esg.pt/>

authority and expectations for him to have some kind of finished product to show from it – i.e. a finished work that will provide a retrospective justification for the social life he spent in isolation.

Sartre described the state of "being-a-project-in-progress" as the ontological condition of human existence, as each person lives from the perspective of their own individual future, which necessarily remains closed to the views of others. According to Sartre (in Reimão, 2005), this condition can result in the radical alienation of the individual, since all others can only see the person as the finished product on their personal circumstances, but never as a heterogeneous project made by these circumstances. On the same issue, Paiva (2009: 41) reflects:

The workshop is not confined to the walls that close the space where I have paints, brushes, canvas and other materials, and where spaces for study, reflection and observation are created and the painting takes place. It travels to other places, extending to the detached house, to school, to the open space, where, in many moments, the activity of a painter is extended to.

And what about chance, fortuity, imponderability? What is its weight in the development of the artistic process? For Ostrower (1990: 1), chance is an important element to be investigated in the process of artistic creation, because human beings live in a world full of visual, audible, olfactory and intellectual stimuli. Some of these circumstances are not noticeable, but few have the power to provoke our imagination, our deepest self. In Paiva's words (2009: 33):

It is in this complex and conflicting broth that the creative decisions are woven, the improvisation and the dialogue with accidents forged, and also where you define the decisions and adjust utopias with pictorial realities that are established. It is in this contradictory framework that the presence of ideology is requested, clarifying the tangible field where the author underpins their creative and civic options.

But chance only becomes part of the artistic process when this happens to be in a state of predisposition, and it changes from mere chance to a meaningful coincidence. To allow the structuring of a significant work, the artist has to perform an approximation of what he or she wants to express with what they wish to express, and beforehand they may not know where they are going; i.e. a white canvas may result in countless paintings, series, which does not mean that the artist is not being faithful to a trend. And when the processes involve a community, the processes of perception and the selected trends may or may not become verifiable (in moments of history, in certain subjects, types of observation, imagination, and formal aspects). In this sense, the solitude of the artist is not always 'visible'.

3. Art as empowerment and social development

The process of creation is the product of a chain of actions deeply linked to ongoing work within the reality, which seeks to deepen the look on the world around us, using significant reorganizations of data seized during the process. The process of perception coincides with the artistic creation and is directly linked to the processes of memory and imagination. Emerging trends in the artistic process can be identified in the individual creative process as in manifestations of a collective nature. The sense of a community thus becomes an integral part of the artistic creation process and is also part of the development of the history of art, at both the individual and the collective level. As there are similarities between the individual and the collective processes of creating, we can observe the correspondences between them.

To accomplish this approach of denoting similarities and trace relationships between the processes of individual and collective creation, we turn to the contributions of Salles (1998), namely to her study of genetic criticism, which is used to interpret, narrate and relate the documents of the creation process and to advance associations to unveil its paths. The documents of the creative process can be understood as temporal records of a work in progress, with functions linked to the storage of ideas and experimentation. This methodology unfolds a possibility of analyzing the collective creation process.

For this approach, I use examples of Paiva's process of individual artistic creation and his involvement in the collective artistic actions influencing the development of the Bienal de Cerveira.

Identification of an individual artist in a collective artistic process usually starts from the mentoring of a collective artistic process. Such an example (Figure 3) is expressed by Paiva (2009: 33), when he states that:

The workshops of Ceramics, Stone and Printing Techniques of the Mar [Sea] Atelier⁶, in Mindelo, were used repeatedly by FBAUP's students and teachers in visits that became regular...

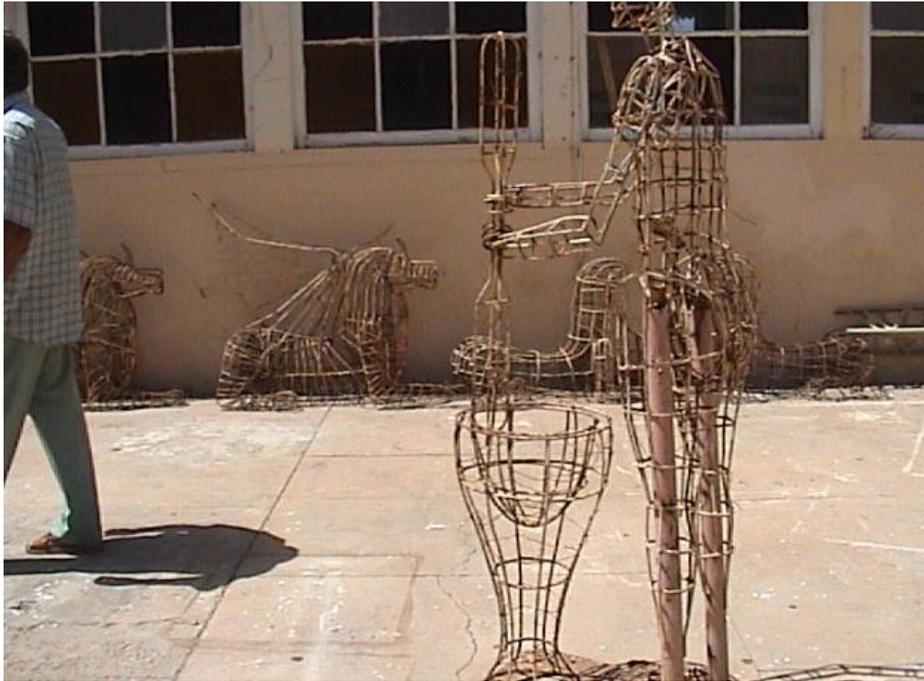


Fig. 3: Sculpture workshop at *Mar [Sea] Atelier*, 2002, directed by Carlos Barreira (Sculptor)
© Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)

The creation of courses and workshops of research, in a forgotten place of Cerveira, at the same time of the Biennial, where in addition to the workshops there is the artistic residency – the House of the Artist (Figure 4). Paiva (2009: 33) elaborates:

The design of the M_EIA project from the zero stage (Free Courses, August – from 2002), its identity, organic and functional configuration was participated by our movement. We participated in the construction of the courses, its profiles, contents, curricular and program design, and in the choice of methodologies.

⁶ Retrieved from <https://ateliermar.wordpress.com/>



Fig 4: Course of live models at the House of the Artist, sponsored by *PROJECTO-NDC*, 1999
 © Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)

With the creation of the Museum of the Biennial, stemming from the work of the Association *PROJECTO-NDC*, which had as main function the attempt to socialize Art in the poorest region of the northern Portugal, it is possible to document the materialization of the place where art meets the community, integrating it as an element and mentor of the artistic process. As Paiva (2009: 123) comments:

The ongoing programs of the Community Development Project of Lajedos are endless: Community School, Museum; Project for Rural Development; Supportive Economy Network, Babylon – Supportive Tourism; Production and marketing of agricultural and processed products.

The Mar Atelier began in 1979 and became an NGO in 1987 with the purpose of animating local development programs through the cultural arts in Cape Verde (Atelier Mar, 2014). Other similarities between the *Mar [Sea] Atelier* and the *PROJECTO-NDC/BIENAL DE CERVEIRA* may be found since the latter also organized training workshops within the Portuguese Institute of Employment and Vocational Training, such as Ceramics Courses and Development Agents as Cultural Tourism Guides, in collaboration with an Office of New Opportunities, the GABIGER located in Cerveira (Leão, 2004). Paiva brings this to bear on his subsequent intervention in Cerveira's public space (2009: 201):

Just in order to better present the ideas of this thesis, which are those of its author, protagonist of his own life, it was isolated in the designation used – in the solitude of the studio – a field of intervention that is not confined to the space of the workshop, which often works in various places and also in the public space, nor is separated in the production of the work of art what is nominated as artistic activity, loosen for the sharing of cultural interventions of sought for innovation in everyday life of communities and institutions.

This is noteworthy since one can still see a mural in the public square authored by Acácio Carvalho, with more than 150 m², reflecting the productive work of 25 years of the Biennial (2003), as well as sculptures around the village, results of the Symposia, *Meeting with the Granite* (1996), the *Symposium on Ceramics* (1998), and the *Workshop of Resins* (2006). On the other hand, the engagement with regional communities was very important, such as those of Caminha, Valencia, Monção, Melgaço, Paredes de Coura and Galicia Tominho and Tui, locations that have also become centers of the exhibitions of the Biennial and of other exhibitions organized by *PROJECTO/BIENAL DE CERVEIRA*.

The relationship between the artistic process and the community is very clear in the work of José Paiva, as well as in the action of *PROJECTO/BIENAL DE CERVEIRA*. This Association has organized several symposia, of which that of the Monumental Ceramic with Arcádio Blasco (1928-2013) can be

highlighted (Figure 5). In this case, gathering artists from several countries (Angola, Belgium, Spain, Portugal), whose individual experience intersects and is also confronted.



Fig 5: Drawing by one of the students in the teaching program, under the guidance of Emília Alírio (painter),
Mar [Sea] Atelier, 2002

Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)

Conclusion

The scaffold of this investigation is based on the assumption that the artistic process of the painter José Paiva should be treated as a social event, in which the producing agent is a representative of their social environment, where the person is also inserted. It appears that narrative inquiry offers a descriptive look at this process that goes beyond the boundaries of stylistic and didactic classification largely adopted by critics and art historians; and paces the internal plots that correspond with the semiotic character that emanates through it.

Starting from this framework, one comes to the proposal of this reflection: to analyse the production of meaning of the image when it becomes contextualized, both in its production and in its presentation. The role of individuals, intellectual and scientific networks, peer community, and institutions are considered. The movement of ideas, conversations, debates and conflicts mobilizes individuals; some of them, perhaps due to the cognitive complexity that characterizes them, will make fundamental creative rearrangements that will lead them to the pinnacle of eminence.

The Bienal of Cerveira could only have this location, given the fact that mentalities have ancient and very subtle changes. This geographic space, besides being a crucible of cultures, has always been a center of arts and, in particular, a center of workshops. This part of the story, I think it was the certification for Cerveira, as a Biennial, that has brought about its label of “Village of the Arts”. Thus, interactions do not occur only in situ but also in thoughts, culture and practices of individuals and peers. And they will have a new start at every end of a project...



Fig 6: *Identities* [Identities], Drawing by Margarida Leão (painter),
 Mar [Sea] Atelier, Mindelo, Cape Verde, 2002
 © Margarida Leão

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Appendices

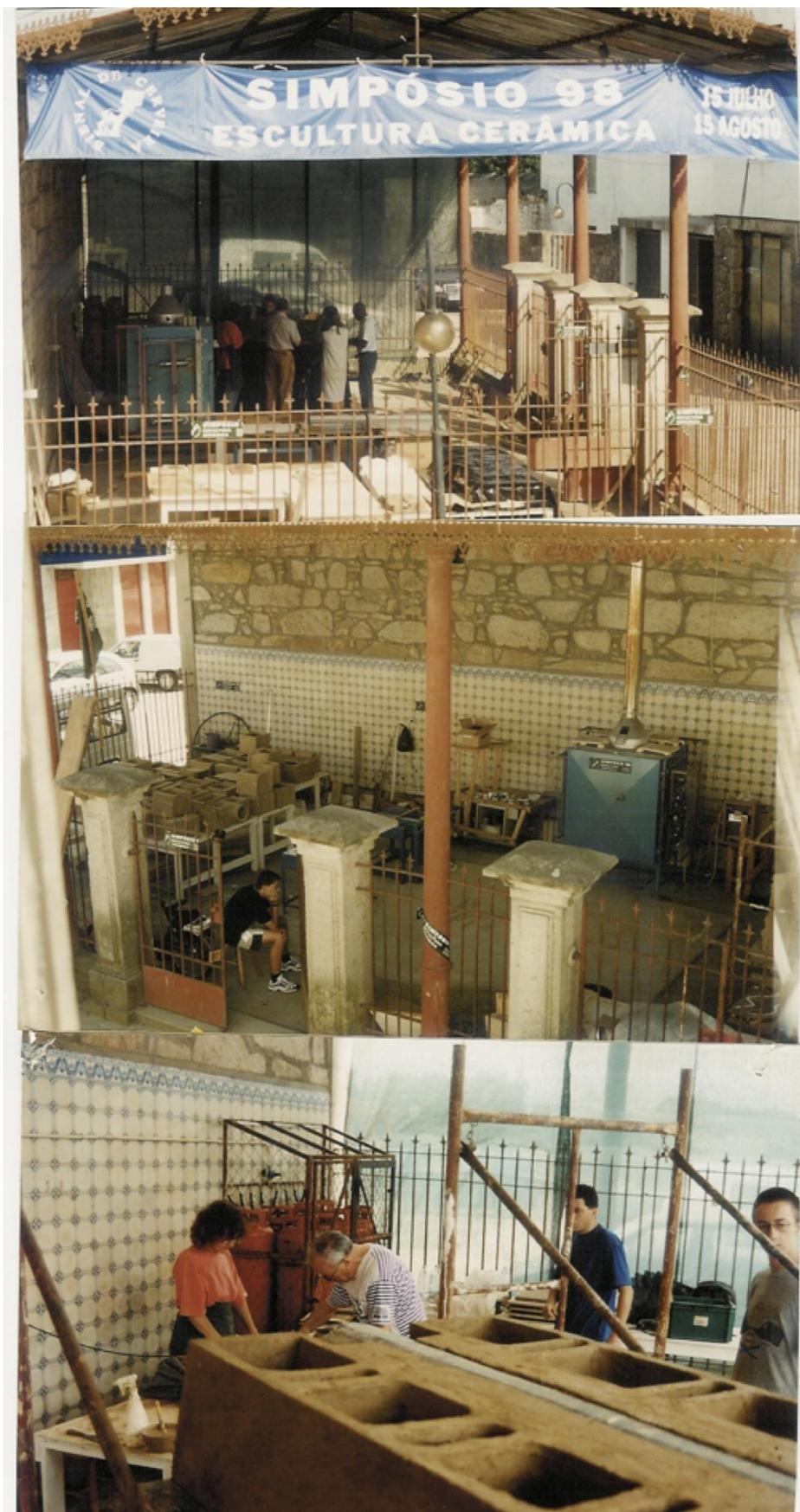
Attached, we present some images of events during the Bienal de Cerveira and in the intervening years, from the Association *PROJECTO-NDC/BIENAL DE CERVEIRA*.



Fig 7: House of the Artist "Painter Jaime Isidoro" (1924-2009) – Workshop and Artist Residency
© Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 8: Children workshop at the IX Bienal de Cerveira, 1997
© Photo: Manuel Morais



Figs. 9-10: Symposium of Ceramic Sculpture, 1998

Fig 11. The atelier improvised at the old fish market

© Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Figs. 12-13: The placement of the sculpture Ponte da Cultura [Bridge of the Culture], according to a maquette by Arcádio Blasco (1928-2013)
 © Photo: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig 14: Installation of Zadok Ben-David in the Cultural Forum,
 exhibition organized by PROJECTO-NDC, 2003
 © Photo: Source: Henrique Silva (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 15. Atelier Electronic Arts, Cultural Forum, 2002
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 16: Interior view of the Museum of the Biennial of Cerveira, by the PROJECTO-NDC
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig 17. Guided tour by Eurico Gonçalves to one of the exhibitions of the Biennial
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 18.: Partial view of the exhibition RIBEIRA NEGRA [Black Riverside] –
Tribute to Júlio Resende (1917-2011) at the XIV Bienal de Cerveira
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 19-20. Free Ceramics Workshop with Public Intervention
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 21: Electronic music concert in the pavilion of the Biennial
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 22: Concert at the XI Bienal de Cerveira Cultural Forum
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 23-25: Street Interventions
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 26: Result of the Workshop of Resins “*Em Cerveira as Vacas são Cervos*” [In Cerveira Cows are Deers], in the Chagny garden, in front of the Town Hall
© Photo: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)



Fig. 27: Workshop Painting of PlintoPoster, 25th of April 2008, close to the Craftsman House, Cerveira
. Source: Paulo Soares (Associação Projecto-N.D.C./Bienal de Cerveira)

14 | *Mediation and partnerships in the Educational Service of the Nogueira da Silva Museum*

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Abstract

Taking into account the enormous diversity regarding the nature of the interaction of the Nogueira da Silva Museum with its audiences, always conditioned by the background of the individual – the personal history, education, taste, mood, as well as the individual perception of the presented object – it is crucial to be transversal and multidisciplinary when trying to mediate and promote these interactions, especially when it concerns younger audiences. It consists therefore of another way to make a *living museum*, enabling an emotional, aesthetic and creative *touch* to the objects or works of art. Promoting learning of their contexts, an important complementary relationship can be established between the formal context of school and the non-formal environment of these spaces. In this way, children and youngsters gain an essential contribution to the enrichment of the transmission of knowledge, cultural heritage, and to the experience of art education, which is only possible through aesthetic and emotional experiences before the real art work and the real objects left by the past.

In view of this, the article discusses the perspective behind several activities for public interaction that were derived from studies and experiences of partnerships between the museum and experts from different areas as well as with some educational institutions. Although focusing on a specific topic about painting, music and theatre, they aim at stimulating a broader range of forms of expression. For the Implementation of these very diverse activities, while retaining the quality and the necessary depth that assures that we are in presence of something more than simple superficial playful activities, the collaboration of music and theatre experts were requested. We can refer to its enormous potential as a medium to carry the message of the museum, in performing contexts where objects or works of art from the collections of the museum can be *brought to life*. Research on the closing session of drawing and painting provided with each school visit, supports the role of museum education for in-depth looking and for developing an on-going relationship between participants and future visits to museums.

Kinds of Mediation

Considering mediation as a form of interaction between the museum, and the public, in order to make easier to understand the objects and collections, trying to respect the individual expectations and the final propose of the museum – the transmission of a cultural heritage, as the responsible person for the Educational Service of the Nogueira da Silva Museum, I always considered of outmost importance those connections.

Taking into account the enormous diversity regarding the nature of this relations, always conditioned by the background of the subject – the personal history, education, taste, mood, as well as the individual perception of the presented object – it is crucial to be transversal and multidisciplinary when trying to mediate and promote these interactions, especially when it concerns younger audiences.

In view of this, often the result of a search, several activities were developed (i.e. *Painting Workshop; Conversations with a painting; Music in Construction; There is Theatre in the Museum; View, Listen and Feeling the Museum*, that although focusing on a specific topic, aim at stimulating a broader range of forms of expression.

For the Implementation of such diverse activities, while retaining the quality and the necessary depth that assures us that we are in the presence of something more than simple, superficial playful activities – we requested the collaboration of music and theatre experts. The partnership between the museum and those experts of different areas and some education institutions, involving all the participants in the construction of the programs and activities to offer the children, naturally improves the mediation quality, through stronger and more consistent experiences.

A Visual Approach

Besides the activities that ensued from research (Trindade, 2006) about the interaction of young people and children with the artwork, *Conversations with a Painting* (Figure 1)¹, where they can deepen their looking with a particular painting, the Educational Service had offered, since its creation in 1991, a workshop at the end of all school visits, using drawing and painting as a way to synthesize and mark the relationship of the child (3 to 12 years old) with the museum. Looking at the thousands of pictures already made, we can of course perceive their favourite themes and objects, and how they draw during the different ages. But mainly, we can recognize the pleasure and spontaneity with which children relate to the museum.



Fig. 1: *Conversations with a Painting*
©museu nogueira da silva

¹ Activity developed in the Master's thesis: REGALO, Maria Helena Trindade A., 2006
Mediation look: artistic appreciation strategies in Nogueira da Silva Museum, University of Minho.

A Theatrical Approach

Regarding theatre, we can refer to its enormous potential as a medium to carry the message of the museum, in performing contexts where objects or works of art from the collections of the museum can be *brought to life*. In this process, the children are involved in ideas and narratives, providing experiences for personal development at various levels. It consists therefore of another way to make a *living museum*, enabling an emotional, aesthetic and creative *touch* to the objects or works of art, and thereby promoting learning many things about them and their contexts. The pedagogical value of dramatic expression in activities already undertaken, like the workshop, *There is Theatre at the Museum* (Figure 2)², by Ana Paula Proença (2012), is very strong and readily observable.



Fig. 2: *There is Theatre In the Museum*
©museu nogueira da silva

A Musical Approach

Connecting sound and music to art pieces and their contexts always seemed to us crucial to complete the relationship with the museum and its collections. With this purpose, in 1995, we initiated a music workshop. It was also our concern to contribute to the demystification of an elitist character, usually glued to classical music, by bringing other forms of music, not usually heard, to children and youth, in order for discovering, playing and trying out rhythms and sounds. And, because, once again, the concern was to imprint quality to the projects, we requested the collaboration of a cellist, Matilde Rocha, who drew up a program designed for different ages, initially named *Discovering Music*, and later on, with the introduction of instruments, *Music in Construction* (Figure 3).

² Activity developed in the framework of PhD thesis: PROENÇA, A.P., 2012, *Dramatic Expression / Theatre in the First Cycle of Basic Education: Investigating the Cultural Mediation Coeducative in relations Museum-School-Community*, University of Évora.



Fig. 3: *Music in Construction*
©museu nogueira da silva

About the School / Museum Partnership

All these approaches are offered annually to schools, through a program of diverse activities. Some, as mentioned, derived from studies and experiences of partnerships between the museum and experts from different areas as well as with some educational institutions.

The Educational Service program activity, *To Look, Listen and Feel the Museum* for example, was implemented together with the *Museum. School Community* (MEC) project of the Institute of Child Studies of the University of Minho. Involving several primary schools and crossing disciplines and expressions, taking into account the class to which it is intended and the topics developed in school, all activities were developed over a year, based on a previously selected object of the museum, and resulting from the cooperation between teachers and museum. It is also the case of the activity *Conversations with a Painting*, which was built in partnership with the teachers involved, both in its programming and through preparation of art history topics. This research had the valuable collaboration of the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo and the direction of Professor Anabela Moura. We focused mainly on the experimental application of one of the possible ways of reading the artwork, as well as how the activity was experienced, involving education students of that Institute and the children in their care.

The relationship of the Nogueira da Silva Museum with students from the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, University of Minho and the Catholic University with whom it regularly works in training areas such as Education or Cultural Dynamism, through academic work, probation, research and visits, is very important for both sides. For the museum, it is essential to increment sound relationships with new publics, for instance through research projects about the audiences of the Nogueira da Silva Museum. Supported by a long pedagogical experience of our Educational Service, this relationship can be also very useful for the students, closely contacting and experiencing realities they will come upon

in their working lives, thereby acquiring skills and more consistent opinions. On the other hand, the program design of the Educational Service annually offered to schools, although primarily supported by the museum collections, is always composed trying to respond to the needs and expectations of schools.



