

Title: Art Education at the intersection of creativity: Integrating art to develop multiple perspectives for identifying and solving social dilemmas in the 21st century.

Authors:

Cathy Smilan, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, USA

Teresa Torres de Eça - Associação de Professores de Expressão e Comunicação Visual, Portugal

Georgia Kakourou-Chroni, Greece and **Ricardo Reis**, Portugal

Presenting Author's E-mail address: csmilan@umassd.edu; teresatorreseca@sapo.pt

Abstract

New education paradigms fostering creative risk-taking, and re-discovery are needed as employers and ministers seek innovative individuals to stimulate economic growth. Arts-based curriculum breaks traditional boundaries, allowing students to challenge established ideas and resist stereotyped world-views. Effective art education, including art-integration, encourages active, problem-based inquiry, data collection, evaluation, and communication. Unlike didactic instruction, such process imitates research requiring student-generated discovery learning, often producing multiple solutions and questions beyond the original assignment. Museum- and public art-based education paradigms uniquely engage learners, requiring multi-sensory involvement providing multiple perspectives on discipline-specific and world problems. Such paradigms are consistent with the UNESCO Roadmap for Arts Education.

Three studies conducted in the United States, Greece, and Portugal, respectively, involving teacher professional development and investigating the impact of museum/public art-based teaching on student learning and creative thinking in teachers and learners will be presented in the conference as follows: (1) Arts-based curriculum focused on William Kentridge's compelling, socio-politically charged work, was provided through The Norton Museum-Conniston Middle School Partnership. Kentridge's techniques of uniquely combining objects and traditional drawing to [re]create moving pictures, with basic technology, were incorporated into work with students who viewed the exhibit; (2) The Coumantaros Gallery, the National Gallery of Greece, and the Portuguese art teachers association (APECV) explored educational resources of public art workshops integrating formal and non-formal art into curriculum to build cultural awareness. The project, partially funded by The Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT), involved students, teachers, schools, museums, universities, and research centers in Greece and Portugal. (3) 'Drawing Pousão': a partnership project organized by APECV in the Museum in Porto, Portugal, similarly investigated formal and non-formal art education and integrated an E-learning training. Transdisciplinary learning activities, based on dialogic pedagogy, enabled students to construct personal narratives based on Henrique Pousão's paintings; student works were exhibited in the Museum in the same room where exhibition about the painter had take place.

Developing Innovative Learners

Creativity and innovation are in the public discourse, in newspapers, in television, in political statements. Employers need competent, innovate employees and ministers call for creative citizens to promote economic growth. Education stakeholders claim the need for new paradigms in education fostering creative thinking. “As the global economy becomes more entrenched in technological and innovative advancement, the idea that creative thinking, risk-taking and rediscovery are the pathways to prosperity is becoming self-evident” (Smilan, 2007, p. 242). Creative skills involving divergent thinking abilities such as critical thinking, problem-finding, problem solving and decision-making skills can be developed through museum- and arts-based learning.

Using integrated approaches encourages students to challenge established ideas, concepts and ways of making, to resist stereotyped visions of the world and to break boundaries. Arts based learning illuminates gaps and limitation in current ideas and helps students to organize frameworks and structures through which they can test limits and develop new structures that bridge the gaps between that which is known and that which will be created. (Eisner, 1972). In good art education programmes, students can develop skills of creative thinking and making such as: ‘experimentation’, ‘exploration’, ‘discovery’, ‘problem-finding’, ‘analysis’, ‘synthesis’, ‘evaluation’, ‘risk-taking’, ‘decision-making’, ‘problem solving’ and ‘communication’ (Samson, 2008) appropriation and transformation strategies concerned with understanding conventions within cultural contexts in order to convert them into a personal style, signature or voice (Ross, 1993, p. 53). Such transformation and envisioning of personal identity is the very premise for creative, critical thought and a significant goal of contemporary education in and through the arts.

Collectively the arts offer young people unique opportunities to understand and create their own cultural and personal identities. They stimulate interdisciplinary study and participatory decision-making, and motivate young people to engage in active learning and creative questioning (WWA , Joint Declaration, 2006) .

