Art & Early Childhood: Personal Narratives & Social Practices

Introduction

by Kris Sunday, Marissa McClure, Christopher Schulte

Young children are explorers of their worlds—worlds filled with unfamiliar things, first experiences, and tentative explanations. As Lowenfeld (1957) recognized, art originates with children's experiences of their immediate surroundings. Young children's encounters with art provide a means to explore ideas and materials, invent worlds, and set them in motion. As a language and mode of communication, art offers children the opportunity to play with ideas and generate conclusions about themselves and their experiences. The communicative nature of children's artwork suggests their desire to be heard and understood by those around them.

In this issue of Bank Street's Occasional Paper Series, we explore the nature of childhood by offering selections that re/imagine the idea of the child as art maker, inquire about the relationships between children and adults when they are making art, and investigate how physical space influences our approaches to art instruction. We invite readers to join a dialogue that questions long-standing traditions of early childhood art—traditions grounded in a modernist view of children's art as a romantic expression of inner emotional and/or developmental trajectories. We have also selected essays that create liminal spaces for reflection, dialogue, and critique of the views that have heretofore governed understandings of children and their art.

We draw from current perspectives on children's art making as social practice (Pearson, 2001). In framing our understanding of children's art within larger conversations about contemporary art, we move beyond the modernist view. Contemporary perspectives recognize that making, viewing, and

interpreting art must be considered within the contexts of the interrelated conditions that encompass art practices. This is to say that making, viewing, and interpreting art emerges from an understanding of the links between broader cultural discourses and when, where, and how an artwork is made, viewed, and interpreted. Individuals bring their local and personal narratives to an artwork and, in so doing, reveal the contradictory and unstable nature of meaning.

Contemporary perspectives give voice to the realities of children's lives in the family, school, community, and broader culture. These wider contexts provide children with both consistent and contradictory information and experiences upon which they draw to make meaning. As both consumers and producers of culture, we see children as people who continuously negotiate a multiplicity of messages, interpreting, integrating, and performing those messages within their own contexts while being shaped by and helping to shape the discursive and cultural experiences and expectations of being a child.

We want to attend to the ways that children move between inner and outer realities, sometimes fluidly, and at other times with trepidation and caution. In this process, children create spaces for themselves in which the instability of knowledge can be temporarily suspended. Within smaller narratives, they generate connecting points between that which is mastered and that which has yet to be mastered.

Art makes the familiar strange and the strange familiar. It is a source of meanings that reveals the inescapable dimensions of context, prompting both makers and viewers to engage the senses to think beyond the immediately visible. Art has the capacity to stretch boundaries and to provoke us to re/think what once seemed ordinary. In abandoning the familiar, art prompts the question, what next? Art has the capacity to confront, disrupt, and to challenge the world as we think we know it. The contributing authors to this issue of Occasional Papers unpack the affordances of the arts for taking up the familiar in new ways. They ask us to re/imagine our images of children, the contexts in which children grow and learn, and our approaches to teaching and learning in/through/with visual art.

Editors

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Entering the Secret Hideout: Fostering Newness and Space for Art and Play

by Shana Cinquema

For many young children, the relationship of play and art is quite natural; children's play delicately weaves within and around their art-making practices. However, this intricate weaving is not always visible within art classrooms. Conventional classroom structures and curricula tend to discourage children's inherent playful tendencies and regulate play to spaces outside of traditional learning areas. Teachers tend to be uncomfortable when children's own interests and desires enter the classroom through play and often limit such experiences. As Wilson (1974) notes, there is a difference between children's play art and the art that children produce in school. He describes children's play art as spontaneous; it is the art that children make for themselves, often outside the confines of the classroom. The art children make in school tends to be primarily initiated and guided carefully by the teaching adults. While many arlague that children's true spontaneous play art can rarely find its way into the classroom, it is this kind of art making in which I am most interested, both as an art educator and as a researcher. For me, these two roles—like the relationship between children's play and art making—have become woven together. I find it difficult to separate my interests in research and teaching. During the year I spent teaching art in a small elementary charter school in southern Arizona, the two roles merged into one as I taught, researched, and—on some lovely occasions—was invited to play alongside the children with whom I spent so much time. Within the context of this paper, I will explore the complex relationships of art making and play for young children and discuss how the inclusion of children's voluntary sketchbook drawings in my art studio curriculum fostered both the weaving of play and art as well as the creation of a third space in my classroom, conceptualized as a site of possibility and newness. It was the formation of this new space that transformed both the nature of my classroom and my relationships with my students.

A Vignette: Play and Art Making at Its Loveliest

Dylan[1] came excitedly over to me during our sketchbook (i.e., free drawing) time in art class and grabbed my hand, pulling me over to look at his newest drawing. It was of a volcano. He eagerly told me that the volcano was about to explode and that we had to get to the secret hideout. Together, we ran to the other side of the room while counting down from five and covering our heads with our hands. According to Dylan, we made it safely and survived the volcanic explosion.

The next week Dylan drew another volcano, which inspired more play and art making. He called me over, once more declaring that the volcano was about to explode and that we only had 40 seconds

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[1] Dylan is a pseudonym.

to get to the secret hideout. This time, when we reached that area of the classroom, we touched our hands to the wall. Dylan traced his own hand and then mine with his finger, making an electronic buzzing sound and stating, "complete" after each tracing. Our hands were obviously being scanned for admittance. After we survived the volcanic explosion, Dylan decided he was going to make a flag for the secret hideout. He asked me what my favorite color was (I replied that it was purple), and he proceeded to color one side of a small rectangular piece of paper purple and the other side green (his favorite color). He asked me to put the flag on the wall above our hideout. I obliged and reached up as high as I could to pin the flag to the wall. He then informed me that he was going to draw our secret hideout and asked me if I would like my own room. I replied, "yes, I would love my own room." He began his drawing using a purple marker, describing the various elements of our tall, tower-like, secret hideout as he drew. He asked me if I would like things in my room to help me get pretty, and again, I answered that I would. He proceeded to draw makeup in my room.

Two weeks later Dylan drew a third volcano in his sketchbook. This time, however, he had discovered a new secret hideout, located on a different wall in the classroom that would protect us from the impending exploding volcano. He called me over, and we engaged in our shared play activity once more, running over to the new secret hideout to survive the explosion. Dylan proceeded to make another flag for the new hideout. After I hung this flag on the wall just as I had the first, Dylan asked me if I would like to see my room. I said yes, and he took my hand and walked me in circles on the carpet. He stopped abruptly and told me that we had arrived. I asked him what was in my room, and he replied that my room had makeup and anything else I needed to be pretty. Then we went to his room. Again, we walked around in circles, and—perhaps understanding my confusion about this circular walk—he informed me that his room was very high. It became clear to me at that point that we were walking up a circular staircase to get to his room. Once we arrived, he told me that his room had toys and anything else he needed. I asked him what kind of toys, and he replied that his room was full of robots and any other toys he might need.

Dylan's play and art making wove naturally in and out of each other. At times, his art making inspired his play, and at other times, his play inspired his art making. The invitation to participate in Dylan's play is not one that I took lightly. This kind of genuine invitation into a shared "playworld" (Ferholt, 2010; Lindqvist, 1996, 2003) is not given often. It provided me with many moments of both enjoyment and contemplation about the rich meanings of children's play art and my invitation into Dylan's imaginary world.

Voluntary Art Making: Fostering Play Art

This experience with Dylan exemplifies the types of moments I aim to foster in my classroom—moments that allow for imaginative play art, explorations of ideas and materials, the inclusion of children's own self-initiated interests, and collaboration among all members of the classroom, myself included. In order to encourage such instances of play and imaginative art making, I give students in my classroom free time to draw in their sketchbooks. During these precious seven minutes at the beginning of a weekly 45-minute art class, the children are free to draw whatever they wish and socialize as they draw. They select their own seats and often sit beside treasured drawing partners. Thompson (1995) notes that the social interactions that occur when children create voluntary drawings—made at the request of an adult, but focusing on ideas and content selected by the children themselves—help to foster and encourage art making. She states, "the presence of other children, the possibility of dialogue, the sharing of perspectives that inevitably occurs around the sketchbooks, contribute significantly to early artistic learning" (Thompson, 1995, p. 9). Dylan drew his volcano images during sketchbook time and invited me to play along with him. This rich narrative and playful experience had not happened at any other time with Dylan. It is clear that the freedom given to Dylan during sketchbook drawing time was essential for the continuation of such play art over the course of many weeks, resulting in four volcano drawings, the creation of two flags, and a detailed marker rendering of our first secret hideout.