Fig. 4: *Memories of water: A Journey by the Fountains of Braga*

©museu nogueira da silva

An example of how this concern was addressed is from *Memories of Water: a Journey by the Fountains of Braga* (Figure 4), a project developed from thinking about the need of activities involving the environment and the city a necessity that is persistently remarked upon by teachers, and is one of the curriculum items of the first cycle of basic education. To do so, we thought of using an integrator element as witness to a lost memory – the fountains. Starting from those in the Nogueira da Silva Museum’s garden we opened the doors and went out to the old town, creating a story about a fish who, tired of living in the museum’s lake, wished to look for another place to live. So, with the participation of the children pushing the fish (giant fish sponge) and answering questions and challenges along the way, a part of the history of Braga marked by the power of the archbishops, was experienced.

In spite of considering the aforementioned partnership between museums and schools in the construction of projects and activities very important, we deem it no less relevant, the option of offering a permanent *ready-made* program by the Education Service, allowing the expansion of the initial experience permitted by the project or activity, as the same students make further visits to the Nogueira da Silva Museum, in a constant discover of its objects, stories and contents. The museum technicians, with a solid knowledge of the collections and what the objects have to offer visitors, can ease the organizational burden of the teachers, helping them to integrate visits to the museums into their schedules and planned curricular activities.

The fact that teachers are nowadays more and more burdened by bureaucratic and curricular activities, is increasingly excluding schools (specially the basic education) from museums, setting apart an important complementary relationship that can be established between the formal context of school and the non-formal environment of these spaces. In this way, children and youngsters are losing

an essential contribution to the enrichment of the transmission of knowledge, cultural heritage, and to the experience of art education, which is only possible through aesthetic and emotional experiences, before the real art work and the real objects left by the past.

We know the importance of the heritage stored in museums; but we are also aware of the limited weight that the visits to these spaces can have in changing the cultural load of each one, given the strength and competitiveness of the audiovisual and digital media today. We would nevertheless be very satisfied if we could provide a set of positive experiences that remain strong in the memory of each one. Having a closer look to a work of art, entering the universe and the skin of a given real or fictional character, hearing and seeing interesting and often unusual aspects about common objects, some of which we had never thought about before, perhaps even joining forces with those competing means of communication. All are surely experiences that have the potential to shape and change the world view of each one.

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15

Contributions of creative writing in fostering creativity and the love of writing and reading – an action research study at vila cova elementary school

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Abstract

This article presents a synopsis of an action research study in 2013, *Contributions of Creative Writing in Forest Creativity, Reading and Writing*, for the Escola Superior de Educaçao de Viana do Castelo (ESEVC), Portugal for the Master's thesis in Arts Education¹. With the ultimate goal of promoting a love of reading and writing and developing creativity in primary children of the 1st cycle of basic education. I investigated if creative writing workshops can improve the love for reading and writing and if also it helps provide facilitative skills in the textual construction process. The creative writing workshop consisted of nine sessions with taught applied methodologies and practices of concrete and experimental poetry with 63 students, in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade classes of Vila Cova Integrated School grouping, located in the municipality of Barcelos, Braga District.

The qualitative methodology of participation action research (PAR) method was employed in which questionnaires and interviews were the instruments of collecting privileged data. The research study found that the creative writing workshop promoted the development of creativity, taught facilitation skills in textual construction process, and improve the love of reading and writing, with participating students. This conclusion came to me through the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires given to teachers, children and parents. Therefore, this study serves as a case study example of how fomenting teaching practices of creative writing through poetry can promote reading and writing education in children of primary age.

Keywords: creativity, creative writing and reading, concrete poetry / experimental poetry, action research.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the school's role in the role of developing creativity through the use of concrete poetry and experimental poetry. Using examples from the Portuguese avant-garde, an action research case study is presented with conclusions, and future research implications.

In the *Essential Skills in the National Curriculum for the 1st cycle*, especially in learning experiences in Arts Education, it is stated that students should, "[...] participate in artistic achievements that favor the development of individual and group activities in interdisciplinary work" (ME, 2004: 151). Whereas, in the current Portuguese curricular goals of the first cycle of basic education (ME, 2012), reading and writing are especially directed to learning the literary texts. Among the various goals in this area,

¹ Penalva (2014) Contributos da escrita criativa na fomentação da criatividade e no gosto pela escrita e leitura – uma investigação-ação no 1º CEB. Master Thesis Escola Superior de Educação de Viana do Castelo.

there is particularly relevant for this research to, "[...] *speak and write in personal and creative terms.*" (ME, 2012). The Portuguese writers Santos and Serra (2007: 180) claim that, "[...] *to be more creative, you must learn to know your own creativity, know how to identify the most suitable mental state to its use and, of course, develop your potential.*"

In order to achieve the educational goals that are proposed, the public schools have to adapt their learning and teaching methodologies making them more appealing to students. Reading is fundamental to intellectual growth, i.e, those who read expand their imagination and become critical; releasing thought; and in a way, enhance their creativity and gain a little more knowledge that develops every day (Dorneles, 2012).

The theoretical framework of this action research case study deals with theories and practices related to the development of creativity, using the tools of concrete poetry and experimental poetry. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, to create means to make or produce something, or bring (something new) into existence.² A creative individual will therefore be someone able to create something new: who is creative. Rodari (1993: 197) sees creativity as, "[...] *a synonym for 'divergent thinking', the person who is able to continuously break the experience schemes.*" Rodari (1993: 195) points out that there are indeed more creative individuals than others, like artists for example, but adds that, "[...] *the creative imagination function belongs to the common man; [...] it is a fundamental condition for life*".

The content of the creative writing workshop focused essentially on the approach to concrete poetry, because of its relationship between image and word, for, "[...] *the literature, as a creator of images, is able to develop the ability to imagine, fantasize and create, starting from the visible text images*" (Calvino, 1991: 48).

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVITY

Creativity involves problem resolutions in original ways. The teacher who wants to teach for creativity must create obstacles in the traditional ways that students typically use to find solutions, forcing them to think in different ways to circumvent these paths; to experience new ones; and to meet different paths for the same solutions or else develop original solutions (Santos, 2007). One should always take into account some aspects to teach with creativity and be creative: i.e. motivation and high expectations, ability to communicate and listen, and the ability to motivate, engage and inspire (Sanches, 2009).

In the school, creative writing includes, "[...] *a series of exercises that have as a main objective, to get someone to write with more agility, more freedom, and be more creative*" (Santos & Serra, 2011: 178). For Gil and Cristóvam-Bellmann (1999), the main objective of creative writing is to create the taste and enjoyment of writing. Creative writing will result in a love of reading and writing, when people discover the pleasure of writing to, "[...] *hear and listen to what colleagues wrote, join in and share the pleasure of reading and curiosity by others, with the same effort and energy of what someone has to say.*" (Norton, 2001: 11 op cit., Cardoso, 2011: 26).

The role of the creative writing teacher

The teacher's role is key when it comes to promoting the creative potential of children, starting with their own personality, which can stifle or stimulate students' creativity. Cardoso (2011) advises the teacher of creative writing to perform exercises that invites children; as well there will be more empathy and detachment, as both teacher and students are subject to the same constraints.

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/create>

While the children are doing their creative writing exercises, the teacher should circulate around the room so that all children feel close to them, to help children listen, supporting and guiding them (Cardoso, 2011). By framing ingenious questions, the teacher will lead students to broaden their ideas (idem). At this stage, the teacher has the task of supervising the activity, providing mental stimulation allowing students to identify problems and formulate its matters. It is best if the teacher doesn't leave the answers to the problems that will be presenting themselves; rather instead, they should stimulate the initiative of the students (idem). The teacher should, rather, help students believe that everyone can be creative and to make up for it, they should only reflect on the issues to discuss, develop them and implement the ideas, because with dedication and persistence, all children will be able to increase their creative abilities (Matias, 2007, op cit. Machado, 2012).

Visual, concrete and experimental poetry

Visual poetry is often confused with concrete poetry because of the strong connection that both have with the image. What distinguishes them is that visual poetry conveys a message primarily through the image, or does not use the word. In concrete poetry, however, the word is always present, despite being, in essence, a communication form of structured-content, not just a message (Garcia, 2008). Already, the experimental poetry relates mainly to research and the experiences of the poet, with the same observance and awareness of its own investigative attitude and research of the free act of creating (idem). The concrete poem, *Sobre a ambição*, (*About Ambition*), by Guilherme de Almeida (Figure 1), is emphasized by the growing number of syllables of the verses in a pyramid: twelve syllables, as well as the ambition to never stop growing. This analogy comes in the form of the poem, which refers to the desire of always wanting more.

Sobre a ambição

Só
de pó
Deus o fez.
Mas ele, em vez
de se conformar,
quis ser sol. E ser mar,
e ser céu... Ser tudo, enfim!
Mas nada pode! E foi assim
que se pôs a chorar de furor...
Mas – ah! – foi sobre sua própria dor
que as lágrimas tristes rolaram. E o pó,
molhado, ficou sendo lodo – e lodo só!

Fig. 1: *Sobre a ambição* (*About Ambition*) (1964).

© Guilherme de Almeida
São Paulo, Ed. Ediouro 1984³

Techniques in concrete poetry

The grid

The grid (mesh or grid) is taken from the Swiss graphic design in the early twentieth century, depicting the constructivist ideals of the time (Garcia, 2008). The main grid function is to control and guide the position of text and image on the page (idem). Ronaldo Azeredo appealed to the grid (a square grid) for linking text and movement to create the poem's speed (Figure 2). *"The visual*

³ Retrieved from <http://comunidade.sol.pt/blogs/josecarreiro/archive/2010/12/10/verbivocovisual.aspx>

organization provided by the grid use was a good readability warranty, either as a graphic piece, or as a concrete poem." (Garcia, 2008: 90-91).



Fig. 2: *Velocidade, (Speed)*, (1957) © Ronaldo de Azeredo⁴

Isomorphism

Isomorphism in concrete poetry focuses on the way the text is organized and aims to, "[...] *create a structure that contains a similarity between the materiality of the sign and the semantic load*" (Garcia, 2008:100). In, *A Rosa Doente (The Sick Rose)*, (Figure 3) Augusto de Campos (1975), adapted William Blake's (1757-1827) painting and poem by the same name (Figure 4) and introduces part of Blake's poem in his own version. Campos's, *A Rosa Doent*, is a tacit recourse to isomorphism, since the textual graphic (a spiral) is aligned with the text itself (ibid), and recursively mirrors the movement of Blake's original rose branches. Returning to the poem, *Speed* (Figure 2), its composition is also an example of an isomorphic composition, as is the graphical form of the poem (not the text message) which refers to the speed of an idea (idem).

⁴ Retrieved from <http://concretismo.arteblog.com.br/233822/Velocidade-Ronaldo-Azeredo/>

Concrete poetry was called of experimental poetry in Portugal and first published in Portugal in 1962 with the publication of a small anthology of Melo e Castro (1932), entitled *Ideogramas* (Monteiro, 2008; Aguiar, 2006).

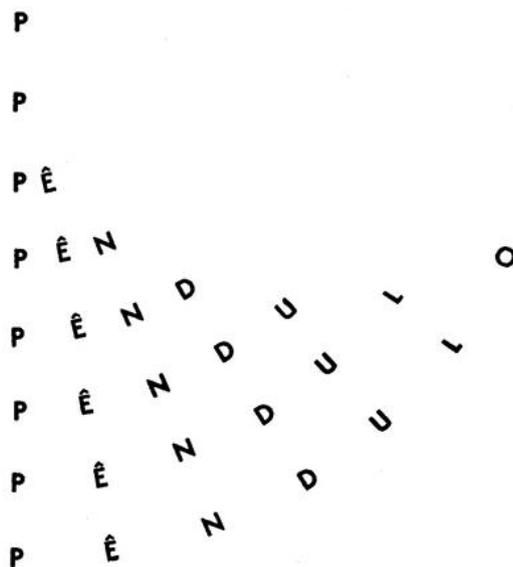


Fig.6: *Pêndulo* (*Pendulum*), in *Ideogramas* (1962). © Melo e Castro¹¹

In *Pêndulo* (Figure 6), Melo e Castro (1973: 67) seeks the object to show itself, establishing in this way a direct link with the visual and concrete poetry. The movement of the letters in conjunction with its message was a significant development of a new syncretism visual language. Through these strategies and methods, an educational workshop for children was designed to utilize examples of the Avant-garde and to inspire students to create their own poetry, drawing upon these examples.

ACTION RESEARCH CASE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate creative writing strategies with primary students to improve creativity and elicit improvement in reading and writing through poetry. Within the various methods of qualitative research, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) present the Action Research as a means by which the researcher can perform reflexive, passive practices to influence educational practice. Thus, this method proved to be the most suitable for the present study. The choice for research methodology fell on action research and its qualitative approach in the educational context in order to maximize collaboration with the teachers at the school. We opted for the use of the qualitative methodology of Participatory Action Research (PAR), to allow greater involvement between the researcher and the other stakeholders (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). Thus, participatory action research (PAR) theory and reflective practice guided the conceptual framework of the research and planning with primary students and teachers.

In order to understand how to elicit creativity in primary students through various forms of poetry, the following research questions were developed:

- *Can a creative writing workshop develop creativity in children of the 1st cycle of basic education?*

¹¹ Image retrieved from <http://po-ex.net/taxonomia/materialidades/planograficas/e-m-de-melocastro-ideogramas>

- *Can a creative writing workshop increase interest in reading and writing in children of the 1st cycle of basic education?*
- *Can creative writing provide children the 1st cycle of basic education facilitative skills in the textual construction process?*

This research was developed in three cycles. In the first cycle, which took place between March and July 2012, made a literature review on the issues and research methodologies in order to find the most appropriate to the study. This literature review sought for a methodology to be based on scientific studies of currently published and poets and writers of reference. In this first cycle research issues were fixed, their relevance and purpose to then devise the implementation plan, defining stakeholders and readying the resources to be used. Also, here the actions and instruments for data acquisition were set. The second cycle was developed from September 2012 to April 2013, where the definition of curricular intervention for the following cycle was established: preparation of meetings, preparation of questionnaires, description of tasks, definition of strategies, activities and identification of inherent resources, and organization of the steps to the cycle three. In the third cycle, from May and June 2013, the definitions were implemented from the previous cycle. The research was conducted through arrangements for a nine-session, creative writing workshop taught at Vila Cova Integrated School grouping, in the Municipality of Barcelos, Braga District (Table 1).

Table 1 - Sessions Time table

Session	Time (minutes)	Date	Contents
1	45m 45m 45m	Monday, 15/05/ 2013 4 th grade Tuesday, 14/05/2013 3 rd grade Tuesday, 14/05/2013 2 nd grade	Project Overview. Activities of preparation and motivation: View international, national concrete poems (Melo e Castro, Herbert Helder, Mário de Sá Carneiro, Ana Hartley, Salazar Sampaio, Salette Tavares, Fernando Aguiar, Sergio Capareli, Fábio Serugi, Aroldo fields and Ronaldo Azeredo) and poems performed for children of Brazilian elementary education. Complete diagnostic questionnaires. Authorization applications delivery to Caregivers
2	45m 45m 45m	Wednesday, 15/05/ 2013 2 nd grade Thursday, 06/05/ 2013 3 rd grade Thursday, 06/05/ 2013 4 th grade	Construction of a concrete poem, under the rules of isomorphism – installation and graid (Part One).
3	45m 45m 45m	Friday, 17/05/ 2013 2 nd grade Friday, 17/05/ 2013 4 th grade Monday,20/05/ 2013 (3 rd grade)	Construction of a concrete poem, under the rules of isomorphism – installation and graid (Part Two).
4	45m 45m 45m	Tuesday, 21/05/ 2013 4 th grade Tuesday, 21/05/ 2013 2 nd grade Wednesday, 22/05/ 2013 3 rd grade	Construction of a concrete poem, under the rules of isomorphism – installation and graid (Part Three).

5	45m 45m 45m	Thursdays, 23/05/ 2013 4 th grade 3 rd grade Friday, 24/05/2013 2nd grade	A concrete poem spiral construction, from a given sentence (activity based on the "Escrita em dia" de Margarida Fonseca Santos.)
6	45m 45m 45m	Monday, 27/05/2013 3rd grade 4th grade Tuesday, 28/05/ 2013 2nd grade	Building a free concrete poem.
7	45m 45m 45m	Wednesday, 29/05/ 2013 2nd grade 3rd grade Thursday, 30/05/2013 4th grade	Presentation and critical appreciation of the work (free concrete poem) to the class.
8	45m 45m 45m	Friday, 31/05/2013 4th grade 2nd grade Monday, 3/05/2013 3rd grade	Preparation of the display panel works for all elementary school (EB1th, 2nd and 3 rd grades).
9		Since June 4th to June 13th of 2013	Exhibition of students' work at the multipurpose center of Vila Cova Integrated School grouping.

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS

The research developed in 2013 in the Vila Cova Integrated Primary School, belonging to the Vila Cova Integrated School grouping, located in the Council of Barcelos, Braga District, in the classes of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade of the 1st Cycle Basic Education, with a total of 63 participators. Data collection took shape from the participant observation (on-board field and journal notes); visual records (photography); student work interviews, two questionnaires given to the 63 students, one questioner given to the four teachers¹² and another one give to the 63 parents; semi-structured questionnaires to teachers and parents. Therefore, this study includes 132 participants.

Creative Writing Workshops Data Collection

The creative writing workshop consisted of nine sessions of 45 minutes each, from 13th of May to 13th of June. Field notes and visual documentation were collected from these sessions. The main objective of the first session involved motivating students to participate in the creative writing workshop sessions. Students of the three grades, despite not knowing about concrete poetry, proved to be curious for this kind of poetry, mainly due to the interplay between image and word forms inherent in concrete poetry methodology. In the second session, we started with the construction of a concrete poem, starting from the grid technique, respecting the rules of the principle of isomorphism and the obligation of not wrapping¹³. This activity is relevant to the avant-garde poetry objectives: "*Rebuild short texts in different forms of expression (verbal, musical, plastic, sign and body) and, "Write short poems, poems using model "(ME, 2012), entered in the field in the "Introduction to Literary Education" of the Curricular Goals for Portuguese teaching in primary education (ME, 2012).*

¹² The participating teachers in the study were the three main professors of the classes and a professor of English for Extra Curricular Classes (AEC's) The coordinator of the establishment and the director of the group acted as outside observers

¹³ The wrapping is the new line when writing, sharing a word and writing part of a line and the other part at the beginning of the next line. Retrieved from <http://www.priberam.pt/dlpo/translineação>

During the construction of the text, the researcher was circling the room to guide the work of children. In the presentation, the researcher conducted the session so that issues such as compliance with stipulated rules (not wrapping and put only one letter in each square) and compliance with specific instructions for the construction of the poem were addressed. In a concrete poem, the poem graphical form, as well as in the poetic text itself, may take the musicality and plasticity own visual arts, patenting the text of different forms of expression (Garcia, 2008). Therefore, the students were sensitized for trying to print it on their works. During the creative writing process, the most difficulty students revealed was not being able to work with the concept of wrapping, especially in the class of 2nd grade. It was easier for them to have a topic chosen for them to work with. The construction of graphical poem form was easier for children of 3rd and 4th grade, but less so for the 2nd grade.

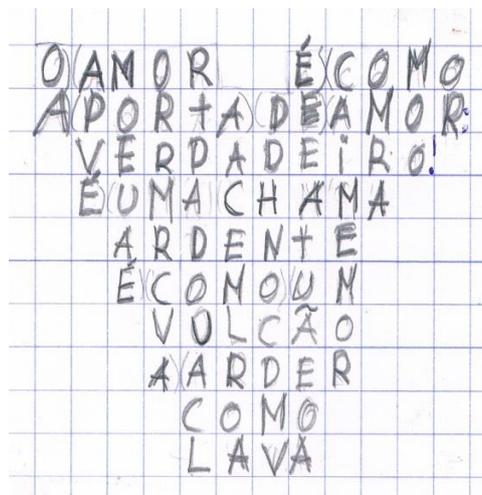


Fig. 7: *Coração (Heart)* (2013) © Maria. 4th grade¹⁴

The poem, *Coração* (Figure 7), created by Maria of the 4th grade, respects the grid technique of rules (a word raster and not wrapping). In textual graphics there is tacit recourse to isomorphism, since the graphical poem form – a heart, symbolizes the very theme of the text: love. The poetic message, achieves its poetry through the elements to that which love is compared: "flame", "burning volcano", "lava" – that transmit sensations of warmth, of passion, of explosion. The accent (the colon and the exclamation point) contributes to print the rhythm and musicality achieved (Figures 8-9).

¹⁴ Image retrieved from: Penalva (2014) Contributos da escrita criativa na fomentação da criatividade e no gosto pela escrita e leitura – uma investigação-ação no 1º CEB. Master Thesis Escola Superior de Educação de Viana do Castelo.

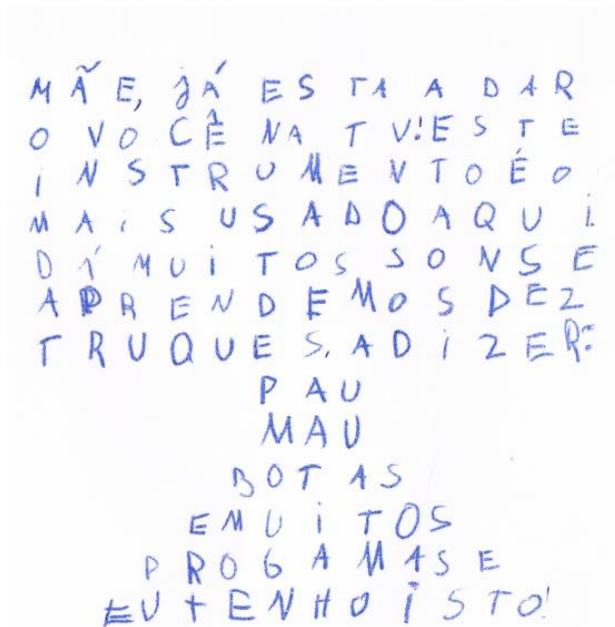


Fig. 8: *Televisão (Television)* (2013),
©Dinis, 4th grade¹⁵

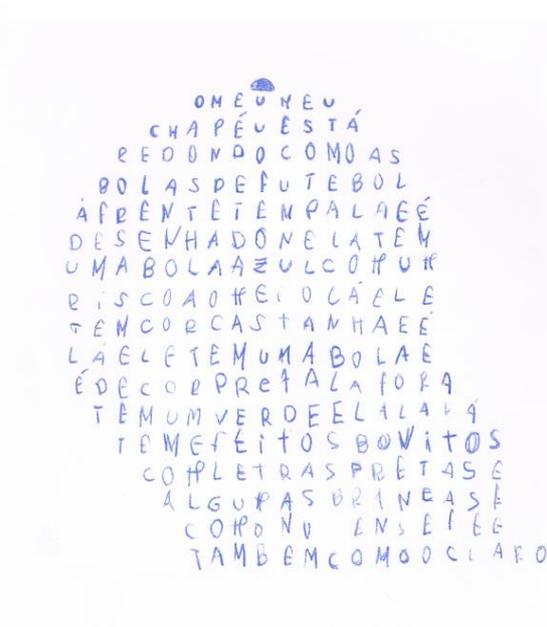


Fig. 9: *Chapéu (Hat)* (2013),
©Eduardo, 3rd grade¹⁶

At the fourth meeting, the students proceeded to rewrite the same poem on the computer. The kids said it was fun to try several ways to rewrite and that rewriting the poem on the computer was very attractive. After doing the poems, the children were invited to present their works to the class. As the student was presenting their work in front of the class, the rest of the students followed the poem, reading it from the white screen, where it was designed to be projected from the computer.