Ironically, LaChapelle (1983) wrote by the 1960’s, fuelled by the search in interest in creativity launched by Guilford (1950 presidential address) education stakeholders

asserted that creativity was a necessary attribute if students were to be prepared to participate in their rapidly changing world. As with much educational reform, the push for creative development in schools, especially through arts-based programming was supplanted by skills and standards-based mandates which leave the arts on the periphery of thinking, teaching and learning. Today, in many countries, we see arts-programming and creativity-based initiatives, once again struggling to regain the foothold they had seemingly established half a century ago.

Increasing creativity is not only a matter of ensuring economic success, we need creative children who will be able to solve a terrible ecological crisis and who will know how to utilize the tools and materials available in unique ways as they strive to arrest the fragmentation of society. We also need to think in ethics and help young people to develop conscientiousness and responsibility. Such learning, which is an integral part of arts and culture education, stems from the ability to perceive the world through multiple lenses; the empathetic viewing and analysis of one's environment is requisite to developing the sensitivity to understand nuance and the subtleties in our volatile world.

Those of us who ... try to find spaces for [aesthetic education] in problematic schools, are sensitive to the multiple life stories young people are carrying with them into our classrooms. We are sensitive to the multiple voices that need to be heard, the multiple vantage points from which the young look at an often uncaring world -Maxine Greene, 2001, p. 110

Against the background of the most severe financial and economic crises in a century and the progress of the Lisbon Strategy, the European Union strives to combat poverty and social exclusion in 2010. Art education experience, including those being implemented in informal contexts, combat poverty and social exclusion, foster citizenship and creativity. Administrators and politicians must understand these pedagogical strategies so as to advocate for a more humanistic education, one that considers the culture, artifacts and valued communications of all individuals. At this intersection of ideas, art education is broadly seen as a crossroad where all disciplines might encounter and develop integrated learning activities. Through meaningfully applied Authentic Art Integration (AAI) (Smilan & Miraglia, 2009), schools, museums, and other communities unite on a continuum of skills and knowledge concepts

presented and represented, respectively, through art-based teaching and learning. Such learning need not be isolated to any one classroom; in fact, art integrated learning need not be confined to a classroom, but should expand to beyond the school to the museum, the community and to the open environment.

According to Lippard (1997) public art is “accessible art of any species that cares about, challenges, involves and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting the community and the environment” (p. 264). Art is a key element in effecting social interventions designed to facilitate appropriation of public places (Abad & Palacios, 2008). Art can engage people in collaborative interventions that transform a public space, thereby enabling them to identify with both work and display site. Schools seldom use public art to foster knowledge and questioning skills; a terrible gap between school curriculum and outside life exists. There is a need to reflect on this gap, to understand how cultural and environmental education in local communities can be used by teachers to empower learners. Committed museum directors, in association with art and other discipline teachers, actively involve the museum community using art education for social change to change the vision of the role of cultural heritage, patrimony and public art resources. Becoming aware of community heritage, shaping the city and empowering children by acknowledging and representing their ideas to local authorities is a great step forward in the society (Albano, 2005). Great steps may start from individual art educators who envision art education as a tool for social transformation. Even small steps, when viewed collectively, can turn into a significant journey.

Education through the arts has enormous possibilities not yet fully developed, including new methods and learning strategies to develop critical thinking, risk-taking, social and environmental awareness. These strategies are tested out in many communities around the world significantly impacting communities through formal and informal education. Artists, activists, teachers and educators in the borders between art, therapy and education are fostering identity, social cohesion and environmental values through arts-based learning opportunities; common to all of these approaches is the development of creativity in learning groups .

The paper to follow considers the unifying link of creative development in each of these educational ventures as presented through three museum-based art education partnerships. As previously discussed, the economic, socio-political, ecological, personal and interpersonal communications of our world are dependent on our abilities as educators to develop multiple attributes in our children. It is imperative that the field of art education, and related fields of museum education and social sciences consider the way in which these creative capacities or creative literacy are scaffolded in the learning process.