As an educator interested in fostering the kinds of social interactions of which Thompson (1995) speaks, I am cognizant of the need to create and model an environment of social engagement and imaginative play during the time the children spend with me in the art studio. During the students' sketchbook time, I sit alongside them, sometimes asking questions about their drawings; at other times, they volunteer to share their stories and images with me. Zoss (2010) describes this kind of classroom space as one that is not entirely constructed by the teacher but is instead a work in progress. She notes that in her experience, this space was "defined and redefined as students played with their own developing meaning making" (Zoss, 2010, p. 187). This space develops in my classroom while the children are drawing in their sketchbooks, integrating their own ideas into our shared curriculum, and is where the connections between their play and art become visible.

The creation of a space in which children's own interests and desires can enter the classroom seems to be a crucial component of the merging of art and play. Zoss (2010) goes on to argue that the activities that take place within this type of classroom are based on a "complex set of relationships among the students, the teacher, the materials they use and make, and the meanings they attach to these relationships" (p. 182). Therefore, the meaning making that occurs is positioned in relation to the

specific context of the classroom. My own role as teacher and researcher comes carefully into play at these points. Through the thoughtful construction of student-centered spaces and activities where the children are given choice, I quietly invite my students to make art and play together.

Walker (2001) states that within the context of the art classroom, when educators include concepts such as purposeful play, manipulation of media, risk taking, and experimentation, students begin to understand that art making is about a discovery of meaning. However, she notes that "these practices do not occur spontaneously: they must be planned for as overtly as the more obvious aspects of art-making instruction. As art teachers, we must…give students permission to play" (Walker, 2001, p. 137). Dylan's choice to draw whatever he wished within his sketchbook (volcanoes), his freedom to move about and interact with the classroom (running from the explosion and entering the secret hideout), and his ability to select his own materials for art making (the construction of the flags) all speak to the kind of space that permits play art; a space that Zoss (2010) defines as one "in which students perform and play with ideas visually, linguistically, and spatially" (p. 182).

A Third Space: Fostering Newness Through Play Art

When interpreted through Bhabha's (2004) ideas about the third space, the type of classroom described above (and the play art created within in), formed in part through the inclusion of the children's sketchbook time, can be understood as fostering newness. For Bhabha, the third space is understood as an ambivalent space, or a site of subversion, where those interacting within it create authentic new experiences. Thompson (2009) describes this space (in terms of the classroom) as a "space *between*—neither the exclusive province of teachers nor of children, but a shared space in which they work together to create an ongoing present and to envision and enact a future in which both are fully acknowledged and engaged" (p. 30). The moments at which Dylan invited me to become a part of his play art formed this third space for us together in the classroom—a new space full of authentic and original ideas.

However, as Bhabha (2004) describes, before we can create new ideas, we must recognize where our original knowledge comes from. Both Dylan and I have our own image of what normal and acceptable classroom behavior looks like; we each hold our own beliefs about how students and teachers should act. We both recognize (although this may be subconscious for Dylan) that these ideas affect our behavior in the classroom, but that our behavior can also affect and change the way we think. These thoughts about classroom behavior relate also to issues of authority. As both teacher and researcher, I acknowledge that authority does exist in the classroom, but I do not accept it as a single kind of authority; it is transparent. There are many ways of being teacher, researcher, and student in the

classroom. It is through an understanding of this transparency, and the rejection of the traditional discourse of normal classroom behavior, that our third space is created.

To better understand how this new site develops, I find it helpful to consider the first two spaces, which I understand as the moments when Dylan created his volcano drawings in his sketchbook and my own moments of being both teacher and researcher alongside Dylan. Bhabha (2004) notes that in order for a third space to be created, moments of discursive transparency and ambivalence must occur: epiphanies when the traditional discourses of power and authority are no longer considered a single form of truth. The first space created (Dylan's volcano drawings) represents his moments of discursive transparency; his epiphany happened in these moments of drawing. He decided that he could consider his role of student in the classroom in a new way—he could get out of his chair, create playful moments inspired by his drawings, and invite me to share and engage in those moments with him. He could rethink or reexamine the traditional ideas about what behavior in the classroom could (or should) look like. The second space created (my own narrative of these classroom events) represents my moments of discursive transparency; my epiphany happened when Dylan first invited me to play, to run across the room seeking shelter from the volcano explosion in the secret hideout. I chose to play with him, to engage with him, to accept his invitation. I realized that I could reconsider his role of student as well as my role as educator and researcher.

The third space created is represented by the collaborative moments that occurred between Dylan and me: running across the room holding hands, counting down to the volcano explosion, walking in circles on the carpet to visit our rooms in the secret hideout, Dylan telling me where to place the flags he created, me pinning them on the wall, and Dylan scanning our hands for admittance into the secret hideout. This was a site of possibility and ambiguousness where we could engage as student and teacher in new and different ways. It was a place where change could happen because both Dylan and I had stopped seeing ideas about classroom behavior as absolute or fixed. It was a space of subversion; by playing and engaging with each other both of us were subverting what were considered to be truths about classroom behavior. Here, newness could occur based on the encounters we shared—encounters that only came into existence because we both rejected these truths. The newness that occurred was of teacher/student relationships, of collaboration and play that could occur between student and teacher.

Concluding Thoughts: Fostering Spaces Where Children Can Live, Learn, and Play

The moments shared with Dylan exemplify the creation of a classroom space that fosters newness, where children have the ability to engage in both play and art making. Yet it is interesting to note that these kinds of moments occurred rarely in my art classroom, where I taught an average of 200

kindergarten through fifth-grade students weekly. Sketchbook time was provided and valued by all classes alike, but my shared play with Dylan was unique. What was it about the time Dylan and I shared in the art classroom that fostered this new space? How could I facilitate these experiences with the other children with whom I worked?

These questions plagued me, and continue to do so, even long after I left that art classroom behind. Part of the answer may be related to trust. At the time of the vignette I shared, I was a returning teacher. Most of the children knew and remembered me from the previous spring, and my return as their art teacher was welcome, especially after a few semesters with different art instructors. The relationship I had strived to build based on shared thoughts and ideas and on my recognition of my students as equal participants in our shared classroom space was continuing to grow. Some of the children seemed to understand that I valued their unique contributions to our curriculum, even if those contributions were spontaneous and, from the students' point of view, unsanctioned.

Another part of the answer may be related to the physical art classroom space and the rules there. The new school year had brought with it a brand new art studio, which I curated meticulously. I filled the classroom with a variety of materials housed primarily in clear bins or jars, so everything was visible. Yarns and drawing materials were arranged by color and style, and most (though not all) supplies were put out and available for the children to use at any time. I wanted to create a space where my students could touch and experiment with materials on their own terms, and the children, who had not had a classroom with such rules such before, were slowly becoming used to this way of being in the art studio. However, it was their sketchbook time that primarily fostered the children's experimentation. Sketchbooks became spaces for exploration of marker, oil pastel, tape, and hole punches. Sometimes, as in Dylan's case, sketchbooks were even replaced with new, different drawing surfaces, like the flags.

I believe that it was the freedom and control offered to the children by their shared participation in our art classroom (through their ideas and use of materials) that helped to foster the weaving of their art and play. Lobman (2010) writes "in play, children are not alienated from their creative abilities. Rather than being passive recipients of knowledge, they are the active creators of the very activity that produces opportunities for learning and development" (p. 203). By providing Dylan—and all my students—the chance to play with me while engaging in artistic, imaginative, and creative activities, I aimed to foster their own active creation of knowledge that challenges traditional hierarchical relationships and ways of knowing the world. It is through the weaving of art and play in the classroom, the rejection of received truths, and the unique ideas about student and teacher relationships that are formed as a result that newness is brought about. It is this newness that has the

ability to transform not only the way we work with and think about young children but also our ideas about art and education.