The fifth session was dedicated to the realization of a concrete poem in a spiral¹⁷ from the given phrase: "And if it never happened" (Figure 10). This exercise comes as a form of automatic writing (writing non-stop) from surrealism, with the main intention of unlocking creativity. Writing spontaneously helps creativity, because as the critical and evaluative sense is almost canceled, the text flows almost at the speed of thought. Students were instructed not to stop writing, and to write even if at times of not remembering anything, by saying, "now I do not remember anything, but I will remember because [...] in order to come up with new ideas. Before beginning the activity, the researcher carried out a practical example on the blackboard.

¹⁵ Image retrieved from: Penalva (2014) Contributos da escrita criativa na fomentação da criatividade e no gosto pela escrita e leitura – uma investigação-ação no 1º CEB. Master Thesis Escola Superior de Educação de Viana do Castelo.

¹⁶ Image retrieved from: Penalva (2014) Contributos da escrita criativa na fomentação da criatividade e no gosto pela escrita e leitura – uma investigação-ação no 1º CEB. Master Thesis Escola Superior de Educação de Viana do Castelo.

¹⁷ Activity adapted from the book: 17 Exercício adaptado do livro: "Escrita em dia" from Margarida Fonseca Santos (2013:27).

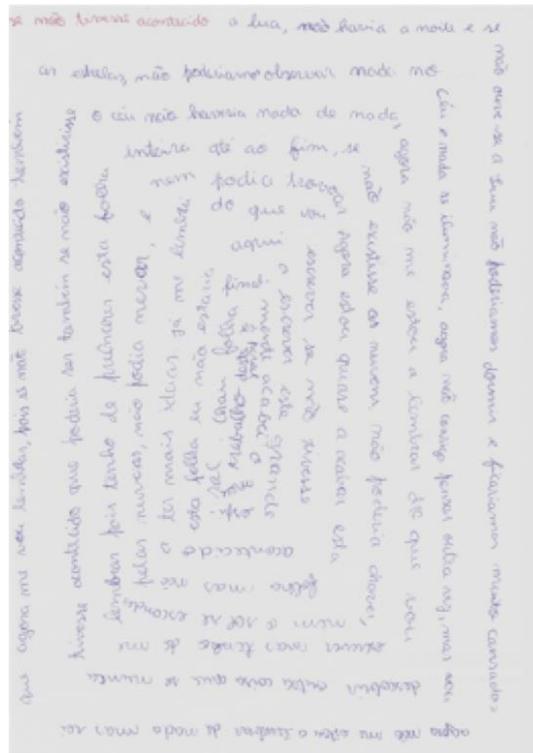


Fig. 10. Spiral Writing (2013), ©Ana 4th grade¹⁸

In the sixth session, the children built a free concrete poem. This session's activity was strategically implemented after the teaching and practice of achieving concrete poem techniques in previous lessons – so that for students with a certain detachment and awareness of all the rules to be followed already, would create their own poems in the concrete style. The investigator opened the session by first stating that its goal was building a free concrete poem to be presented on the feast of the end of the school year, a joint exhibition of the works of the three classes in the school's multipurpose center for the whole community. The children responded well to novelty which worked also as an extrinsic motivation factor. It is noteworthy that most of the children of the three classes had used the technology of isomorphism and the grid because, according to most self-reported accounts, this technique, although more demanding execution, granting the poem a tighter finish. Overall, the students chose to create an overlap between the design and the word by printing with a lot of plasticity and color to their poems (Figure 11).

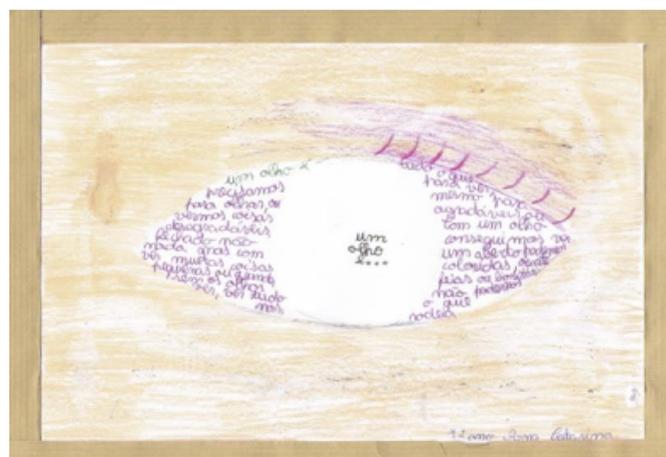


Fig. 11: *Olho (Eye)* (2013) ©Ana, 1st grade¹⁹

¹⁸ Image retrieved from: Penalva (2014) Contributos da escrita criativa na fomentação da criatividade e no gosto pela escrita e leitura – uma investigação-ação no 1º CEB. Master Thesis Escola Superior de Educação de Viana do Castelo.

¹⁹ Image retrieved from: Penalva (2014) Contributos da escrita criativa na fomentação da criatividade e no gosto pela escrita

The seventh session was devoted to presenting the students' work to the class. Each student read their text aloud and listened to criticism of their peers (with guidance from the teacher), to learn to listen to different points of view, and also to facilitate the perception of themselves that what they wanted to convey was sufficiently clear to the listeners or a future reader. As in other sessions, this procedure also contributed to the improvement of the construction of reading comprehension and reading fluency. In this session the researcher could see that the children were more critical and demanding with their work and with that of their peers. This fact occurred, possibly due to being oriented to analyze the poems according to pre-established parameters. The motivational factors were also very important at this stage because both the extrinsic motivation (the exhibition in the school's multipurpose center) and intrinsic (positive mental stimulation) led to rise the spirit and new targets that entailing do a good job for family members, colleagues and teachers can admire.

In the eighth session, the researcher conducted the preparation and assembly of the presentation of the final concrete poems of all children involved in the creative writing workshops (Figure 12). Early in the session, the children answered an open-ended questionnaire that aimed to realize the creative writing workshop helps to increase the taste for reading and writing of children and develop creativity.



Fig. 12: Preparation of exposition ©Cátia Penalva, 2013²⁰

The ninth session was devoted to the opening of the exhibition of the work to the school community in the Vila Cova Integrated School grouping. In the *Core competencies of the National Curriculum* for the 1st cycle, specifically in the "[...] learning experiences" for Arts Education, where part of the purpose of "[...] interdisciplinary practices...[is] to develop projects with other disciplines and areas disciplinary, allowing the transfer of knowledge. " (ME, 2004: 151). The interdisciplinarity between Portuguese and Arts Education were present along the workshop and at the exposition. The entire school community, including parents, had the opportunity to see the childrens' work, and the researcher took the opportunity to question the class teachers and the parents, in order to collect their critical assessments relating to the works exhibited (Figure 13).

e leitura – uma investigação-ação no 1º CEB. Master Thesis Escola Superior de Educação de Viana do Castelo.

²⁰ Ibid



Fig. 13: the poems exhibition in the polyvalent©²¹

REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Students responded to the first session questionnaire

The first questionnaire had the finality of collecting students writing and reading habits and if they like poetry. About their love for reading, all children in the 4th grade (24 students) claim they love to read and their affirmations are substantiated by the amount of books they read (four children have read over 100 books and 91-100 books and other books 81-90). This amount of reading books does not happen in the other two classes (the maximum number of books read is located in the range from 41 to 50 for two children from each class). However, every child from the 3rd grade claims to love reading (from the total of 18 children in the 3rd grade, 15 love to read, two don't consider it an enjoyable activity and one child shows indifference to reading activity).

The students who read less belong to the 2nd grade, with fifteen students (in a total of 24) who declare they read only between 0-5 books. The fact that children of the 4th grade already read more than their peers from other classes could be related to the fact that they read for a longer time and also because everyone likes to read. But this induction is refuted when the data collection shows that in the 2nd grade, despite all the children also assert enjoy reading, fifteen students framed in the range of only 0-5 books read. And, among these 15, eight say they never, even, read a complete book. In the 3rd grade three children, who have a positive opinion given to the reading activity, are the least book readers in the classroom (between 1-5 books). It should be noted, in the class of 2nd grade, the discrepancy between the number of students who love to read (all) and the number of books read in general. This inconsistency between the love of reading and doing it does not depose the truth of the statements of the children of the 2nd grade, when they say they enjoy reading. It refers instead, I believe, to issues related to the promotion and creation of reading habits by teachers and parents.

About their habits of books requisition at the school library, the 3rd and 4th grade students affirmed they usually do it by their own initiative and also with the teacher's encouragement. The 2nd year revealed that they don't request books at the school library because they are not encouraged by the teacher and also because they don't remember to do it. About if their parents read to them, the 4th grade, in general, reported that their parents do not read to them because they, "[...] *already know very well [how to] read alone.*" In the 2nd and 3rd grade, most of the children said that their parents read to them and help them with the textbooks. About the love for poetry, most students love it (15 from the 2nd, 22 from the 3rd, and 19 students of the 4th grade); excepting two students from the 3rd grade that claim they are indifferent to poetry, the two students of the 2nd grade, one from the 3rd and two from the 4th who don't enjoy poetry at all. No student knew about concrete poetry before the workshops, but they considered it artistic and beautiful.

²¹ Ibid

Writing is an activity that appeals to most children, with only four (three from the 3rd grade and one from the 2nd grade), who do not like it and one who is indifferent to it. Overall children prefer to read than write. Writing a book of his own is considered desirable for most students in three classes, however, to eight students (six in the 2nd, one from the 3rd and another 4th grade) is not a desirable job, and four (two from the 2nd, one from the 3rd and one from the 4th) consider that they are indifferent to write a book or not. As for having a diary journal where they can write daily, it appears that most children do not have a journal diary in the 2nd and 4th grades; however, even though more than half of the students of the 3rd grade have a daily journal, many (8 in 18) do not. Nevertheless, all children who don't own one, have wished to have it.

ACTION RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

Since the first session, the researcher was making interviews with children (recorded in the logbook and field notes) in order to realize initially expectations of them in relation to the workshop; then, throughout the sessions, it served as a review of the course of the activities of the creative writing workshop. The data collection presented here, is through the design sense of all the responses for each question applied. All participating students answered the questions, although one had been more involved than others.

Perception of concrete poems and student expectations

No study of the target student knew the concrete poetry before the creative writing workshop. All students considered concrete poetry artistic and beautiful; they were captivated by its structure and message. The general expectations of the three classes were positive. Students proved to be very motivated during the sessions because, as they stated, it was good to learn new things and write in different ways, i.e. they felt then, that they like to learn, as it offered them the opportunity to create something of their own that was original. They also said that as the poetic structure alluded to an image, it was as if they were making a composition and design simultaneously, which was considered very fun and different than what they were used to. In the 2nd grade, six children in particular, revealed they were initially anxious because they thought they would not be able to structure the poetic text in a way to appeal to the message. It should be noted that this state of mind dissipated as they went, step-by-step, doing the tasks. In short, expectations remained high through to the last session (exposure), along with their curiosity and motivation, as well.

Children's critical assessments during the sessions

The field notes taken in the sessions by the researcher indicate that the children maintained enthusiasm along the sessions and improved in their interest to do the writing exercises, as well as in reading them out loud for all the class to comment on with a constructive critical point a view about their work and the work of pairs. Also, it was verified with the questionnaires that there was an increase in self-esteem levels, of self-confidence along with an improved critical sense of the children. These factors became more evident over the course of the sessions, (i.e. mainly in the timelines for the discussions and assessments of their work which they were also showing session by session.

Poetry Session Outcomes

In the first session, all students were motivated and curious. In the second session, the students built a concrete poem using the grid, with will and enthusiasm. The main difficulties that classes indicated were bound with the main challenge of the activity: i.e. to not make the wrapping of words. Although the students were all enjoying the new experience, students of the 2nd grade confessed feeling it was hard to find similar words that would fit the whole lines of his poems and also to draw the shape of the poem. To remedy this situation, I gave more support to them. The third session was

considered fun for all participants, because they had never worked with carbon paper and thought this the properties and functions of this material funny. The fourth session was quite rewarding for students, as everyone liked to write on the computer, and the fact that they can bring their own laptop from home, was a factor of extra motivation. While the 2nd graders were not yet used to working well on computer, they had more technical support from the researcher and from the English AEC's teacher; and they all mentioned that writing on the computer was very pleasant.

Students at the end of the fifth session, in general, said that writing in the form of a spiral was *"very different and fun"* to develop ideas from and that the net effect was *"very funny"*. In the end, they were all looking forward to the next session, where they developed a free concrete poem, because as they stated, they could apply what they learned from their wants and desires. Most decided to apply the technique of the assembly and the grid in their poems, because although they found it more difficult than the other methods, they rather liked the aesthetic result. At the seventh session the children had the opportunity to present and comment on their work and that of their peers. The students in the 3rd and 4th grade felt quite comfortable to ask questions, whereas the 2nd grade needed the researcher support to make questions to colleagues. The most frequent questions were, *"What was your favorite task?"* and *"In what did you feel the most difficulty?"*

The activities that students enjoyed the most consisted of rewriting the poem on the computer and developing the free concrete poem. The last two sessions which were devoted to the preparation and exhibition of the works in the multi-purpose school, were the sessions in which they most praised their work, and they felt the most valued. They responded this way because of the positive feedback from the school community, including their parents and family members who came to the end-of-year party and who saw the work of the children exhibited there. In the end, all said they liked to participate in the creative writing workshop, and many even confessed that they feel sorry for the creative writing workshop to finish.

Students responded to a final questionnaire at the 8th session. The final survey for children aimed at verifying their perception, especially if it existed (or not) about an increased interest in reading and writing; and if their creativity and imagination were developed. Alongside these points of analysis, it was considered important to know the opinion of the children about activities that they would like to have done instead in the creative writing workshops; their opinion about the researcher, and if they would like to participate in a future creative writing workshop.

For the question, *"Do you think your love for reading and writing was improved with your participation in the creative writing workshop?"*, all participating students said *"yes"*. We present some of the replies with justification:

"Yes, because I just liked it before and now I love to read and write." 4th grade: Marta. *"Yes, because I thought at first it would not be able to do, but it's so easy."* 2nd grade: Bruno. *"Yes, because before I did not like to read and now I like."* 3rd grade: Dalila.

In the question, *"Do you think the workshop helps to develop your creativity and imagination?"*, all children said yes. Here are some justified answers:

"Yes, because I have more ideas in the compositions." 4th grade: Rui. *"Yes, because I did very beautiful things."* 3rd grade: Vitorino. *"Yes, because we had to develop and pull out the imagination."* 2nd year: Ana.

For answering, *"What would you like to have done in the workshop? Why?"*, there were several repeated answers of students from the three classes: "games", "written pictures", "alphabet soup", "one book group", "origami", "a keepsake work for later recall", "puzzles", "a screen do everything we learn", "a group working in composition", "go out there", "read a large text", "play with the teacher" and "group work" were the most reported by students. Justified the preference for working group of follows: *"Because everyone could come up with ideas."* 4th grade year: Marta. *"By working together*

we do better work." 3rd grade: Pedro. "Because we could do, together, a sentence with a lot of imagination." 2nd grade: Francisco.

All children issued a positive opinion on the researcher who is, "*Patient and kind.*" 3rd grade: Dalila. "*Beautiful because she helped us.*" 3rd grade: Vitorino. "*Great because she teaches well and was our friend, congratulations.*" 2nd grade: Jose. All children issued a positive opinion on repeating the workshop.

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRES

A questionnaire was applied to the four teachers of the participating classes with the intent to know their opinion about creativity, reading and writing. On the development of creativity in writing, the 2nd grade teacher said that, "The children are very poorly developed in creativity. I notice that in my classroom." The 3rd grade teacher's responded that in his, "point of view it is always possible to perform exercises to promote creativity in a simple and relaxed manner orally and promote and encourage writing." The 4th grade teacher stated, "The development of creativity in writing necessarily involves a reading habit." And the English AEC's teacher added, "The development of creativity in writing is due to the constant reading exercises."

The second semi-structured interview to teachers

The second semi-structured survey to the four teachers was done simultaneously, on the day of the exhibition's day. The researcher wanted to gather the teacher's critical opinion about the results of creative writing workshop. The professor of the 2nd grade said yes, "They are very excited about the workshop and even began to order the school library books." He indicated his students had more ideas: "I notice that their compositions are more imaginative and organized." The 3rd grade teacher added that students were more interested in reading poetry and asked to read the poems they've made in the workshop, with "[...] a large increase in motivation to writing activities and reading; also quieter students, with more detachment time to ask questions or seek clarification". This teacher said as well that the creative writing workshop, "[...] contributed significantly to the understanding and textual construction, and these new skills already been felt in my classes".

The teacher of the 4th grade said, "I am beginning to notice it in their compositions. Now it seems they have more ideas, not get so blocked and organize themselves more easily." The 2nd and 4th grade also mentioned that, "[...] now some of the students who never wanted, started to ask to read and began to write more imaginative and funny texts". The English AEC's teacher commented that she noticed all children felt motivated and that even in times where they came in with the greatest difficulties, none of them wanted to give up, but instead strove to overcome the challenges. She found that during the sessions students were becoming more responsible, and more critical with a capacity of more refined analysis, due to "specific instructions that the investigator always provides" (English AEC's teacher), and noticed more diversity of ideas in text construction.

Questionnaire to parents and guardians

Early in the project, a questionnaire was given to parents that aimed to know the family habits of reading and writing and to corroborate the diagnostic surveys to students. Their answers are in line with the children that most parents do not read to their children. However, all parents consider it important that their children read a lot and not only textbooks, and to write very well. On the whole, parents claim to offer books to their children, however, most, reserve the provision of books for the festive days (two to three times per year). As for having a shelf at home for books, confirming the students' responses, the majority of parents do not keep books on shelves at home. In conclusion, despite the great majority of parents who believe their children should develop reading and writing habits, are not doing so as an increment in the family environment.

On the day of exposure when most parents attended, many parents reported that at home their children continued to play with words and texts to build them in very funny ways. All agreed that they noticed their children were more willing to read and write. By what was given for them to see at the exhibition, they were also more creative. All parents were fully satisfied with the participation of their children in the creative writing workshop and the work they saw in the exhibition.

Data findings

Through data triangulation, the analysis and comparison of data collected from different sources are interpreted in a more credible and broadly converging way for a more authentic final result. The "triangulation" is not limited solely to the study's seriousness and validity, but allows a more complete picture and holistic phenomenon under study (Duarte, 2009). According to the data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers and parents, in conjunction with researcher field notes, this study concludes that children do not generally experience creative writing activities with their teachers, at least not intentionally, and they are not used to promote creativity, taste for writing and reading or the development of understanding of textual construction.

To develop a taste for reading and writing, teachers (except the 2nd grade) consider it relevant stimulate the requisition of school library books, perform oral exercises in a simple and relaxed manner to promote and encourage writing. Parents, in general, consider it important that their children read beyond the textbooks, and recognized it relevant the frequency with which their children attended the creative writing workshop. However, they defer the responsibility to increase the habit and enjoyment of reading and writing of their children entirely to the school.

It is inferred that children are more encouraged to read than to write. Regardless of children being encouraged more for recreational reading than to creative writing, it appears that most children like to write better than they do to read. Even so, according to the data received in the original investigations to children, the majority of students in the study (especially the 2nd grade) have very little playful literature to read and write on their own initiative, and do so for pleasure even less.

According to the testimony of parents and teachers, there could be seen improvements in the love for writing and reading and also a development of creative and student's critical thinking. In addition, it appears, by the testimony of teachers, a development the ability to understand and build texts. It is to emphasize the development of critical sense mentioned by teachers and also detected by the researcher during the sessions (especially in times of defense and discussion of the work), which also suggests that the children have acquired skills in facilitating the process of understanding and textual construction. Children also felt their love for reading and writing significantly improved and that their creativity was stimulated and developed over the workshop sessions, which corroborates the testimony of teachers and parents. By combining the various statements and findings of the investigating, it seems that the children of this study presented a significant development in terms of capacity building and reading comprehension. Furthermore, according to the observations made by the researcher, several cross effects emerged: self-esteem levels increased in relationship to self-confidence and a critical acuity. These findings positively answer the key research questions of the study.

CONCLUSIONS

Drawing upon the study's findings, there is a need to develop and enhance creative writing activities in basic education that foster creativity and a love of reading and writing. The realization of creative writing workshops can be an attractive way to promote these achievements, as the data collected in this study indicate an improvement in interest and the level of reading and writing, and the development of creativity throughout the workshop sessions.

Throughout the workshops, progress was noticed in the participation of children, concerning the ability to analyze, criticize and evaluate, in a constructive manner, in their work and oral presentations as colleagues, which leads to the finding that the creative writing workshop contributed in developing children's skills and facilitated comprehension and text production process. It should also be noted that this project gave children freedom to create and express their opinion in a free manner while still targeting specific objectives according to techniques previously studied. The fact that the children's work was exposed to the school community had positive effects on the self-esteem of participating children.

The use of concrete and experimental poetry was a key factor in the motivation of children, due to its characteristics that combine the graphic and verbal in a playful way, which is imaginative and easily noticeable. In addition, the good humor and the atmosphere of openness and ever-present dialogue during the sessions, prove that it is possible to develop a strategy where the willingness and joy of students is combined with the rigor and requirements of the teaching situation. This project, in its cultural dimension, also helps children have contact with national and international works of recognized poets. There was also a larger community of people sharing knowledge which occurred between students, classes, school, and parents. The knowledge of the artistic expression of the Portuguese avant-garde applied in the workshops, contributes their cultural patrimony to a vision of poetic and writing educationally.

Although creative writing is intelligible in the goals of the *Portuguese Curriculum of Teaching* in the 1st cycle of Basic Education (ME 2012), it is not always encouraged in practice. Thus, it is important to raise awareness among teachers of the benefits of developing activities that promote creativity, specifically creative writing, through more interdisciplinary activities, using examples of good practice and furthering the value of teaching initiatives and research studies in this area.