The Norton Museum-Conniston Middle School Partnership

The Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach Florida developed a learning partnership with Conniston Middle School. A goal of the partnership is to engage students with museum exhibits by helping teachers develop art-based curriculum utilizing the Museum's permanent collection as well as special exhibits. In the Winter 2009/2010 season, in learning activities focused on William Kentridge's compelling, socio-politically charged work. Mr. Brad Schutzman, the sixth grade Critical Thinking and Social Studies teacher at Conniston, worked with the museum educators to develop curriculum based on Apartheid, a concept integral to the work on display at the Museum. Kentridge's work was presented in the sixth grade classroom through virtual tour of the exhibit and through video clips from the exhibit catalogue CD. After a teacher-created presentation on Apartheid, students engaged in a discussion of Kentridge's work considering how artists use their creativity to illuminate concepts and historical events that may be presented from limited perspectives in order to influence public opinion. A rich dialogue elicited comments about creativity. One student suggested creativity is something that everyone has, but that not all of us use. Another student suggested that some artists use their work for social change, but that artists don't really have a responsibility to engage in social activism.

After a critical discussion of the work, students went on a tour of the exhibit. Glenn Tomlinson, Curator of Education and Carole Gutterman, Associate Curator of Education, accompanied the group of 25 students through the Five Themes exhibit. Students shared their knowledge of Apartheid, prejudice and segregation, recalling the classroom discussion from the previous lesson as well as their knowledge of US history

including slavery and racial tensions. Students were prompted to view the art, describe what they saw, analyze the meaning of what they saw, and explain their meaning-making process. For example, in viewing the drawing, "*And her absence filled the world*", one student suggested "her" was a metaphor for "mother nature", equating the mistreatment of the environment and the depletion of our natural resources with the loss of the character's true love. Another student suggested that when someone is gone, it affects the whole world. Still another learner commented on the irony of absence filling something.

Students were asked to identify themes and symbolism in the work. Several students commented on the use of the eyeball, suggesting that the artist was watching, seeing and transforming what he saw from his own perspective. Students commented on the artist's use of silhouette, of torn black paper images against the backdrop of knowledge as portrayed in the processional collages grounded on purposefully selected pages of the evolution of vertebrates. Others commented on the global connectedness of humanity, marching through time and evolving. "Sometimes we don't really seem to evolve", was noted as the class observed a redrawn background image of a predatory creature. The students noted that some of the torn figures were carrying other figures, perhaps wounded or fallen comrades and how throughout history, some were sacrificed so others could evolve. The sixth graders were very cognizant of the concepts of fighting for freedom and for equality. The stark contrast of black and white and the artist's use of shadow and projection were noted by the students who commented that the white minority "saw blacks as different and that in the shadows you can see details in shapes but you can't see much difference". Another student perceptively commented, "Shadows make everyone equal".

A final discussion focused on the artist's use of the palimpsest, a rewriting of a narrative or a revisionist approach to image and memory. Kentridge's unique technique of creating, documenting, erasing, revising and re-documenting resonated with the students who appreciated both the unique application of the drawn image to film and the broader concept that one can [re]present history from his or her vantage point as it suits the purpose of the [re]creator. A fruitful discussion about purpose for presentation of history, art, political or personal narrative centered around the artist's purposeful distortion of image which, when projected and

reflected off of a cylindrical mirror, appear realistically rendered to accurate scale. The discussion concluded with the student comments that events are communicated to influence perceptions and that memories can be changed, but they never can be truly erased.

In discussing the intersections between talent and creativity, Gardner (2001) pointed out that talented individuals are often those afforded the opportunities to learn the semiotic, or symbolic representations required to communicate their perspectives and ideas to others who value their contributions. These individuals are, then, allowed to develop skills in creative literacy—those skills needed to view, analyze, reinterpret and discuss through verbal as well as visual means. Creative literacy, includes respecting the voice and vision of our learners—allowing students to move beyond their teachers' conception of the novel. Student participants are continuing to create artwork inspired by the concepts and techniques from Kentridge's work, uniquely combining objects and traditional drawing to [re]create moving pictures, with basic technology. Students are learning printmaking processes of photographic image transfer, re-envisioned through drawing and watercolors. Some students are working with computer generated film using flash animation. An exhibition of the finished work is planned for the Museum's Marsden Community Gallery.