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The Affective Flows of Art-Making

by Bronwyn Davies

> *I am always slightly surprised by what I do. That which acts through me is also surprised by what I do, by the chance to mutate, to change, and to bifurcate.*
>
> *—Bruno Latour, Pandora's Hope (1999, p. 281)*

Clementine and I have been drawing, painting, and story-making together since she was less than two years old. What we have each become through our art-making encounters, and what our art materials have become in their encounters with us, has continually taken me by surprise. We did not come to our art-making encounters as fixed entities; rather, we discovered what it was possible to be and to do when we "entered into composition" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 257) with each other, affecting each other and being affected, and also affecting and being affected by the space of my kitchen-turned-into-art-studio. It is this *capacity to be affected* that I am interested in here, since it is through the *affections* that a "body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained" (Spinoza, as cited in Deleuze, 1988, p. 49).

In this philosophy, each of us is defined not by our category membership and not in isolation from others, but by our immanent powers of becoming—powers that depend on our capacity to be affected by those ontological and epistemological possibilities in relation to which we find our lives being played out. Affects, in this Deleuzian sense, are both transient and surprising. They emerge not from within isolated individuals, but from the forces that pass between one being and another, creating a change of state in which something new might be generated (Deleuze, 1997). The "beings" involved in our art-making included Clementine and me, the art materials, the stories we created, and the communities and places we lived in. We were, all of us, in Barad's (2007) terms, a "*mutual constitution of entangled agencies*" (p. 33, emphasis in original), affecting each other and being affected as we generated that "mood of enchantment or that strange combination of delight and disturbance" (Bennett, 2010, p. xi) that emerges in the surprising unfolding of art-making.

The art materials that Clementine and I worked with as we made art together were not inert matter for us to manipulate in order to express our own individualized essence. Rather, as I will show here, the emergent processes of becoming-art-makers that we engaged in were an unfolding in intra-action with each others' emergent becoming, where others included both human and nonhuman materialities, both ontologies and epistemologies.

Lines of Ascent and Descent

Being open to the new is vital to any art-making endeavor. Yet continuity and repetition are also important. Bergson's (1998) concepts of lines of ascent and descent offer a subtle and complex way of thinking about these apparently contradictory lines of force. A line of descent is made up of cultural forms and their endless repetitions, making an order that always potentially becomes a force resisting change. To make an art space together, Clementine and I had to create an order, but not one that overrode openness to lines of ascent through which the new and surprising might emerge. It takes continual effort to work against lines of descent; language that enforces order "is not made to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience... Every order-word, even a father's to his son, carries a little death sentence—a Judgment, as Kafka put it" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 76). But these two lines, ascent and descent, are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, lines of descent create life's "conditions of possibility" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 85) and are inseparable from the line of ascent that opens up the unexpected and the new. The line of ascent corresponds "to an inner work of ripening or creating, [that] endures essentially, and imposes its rhythm on the [line of descent], which is inseparable from it" (Bergson, 1998, p. 11).

When two bodies or ideas affect each other, entering into composition with each other, they generate something new. Or, alternatively, they may decompose each other, threatening their coherence:

> When a body "encounters" another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other, destroying the cohesion of its parts... we experience joy when a body encounters ours and enters into composition with it, and sadness when, on the contrary, a body or an idea threaten our own coherence. (Deleuze, 1988, p. 19)

The line of ascent that enters into the joyful creation of a more powerful whole is most often found in art and literature. However, it is not only and always joyful. It is mobile and unpredictable and its capacity to deterritorialize established order can threaten our habituated sense of coherence. Making art is a complex dance between lines of descent (making life coherent and predictable) and ascent (opening up the new and unexpected).

To keep the line of ascent open one must work *both with and against* lines of descent as they appear both in one's own habitual individualizing, interiorizing practices, and in the places where art-making happens. To turn my kitchen into a place where art-making could happen—where we could become and go on becoming art-makers—required of us both that we abandon old habits and ways of being.

Places "are formed through a myriad of practices of quotidian negotiation and contestation; practices, moreover, through which the constituent 'identities' are also themselves continually moulded" (Massey, 2005, p. 154). On the one hand, we needed to set up workable rules and expectations, and on the other, we had to work against those same rules and expectations when they blocked or ran counter to the emergence of the new, the surprising, the line of ascent.

Documenting this double movement involves looking at the smallest details in motion, tuning into the "mutual constitution of entangled agencies" (Barad, 2007, p. 33, emphasis in original). Tuning into affect, as it flows between one body and another, means tuning into movements that are always already changing the nature of the materialities they are working through, changing what they are and what they might be, as they are each affected by the multiple materialities and forces at play.

Creating an Art Space

The possibility of engaging in art-making with Clementine came from our mutual belonging to an inner-city community. We live in an apartment block with a café next door. In the café, there are planned and spontaneous meetings, as well as solitary activities. Here you can find, for example, young parents and their children, gay couples, actors, writers, lawyers, and business men and women; they include a retired architect/artist who is illustrating a book for the café owner, an older woman with dementia who sometimes rings the café owner to ask where she lives, and me, whose attention is ineluctably drawn to small children becoming restive at their parents' intense involvement in conversations. I find myself offering them my pencils and the back of whatever paper I happen to be working on to see what they might do with them.

The first *drawing-story* with Clementine happened when she had just come back from a picnic with her cousins at Centennial Park. Her mum, Claudia, needed to do some shopping and asked me to mind her. Clementine climbed up on the seat opposite me in the café, and I ordered her a babyccino and a muffin. I asked her to tell me what she had done at the park. At Because she was eighteen 18 months old, the task of telling me a story of what they had done was just outside her reach. So I said, surprising myself, "Let's draw it." "Did you run?", I asked. "Yes," she said, so I quickly drew a stick -figure running, giving it curly hair and clothes like Clementine's, pointing out that the running figure had buttons on her dress the same as Clementine had on her dress. "Did you jump?" I asked. "Yes," she said, so I drew a picture of her jumping. "Not like that," she said, and climbed off her chair and showed me how she jumped. I rubbed out the first jumping figure and made it jump just as she'd shown me. The story grew through several pages to include each of her cousins, looking more or less recognizably themselves, playing together in the ways I offered and she assented to, and ways

she told me or showed me. We created a story of climbing the magnificent old trees, and looking at the ducks on the lily pond. "The pond was scary," she said, staring at the duck pond I had drawn—, waiting, it seemed, for its danger to be made evident by the quickly moving pencil. I attempted bland reassurances about the benign nature of the pond, which she didn't find at all convincing. So to reflect her feeling that the pond was dangerous, I took up the affect of danger and offered her a crocodile with its nose peeping out of the water. She liked the crocodile and its possibilities very much. Would it bite her toes? we wondered.... And so the story unfolded itself. I took the pages to my place and bound them together to make a book called *Clementine's Visit to Centennial Park*, and we presented it together to her delighted mother.

Some months later, the idea of turning my kitchen into a place to paint seemed a natural extension of our story-making. To transform my kitchen into an art-space meant giving up, to the extent that I could, the lines of descent of my quotidian kitchen practices (a fastidious attention to cleanliness, order, and predictability) and opening myself up to the surprise of the new. Clementine, for her part, had to be able to forgive those small anxieties attached to order. Some months into our painting together, I exclaimed "No!" as she was about to do something I didn't want her to do. She literally jumped in her seat and I realized with a shock how hard she worked at accommodating my ongoing quotidian lapses. Despite my passionate attachment to lines of ascent, I find in my notes from two years after we had begun painting and drawing together, the following moment:

> Clementine dipped a pencil in the paint and made some dots. I said that wasn't what the pencils were for. She looked up at me, hesitating, and I realized what a stupid thing that was to say. So I said, "Sometimes adults have ideas that are wrong. Show me what you were doing." She showed how she could make small vivid dots using the pencil. I told her that was good, and that experimenting was good, and that sometimes I say things that are wrong, though often I am right as well. She seemed happy with that. She made some more dots, but then wanted to clean the paint off the pencil. I was appalled at myself.