Considering the relevance of the development of future research in this area, there is a need in particular for teaching-learning strategies, including ways to sensitize parents to the problem of reading and writing, using comparative studies with what has been done internationally, an studying the successes in order to look for similarities and dissimilarities with the case of Portuguese educational system. These studies, in addition to the data needed to understand the effects of creative writing workshops for children, act as enhancers of development of the culture of reading and writing, and literacy in general in the population. Because besides the children, there is also the impact on teachers, parents, other professionals and the general community. This study, for its size, serves as a case example of how small educational practices can be beneficial to boost the teaching of reading and writing of students and improve primary interest in them.

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helvis@netcabo.pt**Abstract**

This paper aims at reflecting upon artistic practice in its relation to politics and power. At a time of such severe social and economic crisis, there are renewed calls for the most critical *actors* in our society to take a forceful position in respect to the construction of a better and fairer future.

Over time, artists' interest in becoming involved in an active way in issues that affect society as a whole has wavered. They often even opted for an operational detachment that invalidated any form of assessment from their part of the externality and the context and that, ultimately, also participated in the validation or exclusion of artistic discourses. On the other hand, there seems to be difficulties in establishing and maintaining paths that have a direct and measurable impact on those in power and in policy making. Many artistic works and projects apparently begin to attract more neutral readings and lose some of their inner tensions as soon as they pass through the door of the museum or are incorporated into the functioning of the established artistic device.

Faced with these difficulties, we propose the concept of tension and impedance as metaphors of the recovery and the intensification of the power of intervention of the Arts.

Keywords: Art, power, institutional critique

"The art has little or almost no power. Although we know of situations in which a 'book saved a person,' or a movie that forever changed someone's life, a song that made a politician more melancholic, or that the fact of having attended an opera changed the biography of another person. Still, the art has little power."

(Ribeiro, 2008) ¹

What is ultimately the power that art has in its relationship with the 'powers-that-be'? Can art do anything? Can it influence a particular policy? Can it help bringing down a government? May it intervene in the (in) formation of the public opinion?

The relationship between art and power has been changing over time. After a direct connection to religious power, Renaissance artists had the opportunity to join also, by way of orders and patronage, the economic power of the nobility and the bourgeoisie. In both cases, the art oscillated between an operative and didactic function in the case of religion, and the need to celebrate and sign the deeds and achievements of nobles and merchants for eternity.

¹ Original text: "Pouco poder tem a arte ou quase nenhum. Ainda que saibamos de situações em que um "livro salvou uma pessoa", ou que um filme modificou para sempre uma vida, que uma canção tornou mais melancólico um político, ou que o facto de ter assistido a uma ópera alterou a biografia de uma outra pessoa. Ainda assim, a arte tem pouco poder."

Romanticism exacerbated a split already foreseen in this structure because it emancipated the artist and gave renewed importance to subjectivity. From this moment, the emphasis became one's *inner world*, an inner drive that can by itself, justify and sustain the artistic action. The romantic vision of the artist puts feelings as something extremely valuable for artistic practice and removes the dependency on an outside agency. Artists do not cease to respond to religious or secular orders but another route related to their individual and subjective expression is reinforced. The artist's work extends the break with its historical context and focuses on looking for an absolutely unique gesture.

The first decades of the 20th century, pulverized by a wide range of artistic movements, witnessed strategies that posed problems and challenges never before experienced to art. On the one hand, we witness an entire research focused on the autonomy of art from processes and materials. On the other hand, movements like Dadaism and the work of an author like Marcel Duchamp, reconfigure and enlarge the space previously allocated to art and authorship. These two pathways extend intermittently throughout the century with moments where, in retrospect, one of them appears to be more prevalent. Some of those essential moments of the 20th century are the 60s and 70s, when the neo-avant-gardes re-enact some strategies and some of the problems of the first avant-gardes' of the 20s and 30s, crossing them with a social context where a worldview based on consumption and capital triumphs and begins its decline. The work done at this time by artists such as Andy Warhol and Marcel Broodthaers, by Fluxus, by conceptual and minimal artists, and the emergence of performance and video – are revealing traces of a large effervescent time where art shows its availability to critically rethink the art object, the context governing the production and presentation of this object and all the tensions that define the range of discourses that are bound to be accepted.

For the first time, in a systematic and diversified way, movements that are fuelled more or less explicitly by a critical dimension co-exist. For example, we highlight the deconstruction promoted through institutional critique by conceptual art with the mechanisms of legitimization and framing of artistic production. We also emphasize Pop art and the work of Andy Warhol as a revealing symbolic short-circuit of the way society began to be organized around the image, media and consumption. The emergence of ephemeral practices centred on the body was a critical reaction to the confinement of art to certain categories or to the conservative understanding of the construction/expression of identity. The trope of appropriation became a critical reflection on the concept of originality, the most romantic conception of the author *ex-nihilo* and the cultural industry. The examples are numerous but they are all contaminated by a critical approach that is not indifferent to the social and cultural transformations across the western world. These diverse proposals claim another approach to art in its relationship with society and with power. As opposed to a more centred art in its essence and alleged autonomy, art has this diversity of approaches gathered in a trend under which artwork is purposely infected with the mechanisms that sustain and condition reality – whether they are political, religious, aesthetic, media, economic or other. In this transformation, the art approaches and interferes directly with the world around it.

The world frees itself from a look that reproduces its constitutive forms and its representation, to volunteer as a field worked through life as power of variation and, therefore, in the making of new forms. The art is part of deciphering the signs of these sensitive mutations inventing ways through which such signs gain visibility and become flesh. Art is, therefore, a practice of experimentation involved in the transformation of the world.”² (Rolnik, 2006: 6)

² Original text: “El mundo se libera de una mirada que reproduce sus formas constituidas y su representación, para ofrecerse como campo trabajado por la vida como potencia de variación y, por lo tanto, en proceso de gestación de nuevas formas. El arte participa del desciframiento de los signos de estas mutaciones sensibles inventando formas a través de las cuales tales signos ganan visibilidad y se hacen carne. El arte es, por lo tanto, una práctica de experimentación que participa de la transformación del mundo.”

But, even after this change was felt in modern art from the late 50s, the question remains. What is the current power of art? What can art change at a time when so much seems to need to be changed? Recovering the question of Suely Rolnik: *can art heal?*

Alexandra Lucas Coelho, who recently received the APE Award for her novel *E a Noite Roda*, said the following in her acceptance speech:

No art is a pamphlet, if it is a pamphlet it is not art. At the same time, all the art is political in the sense that it does not exist without any other, which can be only one. The key is not that they are many, but that there is a relationship. Something that acts between them.

This book is political, like all the others I have written, like everything I do, for the simple fact that links me up to others. Being here today is political, public speaking is political. Where there is a collective there is politics.³ (Coelho, 2014)

According to the author, writing and more generally artistic creation is already a form of political participation. They are a form of participation of those who choose this as their geography of action. Contemporary art practices relate to reality in its various substrates, creating short circuits that expose and return the old structures to a dynamic state.

We find ourselves precisely at a time when we are being told a story without alternative or future. Making us believe that everything that eludes it is unproductive and should therefore be abolished, including culture and art. I venture to claim that art, even if it does not cure, already has this capability and this duty to create a productive short-circuit that, if nothing else, can make visible the mechanisms from which the idea of inevitability is projected. And often the healing begins in the ability to demonstrate the existence of the disease. Currently, art wins critical consistency and impact the moment it moves away from representation and anchors itself in the political terms of the discursive production that organizes reality. Paradoxically, this is a very thin line; and the same movement that potentially gives it dimension, is the same that often freezes and closes art in a specialist ghetto without connection to reality. The management of this duplicity remains responsible for many misunderstandings as to the actual power that art has to heal. How to find a point of tension that will allow the creation of a short circuit in reality while maintaining a place where subjectivity can be put back and rebuilt?

Let us consider a project that subtly occupies this fine line that creates tension between experimental artistic practices and the power structures on which reality relies upon. The creation of this tension opens and exposes a discursive limit. The work to which I am referring, *Electronic Reality Associates*⁴, is from 2010 and was conducted by Joana Bastos. In this project, the author is a business consultant from the real estate franchising ERA and creates a link between the actual activity as a mediator in the purchase and sale of properties and the expository location from where she departs and to where she returns after each business visit.

In this bond that questions the tension that exists between the actual reality and art, the conditions for rethinking the procedures and forms for inscription of trade relations and aesthetic relations are created. By bringing to the exhibition space an office and a perfectly functional service, the author minimizes the impedance and friction that supposedly separates each field and opens the way to a reconfiguration of our mechanisms of subjectivities. This return of our attention to a situation of

³ Original text: "Nenhuma arte é panfleto, se é panfleto, não era arte. Ao mesmo tempo, toda a arte é política, no sentido em que não existe sem um outro, que pode ser apenas um. O determinante não é que sejam muitos, mas que exista uma relação. Que algo actue entre um e outro.

Este livro é político, como todos os que fiz, como tudo o que faço, pelo simples facto de me pôr em relação com outros. Estar aqui hoje é político, falar em público é político. Onde há um colectivo há política."

⁴ <http://www.joanabastos.com/index.php?/works/electronic-realty-associates/>

strangeness is in itself a political act, especially at a time when all the appeals are being made in order to have a unique way to see and understand the moment we are living.

In July 2012, there was another particularly interesting project due to the way it was carried out and all that perhaps unexpectedly, was unveiled. The project was called *Lapidaris*⁵ and resulted from a request made by the Municipality of Viana do Castelo to a cultural association in the city, *AISCA*, to conceive and produce this festival dedicated to new urban trends. As part of the festival, the *Lapidaris* consisted of a set of six brick constructions scattered throughout the city that would then become subject to an intervention by a group of invited artists. After completing the intervention and following the controversy generated by these art pieces, the same authority ordered the withdrawal of all works a fortnight ahead of schedule.

What is curious about *Lapidaris* is the fact that it results from a political initiative, formalized by a curator, João Gigante (personal communication, 2014)⁶, who had set as a starting point for these works the idea that the intervention should be able to question the city. This questioning would stem from the fact that the six sculptural pieces were not the most recognizable works of each of the invited artists⁷ but an anonymous set of brickwork. Bearing in mind that a significant part of the job of a city hall was, until recently, associated with construction, the initial project design created this line of tension between artistic experimentation, the political administration of culture and the urbanization of public space. It was as if the most decisive part of the project could only be this one; and the subsequent participation of the artists became a performative act, unable to change the final destination of the project.

The reactions of most people were a direct result of what they knew about each of these points listed above. Depending on the sensitivity and the amount of information, the problem could be financial, political, urban and/or aesthetic. Surprisingly, the *Lapidaris* fulfilled with great efficiency what it contained of political critique because it did not take much time to undermine the ideological frame which surrounds the discourses about the city and culture. Purposely, I did not talk about the work of each artist because in this case they had also been overtaken by the events. Sometimes the interventions managed to further accentuate what was going on; and in others they limited themselves to compete unsuccessfully with the intensity of the initial reception.

These two very different projects show how art can, with more or less consciousness, animate the forces participating in the political design of the social reality and in the modulation of power. And can do so in ways that do not involve the more direct representation or the pamphlet. One may resort to the increase of tension and the reduction of the impedance at the level of the structures that determine the different discourses as a strategy of resistance and transformation.

⁵ <http://lapidaris.wordpress.com>

⁶ I thank João Gigante for the fact that he accepted my request, two years later, to think about the project and to produce a short text which I transcribe: “Dois anos depois do acontecimento: Passou o tempo, mas ainda hoje se fala destes “muros de tijolos” que ocuparam a cidade. Felizmente, por muito que a autarquia os tenha derrubado sem autorização, destruindo algo que os próprios pediram para criar, a forma mental continua presente. Este é um dos pontos a favor dos artistas, as coisas que deixam uma presença muito tempo depois. Pode falar-se de dinheiro, por muito pouco que seja, de falta de respeito para com o espaço arquitectónico, do facto de não se perceber o porquê... Mas uma coisa foi certa, mesmo que me chamem mentiroso: Quem cria a dúvida nas pessoas são os poderosos que assinam papéis, mas que não sabem ler além do “alfabeto numérico”. É preciso saber agarrar as acções, e sendo um cargo político descrito como cultural, a sua função tem de ser explícita, sustentável nos processos de comunicação, mas nunca deve interferir no processo construtivo e criativo.”

⁷ ±MAISMENOS±, Alexandre A. R. Costa, Filipe Garcia e Marta Bernardes, Hugo Soares, Manuel Santos Maia e Vasco Costa

If the above examples are attempts to move and expand the mechanisms of subjectivities, the Municipality of Porto was until recently an uncompromising expression of the opposite. In its press release on the need to organize the demonstrations of urban art in the city in October 2013, one can read: "With this project, which has just taken the first steps the municipality intends to separate the wheat from the chaff, clearing what is trash and fostering the pride in the heritage and the history of the city of Porto."⁸

The purpose is stated clearly – the municipality does not confine itself to erase the interventions of graffiti considered less suitable; but it provides information on what is considered appropriate. This is not the place to discuss the merits or demerits of graffiti art, but it is irresistible to underline this city council's attempt to frame and provide a model of discourse based on the memory of an idealized city. The aim is not only to clean the city of scribbles that populate the facades. The aim is to modulate the discourses by controlling the mechanisms of production of meaning and it does not seem innocent that all of this is done from the comfort of the past and "[...] *organized under the new law of paintings with quality licensing*" (2013).

Perhaps this legislation has the power to clarify the paradoxical aspects of modern and contemporary art. As Boris Groys (2008: 2) states: "*Thus Fountain by Duchamp is artwork and non-artwork at the same time. Also, Black Square by Malevich is both a mere geometrical figure and a painting at the same time.*" It remains as a dream for many the possibility of controlling the experimental processes used by contemporary artists, even if this means a legislative act of some kind.

The above examples confirm to us that art has the power and ability to change reality because, by intersecting it, it is simultaneously creating the conditions for its modification, showing that something can be different.

However, it is also at this point that another crucial question for our final answer arises: Does art draw a politically recognizable territory by itself or does it merely confine itself to include and develop aesthetic and political trends that matter to its field of action?

But I would suggest that it is precisely this absence of any immanent, purely aesthetic value judgment that guarantees the autonomy of art. The territory of art is organized around the lack or, rather, the rejection of any aesthetic judgment. Thus the autonomy of art implies not an autonomous hierarchy of taste-but abolishing every such hierarchy and establishing the regime of equal aesthetic rights for all artworks. (Groys, 2008: 12)

Boris Groys' answer is relevant not only because it reaffirms the possibility of the autonomy of art, but also highlights its power of resistance. This conclusion is based on what many consider to be the fragility of the art, its intrinsic democratic or, to use Groys' original expression, the *logic of equal aesthetic rights* (2008: 12). If all works are expected to have the same legitimacy from the outside, being propelled into this sphere of autonomy that we call art, that is only possible because there is no hierarchy of aesthetic judgment installed in its inside (the law about the quality of paintings). The 20th century is a good example of the operation of this logic in terms of absolute permeability to different techniques, materials and themes that art welcomed. Paradoxically, it was also this openness that fuelled many of the criticisms directed to modern art, particularly, in relation to its elitism and for the total absence of criteria that can serve us as a consolation.

⁸ <http://www.cm-porto.pt/gen.pl?p=stories&op=view&fokey=cmp.stories/22626>

Due to the redesign of the Municipality website, this page is no longer available.

Thus, social or political criticism in the name of art has an affirmative dimension that transcends its immediate historical context. By criticizing the socially, culturally, politically, or economically imposed hierarchies of values, art affirms aesthetic equality as a guarantee of its true autonomy. (Groys, 2008: 15)

Again, what is at stake is the ability of the art, through its promise of autonomy, to keep open an absolute accessibility based on the democratic logic mentioned by Groys. The entrance of the objects into the artistic sphere takes place not because the paradigms of power are respected, but because they were able to concentrate the energy needed to legitimize themselves as a discourse and eventually come to be recognized as art even if this means changing the current paradigm.

At a time when politics produces images and simulations of motions in unprecedented quantities but not in diversity, in which the mass media are becoming less pluralistic and multidimensional – this openness on which artistic creation grounds itself is inspiring. It should be clarified that this praise cannot be translated into acceptance of a total relativism or an uncritical conception that everything is art. It is only the political interpretation that the management of creative geographies is plural and dynamic. This promise of autonomy must not be perceived in absolute terms because the artists, the art market and its institutions, are points of a social fabric subjected to passages, contamination and pressures. However, despite being a system in conjunction with many, its autonomy derives from its peculiar functioning conquered over time.

But if art has the internalized ability to be political as a result of the inclusion of an idea of freedom not determined by the emergence of contextual or historical judgments of taste, why do we now have so many speeches calling for the re-politicization of art and so many diagnoses that point that as a difficult achievement?

This seems to me a presumption because it indicates a specific idea of what political art should be and, even worse, an impractical recipe. It is not possible to call for an intervening art and criticize it when this same art has a real impact in social and media terms (see as an example the work, *Portuguese Monochrome*,⁹ by Paulo Mendes in AXA building in 2013). It is not productive to associate the institutional recognition to the failure of a project with ambitions in terms of its political impact. It is not often legitimate to analyze with cynicism the approaches that artists make to political issues as personal marketing strategies. In this web of misconceptions, often the more subtle aspects are overlooked. Besides the more interventionist art, there is a strong political dimension in the simple fact of producing art as long as that is done from critical points and not from the current legitimizing positions of power and dominant discourses.

The current model of social organization is based on an ideological and intermittent use of the idea of crisis as the basis for a broad set of transformations. Many of these changes affect essential parts of cultural production and the mechanisms of signification and subjectivity. The late phase of capitalism we live in, based on the attention economy, virtualization, in the overall management of flows and privatization of the most diverse spheres of action, does not seem at all to have as a goal an autonomous cultural production and criticism. On the contrary, all the knowledge and all the research that is not convertible into a product or service will deal with financing difficulties. This *tyranny of applicability* is a system designed for this purpose. For all this, it is easy to see how art is a space of resistance even when it does not make from this the core of its speech.

Of course, it is not enough that art that resists by default to the complex neo-liberal trend that we are seeing. We are missing a second moment. Art does not need to re-politicize itself but to find ways of positive expression for its obvious political situation.

⁹ http://www.paulomendes.org/?pagina=noticias/noticias&acao=ver_noticia&id_noticia=476#conteudo

Any artist or cultural operator is at this time also, by default and by training, a curator. Which means that, also in the arts, any worker is also an entrepreneur. The constant bubbling of small spaces, events, that appear and disappear, shows it. Here too, in the arts, where mistakenly one believes that there is a resistance to neoliberalism, is happily applied its basic premise of a social organization treated as a company where even individual identity must obey it.¹⁰ (Moura, 2014)

Although, as we have seen, I am not in full agreement with Mário Moura in his pessimism regarding the ability of opposition of the arts; it really is necessary that artists manage to find feasible strategies to produce works that by their existence are a source of critical strength. Of course that, in a phase of widespread impoverishment and degradation of the general social environment, the creators and consumers of art are also dealing with the difficulties of finding basic living conditions.

Let us return to the initial questions. Which is ultimately the power that art has in its relationship with *the powers-that-be*? Can it influence a particular policy? Can it help bringing down a government? Can it intervene in the (in) formation of public opinion?

I believe, as we have seen, the response has two distinct levels. On the one hand, the practice of art that has as main goal to be interventional has a limited power in terms of its ability to overcome the impedance of the system. It can still perform an experimental work exposing this system, its settings, denouncing it, teasing it, and showing its limits. Often, this power is manifested indirectly and not as an effective one; but, nevertheless, capable of producing interesting results.

On a second level, we highlight art as a habitat which preserves and regenerates continuously a creative tension in the way of seeing the world. The existence of this inspiring space available and at a time that everything pales remains a cause for hope.

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¹⁰ “Qualquer artista ou agente cultural é neste momento também, por defeito e por treino, um comissário. Ou seja, também nas artes qualquer trabalhador é também um empreendedor. O borbulhar constante de pequenos espaços, eventos, que aparecem e desaparecem, demonstra-o. Também aqui, nas artes, onde se acredita, erradamente, que há uma resistência ao neoliberalismo, se aplica alegremente a sua premissa base, de uma organização social centrada no modelo da empresa, onde mesmo a identidade individual lhe deve obedecer.”

17 *Repossessing narrative: a death save for valuing culture, creating cultural value*

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Abstract

The Death Save is a controversial skill that amounts to a bank shot in a pinball machine. The operator anticipates the downward motion of a pinball and with a deft move, shoves the machine so the ball bounces up, hits an obstruction, and falls down in another trajectory, allowing the operator to move a flipper and stop it from disappearing into the trap door of pointless doom. Following this metaphorical thinking, the death save appears as a *détournement*, a movement that establishes a subversive prank, a kind of culture jamming that uses an image or imaginary representational form of thinking to deconstruct the way a narrative unfolds and to develop a common meta-language of cultural value. Using the economics of the *Mona Lisa* and the politics of Jára Cimrman as a discursive *détournement* for the attributes of the collective blind spot about added-value as it appeared in EU cultural policy debates in 2012, the paper argues for strategies to create a cultural death save, transducing established narratives with new metaphors of value, encoding (e)volutionary ideas and images into new meta-codes.

Situating advocacy beyond institutional mechanisms to proactive interventions into the social distribution of goods and services culturally, this paper asks, *how can diverse forms of cultural value be recognized as accountable and given voice inside of creative practices?* To inquire into the ideological construction of public discourses and how activism in cultural policy and practice can change the political nature of cultural funding and the production of creative enterprises, I suggest some possible enactments that invite the added-on value model and its mythmaking praxis into another vision of cultural sustainability. *What does it mean to enact a death save to culture?* In conjecturing possible answers to this question, I seek to avert the potentially obliterating risks from some of the largest budget cuts to the cultural sector in recent history, and alert its beneficiaries to possible other courses of action and adapting their epistemologies to address it.

Keywords: cultural policy, *détournement*, cultural intervention, discourse analysis

“The blind spot is the place within or around us where our attention and intention originates. It’s the place from where we operate when we do something. The reason it’s blind is that it is an invisible dimension of our social field, of our everyday experience in social interactions.”

- Otto Scharmer (2007: 6)

The Death Save

When the actor Phillip Seymour Hoffman died in February 2014, Aaron Sorkin (2014) used Hoffman's own words to say that his death from using heroin probably saved ten lives. Hoffman's personal death save has a certain correspondence with the death save in pinball. As the highest skill in the game, the death save describes the benefit of a bank shot in a pinball machine. The operator anticipates the downward motion of a ball and with a deft move, shoves the machine so the ball bounces up, hits an obstruction, and falls down into another trajectory, allowing the operator to move a flipper and stop the ball from disappearing into a trap door of pointless doom.