Public art as educational resource

The Coumantaros Gallery, the National Gallery of Greece, and the Portuguese art teachers association (APECV) explored public art as educational resource providing workshops on public art. The project, partially founded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT), involved students, teachers, schools, museums, and research centers in Greece and Portugal. The project was intended to build learning experiences promoting local cultural awareness and teachers' exchange. Ricardo Reis, a teacher from Portugal, went to Sparta and Eleni Grafakou, a teacher from Greece, went to Lisbon, expanding their pedagogical perspectives and approaches by experiencing different contexts of public art as resource. Results of participant (school teachers and children) questionnaire indicated public art is a rich educational resource, and an important issue especially in light of degradation of public areas, and loss of available public space due to economic interests of a privileged minority. In the technological

age, public places are slowly disappearing; “public” is merely a token term implying nothing more than “accessible” to the public. Incorporating public art in school curricula empowers children with expanding knowledge and understanding of their world.

During 2009-10, the project team networked with an interdisciplinary team of professionals (teachers, artists, researchers, educators and cultural agents) interested in issues of public art as educational resource in formal and informal educational contexts, in Portugal and Greece. Sharing research and practices through work meetings with area experts, they created strategies for learning through public art, focusing on environmental education. Finally, to disseminate examples public art-based educational practice was disseminated through workshops for schools in both countries. A simple lesson exchange ended up in a series of challenging didactical experiences involving a large community in Greece and Portugal and a discussion forum about public art, promoting intercultural and collaborative knowledge and practice. The web 2.0 social network links 50 members from Europe , Asia and South America A seminar was organized by Ricardo in Portugal in partnership with a secondary school, the art teachers association and the political responsible for the Lisbon region (Benfica). This starting point demonstrated the possibility of community collaboration. Art educators, families, researchers and community organizations with common interests can using art education for local development .

In Sparta, Greece, Dr. Georgia Kakourou Chroni runs educational programmes involving public art and museum education; she is working on empowering the communities organizing art education workshops, including “The Neoclassical City”, in Coumantaros Gallery. Sparta is blessed with many neoclassical buildings, both public and private. Though excessive societal materialism, indifference of local authorities, and lack of national and local cultural policy has lead to their gradual ruin. As in other cities, young people graffiti protests on building walls; having never been taught historical respect. The educational programme “The Neoclassical City” was designed to familiarize children with these buildings instilling a sense of significance and protection. The programme was developed in different stages. Gallery seminars on neoclassicism for parents and children and workshops in which children made visual and oral records

of neoclassical buildings. Three workshops were held in the Gallery: “Engraving the city” and “Water-colouring the city” where children produced engravings and water-colour paintings of the neoclassical buildings and “Square” where children designed their idealized town square. In the same time Coumantaros Art Gallery held an exhibition of neoclassical building designs in collaboration with the National Greek Archives. The final stage was an exhibition of student work. Architect George Giaxoglou and artist Kaliori Katsafana took part in the exhibition, contributing architectural drawings and water-colour paintings. During the programme, student proposals for using the endangered buildings, were published in local newspapers and presented to local authorities.

Squares are prototypical public places in European towns and are obvious sites for public art. The environmental, aesthetic, political, historical and social background of each square is relevant. Eleni Grafakou, artist-researcher/art teacher at Athens College helped children think about their interactions with these squares and create models of their perfect square. Experiences were shared with Portuguese art teachers, and discussion followed. Teachers initially saw a familiar design problem, however, the underlying structures of students’ process and product are the most important stones of art education: developing creativity, critical understanding and social interaction through the arts. Public art reveals aspects of identity; the identity of people and the specific place and time they live in. It lends beauty to its surroundings, though it does not impose itself on them. It has the power to provoke questions. It inspires different generations to talk to one another and provides young artists with a means of expression. The educational challenge of letting children design their own surroundings develops creativity skills (Adams & Ingham, 1998). Sharing such visions makes art educators, researchers and other stakeholders aware of our aims and transformative mission.