Each time we got together to paint, I covered the bench surfaces with newspaper so I wouldn't worry about where the paint landed, and we painted on recycled paper from my study to avert any unwanted anxieties I might have about waste and so there wouldn't be any demand from the paper that only perfectly executed paintings could appear on it. Spillages of paint and water, or wet paintings that landed upside down on the floor, came to be defined by us as accidents, over which there would be no drama. Clementine's paintings, when she was especially pleased with them, went up on the walls

of her own apartment. Some of mine went up on my kitchen walls. What I sought in this new order, these lines of descent, was a space in which art could happen, where we could joyfully and without any unnecessary anxieties open up lines of ascent as we experimented with art-making.

The first time we decided to do painting, Clementine sat up at the kitchen bench watching attentively as I put everything we would need in place. I put a sculpture of an exotic, blue bird on the bench as possible inspiration for our work. I asked Clementine to choose which colours she wanted and squeezed these out in generous dollops, each into its own small indentation on the small palette, and we each chose a brush from among the many differently sized and textured brushes. I showed her how to dip her brush into the glass of water and then into the paint she wanted to work with. To my surprise, she dipped the brush into all of the colours, one after the other, before beginning her painting. I felt a rush of anxiety about this instant "messing up" of colours, exclaiming "oh!" and then watching in fascination as her brush dipped into one and now another of the vivid colours, resisting my resistance.

She began working with great speed, moving from one painting to the next, as far as I could see, ignoring the bird. I too got into the swing of moving rapidly, as I'd already learned to do in our drawing-stories, not worrying about how the "product" might turn out. With rapid brush strokes, I found the bird appearing on my page in a way that delighted me, and that I had not imagined myself capable of. The legs of the bird in my painting were too short as the page wasn't long enough to extend them to the right length. Realizing that the too-shortness didn't matter gave me intense pleasure as I found myself liberated from one of many small enslavements to how art *ought* to be. Letting the brush flow and the colours mix in unexpected ways was a skill I began picking up from Clementine right there in that first encounter. Together we listened to each other as we became emergent-artists-together, open to being affected by each other and to what we might create. I was so delighted with my bird painting that it lived on the wall for some time next to the bird itself. On subsequent visits,

Figure 1. Two Birds.

Clemmie would point with delight to the bird and then the painting, saying, "See, bird, bird," as if surprised all over again by what had appeared on my page. (See Figure 1.)

At the end of each painting session, I would move Clementine's chair over to the kitchen sink and we would wash ourselves and the art materials. Anticipating that there might be danger because the hot tap was in such easy

reach, I personified each of the taps, giving a deep, gravelly voice to the hot tap, which said, "Watch out! I'm the hot tap. I'm really dangerous!" and to the cold tap a mild, soft voice that said, "Hello, I'm the cold tap. I don't hurt anyone." Clementine loved these voices and took great pleasure in repeating them. When it came time to let out the water, knowing that the drain might make a rather startling noise, I invented a funny gurgling voice for the plughole that talked nonsense to Clementine while it took away the water. As we cleaned up together I learned to notice the colour of the water as the paint washed out of the brushes, while she learned the nature of the different brushes and how to care for them. She learned how to be safe with the taps, while I discovered a playful capacity to animate the taps and the plughole. Together with brushes and paint and water, we entered a timeless zone of play where lines of ascent and descent worked together in harmony.

Moments of Becoming Art-Makers

What follows are brief excerpts from the notes I made after each painting session. Out of more than 250 paintings and drawings, I have chosen moments that reveal the surprising nature of our art-making and the intra-active, affective flows in between. I have chosen as well moments that show the tension between the lines of descent, always at work, and the contrasting liveliness and joy of mutual composition.

OCTOBER 13, 2011 ORDER SUPPORTING THE FLOW OF AFFECT AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW

Today was our first session after me having been away for six weeks. When we left her place to come to my place, her little sister Scout cried as she wanted to come too, and Clementine, now two years and 10 months old, explained to her that painting was only for big girls.

When we arrived in my kitchen, Clementine moved her chair over to the bench, saying, "This is my chair," and climbed up onto the chair, asking, "Where are the paints?" As usual, I talked about the preparation as I got everything ready... I am fascinated by how quiet and how patient she is as she watches it all being laid out...

Today she had insisted that she bring her doll Archer, and announced that she was going to paint Archer. She nodded toward my painting of the bird on the wall and said, "You painted that yesterday" (her word for any time past). I have not at all pressed representation as what we are doing, though I often have something interesting to begin with as inspiration. Today she had chosen Archer, and so we sat him on the bench where we could see him. As I squeezed out the colours, we discussed how red and white together would make pink. She immediately mixed these colours and began her painting

with playful sweeping lines. Then she moved to blue and white, and some gold, overlaying these on the pink.

Meanwhile I began with a pink circle for Archer's face and a pink smile. She glanced at it and said, "That's you." I accepted that I was not painting Archer but myself. We discussed what colour my hair should be and we decided on gold. I gave myself blue and gold eyes and a stick-figure body.

Figure 2. Angry Spider Mother.

Clementine engaged in more experimental mixing of colours and brush strokes, combining blue and pink, incorporating the circle I had begun my painting with. She moved from there to experimenting with combining blue and yellow to make green, using both circular and straight brush strokes.

Her free and confident brush strokes, layering one colour on top of another and mixing colours, and her idea that I was painting myself led to my own experiment. I was amazed at what emerged. A wild, angry, crazy-looking face. All the grief and anger I feel about my current work situation was suddenly visible on the page.

I was so surprised I held it up for Clementine to see and said, "Look at that!" She looked at it and exclaimed, "Oh! It's a really angry spider mother!" (See Figure 2.)

Her next two paintings incorporated some of the colours and lines of the spider mother. She abandoned the brushes and began doing dots with paint on her fingers and then sliding her fingers through the paint. It was as if my wild painting gave her permission to do something outside the ordinary. She then began a new painting using the same colours with a brush, but this time picked up a pencil lying there and made squiggly lines in the paint that captured the affect of the angry spider mother. (See Figures 3 and 4.)

OCTOBER 25, 2011 EXPANDING THE FIELD OF MATERIAL ENGAGEMENTS

[Clementine has been sick, so this was the first session after a break. After we finished painting and cleaned up, we played with the dolls and then Clementine noticed for the first time my bowl of brightly coloured wool.]

She asked me if she could do knitting. I said she would have to be bigger before she could do knitting. She did not find this at all convincing. I showed her how knitting is done and she accepted it might be

Figures 3. Response to Spider Mother.

Figure 4. Response to Spider Mother.

too hard. She began cutting pieces of black wool into odd-sized strips, taking pleasure in the fact that she could use the scissors so well. She looked at all the rest of the wool and seemed to think cutting it all up would be fun, starting in on a ball of green wool and cutting through the whole ball. I said gently that I hadn't really wanted her to do that, and began an alternative game that we would make a spider from the black bits of wool she had cut. I rapidly made two spiders with red eyes and she thought they were scary and wonderful. We played with those for a while and then she said she wanted to write on the computer. So she sat on my knee and typed the first few words, with me telling her how to spell them and pointing to the relevant keys. She then dictated for me to type:

> *Dear clemmie*
> *I hope you are alright.*
> *Dear scoutie*
> *I hope you are alright.*
> *Dear mummy*
> *I hope you are alright.*
> *Dear grandma*
> *I hope you are alright.*
> *Get well soon*
> *We all go to bed last night and*
> *We had sweet dreams*

She was aware that the words on the screen were the words she was saying to me, pointing to the words and repeating what she had said. When I said we had left Daddy out, she said no, he couldn't be there as he hadn't been sick. She hadn't been sure how to end her poem, and so I had suggested the sweet dreams, which she accepted with a smile.

Today began in the coffee shop. In this story-telling Clementine told the story and I drew it. She began with herself and Scout, and her cousins, and their parents, each with a mermaid tail. Each of the mermaids had spots on their faces, which Clemmie added, at first with pencil and then, realizing we have a red pen, with red pen. The red spots grew into wild scribbles, which could be cuts. The spots meant that everyone was sick and had to be rushed to hospital. I drew an ambulance rushing along to take them to the hospital. We only had one page, so we had to go across to the newsagent for more, as she was determined the story would continue. (See Figure 5.)
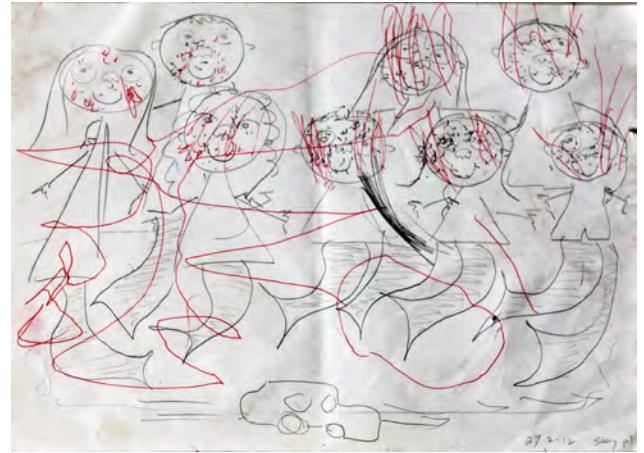

Figure 5. Mermaids with spots.