As a metaphor, the death save for culture appears as a *détournement*. *Détournement*, was a tactic of extremist innovation for the Situationist Internationale to disrupt the social patterns of interaction (Debord, 1956). The SI movement drew upon a critique of capitalism to argue that as the intersubjective relations between people have become displaced and spectorized, ideology is structuring the social reality through relations between things (commodity fetishism) and giving them value. In this context, the network of social relations between producers of diverse commodities assumes the form of a quasi-natural property of another thing – i.e. money. But because the power relations between production and consumption are socially repressed, (e.g. a blind spot), (Žižek, 1989: 26-28), by distancing oneself from the sign systems of the operating system – the system of capital, the 'subject' can create a fantasy of transgression that covers up actual complicity (Hollingsworth, 2007). Slavoj Žižek (1989: 23) speaks of this space as an ideological illusion. Heightening covert complicity through parody and satire becomes a space of resistance to stagnation by stirring up reflection (Figure 1)¹.

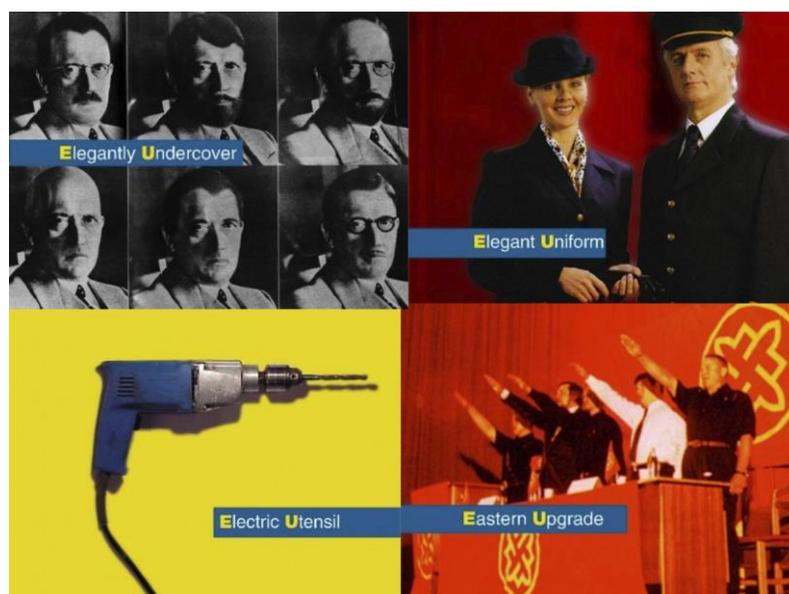


Fig. 1: Stills from video, *Eutopia 2000*

© Podebal

¹ <http://www.podebal.com/content/projects/eutopia>

To address the collective blind spot behind the marginalization of culture financially, this paper dialogues with the terms of the economic narrative of added-value in EU policies by examining the inconsistencies of the added-value narrative at the policy level and proposing actions to avert the conditions of further cultural infrastructure demise. Repossessing narrative and redefining the terms of cultural value through the death save metaphor also has its dangers. Thus, in the first part of this paper, I inquire into the added-value discourses of the assessment model used to evaluate cultural effectiveness and hence its funding eligibility. I then bring this discussion to bear upon the political nature of culture in general, and finally, propose specific actions that can be enacted to proactively use culture's situated power in the urgent reform needed in the economic discourses about value.

Referencing the pseudo-style, amorphous and natural refusal of the social norm to which people are in collusion is today is not just a *détournement*; it is also a digital business for advertisers and entrepreneurs. Breaking the borders of propriety with excess by advertising agencies (i.e. selling politicians as well as product lines), is acceptable business practice and even expected as a legitimate manipulation of consumers; but in the cultural realm, there is no economic benefit of such excess; only an enduring ideological fantasy of cultural added-value, to which commodity value is attached. For this reason, using a death save has also a certain danger.

Following upon Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) investigations of heterogenous assemblage points, this task requires a new tool of analysis. What I would like to call attention to here, is that what is both created by us and for us in making culture happen, is being represented by narratives about the situations we are in, and both are deficient for addressing what is at stake for cultural futures today. As Camargo (2013) suggests, there is a relationship between discursive representation and a disciplinary control whose historical traces are still present in schooling structures, routines, curriculum and pedagogies, extending beyond schooling practices to social conditioning (Figure 2)².



Fig 2: Белград, Бухарест, Будапешт
(Belgrade, Bucharest, Budapest) © Crew Against People

² Crew Against People, Белград, Бухарест, Будапешт (Belgrade, Bucharest, Budapest); April 20, 2013
<http://crewagainpeople.org/index.php?/contact/>

The High Speed Mitigation Train

When Félix Guattari (2009) took Lacan's (1977/1966) idea of the subconscious being structured like a language and put it onto the logic of capital, it became a counter-narrative, *a détournement*. Guattari uses the space in between *détournement* and the emancipatory ideologies of capital to turn the system against itself. In doing so, no necessary end product determined his added-value; rather *value* becomes the result of a necessary critique, puncturing both mystification and displacement from repression.

As Guattari states,

Capital is not an abstract category, it is a semiotic operator at the service of specific social formations. Its function is to record, balance, regulate and overcode the power formations inherent to developed industrial societies, power relations and the fluxes that make up the planet's overall economic powers. One can find systems of capitalization of power in archaic societies. (2009: 244)

Using economic data to prove added-value financially through cultural activities can also contribute to cultural loss as we are witnessing today. Before the financial crisis in 2008, the cultural and creative sector in Portugal for example, generated 3.691 million euros, and 127,079 jobs, accounting for 2.8% of GDP in Portugal. Nevertheless, having already proven added-value in the Minho region of Portugal, public investments in the sector have been systematically underfunded and since that time, reduced even more. As well, evidenced by the Fundación Caja Madrid closing all of its 48 cultural centers in Spain in 2012 (Bruell, 2013) and the expectation of the loss of 60,000 jobs in the cultural sector in Spain by 2016, the perception of an enduring financial crisis has turned society against itself. Amounting to the suppression of cultural development by the elimination of its funding, there is no other sector in the EU which has taken the brunt of such systematic public and private financial cuts and investments.

The 2012 Creative Europe Campaign

By example of the semiotic operator power in capital, I turn to a case that started in 2011 as the Council of Europe (COE) revised language for its Creative Culture program from 2007 to include the language of competitiveness, service, added-value and market mechanisms (Bruell, 2013: 5). As European Cultural Foundation Board member de Voogd discusses (ECF, 2012), in the post-2012 *Reimagining of Europe's Future*, the lobbying for an equity in cultural investments in order to match the level of cultural production in GDP and jobs, resulted in an announced quadrupled budget for culture across Council of Europe (COE) budget sections.

Announced cuts for the ECF's *Creative Europe* programme for the period starting 2014-2020, however, began in November 2013. In spite of lobbying by Cultural Action Europe (CAE), an umbrella group for 80,000 cultural organizations to stop proposed funding cuts in the COE's sector 3 for 'citizenship, freedom, security, and justice' where the European Cultural Foundation budget was placed (amounting to only 0.05% of the entire COE budget), the COE's revisions kept administrative costs intact while reducing funding for policy objectives, programmes and project investment. The result was that the ECF budget reduced from 1.8 billion to 1.29 billion, undermining the EC's promised intention to ensure job and financial security in the cultural sector's new programme, *Creative Europe* (Creative Europe Programme, 2013).

In response, Cultural Action Europe analyzed the COE budgets and produced counter-narratives distributed across the Eurozone, waging an international *call to action*, lobbying the COE to redirect tax revenues from administration costs in order to restore the funding cuts to cultural programs (Figure 3)³.



Fig. 3: Home of Graffiti
© Upstream Mag #8

In their '*we are more*' statement to the Council, CAE (2013) reiterated the contribution of the cultural arena to innovation, arts, education, and citizenship. By redirecting the quantitative analysis of empirical data qualitatively to advocate for creative solutions to fund cultural programming, they stated,

Investing in culture, arts, education and research not only generates growth and jobs; it fosters both freedom of expression, flexibility and creative solutions. A focus on culture leads to sustainable development, cohesion and well-being (CAE, 2013).

Supporting the idea of cultural funding being an investment, Irish arts and heritage minister Jimmy Deenihan stated, "For every €1 of Irish Film Board investment, close to €10 is generated in the economy." But as Robert Everett-Green (2012) argued, the amount of Creative Europe funding is still miniscule. In 2012, Berlin alone enjoyed €1 billion in cultural subsidies from the German government.

On November 19, 2013, the *Creative Europe* budget was approved at 1.46 billion, successfully demonstrating the importance of focused, lobbying efforts by cultural groups, able to direct quantitative analysis and the contextualization of empirical data qualitatively to advocate for cultural programming, its funding, and infrastructure needs. While an overall quadrupled budget for culture in the 2014-2020 EU funding cycle was never realized, the CAE was partially successful in restoring some of the cuts back to the funding for cultural programmes amounting to an overall 35% increase. The restored funding is a significant precedence for the importance of sustained and focused, lobbying efforts by cultural groups at the policy level. As the united front of cultural lobbying demonstrated, it

³ "don't bootleg, create and build, print UPstream at home and pass it around peace"
<http://www.upstream.cz/mag/upstream08.pdf>

is important to ask questions of the data and reformulate its interpretation through different criteria, modeling systems, and values.

Fueling the knowledge-economy on behalf of new financial markets in ICT technology, science, and entrepreneurship in the midst of deep financial cuts and austerity measures, has contributed in part to a schism in the perceptions of the EU across the Eurozone. According to the July 2014 Eurobarometer, only 35% of Europeans have a positive image of the Union. According to de Voogd (ECF, 2012), it reflects a rise in nationalistic and confrontational narratives. These statistics also reflect the tensions surrounding financial debates affecting member states and their populations. Apparently culture is not the only sector to remain dissatisfied (Figure 4)⁴.



Fig. 4: GIVE YOUR OPINION!
Exhibition of the workshops for Adobe Youth Voices,
ACVIC May 5, 2014, © ACVIC

A death save needs to be linked to the efforts of financial sustainability in the cultural sector - what Culture Action Europe has in common with the UN's Action Plan to Avert Climate Change, and the advice that the "high speed mitigation train needs to leave the station" (UN, 2014). Because culture also exists also in situ, as cultural places - and cultural monuments in places are also under climate change threat, as the UNESCO world heritage site, the Orkney monuments in Scotland example (The Scotsman, 2014). In other words, to mitigate this situation, it is necessary to recognize that culture and sustainability are interconnected to the planetary life of people and in critical urgency (RTCC, 2014), but the narratives about them are not.

⁴ <http://acvic.org/en/exhibition-projects/1483-exhibition-projects4>

Adding on to Cultural (E)Value(Ation)

In the *Society of the Spectacle (La Société du spectacle)*, Debord (1973) raised the role of the image as a mediator between social relationships, arguing that at the spectacle's heart is the mental model producing conditioned thought and pseudo-knowledge. Bohm (1994) argued, however, that neither are capable of the insight necessary to produce awareness of what thought is doing and how perception enacts it. He addresses this by observing that representation is an abstraction, a symbol with physical properties, affecting perception. "Thought is participating in everything but then says it is not – it is telling you the way things 'are' " (Bohm, 1994: 34). Bohm suggests this is the basis of any personal or collective blind spot, to which every *thought* is subjected. Rather, thought and knowledge are primarily collective phenomena and the flow of meaning between people is more fundamental than any individual's particular thoughts. He believed the entire consciousness is actually created as a process guided by information from the senses (Bohm, 1994: 151). Perception without proprioception is perceiving from reflexes of memory, which will never perceive the movement of thought where past and future images are contained.

Bohm concludes that we do not understand what is the role of incoherence in learning and in the system, especially the relationship between thought and the reflex system. Yet, if the process of thought has sustained incoherence then it all has no meaning (1994: 50). To break the inertia of incoherency, questioning the question is necessary, which questions a deeper assumption – a process which Bohm insists is essentially non-verbal (1994: 29). The creative act, on the other hand, alters some of the reflexes and produces insight that changes some of the synapses of how thought operates as a material process. Furthermore, if the reflexive structure of thought can be attended to instead of acted upon, and if a driven momentum is being dissipated, then insight, as an active energy, has the capacity to directly affect the structure not only of the thoughts in a group of people, but of the brain itself. Here Bohm gives us the basis of authentic change – *insight* (Figure 5)⁵.



Fig. 5: *Ugly* February 14, 2014
© Crew Against People

⁵ <http://crewagainpeople.org/>

In order for an *insightful* transformation of the collective reflexes in thinking about culture to occur, we need to train ourselves to attend to how thoughts function dialogically, and reflexively assimilate communicative practice socially about the resourceful means of cultural production and creative enterprise. *Does the question of recuperation, then, involve only the consideration of economic factors and their indicators for the valid measure of cultural contributions?* To question the question, we can ask what are the risks and the costs of *withholding* cultural investments? Ramon Parramon of ACVIC in Spain brings attention to how current societies are immersed in the staging of risks – risks for capital; risks for social capital; risks for futures and their derivatives; risks for business investments (2010: 109). Yet, the related discourses of globalization, unemployment, and individualization, are seemingly without risks.

Supported by economic reasoning power through statistics, cultural organizations can refashion the language of risks and its ideologies to reveal, *what are we risking by not supporting creative operations, programs and operators at sustainable levels? What are the risks of eliminating the operating costs for cultural organizations? What are the risks of underfunding cultural social capital?* By creating the productive imagery of our own *détournement*, can we create counter-narratives to the imagined upwardly mobile, unending stream of productive wealth, disconnected from the planetary life of people, and unmask the complicity of the cultural sector's dependence on external capital streams. Given the harsh funding climate for cultural production and its education today, to question the question is to ask, *how can we, as cultural operators, cultural creatives, and enterprises in the design of culture, its social expressions, pedagogies of development and its management – give a greater presence to economic absence?*

To address their underlying assumptions, the next set of questions will ask, *do designated institutional criteria for cultural added-value through produce necessary and sufficient data for the validity of their assessments?* Using Bohm's research means that creative acts bring insight to the shared meaning of cultural value and can influence the actual structure of thinking itself. Generating new ways of thinking about culture can in turn catalyze actions producing it. Systems thinking offers holistic perspectives through which new models can be developed and modified with simulations of interdisciplinary, symbolic formalizations.

The Spectacle of Mona's Spectators

To bring the displacement of added-value discourse into another light, in another case, the most talked about oil painting of the past decade was Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* (PRlog, 2010), created in 1503. In 1911, the painting was stolen, resulting in several books and a movie based on Seymour Reit's 1981 book, *The Day They Stole the Mona Lisa* (Tomlins, 2010). In 2012, 7.2 million people out of 9 million visitors went to the Louvre just to see her in person (ThatLou, 2012). In 2005, 350,000 Mona Lisa magnets, puzzles, and postcards were sold in the Louvre gift shop (Vital Statistics, 2005-2014). Mona even receives at least one fan letter a week addressed to the museum.

In the past decade, the painting has been reproduced digitally through the decade's best selling book, *The Da Vinci Code* and its subsequent movie. "This is a prime example of the correlation between sales and media placement of oil paintings. The *Mona Lisa* did not make the annual Top Ten list until after 'The Da Vinci Code' film was released and the renowned work of art was featured in it" (PRlog, 2010). Also in the past decade, the company that released the data, "...overstockArt.com sold more than a

million oil paintings. They are one of the Web's most successful distributors of wall décor items with over 10,000 daily visitors" (PRlog, 2010). Given the diversity of these cultural by-products, actions, behaviors, revenue streams, customer satisfaction, outreach and marketing efforts and their statistics, *what modeling system can we design for the actualized added-value attesting to the cultural worth of the Mona Lisa economically?*

The magnetism of the Mona Lisa as both an aesthetic and cultural enterprise, has proven its added-on value stimulating commercial ones, as its rhizomatic network of product lines of Da Vinci night creams, paints, software programs, university initiatives and the recent Da Vinci robot (The Guardian, 2014) revolutionizing invasive surgical operations, attest to. In the 500 years of its existence, the Mona Lisa and the author's name, have created centuries of added-value, stimulating new cultural resources, museum audiences, economic development, tourism, entertainment, medical advancements, and educational programs, serving a multidimensional function globally. To situate ourselves within the qualities of systemic and strategic design thinking, *what modeling system can we use to created cultural added-value economic statistics for this kind of impact assessment?*

Mona Lisa is a metaphor for culture reproducing itself in capital and social systems in new ways, producing new products, developing new media and other forms of culture, creating new income streams, diversifying capital resources, and integrating new aesthetics into the practical, cultural life of societies today. But in the context of inequality, the most troubling aspect of the collective failure of local and national leaders and their governments to create substantial policy changes in cultural budgets, is their inability to develop 'real change' incentives for the cultural sector today (Figure 6)⁶.



Fig. 6: Nadja from the series *People for People* 2002

⁶ <http://www.podebal.com/content/projects/lidelidem>

Text: Please help! I am 28 years old, single, without children. I am a school teacher from Romania and I would like to live at least one year with the same standards as my colleagues in Western Europe. I'm looking for a sponsor. © Podebal

A collective blind spot is an enduring incoherency is that educated people in roles of public representatives, cannot interpret the findings from decades of research reports, study findings, conference outcomes, summit statements, and emergency meetings, into outcomes that substantively improve the situation – using instead economics as a weapon against culture as a justification for the diversion of funds.

In establishing an alternative model for valuation of cultural impact, the added-value of this experiment will be not be for economic purpose alone. It is possible to imagine other economic derivatives from culture by conversely asking, *what are the costs of withholding cultural investments?* Likewise, it is possible to imagine monetary value for how culture catalyzes community participation and catalogue its social benefits; to imagine culture as a working expenditure reproducing itself, not only through experiential encounters of cultural events themselves, but examining *what are the contributions to investing in cultural memory?* The *Mona Lisa* is not just a cultural artifact, it is a metaphor for culture enduring.

To question the question, *can an added-value determination be extended both backwards and forwards into a futures market using a cultural capital modeling system?* The conjecture raises many questions about how the emphasis on economic benefit is narrowly focused only on economic data (Americans for the Arts, 2012) and encourages a one-dimensional view of culture that can become more damaging to actual culture than its virtual and pseudo-imitations.

Addressing The Cultural Blind Spot

“...contemporary science’s blind spot is experience.”
-Otto Scharmer (2007: 22)

When Rodin unveiled his model for a commissioned statue of *Balzac* prior to its completion in 1897, the writer first appeared as naked, holding his penis. What appeared as an early *détournement* of the *Comédie humaine*, and Balzac’s *Etudes de Moeurs*, or study of manners in society, Rodin’s second model reappeared with the writer cloaked and statuesque, looking out into the future, the territory of the writer’s own plans, codifying the male gaze. Because of a public outcry that the writer didn’t appear as expected, Rodin’s commission was subsequently revoked.

Rodin’s first model dared to do something that today is still unimaginable in many Western societies and public school classrooms, and examples of culture that have attempted to do so in public spaces, as Rodin’s statue did, are increasingly censored from public institutions and public view as David Černý’s commissioned sculpture *Entropa* was, when it was removed from the Justus Lipsius building in 2009. Like Rodin, Černý returned the money he was given. In both these cases, mystification is not an incoherency but a response to it, a *détournement*. In response to the political slogan, *Europe Without Borders*, *Entropa* was a parody of national stereotypes, reflecting on how borders are maintained. More than culture jamming, the post-Koons sculpture, structured like the interlocking pieces of a

larger-than-life children's plastic toy taken from the inside of a cereal box, *Entropa* was a *détournement*, a visual subversion of discursive taboos. As Černý states,

Grotesque hyperbole and mystification belongs among the trademarks of Czech culture and creating false identities is one of the strategies of contemporary art. The images of individual parts of *Entropa* use artistic techniques often characterized by provocation. The piece thus also lampoons the socially active art that balances on the verge between would-be controversial attacks on national character and undisturbing decoration of an official space (Černý, 2009)

Reflexively, this implies that the dialogic process works visually and that language is not the only communication system. Our debt to culture seems to be a question of how to knock the system back into coherency. To do so is to embody actions that break the hegemony of unified discourses surrounding the roles of governments, institutions, organizations and participants, grounding the corpus of the individual to the collective body we equally inhabit. Perhaps it is time to speculate on the future markets of investments into contemporary culture and its social pedagogies. This in turn can generate new ways of thinking about culture and catalyze actions producing it.

The Case of Jára Cimrman

To demonstrate how culture can function politically to create alternative forms of artistic, social, and economic value, I mention the case of Jára Cimrman. Inspired by a British contest and conducted by a Czech Television in 2005 to nominate *The Greatest Czech*, Jára Cimrman was selected by a Czech national vote.⁷ Unfortunately, Mr. Cimrman was later disqualified when it was revealed he is, in fact, a fictional character. Created by Zdeněk Svěrák in the 60s, Cimrman was purported to have been one of the greatest Czech playwrights, poets, composers, philosophers, inventors, mathematicians, politicians, lovers, and sportsmen of the 19th and early 20th century. In 1966, Svěrák co-founded, *The Theater of Jára Cimrman*, dedicated to the research of the life and death of the newly discovered Czech genius, who later 'starred' in many of Svěrák's plays, assuming the qualities of various personalities in Czech history and television. Today, many Czech people believe Cimrman is an actual person (Figure 7)⁸.

⁷ Part of this text is excerpted from: Tipton, T. (November 2010) *Final Report Project Findings 2008-2010: IMAGE AND IDENTITY: Improving Citizenship Education Through Digital Art*. External Evaluator Report for the Department of Art Education; Charles University in Prague.

⁸ <http://www.osobnosti.cz>



Fig. 7: Jára Cimrman⁹

Cimrman has withstood the test of time's oblivion by becoming a tv personality, writer, author, actor, and even a theatre itself, the *Theatre of Cimrman*, which becomes an exegesis of the multi-dimensional aspect of 'image'. In Prague, Czech Republic, Divadlo Cimrman produces creative interventions and farcical fictions that evoke a certain truth - *insight* able to animate cultural situations and events. Cimrman's *détournement* to mystification is the biography of his life, which attests that:

After World War I, Cimrman lived the life of the globetrotter....He selflessly assisted several luminaries. For Mr. and Mrs. Curie he carried 45 tubs of uranium ore to the basement on his back. He showed Mr. Edison the proper way to screw in a light bulb. He found rental space for Mr. Eiffel. He praised Chekhov's new book of short stories and personally fertilized the cherry orchard (<http://jaracimrman.wordpress.com/cimrman/>).