Drawing Pousão’

‘Drawing Pousão’ was a pilot project organized by the Portuguese Visual Art Teachers Association APECV and carried out in the National Museum Soares dos Reis in Porto, Portugal. The project was part of the programme launched by APECV: Arts, Education and Communities to create learning partnerships between formal and non-

formal art education. The project was held during September 2009 and February 2010 and integrated an E-learning training course for art teachers, seminars, students' visits to the museum, students' studio work carried out in schools and an exhibition of students' work. The topic of the work was the study of a Portuguese nineteenth century painter, Henrique Pousão. Pousão was the starting point to the learning activities that were transdisciplinary in nature enabling students to construct their own narratives about the painter works . Students works were exhibited in the Museum in the same room where a great exhibition about the painter had take place for celebration of his centenary. The entire experience was based on a didactic approach based on a dialogic pedagogy allowing polyphony of voices.

The organizers of the project detected a need to foster links between schools and local museums. Textbooks usually displayed only international artists, and teachers usually only visit very important Art Foundations and Museums that usually do not display local artists. Although considered an important naturalist painter in the history of Portuguese Art, Pousão is not well known by the general public. Some art teachers in the project confessed they did not have enough understanding of his work. Another need was detected by the organizers, analyzing self-evaluation reports from past in service teachers training courses. Art teachers used old methods of art appreciation to study art works, usually providing modernist appreciation tools and avoiding other histories of art, not enabling students' narratives about art works nor fostering critical and creativity skills. So, they developed a E-learning course for art teachers in the Museum integrating seminars and on-line forums for discussing and for supervising the experience through time. The methods shared with the teachers were basic ways of critically understanding the arts, methods based on questioning, association of ideas, concepts and visual maps to understand the contextual meanings of an art work and making personal narratives about the art work. Forty-one art teachers from 26 schools and about 600 students from six to 18 years old participated in the project .

In the rationales of the programme the organizers were interested in passing different ways of reading image. One was centered in the possible 'gazes'. Considering the gaze focuses attention upon us, the viewer and our relationship with what they see. We are

invited by images to see in a particular way, but we also come to them with already existing relationships to what we see. The gaze is therefore a crucial way in which to understand ourselves as individuals and as a society. It offers a significantly different orientation than most thinking about fine art that teachers used to have, which tended to focus on the image-makers and describing, interpreting and evaluating their work without necessarily considering what we ourselves bring to the image. Not only does the idea of the gaze introduce a much broader range of objects and approaches than fine art forms have normally attracted, but it also throws a spotlight on the viewer, and our context (Duncum, 2005). Another one was the concept of intertextuality. Audiences make associations with imagery according to their own interests and knowledge (Duncum, 2005), viewers were invited to build their own narratives or histories connecting their personal knowledge with the knowledge acquired in the museum and school by means of connecting nodes. Teachers and students were invited to connect images irrespective of historical categories like high and low, the past and the present, our own and other cultures, student interest and teacher requirements. By encouraging teachers to construct curriculum in these terms the organizers hoped to change their routines. Teachers developed the methods of critical understanding in their classes and they were surprised to see the results. All the students were highly motivated. For the first time students were able to express their history about the art works, and their visual narratives were valued as art works displayed in the same museum where the commemorative exhibitions had taken place. Their voices mattered, and in the 'opening' many students' families come to validate them.

Final considerations

The impact of museum-exhibited and public art as educational resources merit investigation, especially considering the loss of public space and accessibility motivated by interests of a privileged minority. Integrating public art and museum exhibits in curricula empowers children, expanding knowledge and understanding of their world and developing marketable creative-thinking skills. Evaluation of three, international partnerships inviting youths to engage with and create art, provides evidence to support arts-based curriculum as an approach to discipline specific and interdisciplinary learning, and advanced creative thinking. Providing alternatives for teachers and

students to identify problems and posit unique solutions, suggest new possibilities and paradigms for educating creative citizens for the 21st century.