There are seven beds for the mermaids to lie in, and a doctor with some pills for them, some big double doors to go through. The new baby-to-be, Sunday, is now included, with a bed of his own, and Clemmie has two beds, one for her when she is three, as she currently is, and one for when she is a very big girl. Everyone takes their pills. I draw the pills in their tummies. The two Clementines had to have an especially big pill. When they were well, I added a sports car for Clemmie to drive off in, and I drew her hair whooshing behind her in the wind. She coloured in the car with the red pen. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6. Mermaids in hospital.

Now the story moves to the park. She loves this part of the story, where her toes are bitten by a crocodile. This has many variations. Today the park had a tree and a ladder and a slippery dip—a long slippery dip at the end of which one could fly down into the boat on the water. Clementine climbed the ladder and went whoosh down the slippery dip, with her hair flying, and landed on the boat. Then she dived into the water, knowing the crocodile would be there. She insisted her arms were not going over her head in a crawl, but in front of her in a dog paddle. So I changed the arms to dog-paddle arms. The crocodile nipped her mermaid tail. She swam fast toward

Figure 7. Mermaids in park.

Figure 8. Mermaids ice-skating.

her mum, calling, "Mum, mum!" who was also in the water. I suggested a Band-Aid for the nip in her tail, and that made it better. On the next page, the mermaids have gone to an ice-skating rink where two mermaids, covered in Band-Aids, go skating. In the top left-hand corner, in red, is Clementine's drawing of hair flying out behind. (See Figures 7 and 8.)

FEBRUARY 28, 2012 A SURPRISING LEAP INTO SOMETHING NEW: HAIR BLOWING IN THE WIND

Next day, Clemmie is very keen to come to my place to paint, even though I warn her we have only half an hour. She begins with a pink fish and some water and the wind blowing. Next she paints herself with hair blowing wildly in the wind and then Scout with hair blowing wildly in the wind. In each case, the blowing hair takes up most of the page and is full of colour and movement. (See Figures 9 and 10.)

What was magical for me in these sessions was to see the way that our story from the day before leapt over into her paintings with the fish, and the hair blowing in the wind. And much bigger than that, really, is the way she drew on all the skills she has been developing in experimenting with brushes and colour and lines. It was an amazing day.

Figure 9. Hair blowing in wind 1.

Figure 10. Hair blowing in wind 2.

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[After several paintings] Clementine chose the calligraphy brush and began with dots in the corners representing her house and her friends' houses. Then she drew flowing lines back and forth between the houses, some with mud puddles. She called it Clemmie's house, and all her friends' houses, and visiting friends and adventures with crocodiles. As she painted she told the story of a very brave girl in her painting called Clementine who was the bravest mermaid. Her friends were all there. There were so many crocodiles chasing them and they couldn't run fast enough and the crocodiles were biting them and they had to go to hospital. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 11. Visiting friends and adventures.

At that point, she stopped and asked could we draw a mermaid story. I said she could draw but she was adamant that I should draw because I am "so good at it" and she would sit on my knee, she said, and we would tell the story together. We drew two mermaids, Jazzie and Clemmie. Clemmie was the biggest mermaid. The hands of the mermaids had to look like Clemmie's hand, not the stick fingers I had quickly drawn. (Recently we have been tracing around our fingers and painting them so she has an image of how fingers should be.) Jazzie had a cut in her tail. Clemmie and Jazzie both had thorns in their tails and had to go to hospital. They were each in a hospital bed and very sad. Dr. Bronny came with her Band-Aids and tweezers, and the sad faces turned into smiles. Dr. Bronny pulled out the thorns and put them in a bowl and put a Band-Aid on Jazzie's cut. I said they said "ouch" when the thorns were pulled out. "But they didn't say 'ouch,'" she said, and she didn't want their words written, so I rubbed them out. Then she noticed that mermaid Scout and mermaid Maxie were hiding under the beds... All during the storytelling and drawing she squirmed with excitement, almost squirming off my lap several times. I wouldn't have known the level of excitement in our drawing stories if she hadn't been in my lap!!

This was one of the most creative and relaxed sessions we have had for a while, and one where the love between us has been palpable.

JUNE 25, 2012 THE EMERGENCE OF THOUGHT ABOUT OUR COLLECTIVE MATERIALITY

This was a most relaxed and joyful session with Clementine—though they are always that, this time together seemed qualitatively different. When we met by chance on the front stairs she jumped up into my arms and hugged me and asked if she could come to my place. She said she had missed me so much

while I was away though I had only been gone for five days... She reminds me the baby is due in three weeks.

When we got to my place she was hungry and asked me to cut up a pear. We talked about how pears and people were alike. The pear had skin like her, and a round tummy like her mummy. She said she had a round tummy too. We then wondered about the seeds and whether she had seeds, but she thought not. I jokingly asked her if she had a stalk sprouting out of her head and she laughed and said no. I asked if she wanted toast, with butter and honey, and she said yes, but she would also like on her toast some of my little red seeds with white fingers. It took me a while to work out that she meant pomegranate seeds, so I cut open the pomegranate and she showed me the little white fingers on each seed, which she said were not good to eat, and I agreed. We wondered how pomegranates and people were alike and decided the red juice in the pomegranate was like blood. She observed that in people it was better for the blood to stay inside and not come outside the body.

Finally we got round to painting. She drew some fluffy clouds, telling me she was good at clouds, and indeed she was. She painted them pink, mixing white and red and told me they were awesome pink clouds. She thoroughly mixed all the colours I had put on the palette, and the resulting muddy paint on her brush then rather spoiled the clouds. I suggested brown was not great for clouds and she stopped, leaving some of the pink still visible. Curiously she named her painting pitta patta rainbow, and when I asked, wasn't it called clouds? she said no. So I have not yet got to the bottom of what she is doing with the naming. (See Figure 12.)

She said she didn't want to do any more painting, so while I finished my painting she drew a picture of her mummy's tummy with the baby in it. She then painted over the drawing, became upset, and wanted to rub the paint off. She was rubbing a hole in the paper, and I suggested she stop before she had a hole. She stopped, but then produced two new watery paintings, which she rubbed a hole in. She didn't seem upset when she did this—just very intent on rubbing until she got a hole. She asked me to draw Claudia with the baby coming out with Clementine beside her looking sad as she had the hiccups. She insisted that the baby was a girl, though she knows the baby coming is a boy. Next drawing was the whole family, with the baby still in mummy's tummy, and Scout with a baby in her tummy. ("Just pretending," she said, "It's really Archer, the doll.") (See Figures 13 and 14.)
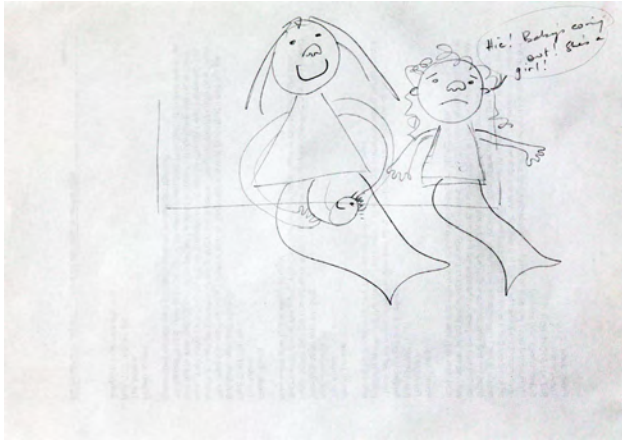

Figure 12. Clouds.