Cimrman is also an example of how a 'virtual identity' operates in the socio-cultural sphere of contemporary Czech culture and identity, shape shifting through the transformations of the various fictionalizations of his character. Nevertheless, his character maintains a mystification of his own identity and the identities of others, even while his existence and the depictions of his changing character represent ongoing historical-cultural narratives. Contemporary media assemblages about him demonstrate the intertextual morphology of the cyber-based interface between people, information, society, culture, and art.

The case of Jára Cimrman illustrates that culture not only reproduces itself in unpredictable ways; it becomes a space through which the political, social and economic ideologies of the cultural context are play out their constructions and functions. Psychologically, Cimrman's appearance in the public realm functions as a screen for understanding how people project national and cultural stereotypes onto his character. Like Černý's ironic parody to stereotypes, humor is a strategy of subversion to that which doesn't want to see or be seen – the blind spot - and provoke it into (inter)action. It means that

⁹ Uncredited photo from <http://www.osobnosti.cz/jara-cimrman.php>

culture can recreate itself anew generationally in critique as well as in play. A stage upon which social issues can be played out, Cimrman's impervious antics nevertheless transpire without direct harm to people, where the element of creative fun imaginatively reinvents social experiences culturally, reminding us to dis-identify with the current situation we're in – whatever that is.

Cimrman, who parodies the spectacle of identity, demonstrates that the perspectives of art inform politics and are sites for understanding and constituting political ideas. Negash (2004) believes as well there can be an independent role played by artists in the shaping of political values and beliefs. Negash further affirms the nexus between arts and politics to construct modes of analysis that will inform pedagogy, enhance interpretation and facilitate theory-building (2004: 4). Such ideas contribute to valuing the innovative role played by intellectuals and artists and their influence on the construction of images, both mental and perceptual, that contribute as well to the meaning of everyday life. Guattari elaborates (2009: 106), "...that a truth passes directly, with no visible break between the elements of reporting, fiction, and documentary."

As a form of cultural assemblage point, Cimrman represents culture's capacity to renew representations and meaning in untold ways. As a cultural strategy, *détournement* evokes creative situations that provoke insight into culture's role in the construction of social knowledge, and offers opportunities for social participants to participate in the creation of new forms of recuperation. Cimrman encourages ironic and clever inventiveness, allowing people to peacefully find pleasure in culture and enjoy themselves. *Coming back to mind* by generating insights together creatively becomes a part of culture's necessary representation (Figure 8)¹⁰.



Fig. 8: Petra Šuty's statue of Jára Cimrman statue for Tanvæld unveiled (2009)

© Photo [ČTK](#)¹¹

¹⁰ http://www.rychnovjbc.cz/_2805_jara-cimrman-bude-mit-sochu-v-tanvalde-/#.VGPm_ftF8z0

¹¹ Photo from http://kultura.idnes.cz/jara-cimrman-bude-mit-v-tanvaldu-sochu-bude-vsak-zahalena-v-mlze-pv6-/vytvarne-umeni.aspx?c=A090613_153811_vytvarneum_ob

The Field Structure of Cultural Value's Movement in Five Acts: co-initiating, co-sensing, co-presencing, co-creating, and co-evolving

"...only somebody reprieved from a death sentence can imagine time as a gift."

-John Berger (1984: 38)

The apparent divide between present and future can be studied through a strategy that Otto Scharmer (2007: 18-19) calls *emerging*. Through the method of generative listening, studying *emerging* as a counterbalance the politics of reacting. He calls this a field structure of attention in five movements involving co-initiating, co-sensing, co-presencing, co-creating, and co-evolving. As he states (2007: 19), "you cannot understand a system unless you change it." To address the cultural blind spot, Scharmer (2007) suggests *presencing* can begin a change process by imagining a more desirable cultural future and beginning to trace how it emerges in the present: "Presencing is a blending of the words 'presence' and 'sensing'. It means to sense, tune in, and act from one's highest future potential – the future that depends on us to bring it into being" (8). Creating simulations of possible cultural futures theoretically and practically serves to disseminate new designs, prototypes, and their representations, establishing culture as a renewable energy source. Supporting this trajectory, Peter Senge (1994) believes that change takes systemic and strategic thinking as well as action (SOL, 2014).

A first course of action that can be taken is in reclaiming the terms of cultural value. A beginning step is the recuperation of cultural discourses in policy documents, valued-added indicators, competency designs, mission statements, and activist strategies. Recognizing the need to shift policy perspectives through the structure of meta-language and its data, is to recognize that cultural activism in this realm is necessary. The infusion of inclusion by revising the language of added-value can begin by inserting new keywords and creating different interpretations of value indicators into key governing documents and their ordinations for culture at all levels of their existence.

We can be attracted to the word 'empower' and inquire into what that means to encourage and 'co-create' a process of discovery and experimentation in open spaces that capacitate and impact ways in which we communicate, circulate, perceive, and imagine. Following the example of the abART's *Archive of Fine Arts* at the DOX Center for Contemporary Art in Prague to collect and make cultural operators and their works accessible in an up-to-date, on-line database, (www.dox.cz/en/premises-and-shops/archive-of-fine-arts), we can link cultural archives together into international networks in order to catalyze investigations into site specific actions, their authors and participants, exhibitions, documents, concepts, and events produced in communities, expanding our database of evidence for the added-value of culture in community development and providing best practices models others can use for their own design morphologies. The abART archive and its history is a witness to the power of individuals to co-create community resources that support the database of cultural organizations and expand the knowledge of cultural actions that take place and interact beyond object or artifact, and stimulate creative thinking.

To enhance the development and use of actual data, we can move the emphasis on the assessment of knowledge to the demonstration of its use. Developing interconnected, international cultural databases supports the dissemination and use of expert data for policy, advocacy, and outreach efforts and expands their tools into other avenues such as research findings and scholarship in the cultural and creative sectors academically. As the Culture Action Network demonstrates, engaging

communities of practice in advocacy efforts can further the resource base and support system, to co-generate new local arts and culture sites of production and expand their networks. In these ways, we shift culture to networked, resource-based connections.

A second course of action is to redefine culture as a working expenditure reproducing itself. We can codify new terms for how culture catalyzes community participation and put a cost to its social, educational, and creative benefits (Figure 9)¹².



Fig. 9: Center for Interactive Arts Uhonice, Czech Republic
© A1 Architects

One of the ways we can do so is to direct our efforts towards encouraging and intentionally developing the gift of the human imagination with our youngest cultural participants in schools to our oldest members in societies today. In the cultural sector and in pedagogical practice, in public schooling systems, and in communities, we can witness and initiate greater opportunities to infuse creativity or cultural actions across early years programs and extend their practice into life-long learning experiences. We can hold our institutions accountable for valuing arts practice-as-research and strive to provide alternative models of creative education, good infrastructure support systems for creativity and innovation in our schools. Academically, institutions can provide and maintain the full range of BA to PHD professional certificates, diplomas, and degrees for fine arts, cultural animation, arts education, arts infusion, community arts programs - their administration, and cultural management. Practically, it means that we understand that to reinvent ourselves means retooling personally as well as digitally through the support of digital communication tools, their access, and training.

If *value* was considered a living commodity, its protocols would be the criteria for (re)producing itself in the lives and experiences of people and introducing it in new ways. To catalyze personal and professional growth in individuals and communities and expose each other to the diverse experiences possible in arts and culture, we can bring the laboratory of the classroom into wider audience. We can

¹² <http://www.a1architects.cz/en/works/centre-of-interactive-arts-uhonice>

link ourselves across institutions and establish collaborative networks sharing cultural practices and bringing them out into the world for others to use, as Spain's ACVIC's (2014) project, *Pedagogical Interferences*, and Art|Escola network invites (<http://artiescola.cat/>).

A third course of action is to rendezvous with infusion. Our art and cultural frameworks and skills can reach beyond teacher certification in schools to mental health, health care, senior centers, daycare, prisons, and other social settings. In these ways, the community becomes part of a cultural learning laboratory. Our theories, methods, calls for action, and mission statements can invite participation within the activities of localities of where we are situated connecting to social youth programs, festivals, business incubators, civic organizations, training programs, urban design, and housing developers.

Presencing together, we can encourage thinking about how culture can exist inside or outside of the classroom, in the hallways of society, in the boardrooms, in the palazzos, in the shopping centers, in the hospitals, in the senior citizen homes, in the tax offices, in the practices of health care workers, social workers, and urban planners; infusing and integrating cultural actions so that we can function, practice, relate to, and belong together in this fragile space of planetary co-existence with a value that is understood and no longer a question mark on the proof sheets of validity.

To reach out across disciplinary borders also means connecting to business leaders and involving them in practical visions, seeking out entrepreneurial philanthropists, cultural critics, philosophers, cultural advocates, wellness specialists, cultural ambassadors, urban and civic leaders, community developers, innovative schools, and government bodies – and invite them to make culture happen together. In these ways, the community is engaged as a cultural learning laboratory that can reach even further to benefit non-cultural sectors by pitching creative ideas to business incubators, civic organizations, manager training programs, and community developers. We can co-evolve by involving business and community leaders in practical visions and invite them to co-create a new form of cultural ecology. With actions to engage participants and passersby with the critical value of the arts and cultural experiences in society, we enact cultural value and its sustenance. Utilizing all of the resources, networks, strategies and knowledge available to us today at this scale becomes akin to a high intensity, coherent laser beam aimed at a situation of sustained incoherence.

Conclusion

As creative efforts and policy analysis through collective actions demonstrate, however, large-scale, focused policy interventions can make a difference for culture. Symbolic transformations are meaningful for new narratives that bring attention to this process politically and allow for reformulations of policy objectives, program outcomes, economic messages, and cultural directions. These in turn bring new investigations into communities of practice and engage larger collectives in the design and practice of resourceful intersections. To dissolve the current image of unsustainability and reconstitute a new face of merit means to imagine meeting the world and ourselves in it, as a living system, not abstracted and inert; neither as an impersonal ledger account objectifying the lives of people without the context of relationship, nor being cast outside of the means of sustainability by enacted financial catastrophes.

To conduct a death save is to intervene in an anticipated foregone conclusion – not only to avert the continual erosion of funding by resuscitating value through other measures, but by refocusing attention on the marginalization of cultural workers and creative enterprises into localities of need. Meaningful *détournement* means to intervene in ways that ensure that everyone present has access to culture, and that for those who choose to, the means to experience, contribute to, produce, and protect the world patrimony of culture and its heritage. In this situation, the nearly final question to the question we can ask is, *how can each of us participate in a cultural renewal that is urging us forward, calling through our collective discontent and insecurities, for a different way of life and living it?* If the immigrant, exile, tourist and urban wanderer are our companions, whose territory will we cross over together?

What does it mean to enact a death save to culture? When Alfredo Gregorio de Melo was asked what he would do in response to the predication that in the near future, rising sea levels would put most of the Amazon between the Purus and the Mapia Rivers where he lived, underwater because of climate change, he replied, “On the morning of the last day of the world as we know it, I will go out and plant a tree.” (A.G. de Melo, personal communication, 2006). And then, inside the fifth act, imagine the interfering tilt to the machine, and enact the death save.

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Abstract

With the desire to promote excellence in higher education in Portugal and develop the Alto Minho region, the positive association that exists between art education in improving individual skills, and increasing cultural participation and academic results and Viana do Castelo School of Higher Education (VCHSE) was established. The determination of importance that the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo [IPVC] has in the plan to comply with the cultural strategy of Europe 2020 initiatives was the starting point for a group of teachers and researchers of to consider the weight of school capital and cultural consumption, in relationship to the lack of correlation between increased cultural offerings and increased cultural consumption. Through these investigations, VCHSE began to inquire into the relevance of designing and implementing a program of cultural intermediation that could develop students' cultural practices through art education, improving the skills of professionals qualified by the Institute.

The aim of this paper is to briefly present the VCHSE strategy to diagnosis the cultural practices of IPVC students in order to design a pilot program, *Cultural Intermediation in Higher Education in Viana do Castelo*, which will be implemented at the VCHSE.

Keywords: cultural intermediation; cultural offer; cultural practices

¹ Expanded version of the presentation given on May 27th, 2014 at the 9th International Conference of the Arts, in Viana do Castelo, Portugal.

The starting point of *Cultural Intermediation in Higher Education in Viana do Castelo*

The importance of culture and creativity in the competitiveness of Europe (KEA European Affairs, 2006), as well as in the affirmation of cities at the regional, national and international levels (Florida, 2005), supports the UNESCO (2006) findings that art education plays an important role in the educational process for the development of individual skills and cultural participation. These investigations were the starting point for a group of teachers and researchers of VCHSE to begin to inquire the relevance of designing and implementing a program of cultural intermediation that could develop students' cultural practices through art education, improving the skills of professionals qualified by this school. Cultural intermediation in higher education encourages alliances with institutional networks and regional resources using cultural and social methodologies in order to develop new constellations of networks, and their discursive practices on behalf of cultural activities in communities today. Drawing upon the idea that culture is mediated through social spaces, cultural intermediation points to the institutional role in education to lead in the professionalization of change processes in the social dimensions of culture.

VCHSE courses are particularly relevant for the development of skills in cultural intermediation in the cultural sector since they already draw upon professional programs in arts and cultural management, whose aim it is to develop arts and cultural managers, cultural workers, teachers, and researchers in the cultural sector. By building upon bachelor's degree study in arts and cultural management, students can continue their professionalizing study and practice at VCHSE through to the Master's level, building skills sets in increments along the way, strengthening the impact of competency implementation in the sector. This means that already each year, the cultural sector is receiving many new, highly trained and qualified managers from VCHSE, who are graduating with professional competencies positioned to contribute new skills in the management of cultural enterprises, cultural operators and institutions. Knowing this, we thus observed that the acquisition of skill sets in intermediation can also contribute to individual transformation. At the present time, Alto Minho region has the opportunity to place real agents of change in key sectors such as education, arts management and social gerontology. The benefit of a new program in this area would be to bring the benefits of art education and cultural management into community-based approaches to cultural development.

In November 2012, in order to profile the group of fifteen students in the Master's in Arts and Cultural Management program, a survey questionnaire was distributed. The main conclusions were: a) students had a careless or retracted cultural practice (Gomes, 2004); b) there were some who had a profile of cultural consumption which was pervasive/cumulative/fragmented (Santos & Pais, 2010). The results are in line with national trends (Santos, 2007) and profiled cultural practices of other groups of students in higher education (Fernandes, 2001). This kind of remark is of particular concern and reveals itself as a huge weakness considering expectations when entering the labor market (especially in a group whose professional future involves the development of strategies for the cultural development of the public population). Thus, it seems clear that, at least in this small sample of 15 students, the implementation of a cultural intermediation program can help minimize the problem and develop cultural practices of future arts managers in Alto Minho.

Considering that it is not our intent to restrict the designed program to the students of the Master in Arts and Cultural Management degree, it becomes necessary to gather evidence that is pertinent and

relevant to apply its premises to different courses of the VCHSE school. During this process of conducting action research on students' observations, the regional strategic plan for Alto Minho for the Europe 2020 initiative was released (2013). This plan resulted in a deep study that aimed to establish a diagnosis, a vision, a strategy and an action plan for the next programming period of EU Structural Funds. The study for Alto Minho indicates that the focus of the region should be on the development of programs and projects to help it become more competitive, more attractive, more connected and more resilient through improved quality, efficiency and openness of its higher education in order to contribute to and increase the levels of participation and attainment of the local population (Augusto Mateus & Associados, 2013).

It was bearing this in mind that the Cultural Intermediation project was designed. Its main objective was to begin by conducting a needs assessment through a diagnosis of student participation in cultural activities and then to diagnosis the cultural offer within the overall IPVC educational system. In order to determine what kinds of cultural activities IPVC students engaged in and to what degree their involvement in the cultural sector is, a questionnaire for the 2015 school year will be designed to determine how extensive and intensive their cultural practices were during 2014. This information will serve as the baseline data for designing and structuring competencies for a new program, *Cultural Intermediation in Higher Education in Viana do Castelo*, to be implemented at VCHSE.

The needs assessment is to be designed across the four locations of the IPVC schools in order to determine the relationship between the cultural offer of the IPVC schools; their role in the development of the cultural practices of the academic community; the faculty and staff; the municipalities; and the students in order to tailor the design of a pilot program to the needs of the regional development plan. Together with the application of surveys and the creation of focus groups, an analysis of public documents will establish the baseline for the final evaluation of the pilot program. This information is necessary for determining how to adapt the program to the needs of prospective students in the remaining schools of the IPVC in alignment with the regional 2020 goals.

The innovation of the project lies not only in the type of analysis used to evaluate the cultural practices of the students, but also in its use of strategic visioning and planning processes to improve and consolidate cultural practices. Built into the proactive design of the pilot program is also the fact that there never was such a program implemented in Alto Minho before. It is clear that the promotion of excellence in higher education through the establishment of a dynamic and positive interaction between institutions and students is not new (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) – just as an analysis of cultural practices is not new (Bourdieu, 1992). The innovation of this program for the production of knowledge in the cultural sector and its research area lays in the fact of its transversality – being a vehicle that will allow us to look at the problem holistically.

One of the misconceptions that exists regarding art education is related to the fact that it is often used instrumentally to create audiences (Bamford, 2007). By focusing on the interactive elements of the cultural sector and supporting its mediation, we intend to broaden the uses and purposes of art and cultural education into the animation of culture beyond its predetermined, institutional borders. The result will be the definition of a strategy to produce a new kind of professionalizing training for the cultural sector that will create new cultural opportunities in the region. Using art education for the construction of a relevant and participatory program integrated into VCHSE, IPVC and the Alto Minho

region, will contribute to the development of students as well as that of the community's cultural enrichment.

Four Levels of Diagnosis for a Holistic Analysis

1. Cultural offer diagnosis of the municipalities in the locations of the six IPVC Schools

An analysis of the cultural practices of a population should include a synthetic study on cultural offers in order to establish a consistent relationship between consumer preferences and the range of options available.

Considering that the six IPVC Schools are placed in four locations of Alto Minho, a diagnosis of the cultural offers in the municipalities of Melgaço, Ponte de Lima, Valença and Viana do Castelo was planned. The diagnosis is based on the analysis of a set of public documents normally used for the marketing, public relations, and information dissemination of cultural events (e.g. municipalities' webpages and cultural agendas; local newspapers, etc.) produced between the months of January and December 2014. For an exhaustive survey of such documents in each of the four locations, we will have the collaboration from IPVC's scientific area of Art, Design and Humanities, since they teach in all IPVC schools and, therefore, have easier access to documents produced in different locations. In addition to this generic set of documents, narrative statements will be extracted from interviews to complement gathered information. The selection of the period of analysis of the cultural offer in municipalities is consistent with the fact that the questionnaire, which will be implemented between January and February 2015, focuses on the cultural practices of IPVC students for the past 12 months.

Document analysis will be performed using a database grid especially designed for the purpose. Key words and thematic categories will be created from the set of activities that include the cultural and creative sectors. A set of defined subcategories will establish a relationship between the type of the event, the promoter, the degree of professionalization of the producing entity, the cost of membership, location, the day of the week and the time of realization. The development of this diagnosis foresees a joint coordination with IPVC's Bachelor's degree and Master courses in Arts and Cultural Management. Degree finalists and master students will be directly involved in the process of data collection, which will allow them to participate in a research that is expected to contribute to the implementation of a process which is to bring improvement and change to IPVC.

2. The use of IPVC's cultural diagnosis on the activities for the promotion of cultural practices among the academic community of the IPVC institutions

Higher education institutions gather individuals with different positions and predispositions and different symbolic universes, working as a socializing agent of individuals with different cultural practices. Thus, the perception of how higher institutions of education face this mission is vital for the development of a strategy that contributes to the qualification of IPVC's academic community, especially students.

Considering that IPVC has six schools, we will do a detailed study of each of them focusing on the activities promoted in the year 2014, aiming at the development of the cultural practices of students, teachers and non-teaching staff. For the overall analysis of the cultural actions of IPVC in this field, we

will analyze a set of official documents of the institution together with news published on the IPVC website in 2014. The analysis of this data will follow a similar logic to the diagnosis of the cultural offers of the municipalities. In addition, focus groups will be created including key stakeholders of the institution, including representatives of the presidency of the General Council, of the Technical and Scientific Council, of the IPVC scientific area of Art, Design and Humanities and of the Academic Federation.

For the analysis of the specific cultural actions of each of the IPVC schools, we will analyze them in relationship to a set of documents from each school (e.g. course reports, course programs) plus the news published on their specific websites in the year 2014. Furthermore, two focus groups will be created in each school: one with representatives of the Board, of the Pedagogical Council, of the Students Association, the non-teaching staff, of the library and of ongoing projects, and one with representatives of the courses' coordination team and their students.

The thirteen focus groups have two main purposes: to ascertain the validity of the preliminary findings resulting from the analysis of the documents with contextual factors and participant reflections on the content analysis of the existing cultural offer; and to sensitize participants to the importance of further developing cultural practices among IPVC's academic community. Results will allow us to know IPVC's activities for the promotion of cultural practices among the academic community and what recommendations can be made to further develop them.

3. Diagnosis of VCHSE employees' cultural practices

For the solid implementation of this pilot program of intervention, it is imperative to also focus on those who deal with students daily. It is crucial that teachers and staff have these practices anchored in order to facilitate and maximize the involvement of students.

Taking into consideration that the main objective of the strategic planning research is to come up with a program of action based on the diagnosis in order to design the pilot at VCHSE, this third diagnosis becomes vital for the congruence of this research. A questionnaire survey will be carried out in February 2015 for all employees who are serving in this school system in order to measure the cultural practices of VCHSE's staff. All teachers who have lectured in any curricular unit at VCHSE in the year 2014 will be considered; in the case of employees, all IPVC officials who have had their main workplace at the facilities of VCHSE over the same period will be included.

The questionnaire will be created especially for this purpose in relationship to data collection instruments applied in other similar studies carried out in national and international public contexts. At the end of this analysis, it will be possible to diagnosis the extent and quality of cultural practices of teachers and non-teaching staff of VCHSE.

4. Diagnosis of IPVC students' cultural practices

The profiling of the student' cultural diagnosis is of particular importance for the success of the whole program. At the end of this task it will be possible to know the cultural practices of IPVC students for determining the baseline data for a longitudinal study of personal and institutional cultural offer development.

Firstly, it will allow the profiling of IPVC students' cultural practices in year 2014 with all the advantages such information can bring to wider agents in a variety of areas. Secondly, the results obtained for VCHSE will be essential for the design of the action plan to be implemented at IPVC and to gradually expand to other schools. Thirdly, it will allow for a baseline to be developed that will be important for an analysis of the longitudinal evolution of cultural practices among students who actively participated in the study; and to assess the impact on students' cultural practices over the first three years of initial training.