The three described case studies were motivated by the desire to empower students and teachers. The people who are working in such projects share a collaborative approach of art and art education, they use art and understanding of the arts as a tool for social change, an important aspect if not the most important issue of education. As teachers, artists and/or researchers, the developers of the programmes have in common a “revisioning” of art roles in our society, understanding art as a model for ‘connectedness and healing by opening up being to its full dimensionality—not just the disembodied eye’ (Gablik, 85–86).

“Schools should be places for experiments, growth, and, most importantly, social change” (Baker, Ng-He, & López-Bosh, 2008, 296). In the same way Museums and other cultural organizations should foster similar goals, A revised role of art, collections, promotion and storage in the museum and in public spaces is wholly recommended in light of the paradigm of information society. We must be aware of its importance of using art as a resource for social transformation in fostering critical citizenship. The three cases illustrated in this paper described partnerships between Museum and schools where the partners were involved in the design and development of the educational programmes. Respecting their missions and aims without overlapping responsibilities, the participants showed possible interfaces where the community, the schools and museums can interact and work together for local development through the arts. “In order to create a new arrangement, one must be willing to extend beyond the comfortable; students must be encouraged, if not required, to expand their radius of perspectives” (Smilan, 2007). Such expansion requires that teachers first suspend disbelief, learning to trust themselves and their learners by engaging in conversations outside of the ‘known’. Pedagogical and conceptual shifts involving content, materials, application and the very vehicle for knowledge construction must incorporate the criteria for creativity: flexibility, fluency, elaboration and resistance to closure, where re-creation and co-creation (Wilson, 2008) replace the conventional road map to knowledge. In this new road-map, participants must simultaneously move beyond their comfort zone of

convergent response and work toward reconciliation with ambiguity and the 'unknown'. Such transformative interaction is essential for both student and teacher as we move to a new paradigm of re-discovery

References:

- Abad, J. & Palacios A. (2008) Escribir el Lugar: Collaborative Projects. Public Spaces. In: *International Journal of Education Through Art* 4-2.
- Albano, A. (2005) Sementinha: School under the mango tree. In: Mason, R. & Eça, T. (Eds) *Intercultural Dialogues in Art Education*. London: Intellect Books. 2008.
- Adams, E.; Ingham, S. (1998). *Changing Places: Children's Participation in Environmental Planning*. London: The Children's Society.
- Baker, M. ; Ng-He, C.; López-Bosh, M.A. (2008) Reflection on the Role of Artists: A Case Study on the Hidden Visual Curriculum of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. *Teaching Artist Journal* 6(4), 290–297.
- Duncum, P. (2005). Popular visual culture and ten kinds of integration. In M. Stokrocki (Ed.), *Interdisciplinary art education: Building bridges to connect disciplines and cultures*
- Eisner, E. (1972). *Educating Artistic Vision*. London: Macmillan.
- Gablik, S. (1995). "Connective Aesthetic: Art After Individualism." Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art. Ed. Suzanne Lacy. Seattle: Bay, 1995. 74^87.
- Gardner, H. (2001). Creators: Multiple intelligences. *The Origins of Creativity* (pp. 117-143). Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute lectures on aesthetics education*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- LaChapelle, J. R. (1983). Creativity research: Its sociological and educational limitations. *Studies in Art Education* 24(2), 131-139.
- Lippard, L. (1997). *The Lure of the Local Sense of Place in a Multicentered Society*. New York: The New Press.
- Ross, M. (1992). Assessment of Arts Achievement in the United Kingdom: The Reflective Conversation. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 26 (3).
- Samson, L.K., (2008, August). My Birthday Party: An Exploration into Creativity. Paper presented at the 32nd Congress of the International Society for Education through Art. August 6-8, 2008. Osaka, Japan.
- Smilan, C. (2007). [The] creative art [of] education. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(4), 242-249.

Smilan, C. & Miraglia, K. M. (2009). Art teachers as leaders of authentic art integration. *Art Education*, 62(6), 39-45.

Wilson, B. (2008, August). *The end of child art and the emergence of adult/kid collaborative conjunctions in three pedagogical sites*. Keynote address presented at the 32nd Congress of the International Society for Education through Art.

World Arts Alliance (2006) Joint Declaration, accessed on 2008-11-05 from :
http://www.insea.org/docs/joint_decl2006.html