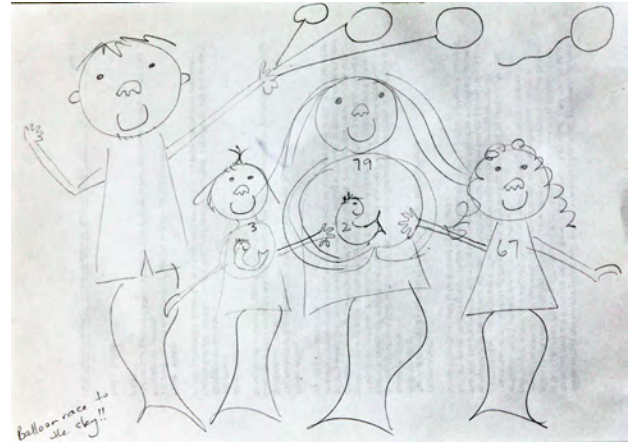Figure 13. Birth of Sunday.

Figure 14. Mermaid family.

JULY 23, 2012 ATTENDING TO THE SMALL DETAILS OF THE FLOW BETWEEN US TWO, THE POPPIES, AND THE BEES

I have Clementine to visit for a few hours. Claudia's baby is due any day.

When I showed Clemmie my vase of poppies as our inspiration for painting, she asked me, did I know that flowers need water and sun and earth to grow? Right then a poppy flower unfolded from its pod and we talked about how it was like a butterfly unfolding its wings from the cocoon that the caterpillar has made. Over lunch we talked about the lettuce seedlings she and I planted in the community garden, and the fact that they are growing, and she said we should get some seeds from the poppy and plant them. I said that the flowers needed bees to pollinate them and there are no bees inside the apartment, so there will be no seeds. She told me that bees make honey, and I got out the honey jar, and she showed me the picture of the bee on the lid. "See bee-honey, bee-honey. See?" she said, pointing to the picture of the bee and the actual honey in turn, showing me how obvious the connection was. We looked in detail at the beautiful yellow centre of the flowers and talked about how bees pollinate flowers. I told her about the little sacs some bees have on their legs to carry the pollen, and about how the flower relies on the bees to put the pollen down the small space in the middle of the flower to begin the process of making seeds. And how the flower, if the bee pollinates it, will turn into seeds that we could plant and make more poppies. We had some toast and honey to get the feel of bees and honey and poppies and how amazing the bees really are. Then we did paintings of poppies, and Clemmie wrote a poem to go with each of the paintings. The "pitta patta" title of her paintings that puzzled me so much for their repetitiveness and apparent lack of meaning relating to the painting has finally budded into a poem that is a little like an ode to a bee and butterfly combined.

> *Pitta patta*
> *catty pillar*

Pitty pea...
I want you
To be my bee.

Today I wanted to paint the poppies... I asked Clemmie to leave my green paint green and my orange orange, as they were the colours I needed, but she couldn't resist mixing them to see what would happen, and once again the mixes were better than I would have done for myself, adding (somewhat random) depth and variation, whereas I would have happily stayed (boringly and uninspired) with mono colours. When Clemmie flicked drops of wet paint onto my painting I was a little upset. I said, "Oh, I didn't want that," using a tissue to soak up the splodges of water. She looked quite puzzled, not knowing why I might not want those random flicks of colour. She teased me (with a little smile) by using her paint-loaded brush to show me where on my painting I might put some stars (there were some star stickers I had put in the paint box). When I objected quite firmly, she

Figure 15. Poppies 1.

smiled and turned her brush around and showed me with the handle end where I might put the stars. When I said I didn't want stars, she accepted that and continued with her own glorious painting of poppies. (See Figures 15 and 16.)

And So...

Sitting across the kitchen bench from each other, creating an art-making-space together, Clementine

and I experience a peculiar attentiveness to each other's drawing and painting that is evident in the elements of our paintings and drawings that jump from her page to mine, and my page to hers; her excitement infects me, just as my pleasure in our quiet play with pencils and paints infects her. Together we have responded to the spaces we have created by developing a joyful engagement in the practice of drawing and painting together.

Figure 16. Poppies 2.

The speed with which she painted enabled me to let go of an idea that painting involved slow and painstaking attention to representation. Her mixing of colours gave me the possibility of lines of flight that did not emerge from a carefully laid-down plan or knowledge of colours. I see, too, as I look through the 250 paintings so far, that she returns again and again to the story of the flight to hospital, and I have not mentioned in my notes that she had had firsthand experience of such a flight when she severed her finger in a sliding door.

There was much that happened outside our art-making—my grief at my then work situation, or my visit to an inspiring exhibition of paintings of flowers by the Japanese artist Secca. There were many other forces at play that, of necessity, I cannot be aware of. I notice too that I have not found space to document here the generous and warm encouragement that Clementine's parents, Matt and Claudia, gave to our art-making. Claudia's delight in the paintings and drawings and stories Clementine brought home were vital to our work; Matt and Claudia's filming of some of our times together, their willingness to put her paintings up on their walls—all of this was integral to the community that made our art-making possible—not to mention the forbearance of the workers in the coffee shop who dealt with spilt babyccinos, crumbled muffins, and pencils and papers everywhere. I'd like to think I've exaggerated my adherence to quotidian, repetitive lines of descent, but the surprise and exhilaration I felt at being freed from them cannot be made real unless I admit the extent to which they were there, constraining what it was possible for me to do. Being open to that sense of surprise and joy in the affective flow of our art-making is what I have most gained from our work together. I cannot speak for Clementine, and what she might say she has gained, except to note that Claudia tells me she asks almost every day whether she can come to my place to paint.

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Seeing Meaning

by Barry Goldberg

During a recent classroom painting session, six children were sitting on the floor, working independently on the various shapes of paper they had chosen. There was the usual mix of impromptu experimentation, welcome aesthetic accidents, and occasional minor mishaps (distinctions which are not always easy to discern.) One of the four-year-old painters, who had been working on a rectangular piece of paper, announced to no one in particular, "I have a good idea." Without another word, the child proceeded to carefully tear his painting roughly in half. He tried various ways of recombining the two pieces and then finally crumpled one half of the painting into a ball and stuck it in the center of the remaining half, which still lay flat on the floor. Pleased with the result, he happily announced he was finished and trotted off.

One could write a good many paragraphs and not begin to convey what this child's actions expressed so simply and forcefully: *The activity of making art is a unique form of wordless thinking.*

Thinking and *idea* are bound up with one another. This child's project, left on the floor and almost lost in the sea of marks from previous paintings, was filled with ideas. It might be useful to regard the physical project—in this case, an object made of paper and paint—as the material evidence of *visual thought*, of *visual idea*. When we look at this child's painting, what we see is the tangible result of each of the child's actions. This child's final few actions alone embodied a number of striking ideas. The first was the idea of tearing the painting in half. The child, of course, did not reason this out with words and then act. Rather, he was responding to materials that were changing right in his hands and right before his eyes. Within that evolving process, he decided to *tear* the paper—a very different idea than, say, cutting or folding it. Although the result was still a rectangle, changing the paper in this particular way significantly altered the smooth regularity of the original shape. The one rough, torn edge gave the new rectangle a particular energy and liveliness that the original shape did not possess. Had the child used scissors, the changed shape would feel very different to us.