Data collection will use the same instrument used in the employees' diagnosis. This task will have the collaboration of IPVC's scientific area of Art, Design and Humanities and of all courses' coordination teams at VCHSE, aiming at the creation of multidisciplinary groups that will go to all six schools sensitizing students for their participation in this project. At the end of this task it will be possible to know the cultural practices of IPVC students.

The design of the pilot action program

All four diagnoses are vital to establish a grounded relationship between the cultural offer of the sampled sites and the cultural practices of the academic community and, thus, the role of IPVC Schools on the development of these cultural practices. The feature that is considered most important in the development of this program, is that the design of the pilot program is not based solely on conclusions drawn from the analysis of data collected over the tasks previously outlined – it also includes strategies for an intensive action plan which will contemplate how to catalyze the active participation of VCHSE's entire community. We hereby seek to create conditions for an authentic involvement of all sectors of VCHSE in this phase so that the integration and implementation of the pilot program is seen as an important initiative of the entire academic community for the qualification of the individual and the benefit of the VCHSE communities at large.

This last phase is structured in three major stages: 1) the VCHSE Cultural Space; 2) a Multidisciplinary Artistic Experimentation; and 3) an International Seminar.

The VCHSE's Cultural Space is a particularly important place. Students, teachers and non-teaching staff will be invited and challenged to contribute ideas for the transformation of the physical facilities in order to be make them available for this purpose and to be located in a privileged spot of the VCHSE's old building. An official opening will occur on the first weekend of March 2015, during a '40 hour non-stop' that is to rely on the involvement of the academic community at large. Driven in collaboration with Bachelors degree and Master's students in Arts and Cultural Management, the new space will be permanently open to the public and complemented by the creation of a virtual space available on the internet.

The second stage of this phase will take place during the month of February 2015 with the promotion of a number of initiatives related to artistic experimentation in order to enhance cultural practices. During this month, a set of intensive training actions will be promoted to allow the academic community of VCHSE to make contact with some special forms of artistic expression. The final selection of activities to be developed depends on the outcome of the first stage of the data analysis. It should be noted that the rate of adherence to proposed initiatives and the results of some specific initiatives that are already pre-defined (i.e. such as an action within the performing arts, during which drama and

theater will be used to enhance the creative manifestation of expectations and needs of VCHSE community in relation to their cultural practices), will depend upon the actual conditions for building an appropriate pilot action program that contributes to the mission of further developing VCHSE's cultural practices.

The last stage of this phase is the organization of an international seminar to be held in June 2015 and during which we will present the preliminary results of the study and a version of the pilot program.

We hope that, with this strategy, the pilot program will be the first step of a journey that will be both consistent with and consequent to the implementation of a process of change in higher education in Alto Minho, contributing to the qualification of the region by promoting excellence in IPVC.

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mcachadinha@ese.ipvc.pt**Abstract**

The phenomenon of aging is one of the most remarkable features of present-day societies and is also one of the dimensions of social crisis today. Characteristic traits of today's world interacting with aging are cultural globalization and interculturalism, impacting the lives of different age groups. Many of today's seniors have never been educated to globalization but live it, often in a problematic way for different reasons.

This article has a main objective of understanding the extent to which different socio-cultural and educational experiences resulting from migration during life, relate to the autonomous everyday experiences of a selected group of seniors. During the empirical research, a group of seniors with migratory experience who are currently living in the urban area of Viana do Castelo were interviewed. Our interviewees produced narratives which speak of their migration and intercultural experience that allowed us to understand the reasons for their departure, and depict how they live today and what they think about life. We concluded that the intercultural experience contributes to the maintenance of high levels of activity and to successful aging.

Keywords: culture, education, successful aging

Introduction

Culture is a key concept in social sciences and humanities reflection. Several definitions have been presented for this concept. The definitions displayed the idea that persons are much more than their biological and genetic heritage. According to Cuche (2006: 10), "The culture allows the man to, not only, adapt to the environment, but also to adapt to himself, according to his needs and projects, and that is in other words, the culture makes possible the transformation of nature."

Modern societies have been getting older, mainly in developed countries, as demonstrated by several statistics and bibliographical sources from the social sciences. The analysis of situations and implications from the population that is aging takes on a growing scientific and social significance. The aging population has the characteristics of a problem precisely because society has some difficulty in dealing with this particular situation. The existence of a growing senior population and increasingly long-lived people launch new challenges to health, education, social security systems and to society as a whole.

The senior population may constitute a social problem mainly when there are situations of physical dependence and/or social and economic disadvantages. The dependence problem with an increasing number of elderly people assumes greater social visibility and requires political and community interventions. Aging requires new educational and cultural programs in order to encourage autonomy.

It is understood that successful aging requires maintenance of autonomy. At the moment, in parallel with the demographic phenomenon of aging, there is also a growing economic and cultural globalization accompanied by migratory phenomena involving an increasing number of people from different countries and cultures. This situation requires social and cultural changes and it has implications in formal and informal education.

Portugal, which was traditionally a country of emigration has also become in recent years, a country of immigration, bringing the reality today of the existence of a large number of residents from other geographical areas. Also, many of the portuguese who had emigrated decades ago, returned to live here on their retirement pension. This article will present results of an investigation conducted on an elderly group with a migration past who are intercultural residents in the city of Viana do Castelo. Research findings reflect on how the acculturation and learning made along the migratory path influenced autonomy during the aging process as well contributing to what today is called successful aging.

1. The model of analysis

According to the characteristics of contemporary society in which we see not only an increasing complexity and intercultural environment, but also a growing population with diverse sociological features that is aging. It is relevant to know the relationship between these two phenomena. Given the current social complexity, it is essential to consider the person who ages in connection with their individual and experienced contexts in the particular trajectory towards seniority. As Faleiros (2013) argues, to understand aging and the assets of aging, it is important to consider a multidimensional approach. Using this perspective, aging can be understood as a process of development and not as a process of stagnation, the end of existence or the end of social relationships.

In evidence of this assertion, several authors relate the importance between education, culture and autonomy. The theme of autonomy appears in academic literature linked either to the idea of social participation; as well as to the idea of the expansion of political participation concerned with decentralization and non-concentration of power (Martins, 2001; Ollivier, 2005). In short, autonomy is the ability of a person or a community to make decisions that affect them, building their own rules, reflecting on the consequences of their actions, assuming responsibilities. However, in a political perspective, there is no other way to become autonomous than by the personal experience of democracy (Ollivier, 2005). An individual (regardless of age) can only achieve autonomy if they progressively have the ability and/or opportunity to make decisions about matters that affect them.

As Faleiros (2013) argues, the articulation between social relationships, autonomy and protection, represents a paradigm of linking between the context, the environment, the personal perception, i.e. the way of life and attitudes facing difficulties, from both normal aging and the exceptional or pathological aging. Autonomy means consciousness, relational ability and the opportunity to make decisions about oneself, as well as about one's relationship with the world, in an interdependent mode, in a socio-political-cultural context and as a social and political subject, with expression in the different levels of society (Faleiros, 2013).

Researches that make a simultaneous approach to the different dimensions of autonomy are rare. Nevertheless, the literature review shows the, importance of retaining autonomy involves physical, instrumental, social, cultural and political capacities.

In our days, children, youth, adults and elderly people live in multicultural societies. They have an absence of intercultural education, which is necessary today in order to achieve a full integration in the world in which we live. In addition, many of the seniors living currently in Viana do Castelo, in

Portugal, are carriers of migratory and intercultural experiences. They lived many years in other countries to which they migrated, and now they are returning to live on their retirement pension.

The contribution of migration and intercultural experience appears to be in the development of identity and citizenship. The intercultural experience promotes the development of social responsibility, while also allowing people to return with their extended citizenship (Sebben, 1997). Alencar-Rodrigues, Strey and Pereira (2007), characterized and studied “migratory experience” seeking to analyse the implications of such experiences in the positioning to the culture and society of origin.

The migratory experience means having a fixed residence for a certain time in another country or city with different socio-economic and cultural characteristics from those of one’s previous geographic area of origin. As a result of the migration experience, it is identified that living abroad enables personal discovery, maturation, expansion of autonomy and development of critical thinking. The migratory experience is also presented as an initiator of difficulties in adapting to the new culture and in the return (Alencar-Rodrigues et al., 2007).

Concerning the research issues and their answers, the analytical model of interpretation includes essential elements taken from three fundamental theoretical frameworks:

- **The constructivist theoretical framework** (consisting of a set of theories). Regarding our purpose of study, these theories become relevant: 1) the explanation and the understanding of the individual aging processes, in particular the influence of social structures and the interactions; 2) the study of the aspects related to each situation and construction of the social meanings of aging; and 3) the study on the evolution of the social conceptions of aging.

Specifically, Gubrium & Holstein (1999) highlight as examples of most current work on aging the application of ethno methodologies in the research of the strategies of the elderly in their daily life; the analysis of life histories and narratives about how elderly people are building their meanings and how they go through their experiences; and the analysis of how, in specific and different social and cultural contexts, seniors build upon their aging and their lives.

- **The theory of the life course.** This theoretical concept is based on the interactions between person / environment, in conceptions of stratification and changes with age and with the events of life. The logic of life course theory, with dynamic and dialectical conception, prevails either at an individual level or a group relations level. In the context of this theoretical conception, there are connections between the different cycles or phases of life and the moments of transition should be particularly studied (school, early working life, marriage, emigration moment, descendant’s birth ... retirement).

An important aspect of this design is to recognize that aging cannot be understood only in terms of immediate and visible ageing in the final cycles of life; but that it must be understood in the light of previous cycles, including early adulthood, and its effects on health and social integration.

- **The theory of activity** that began to be developed in the late ‘60s by Havighurst (1968). Havighurst claimed that the end of physical and mental activities due to aging would be associated with psychological disorders, attitudes and behaviours of social isolation. According to the logic of this theory, successful aging would be possible if the retired senior keep levels of activity equivalent to those experienced during the active phases of life.

In this theoretical conception, it is pertinent to mention the importance of older people to replace their social roles around which their life as active adults was built and that were lost during the aging process by other, new, equally rewarding roles for the person. Basically, this theory assumes that

although there are physical and psychological changes during aging, there persists the same needs for sociability and active functionality. In this approach, the activities developed by the elderly contribute to the quality of life during the aging process and also contribute to the maintenance of autonomy. In recent years, the theory of active aging has become a much-publicized paradigm by international organisations (UN, OMS).

2. Socio demographic characterization of our senior group

The research study included 25 seniors (13 females, 12 males). In this group, according to age, are seniors between 60 and 91 years of age; of which eleven are between 60 and 69; another eleven are between 70 and 79; and three have 80 or more years. Concerning marital status, in the group of 25 seniors, 21 are married, three are widowed and one is divorced. As for the number of descendants, the respondents oscillate between a minimum of one child and a maximum of five. The number of grandchildren varies between none and eleven.

According to school qualifications, the sample of seniors range from a minimum of "no education" (1 individual) and a maximum of "master's degree" (1 individual). In this indicator, grouping individuals according educational levels, there are seniors holding higher education (4); those with schooling between the 9th and the 12th grade (8), and those with a schooling of 3rd and 4th grade, i.e. primary school (12); and 1 person without formal schooling.

Given the geographical dispersion of respondents according to residence, we verified that all individuals are living within the urban area of Viana do Castelo. As for the situation of residence, 20 of our seniors reside with family and only 5 reside alone. In our group, those who claim to reside alone, three are widowed, one is a divorcee and one is a married man. These persons residing alone have all over 73 years of age.

It should be noted that during the aging process, the paths of people's lives profoundly changes. In most situations, there's a family life for a life together, and afterwards a life alone resulting from widowhood, divorce or separation – a tendency that has become more pronounced in recent generations (Aboim, 2003). The observation of our group reveals that most people live with relatives, especially with a spouse. People, who currently live alone, lived in family during their course of life with family, with varying extents.

As reported by Cabral et al. (2013), in seniority, living alone is often associated with loneliness and isolation. The idea that older people are simultaneously separated from others and dependent on them, especially when it concerns cognitive and/or functional capacity, makes living alone to be perceived as a social problem. Although living alone does not constitute the framework of life among the elderly, experiencing this situation in seniority is not necessarily identical to that of younger age groups.

3. Our seniors' autonomy and well-being

Through the analysis of the answers given by respondents, conjugated with the evaluation criteria internationally used, the findings conclude that the level of autonomy performing basic activities of daily living (i.e. personal care and household arrangement) is very high.

The level of autonomy in terms of mobility and health conditions is also high. In the context of the 25 respondents, only three have expressed difficulty moving alone at home or outdoors and that their lives depend on regular medical treatment.

The family network support is of great importance and significance for our respondents because the majority of those who need some support use family members for help when needed to perform certain household tasks and personal care. The mentioned autonomy also stimulates situations of high satisfaction with the living conditions and well-being as we conclude from the answers:

E1- "I feel good about myself. I never require to myself super perfection. But yeah, being well to demonstrate ...to those around me good vibes, in other words, feeling good."

E3- "I used to say that I lived well with what I had, which was true. Today, considering the overall country situation, I'm beginning to have doubts if I can keep that statement, if I want to continue to spend, as I always have done, according to what I had for granted."

E20- "I feel that my life is what I wanted it to be. It could be better if I had done so, ... but I can't complain because that's s what I wanted ... I always done what I liked to do and today I still do what I enjoy doing. I don't feel frustrated by anything I have done; I feel regretful by what I should have done. I don't regret the things I did. On a day-to-day basis, I still do what I want".

E23- "Because I got my health and I can manage to do all my stuff, my purchases of the everyday, I do everything, so I'm happy."

Regarding life satisfaction among our respondents, it is relevant to point out that the answers given to the question, "What do you think about your actual life and how you live?", reinforces the idea that most of our respondents are satisfied with their lives. Now some of the responses that demonstrate such satisfaction are transcribed:

E3- "I like the life I have and how to live. I attempt for consistency in my actions and fulfill my personal and social obligations."

E5- "Honestly, I think I'm quite satisfied with my current life right now and I don't feel any need to change it substantially."

E7- "I am satisfied with what I do and... I'm happy to be a grandmother to my two newest granddaughters, since with the older ones because I was still working; I wasn't truly a grandmother."

E8- "I have a quiet life, sometimes, a little monotonous. Nevertheless, if I took some action, maybe it changes. I don't complain. I'm okay."

E9- "Generally speaking, I'm satisfied however I'd like to have greater control over time, mainly in order to read more."

E10- "I'm a person who can't sit still and do nothing enjoying retirement pension, so I have all the time busy, It fulfils me."

Considering now the answers given to the question, "Would you like your situation and your life could be different? Why?", the majority wouldn't want to live their lives differently from that in which they live. Those who aspire to a different situation often mention health as the clarifying element. These respondents claim to have more health and/or better economic conditions.

Differences due to age or gender are not observed in life satisfaction assessment. It should be noted that our older respondents (over eighty years) appear to be as satisfied with their lives as the less elderly.

4. The migratory pathways of our respondents

In relation to the migratory past, our informants highlight the variety of paths whose trajectories formed three large groups corresponding to different geographic areas of migration: a group that emigrated to France; another group that migrated into our former colonies (Angola, Mozambique and India); and another group that migrated internally into Portugal's largest coast cities (Lisbon, Porto, Coimbra). In these groups, among the senior interviewed: ten subjects had migrated to France, eight had migrated to the Portuguese former colonies, and twelve had migrated to Portuguese cities.

Within these three main groups, we find subgroups with people that cumulated different migratory practices: in Portuguese former colonies and in a big Portuguese city; in a foreign country and in a big Portuguese city. At this point, we must clarify that five of our questioned seniors had migrated to different geographical locations; therefore five respondents were taken in account of more than one group mentioned. As for the time and duration of the migration periods of our respondents, they globally fluctuate between two years up to 55 years.

Now we present two narratives made by our respondents with larger or smaller times of duration in a migration experience. In these narratives there appears a heterogeneity of their migratory life paths.

E20 "In short, my experience since I have knowledge of my existence ... I was born in a parish, from Ponte de Lima (...). With 6 years old I moved to Queijada. There I remained, I did elementary school and at 14 years I moved to Oporto. There, I stayed for many years. I studied in Gomes Teixeira School the commercial course, at night, since during the day I worked. Meanwhile I am mobilized to Mozambique during 26 months. After I returned to metropolis, and from there I started thinking about my life and to raise a family. I married with 25 years old, and it was a very difficult beginning, because that period was brutally difficult, either politically or economically. But with great sacrifice and with unlimited force, I and my wife managed to crack problems. From this union, two children were born ... My married life had ups and downs like everyone else. But all passed with more or less difficulties, of course always with many sacrifices. I married, and I always had the goal of working on my own. Come back from military service, before the wedding, I am hired by a Lisbon company to open a decoration store in Oporto ... before going to Lisbon I had a serious conversation with my boss at the time, because the offered salary was very attractive. We concluded that unfortunately they couldn't give me the same conditions; nevertheless they said that if they could they kept me, but when I wanted to return I was welcome. I've been Lisbon for months while organizing the store opening (...)"(55 years of migration).

E2- "I was born in Santa Maria Maior parish, in Viana do Castelo. I studied at Carmo's Elementary School and then in the Nuno Alvares Industrial and Commercial School, where I concluded the general course of Commerce. I worked in Viana do Castelo in an automobile company and then in an economic coordination group, after I run to a bank, where I held office for 34 years, in the cities of Lisbon, Porto and Viana do Castelo. During my professional life I never stopped giving my cooperation to several institutions that allowed me to live with various people, some of them are part of the core of friends I have. Besides, I acquired a wide experience of how to manage and how to act leading any association "(4 years of migration).

After reading and analyzing the interviewed discourses, it was apparent that in cases where migration took less years, these experiences manifested significant marks – either friends that still have contact or in personal and professional knowledge.

From all the narratives created by the subjects on their life histories, three main types of profiles were extracted when the moment and the migration motive are considered: in one profile, migration happened during childhood and youth who follow family. In this case, the subjects went with their parents and started to study in the place of migration and then they started their working life). In

another profile, migration happened during adult and working life, with the purpose of going to work. In the last profile, the migration happened mainly due to colonial war.

Related to some of the interviewees, this extract of the data narrative corresponds to the first profile mentioned above:

E6- *"I was born in Portugal and here I remained until the age of five. I immigrated with my parents to France and I studied there and stayed until the age of thirteen. Then I returned to Portugal and here I studied in a boarding school former 5th grade (secondary school). Then I did the Escola Normal of Viana do Castelo and then I worked as a teacher primary school in several parishes. At one point I felt the need to study again and I took up again school route. I completed High school and I started Higher Education (French / Portuguese Course). In the final point, I concluded (...) the training in Precocity Foreign Language Teaching. I followed French training classes in the Elementary Education. Professionally, I worked in the Elementary school, Telescola and I finished my career as vice president of a School aggregation, accumulating as a French teacher. During all my life I have lived always divided between two cultural realities, France and Portugal. I have two sons, one with 38 years old and other with 35. I have 2 grandchildren, one for each child, the 3 and 10 years."*

Attending to this narrative, very similar to the others, it is noted that despite the migratory experience vivid by the woman narrator, it wasn't very long according to the number of years (8 years), but nevertheless it was a determinant even on professional options (teaching French) chosen and experienced in Portugal.

The next narrative matches with the second migrant profile referred to above that is related with those who left Portugal to work in adulthood:

E22- *"This is where I was born and I went to France, with 20 years old. I have been there 40 years, now I asked for my retirement pension and we came together. Now, the annoying situation is to be between here and there. There are familiar belongings ... my job always was a trucker driver. I took the driving license there, and I had the same boss for 40 years. He was the one that paid better. We had many advantages ... for example they gave us clothes to work (...). I never had any complaints and I miss! Even now before coming, they made a farewell banquet ... it was superb. I miss. It. They were like family. It was a family home! (...) I went there because farming life was very poor. I told my dad that wanted to go, that if he didn't want me to take, that I would go alone. He told me to wait a little longer because he would give me a head of cattle to create. I delayed until I was 20, and then I went in December. I went jumping as the bunny hop through these mountains outside! And so I went, with 20 years old. I arrived there; I still had to get all the paperwork. I started immediately to work at the firm where I had been all my life. I had more proposals for factories, but I did not want to be closed, that wasn't for me. I had a three days trial and then I got the job. My boss is a well-known person ... he is chairman of a football club. French high society. He is a person who has business throughout France. And all over the place, even in Morocco"*

The reasons given to the beginning of the migratory process were the hard living and working conditions in the innate geographic area (i.e. *"I went there because life in farming was very bad"*).

By the narrative, it is understood that the bonds with the migratory place still remain even after returning (in this case, bonds with the family that stayed and with the employer) because, in many cases, descendants and grandchildren stayed there working or studying in the place where migrated. From the replies given by the respondent quoted before, we can realize that migration time, being a long term professional involvement, was also emotionally significant, due to the fact of having to leave family and friends in the place of migration.

At this moment, we present another narrative extract corresponding to the third and last profile presented above and related to migrations associated with Portuguese colonial war:

E11- "In Lisbon and Angola, in Lisbon I studied up to 9 years old, then happened what I mentioned earlier, I've been here two years, here in Caminha and Viana do Castelo, then I returned to Lisbon and I took the Curso Complementar in High School. When I went to Angola, I haven't worked, I went there with 16 years old and I came here at 18, so I lived with my parents, afterwards I came here and I've been in the Air Force, and I served my military service in Angola. When I left Air Force then I got a job. There are so many memories that I do not know which one has more value or intensity, It is a bit tricky maybe do not know when I was with my group of friends at the zoo, and all that, we lived right in front of the ZOO, we were there every day, perhaps those times. "

The analysis verified that the solution to migration happened in an imposed process for those people. All the subjects talk about their migratory experience as personal, significant, and expressive; despite in some cases the experiences weren't extended, as the case above, corresponding only to military service time.

Alencar Rodrigues, Strey & Pereira (2007) studied and characterized the "migratory experience" in order to analyze the implications of such experiments in relation to society and culture of origin. As a result of the migratory experience they also found that living abroad enables personal discoveries, maturation, increase autonomy and critical thinking development.

In this context, we should remark that the subgroup that emigrated to France, did it in at a time when Portugal still had a non-democratic dictatorial regime, and France had a social and political climate based on democratic principles. The subgroup that migrated to the former colonies did it over a period of confrontations with the native inhabitants, who were fighting for independency. The subgroup that migrated to major Portuguese coast cities, made it in a moment when some struggles for social, political and employment rights began. These life experiences are considered by us as a condition of building autonomy and citizenship in respondents who lived those experiences of contact with different political, cultural, social realities or different employment reality of their place of origin. As Sebben (1997) references, to become a citizen of the world might result or arise from the migratory experience.