Then came the idea of crumpling one half of the already painted paper into a ball. Watching this take place, it was easy to imagine that half of the painting was about to be discarded—in fact, that may well have been the child's initial impulse. There was certainly a degree of happy destruction, or at least aesthetic mischief, in crumpling up one half of a painting. But there was also the idea of taking a flat, square-cornered, straight-edged shape and transforming it into an irregular, rough, round, three-dimensional object. One result of this action was that the physical paper now played two very different

roles. On the one hand, it played a quiet, background role, existing—quite literally—behind the paint. On the other, it forcefully declared its independence—a paper ball free to move in space. Moreover, it was a ball formed by the child's own hands, unlike the original rectangle. What became clear was that two different intentions were now at work. The first was positive and constructive—applying paint to paper to make a painting. The second was seemingly negative and destructive—tearing the paper in two and crumpling up one half of it. That's when the child arrived at the final surprising idea—to join these two opposing intentions together in his project. By reuniting the balled-up paper with the half from which it was separated, the child found a way to make something new and whole out of two contradictory impulses: the positive and constructive entwined with the negative and destructive. We see the child's original painting now torn in two. And we see the removed half, crumpled into a ball, then suprisingly returned to the painting as a new element—a veritable pre-K yin-yang. As humorous as this may sound, it is in no way meant to make light of the extraordinary level of visual thinking that had taken place in this project. Again, it goes without saying that the young painter did not intellectualize those ideas and then act upon them. He neither could have nor did he need to. And that is what is so important to recognize. The child was *thinking directly through seeing.*

Making Sense When There Are No Things to Name

For many adults, the phrase "to make sense" is almost synonymous with being able to put an idea into words. If we see, for example, a child's drawing in which there is a figure, a yellow sun, green grass, and a flower, it makes sense to us because the things which we see, and which we readily name, go together in a way that we accept. But when we try and apply this notion of sense to a painting that has no things to name, it simply doesn't work. For example, there is not much to name in the painting I have been describing, except perhaps for the ball of paper. This inability to affix names or identifying labels is difficult for many adults. The lines, swirls, pools, and smears of color do not collect themselves into anything we recognize. Drips, spatters, and spills can all seem like just a lot of accidents resulting from a lack of facility. The problem is that the sense we are looking for, rooted as it is in words, has little to do with the sense and meaningfulness of the child's project, which is rooted in the visual and material. Until we recognize this, we may find that a child's project pleases our eyes but, unfortunately, its sense and meaningfulness eludes us. We remain *outside* the painting, while the child has lived the painting's making from the inside—where its meaning lies. The young child has no need to translate the experience into words in order to make it meaningful. The child is, in every sense, *seeing meaning.*

The Vocabulary of a Visual Language

When we talk about language skills in early childhood education, we are usually referring to skills involving words—reading, writing, and the ability to use words to express our feelings and our thoughts. Thinking is often regarded as almost inseparable from the use of words. Visual thinking, however, is a way to make sense of experience that does not involve these word-based skills. Children, before they acquire spoken language, are natural visual thinkers. Seeing provides one of the primary means by which they begin to make sense of the world around them. For most of us, visual thinking eventually gives way to thinking in words. The acquisition of word-based skills, however, need not be at the expense of visual-language skills. When reinforced at an early age, visual thinking accompanies thinking in words and often offers a way to find meaning in experience where words fail to provide one. On the other hand, when words provide the only "means to meaning"—to borrow a phrase from the poet Archibald MacLeish (1961; p.1) —a child's ability to think, and the world of experiences to which they are open and receptive, has been effectively and significantly diminished.

A visual language is one in which ideas are found in the innumerable decisions made during the creative process. Evidence of those decisions is what constitutes the work of art. Placing one cardboard tube inside another is an idea very different from placing those tubes side by side, just as tearing the edge of a piece of paper is a different idea than cutting it with scissors. Often we can feel these differences more easily than we can articulate them. These differences are the vocabulary of a visual language. They embody meaning even when we are unable to affix a name to them as we might name, for example, an object in the world. Unfortunately, the more our ability to make sense of experience is dependent on words and the more we feel the need to name what we are looking at, the more uncomfortable (if not threatened) we feel by elements we cannot easily name. This uneasiness with what cannot be named speaks directly to the value of art in education: *Visual thinking enables us to not feel threatened by what we cannot name—by what we cannot take hold of with words.* This capacity is one whose implications extend far beyond the edges of a painting.

The perplexed adults standing in front of the abstract painting saying to themselves, "I don't get it, I don't understand what it means" might just as well be saying, "I cannot translate this object into words. If I could, it would make sense, it would be meaningful." Young children do not have this problem; they have no need to translate a painting into words in order to experience it. They see the differences within the painting, and these differences kindle meaning. The roughness or smoothness of paint surfaces, the speed of a line crossing the space within the painting, the way two forms don't quite touch all have meaning to a child who is still thinking visually.

It's helpful to remember that, of course, adults were themselves children at one time and possessed the same capacity. For this reason, when an adult responds to the amorphous colored shapes in a young child's painting by attempting to attach labels like "clouds," "water," or "mist" to them, it speaks more of an adult's lost capacity than of a child's lack of facility.

Talking about Art When "The Art in It Is What You Cannot Talk About"

Importantly, the capacity to think visually is one that young children naturally possess. Ironically, it is, one might say, taught out of them. In this regard, the role of the teacher should be one of preserving and nurturing what already exists rather than instilling something perceived as missing. One of the most important ways of preserving that capacity has to do with the way we talk to children about their art.

The question which often confounds the adult is: How do you talk to children about their art when, as one painter put it, "the art in it is what you cannot talk about"? You do so by talking about the painting in terms that have to do with *seeing* rather than in terms that have to do with *naming*. For example, when you approach a child's work you might say: "Let's look at your painting…the paint that makes the blue shape is so smooth and flat, even its edges are smooth. The red shape is very thick and lumpy and its edges are rough. I like the idea that those two shapes are rubbing together in your painting. I see a new color where they are touching," and so on. We have said a good deal about what we *actually* see, but we have not "named" anything. "I like the idea of" is a phrase which sets the tone for what is important in the child's work—idea expressed as visual language.

A very different approach would be to say to the child, as many of us have, with the best of intentions, "I love your painting. It's so beautiful. Is that blue the sky? The red shape looks like a flower. Do you want to paint some grass?" In this example, we have said almost nothing about what we actually see, about what the paint is doing or how the marks have been made. We have said nothing that enhances visual thinking or broadens a child's awareness of the elements found in a visual language. We have, however, said a good deal about our need to take hold of the shapes in the painting by giving them the names of things we know in the world.

But what about a drawing like this?
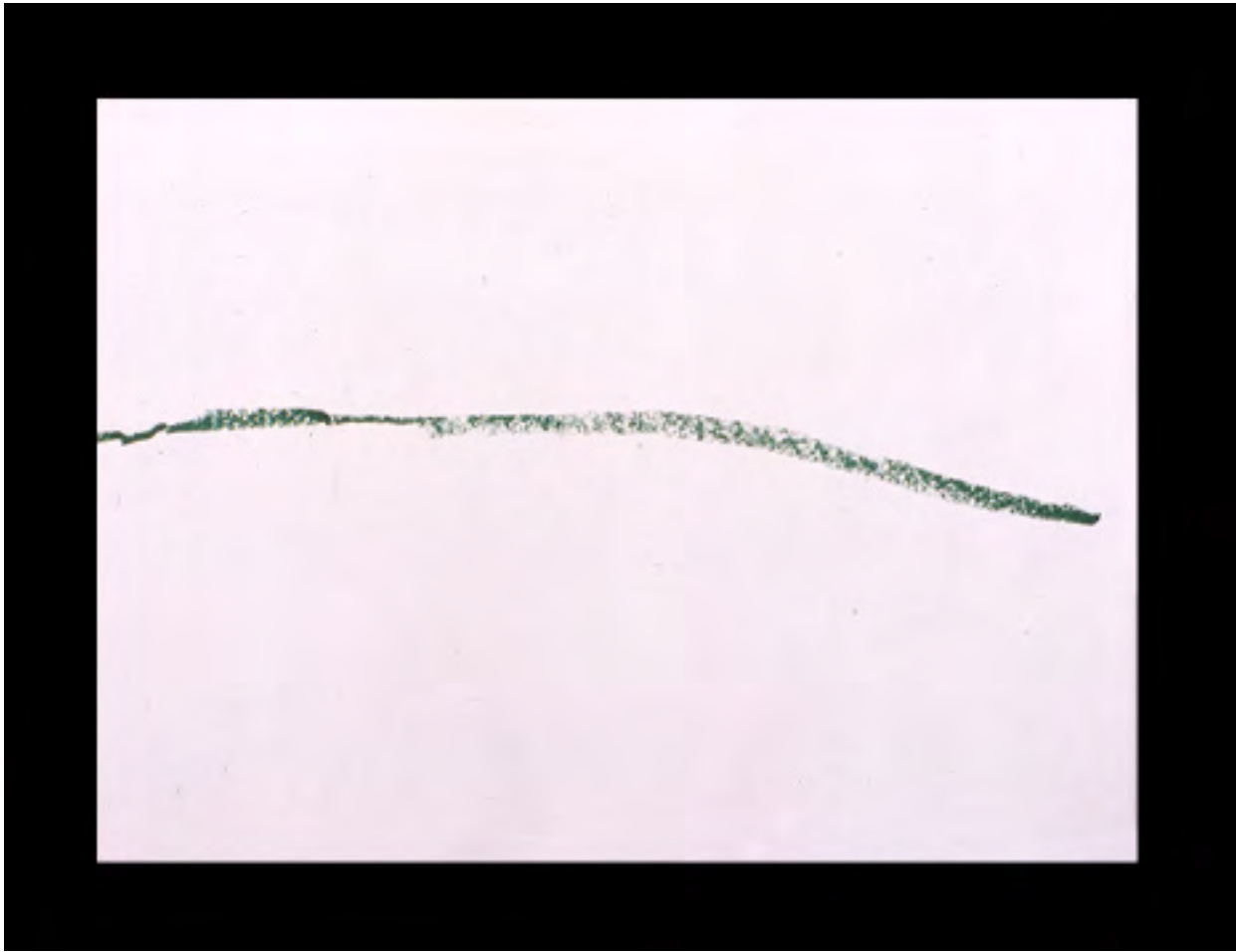
It might seem like there is almost nothing to say to a child about such an apparently minimal effort except maybe, "Don't you want to draw some more?" Looking closely, however, we realize that even the simplest line has a place where it starts and a place where it ends. It has a speed, a direction, and a location on the page. How hard the child has pressed with their hand changes the line—and changes the way the line feels to us.