Conclusions

The cultural and educational experience generated and/or developed during the periods of life in which people emigrated or migrated, made very substantial marks that are well remembered as our senior respondents described. In the studied narratives, the importance and the consequences (professional, cultural, familiar and economic) outshine what migration appeared to mean to our respondents.

Given this empirical research, three subgroups were established according to the migration place: one subgroup immigrated to France, another migrated to Portuguese former colonies and the last subgroup migrated to big Portuguese cost cities. The very fact of taking the decision to leave (by itself or due to family situation) constitutes an assertion of autonomy and personal and social growth. As Freire (1972) and Casey (2009, 2014) state, we also understand that in order to develop as a person, any individual has to primarily learn to be autonomous; in other words, being the subject of one's own self-history by building a personal identity from their self-potential.

The research findings agree with the constructivist paradigm and the theory of a life-long course, for which it is necessary to realize that **seniority** is built over a lifetime. It cannot be understood only according to an immediate and visible process of aging. The last stages of life, it must be subsumed in

the light of previous stages, including the beginning of adulthood and the effects over health, autonomy and social integration. The adoption of a life-long course perspective allowed and still allows an analysis of aging as a result of the earlier trajectories, especially those in the professional field (Cabral *et al.*, 2013).

In this context, the learnings from migration contribute mainly (but not only) to the growth of social and civic autonomy; therefore, the citizenship development. The contact with different cultural practices, and also with more urban resources, as well as more diversified people and working environments, certainly enables the development of critical understanding, over and beyond the cultural and social performances in the inborn place.

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20

*There is a bit of white between my heart
and my stomach in truth my work does not
exist because it is not written anywhere*

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Abstract

The project - GUELRA | Choreographic Transcreation Laboratory¹ – arose in the search for strategies to promote the development of written thoughts on the relationship between a choreographic and co-creational work in the artistic training of young performers. GUELRA is based on the assumption of Souriau² that the term "art is all arts" and they all (arts) have a correspondence between themselves. GUELRA is a laboratory. A laboratory of ideas that can be tested. The laboratory is part of research in arts education devoted to reflection on the process that follows in the relationship between contemporary dance and the writing of the creators themselves. The project was added to the syllabus of ten dance students in Portugal as part of their training, focusing on the investigation of empirical knowledge, based on the subjectivity and diversity of the participants. During this process, the main focus was investigating the intersection between architecture (public space), choreography, body and writing. The starting point of the project was the workshop-based and craftsmanship method developed by the sociologist Richard Sennett (2008). As a manner of incubating ideas, Maria Ines Villasmil guided the exploration of questions related to the urban space, having in view the use of the city map - Use it Braga³- and its shift to artistic intervention areas in GNRation.

Thus, this first phase of the project the focus was directed to the exploration of paradoxical means. The research processes unfolded around two main topics: 1) analysis and reflection on how writing⁴ can reimagine forms of artistic collective action, and 2) an investigation on the difficulty of registering the choreographic act of creation into a written text generated by the creators. The project aims to address the connection and artistic interaction in the transdisciplinary nature of dancing and writing,

¹ The name *Transcreation* in the title appears to explain that the project is not about translation, paraphrase, storytellers or explanation of a process of working with the body, but an attempt to think the writing and the bodies simultaneously. Thus, this note also serves as a tribute to Jorge Larrosa by his brilliant text, "The Essay and Academic Writing", published in the *Educação e Realidade Journal*, Jul / Dec 2003 28 (2): 101-115. "The issue is that the academic world is highly compartmentalized and I have a feeling that this whole transdisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity fashion and things like that style, does not any other thing than open new compartments, as if those were not enough we have. It is as if we are manufacturing specialists in relationship, in synthesis in "inter" and in "trans"; as if there is an academic policy of mestizaje; as if we were beyond the pure races making expert impurities, i.e, the relationship between the pure races"(Larrosa, 2003: 106).

² Souriau, Étienne (1983 [1969]) *A Correspondência das Artes: Elementos de Estética Comparada*, São Paulo: Cultrix / EDUSP, trans. Maria C. Queiroz e Maria H. R. da Cunha, 2.

³ <http://www.braga.use-it.travel/en>

⁴ "There are all kinds of styles that always set by the refusal of the writer to situate himself as a subject in enunciation, and this is the writtignency; in that case there is, of course, no text" (Barthes, 1975:31).

exploring the link between four main aspects: space, memory, body and writing. The written and spoken language used in GUELRA has led me to think about the concealed power to control.

keywords - writing; dance; space; temporality, memory

(The) Body Knows

Why are artists so interested in philosophy, literature, sociology and all of these areas that involve thinking and writing? If body parts conquer the erogenous status by printing dots received by an external stimulus, it is possible that other parts of the body, not experienced consciously by the sensations of the parts, are nevertheless merged into language? Françoise Dolto (1984) indicates verbalization as a symbolic transition that is committed in replacing an object: " 'No, just, no suckle'. Words that allow the mouth and tongue taking over the value of desire" (Dolto, 1984: 50).

Despite these words, they are spoken with no meaning for the receiver, which Dolto (1984) calls transitional phonemes. It serves perfectly well to the family record that verbalization advocates for the bridge function between the body (mother) - erogenous source - and another object (baby). Simultaneously, there is the first record of an interdicting object. It is a promise of separation from the body: a symptom of castration (Lacan, 1986).

There are books that argue for the existence of an implicit body language and the words which have the power to express what actually encourages the subject beyond its behavior. Then, will this implicit body language be a shortcut for what we do not know? It seems naive. But, this writingness is trying to put together the verb and the body, joined together by rational control. It touches people. Even educated people! The power of the words makes me shake with rage because I do not know how can I verbalize what my body says in words. That control of symptoms has not yet been invented. Or has it?

Mother's dance

Yes: I exist within my body. I bring neither the sun nor the moon in the pocket. I do not want to conquer worlds because I slept badly, neither eat the ground because of the stomach. Indifferent? No: born to the land, from which if I leap I'm fake. A moment in the air is not for us. And only happy when our feet hit again on earth. It brings! in fact no lack! - Alberto Caeiro⁵

After working with the body for so many years, just when my son was born I realized many relevant issues. He made me reflect on body. With his nonsense questions and thoughts, I discovered new ways of seeing and feeling: "Mom, has gelatin of the eyes feelings? Mom, I just feel my body when I land at any place, isn't it? Mom, I liked to be a microbe in order to enter into the body of people to know them better. Mom, is what makes me smart the heart or the brain?" These questions, among many others, have produced in me a certain awareness of the multidimensionality of the body, the world in motion, the dancing and its possibilities. So, why is there so much interest by artists in philosophy, in literature,

⁵Albert Caeiro da Silva (1886-1915): Sim: existo dentro do meu corpo. Não trago o sol nem a lua na algibeira. Não quero conquistar mundos porque dormi mal, Nem almoçar a terra por causa do estômago. Indiferente? Não: natural da terra, que se der um salto, está em falso, Um momento no ar que não é para nós, E só contente quando os pés lhe batem outra vez na terra, Traz! na realidade que não falta! Retrieved from <http://alberto-caeiro.blogspot.com/>

in sociology and in the relationship between research and artistic work? What drives the relationship between research and artistic work? What moves this bending? What hides this performative turn of contemporary art? It is not only talk about it, certainly. It is, I think, the need to think about it. Today, there is an asphyxia of life that does not facilitate the act of creation. This means that one has an increasingly techno-scientific and pragmatic perception (in the lifeless sense of the word) of things around.

Today, I still feel that in the world of dance, there is not enough of a journey of danced thought. And in fact, there are multiple paths. And here, I return to my son. Children, curiously, have this gift. They are who better inform us about the secret codes of the body and their energy. We know better the people when you are near them. We know inside. Like a microbe. Being aware of the physical reactions of the children has been a great lesson to me.

Thus, with the asphyxia of life, the transartistic field hardly becomes a source of power to think and give depth and continuity to the work – not only to understand what is done but also the process of understanding what is being done. Reading Spinoza, reading Deleuze can be a way to oxygenate this stifling of everyday life, which in most cases causes an exhaustion of life and deadens the multiplication of meanings. So, we resort to both as research spaces. But there will be other reasons?

The alchemy space

In this work, the alchemy space (Derrida, 1972), is the space of writing experimentation. Experimentation in this direction, reinstates a written shape from a set of relationships between stimuli inscribed into a body riddled with real signs (Dolto, 1984) and a draft text (Gil, 1997; 2001) - where float and perform pre- and proto-literary units, i.e: a body that does not belong to any symbolic code, but a body with a floating signifier, allows metaphors and metonymies of a pre-act of creation. "The floating signifier designates this primary force which, in the primitive world, circulates everywhere between different worlds, crossing codes, filling things and beings of power, of luck and of life" (Gil 1997: 25).

The stimuli inscribed into the body, accepted by Dolto (1984), shall be effective as a sign and, the alchemy space that involves the creative act of writing described by Derrida (1972) becomes, as Breton announced in the Surrealist Manifesto (1924), an "[...] approach from two more or less distant realities". The energy intensification and focus of the will to produce an artistic object (Gil, 2001), which lead and affect the body of the creator as a total experience, emphasize this unconscious awareness that invades rational thought and provides the perception of alterity that commonly seeks censoring.

This sign is not linguistic, but a space where all future construction of language will develop through successive stages of herogenization of the body. This means that there is an inscription of the exterior and interior of the body stimuli. It is thus understandable that the body becomes an infinite reservoir of signs and languages closely linked to the verb. Thinking about the issue of writing through the concept of corporeality and crossing the domains of the word, we can on the one hand, problematize the text as a corporeal being (Nancy, 2000; Barthes, 1970) and on the other, the experience of pharmakon (Derrida, 1972) as poison and remedy, allowing the reading of the layers of a body phármakonized with the duplicity and ambiguity of meaning – and my dog came from a long walk. He sat next to me, looked into my eyes and said:

Dancers are like God they 'cannot write, but this ignorance or this inability testifies about their sovereign independence. He has no need to write. He speaks, he says, he said, and his speech is sufficient'. I am quoting Derrida but remember, however, a dancer who was a scribe of God. Nijinsky, of course.

– Sure! I replied. Today I will not argue with you. You're not going to hear a single word versatile and radiant as you are trying to provoke in me. Today I will write you a ticket. I wish the words written will stimulate you to thin your own thoughts:

for moon the hours are like tower castles

what one day history regards as facts and white hairs

The dog lay down and fell asleep. He must have dreamed a lot, because I have heard whimpering several times. When he woke up I asked him:

– With what were you dreaming about?

He answered promptly:

I dreamed that I frenetically gnawed a lid. Scraping the plastic with my teeth. The plastic was green and smelled like a Spanish doll. Each splinter went directly into my throat and became a word.

– It was a nightmare!

yes ma'am, It was. And it's your fault because you write me these tickets. There must be a truth in it, but today I've been beaten with the bit of truth that touches me. I'd rather talk.

– Yeah! And I'll be your scribe. Okay. Today may be. You know it's not the same thing, don't you know? I can transcribe your speech but what it is is secondary!

and ..? what's the problem? do we exist for so long that we have all of the secondary side of secondarity, the side that is secondarity itself

Both writing and dance as secondarities, prompt the body to a transposition, an incisive move to the inside of a space. In both cases the borders that frame the condition of meaning is infinite. Secondary, of secondarity, of secondarity's side ... like my dog says. Are bridges what I do not know if it passes, or if it falls in your groove – where the body begins: dance and then write as Alice in Wonderland said, “Down, down, down. Would that fall never come to an end? I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?” (Carroll, 2006 [1886]: 14)



Fig. 1: Play Bleu for *Arte Total* 2013, © C. Mendanha

The GUELRA project

There is a bit of white between my heart and my stomach (Figure 1). This sentence was the starting point in the writing of this text. The project I have experienced and now put into words was guided by the choreographer Maria Ines Villasmil⁶. During a week of experimentation, a group of dance students explored the link between four main aspects: space, memory, body and writing, having as a starting point the city map and its further transfer to a pre-determined artistic intervention area. Focusing on the investigation of an empirical knowledge, based on the subjectivity and diversity of the ten participants, the project was added to the syllabus of the dance students as part of the training. During this process, the main focus was the investigation of the intersection between the architecture (public space), choreography, body and writing. Having as a starting point the workshop-based and craftsmanship method developed by the sociologist Richard Sennett (2008) as a manner of incubating ideas, Maria Ines Villasmil guided the exploration of questions related to the urban space, having in view the use of the city map - Use it Braga - and its shift to artistic intervention areas in GNRation. The main goals of this experiment are related to the development of the interdisciplinary activity of an artistic collective action of the creative process in dance and writing, and the creation of links between experimentation and the excuse of space in the memory of the city.

⁶Maria Ines Villasmil was born in Venezuela and became Dutch citizen in 2004. After a career as a young sociologist and having developed a parallel dance career following dance studies in her native Venezuela and in New York, she moves to Holland in 1996, where in 1999, holds a BA from the School for New Dance Development (SNDO) of the Amsterdam Hogeschool voor de Kunsten.

Text and its matters

There is a bit of white between my heart and my stomach. That was how I felt the project. In an empty and unreachable space, where there is no pain. Smooth, light and heavy at the same time. Sometimes I went there. Entering slowly as a current of devoted souls at the end of a Sunday mass. And I questioned. How should we refer to that bit between my heart and above my stomach? How to explain to the others these spaces in me to myself? How can the project participants say it? Why do we let ourselves be carried away by writing?

During these thoughts my dog has spoken to me again ⁷.

you do these things just because you want to get out of that chair! but ... while you're finding a certain excitement in writing. you want to explore the secrets that your senses can never serve. there are limits in our world, you know? said my dog.
And I answered with more questions - Do you think it's really a limit? We can always differentiate *outside* and *inside*, no? I do not know.
He replied - *my world is just what my senses tell me. ... and I say no more right now.*

I could not answer him and, nonetheless, inside me a piece of white (between my heart and my stomach) a sentence was floating. "If a thing can be conceived as non-existing, its essence does not involve existence" (Spinoza, 2010 [1632-1677]: 15).

The participants continued performing their writing and choreographical composition tasks. A real research in action where the disorganization of the symbol, the context, the conscience and the body, as Gil (2001) and my dog point out, opened the possibility of thinking out a laboratory dance project, being exploited with the processes of movement relating to the creation of performance writing. The body herein being evoked is the dancing body that builds itself in the present, in the experience, that "dismembers the paradox, separates its elements and recombines them, superimposing, plays with them proliferating its meaning" (Gil, 2001: 237).

My dog returned. I felt a will to talk first.

- You know dog, this group of people are writing from their bodies. I've tried to motivate them to write from what they heard, from what they thought, from what they have learned in their academic training ... I found that does not work. Being clear (to me, of course) that the material I search for is inside those who produce it. My white space, you know? within the bones, back, trachea holding the organs, joints, muscles and tendons that move without us noticing ...

but remember what I told you once! it is very difficult to be an animal.

- No Dog. No, it's not a beast what I want to see ... I just want that GUELRA participants write on the writing that exists in their bodies. And try that the words do not overlap feelings, like a mask. Have you noticed that I teach so many curiosities about the body and, at the same time, this same body can teach the open space on the possibility of writing?

yes. but after all do you want to write or do you want that your students write on their dance experience?

- Well, I do not know. Or rather, I know, but right now I do not want to talk about it.

⁷ I have the habit of speaking for my dog. Giving her voice gives me pleasure. It's one against two. The voice is a bridge that connects us. Or rather, that connects me with the world.

In this context of relationship, I have been developing some questions during the creative process: after all, what writing is this that arises from a dancing body? How did the writing interfere in the creative process of this work? Have the speech and writing acted as activation mechanisms of an intimidating reflexive thought for participants? How do we accomplish verbally the feeling that drives the coming to be, i.e. the idea prior to action.

The spaces of body | writing and the bit of white between my heart and my stomach

The body memory herein evoked, is thought writtingency. Or is it pre-linguistic writtingency? An engaged type of writing, since the ones who wrote – both the participants and myself have observed – took part in the problems. An inner and reactive discomfort has emerged to writing and its concealed power to control. In here, in the body written, the thought as a reflexive praxis of movement (Schön, 1983), has investigated the invisibility of a reality that has accompanied us to its limits: the city streets and what we loners cannot see when we look at them. The search for the limits has also changed the essential status of the path to the creation of a meaning, in which the witnessing body has become what our senses were telling us – full of illusions and representations.

Therefore, this body and this writing cannot be distinguished from the experience of reality, negativity (Adorno, 1966) or difference (Deleuze, 1986). In other words: the body|writing exists as a piece of white that counteracts the logical form of speech and as a field of critical reflection that encompasses the artistic production process in polyphony. As stated by Bakhtin (1929: 113), it is “[...] a sort of bridge thrown between myself and others.”

*so this relationship between writing and Dance is located in a place that is passing
- my dog asked.*

And I said: – This relationship is a process. The result of performance is a gap pointing a pathway to another bridge, which in turn gives rise to another gap ... (laughter) it looks like a new version of Alice. A black hole to me is a piece of white. This place, that I try to write, is a place of tension!

stress? you and dance? you and writing? dance and writing? continued my dog.

– Well! Tension is my thesis: a discussion about the relationship between writing and dancing. Have you noticed that is being asked of Guelra participants – to write and co-create in simultaneous texts and movements ...

explain to me the crack or gap ...

– Ok! So listen and do not talk. This gap is my inability to write my vision in a neutral way, or the inability to have an attitude of inner detachment. I do not put myself in practice, but I talk about it and others ... and me with others, allowing my shaggy ancestors⁸ to invade untouchable spaces with words in a way that you can dance with words (as Žižek says, "fuck with words" (2006: 189).

therefore, the relationship is not a relationship itself. Žižek says in the book Parallax View, it is the product of an antagonistic situation ... an ontological excess.

– Yeah, could be. You know dog, the worst is that the excess claims exception to normal and I walk around with an excess result without normality, because the participants are not putting into practice their own privacy, but writing about it.

uhmmm ... "fuck with words".

⁸ My dog is always present. He exists because I actually always suspected that something more lived within me, besides myself. This fuzzy speaks out of me, especially when I talk to many people and I am alone.

Probably a bit of white ... though delayed

A body | written, in action, was happening by approximation and intermittently. Their impossibility to embodiment emerges as a gap where is possible its execution ... as a possibility ... as a piece of white between the heart and the stomach. Thus, relates and considers. A body | written manufactures affections and perceptions that may be turned into concepts, making visible a reality that attempts to unveil. From a body and from writing it, what arises is neither: it is creation as research with directions.

In this project, writing the space of experimentation was taken as the *phármakon*, as a remedy with all that this "[...] |charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be - alternately or simultaneously - beneficent and maleficent." (Derrida, 1972:14). The *phármakon* is not just metaphysical, it is a product that belongs to dance, if we consider it as Derrida suggests, as ambivalent, both medicine and poison, which can mediate a creation that bridges us to the rhizomatic margins. But, unlike the *pharmakon*, whose non-absent absence is an inspiration, simultaneously, dance is a product, a tautology that cannot be reduced to oppositions, rather it is "[...] life going out of itself beyond return" (Derrida, 1972: 22) (Figure 2).



Fig. 2: Play Bleu for *Arte Total* 2013 © C. Mendanha

The instinctive grammar

In the creative act, from a relationship body | written, I shall be deemed or considered by a multiplicity of roads that open up and with styles that will be possible: aphorisms, fragments, essays (Adorno,

1958)⁹. Not intended to be imperiously exceeding nor subdued to hegemonic theory and academic knowledge. In the act of creation a body | written does not emerge over or with codes of linguistic written references, but from and with them (Deleuze, 1991). And are we not exposed to the relativity of academic knowledge but supporting the multiplicity of meaning?

We enjoy the process of self from two points of view. One is the point of view of an observer who enjoys a dynamic object - dynamic object consisting of certain operations of our mind, certain traits of behavior and a certain history of our life. The other point of view of the self as 'knowledgeable', the process that gives a center to our experiences and ultimately allow us to reflect on those same experience. (Damasio, 2010: 25).

In its movement the body relates to other approaches that differ from reality and intends to bond with the procedures of philosophy, literature, science and art, while it has an ethical and critical acceptance of the possibility to revise its opinions.

The output of texts was not a difficult task, although participants preferred to dance. Some made comments like "[...] it was easier to write because first we experience with the body" or because "[...] we think of questions before writing". Another reported that "[...] did not cost much because we already had training on writing". The workout settled many issues. Experience, in this sense, states that a written form from a set of internal relations with dance, which exists as power, assumes that the creator (dancer) learned the syntax and semantics of instinct, muscles and tendons, codes of body, the curiosities of movement and scripture. And so, there remains a piece of white between my heart and my stomach. I do not know how this place is called. I do not know how to explain to others. I do not know. But it exists. I saw it. All participants saw.

*"In all cases, I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space,
much more than with time."
(Foucault, 1967: 2)*

In all cases, I believe that

In this project I tried to describe the results of a dialectic between body and words and pointed out the ways of answering my initial questions: What is a Body | Written? How can writing interfere with the creative process of dance? How may speech and writing act as mechanisms of activating an intimidating reflective thinking for artists? How do we accomplish verbally the feeling that drives the idea prior to action?

Here, body and writing are images. Images of words, images in the bodies, imagery on images built on the piece of white that exists between my heart and my stomach. The body was that writing taking space consumed by these images, which have been built over a week in the laboratory and in subsequent workshops. Set a writing process based on the practice of choreographed bodies and, thus, the body is assumed as writing space that does not exist.

⁹ The essay that refuses naturalized forms of knowledge production and that "[...] dives into the cultural phenomena as second nature, a second immediacy, dialectically to stay with his tenacity, that illusion" (Adorno, 1958: 39). "Only the essay develops the thoughts of a different way of discursive logic [...] No derives from a principle, neither infers a coherent sequence of individual observations. The essay coordinates the elements instead of subordinating them" (Adorno, 1958: 43).

The spoken and written word are our lens to the world driven by power relationships and therefore even when the dialogue comes from two completely different languages - dance and writing, it is not a clash of systems, but a link between the two. Even knowing they start from different discursive codes, and for this reason "[...] we should impose an entire discipline, forging new concepts, organizing a common vocabulary, perhaps inventing scanning means truly paradoxical" (Souriau, 1983: 18)... but do they understand the inside and outside spaces of itself and each other? While artistic research is kept in captivity for exploitation by an economic knowledge, only a few artists can relate to a purely discursive premise: it exists because it is written. Isn't it? Thus, I notice as a natural and transparent thing that the written language is always present in the discourse of the institutions and hierarchies, as the creativity of contemporary dance incorporates writing as a logical way to validate its own existence. And yet, it is difficult to occur.

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