In this drawing, the line enters at the left almost as if it had started somewhere before it ever got to the paper. When it enters the white rectangle, it makes two short, sharp movements and then it suddenly speeds up and broadens out as if pushing into the white of the page. Only a moment later, the white seems to have pushed back, twisting, thinning, and slowing the line. It's something of a surprise then that the line suddenly rushes boldly forward again—lightening, almost lifting off the page before speeding to a halting, dark, and definite stop just before it gets to the far edge of the paper. Now the white of the page feels squeezed as it is forced to go around a green line whose appearance

has completely changed the quiet world of this one white rectangle. While only a single crayon line may have been made in this drawing, there is a lot going on. It's also important to remember that the decision *not* to make another mark is just as significant as the decision to a make a mark in the first place.

Verbalizing a "trip" taken with your eyes on a line like this often delights children and encourages them to try new ways of mark-making without ever directly asking them to do so—and without having named anything in their drawing.

The gratification we receive from the simple act of naming a form or object is strong. Probably this goes back to the praise we received for it as a child. I have already given the example of the adult who stands mystified before the seemingly impenetrable abstract painting. Confronting this painting may seem a bit like trying to comprehend a sentence which has no nouns. The feeling of frustration is not surprising. This same individual would no doubt happily turn their attention to a Van Gogh painting that seems easy to understand. In that painting, they might find a chair, a pair of shoes, and a room with a bed—and along with these objects, they will find the "sense" that they could not find in the abstract painting. But naming is not seeing.

That said, recognizable forms will begin to enter the drawings of children around the age of three or four. The presence of identifiable forms adds the new element of associated meanings which are conjured by those forms. What is important to remember, however, is that the way you see a form is inseparable from the means used to render it. *How* we see forms is utterly entwined with every aspect of the materials used to create them. The same visual elements which carried meaning when we could not affix a name to the forms continue to carry meaning when we can. The difference is that when there are identifiable forms present, the meaning carried by the visual elements alone (color, line, shape, surface, and so on) now involve themselves with the associations conjured by the forms we recognize.

The Drawing Is the Telling

The tendency to gratify ourselves by just naming the forms we see is usually accompanied by the strong desire to connect these objects with a story. Often a well-intentioned teacher engages a child in the story of the painting without ever acknowledging the ideas within the paint itself. A teacher once asked me if she should be saying to a child, "Can you tell me about your drawing?" My response was that *the drawing is the telling*. When story replaces real seeing, we effectively recast a primarily visual language as a primarily literary one. We have once again reduced the visually charged painting to words and begun the process in which the capacity for visual thinking steadily disappears.

But how can we not talk about a large, toothed orifice when one is staring at us from a child's painting? Indeed, it may seem irrelevant to be acknowledging the way the paint is applied when one figure in the painting is about to devour another—and especially when the child is telling me that they were thinking about a monster when they were making the painting. It is, in fact, a perfect opportunity to talk about the particular kind of marks the child used in relation to the words they are relating.

For example, vigorous, high-energy marks made by a big brush loaded with paint feel very different to us than the thin, scratchy marks made by a small, relatively dry brush. And a head created by a heavy application of green paint coarsely brushed into a lower corner of the painting is clearly different than the same form created by a delicate wash of yellow floating near the top of the paper. It is these differences that are so important to acknowledge.

It is not that *what* or *who* children are drawing is unimportant, but that if we don't talk about the *what* and the *who* in terms of the how—how something was drawn, how the marks were made, how the drawing or painting or sculpture was constructed—then we risk turning visual art and visual ideas into narrative, into literature, into illustration. We turn something made out of paint and crayon and cardboard into something made out of words.

You might say to a child who has identified a specific shape in their painting, "The paint you used for that balloon is so thin and delicate. I can see the white paper coming right through. It reminds me of just what it feels like to hold a balloon." The particular way the child painted this form reflects, consciously or unconsciously, choices that child has made. By acknowledging these choices, you heighten a child's awareness that such choices are meaningful. So whether or not the drawing or painting has identifiable forms, the question that is helpful to have in mind is not "*What* does this mean?" but rather, "*How* does this mean?" Interestingly, when we answer the question of how, the question of what often answers itself.

In short, when the forms in a child's painting begin to take on recognizable shapes, the vocabulary of a visual language is being enlarged—not replaced. Viewing the child's project, our role is not to psychoanalyze it but to acknowledge it by describing what we see. In doing so, we continually reinforce the act of visual thinking and expand the elements of a child's visual language.

The "It's So Beautiful" Problem

Aesthetic accidents that end up on a child's project—wayward drips, paint flung from another child's brush, a puddle of color from a spilled paint cup, and so on—also involve choice. After all, the child might either choose to paint over the accident or might find interesting ways to make use of

this unexpected occurrence. Again, these are all opportunities for us to acknowledge an expanding visual vocabulary. More often than not, such a painting—filled with intention and accident, seized opportunities, and unplanned results—will be received by a loving parent exclaiming, "It's so beautiful!"

"It's so beautiful" is one of the most common responses of a well-meaning adult who has been presented with a child's art work. While this response may make a child feel good, it unfortunately ignores all the ideas present in a project—ignores the language of its making—offering instead reflexive (rather than reflective) praise.

Thinking back on one project in particular, *The Large Ink Drawing Project*, there are certainly times when I, too, can barely contain the urge to say, "it's so beautiful." The drawings in this project are accomplished by using a large, long-handled brush, black India ink, and a substantial rectangle of cream-white paper as big as the child's body.

These drawing often achieve a very powerful presence. And equally often, they are indeed beautiful, sometimes astonishingly so. Such drawings obtain what all compelling art obtains: *a deeply meaningful condition*. But they are not meaningful because they are beautiful. They are beautiful because they are so meaningful, because of how forcefully the ideas in these drawings have been realized—ideas made of ink, paper, and light. And it is those ideas that we need to be talking about, to be acknowledging, to be reinforcing.

One drawing may involve a powerful, concentrated massing of broad brush marks, while another may convey an almost atmospheric delicacy, and jaunty, playful rhythms may be most prominent in yet another. The problem with saying "it's so beautiful" is that it makes everything the same. And these drawing are in no way the same. They convey very different things to us, and it's those differences we should be talking about.

Children are very responsive to praise, as we all know. That's why it's so important to talk about the ideas that are embodied in a child's work. When you hear young children say, "Isn't my painting pretty?" or worse, "My painting is prettier than your painting," it is no doubt because their valuable visual ideas have been ignored in the past and that the simple pleasure of receiving praise has taken the place of receiving acknowledgment of their ideas. When we tell a child only that their work is "beautiful," we are not just reducing everything to the same blank, well-meaning platitude, but we are

also telling that child that they are finished. When, on the other hand, we acknowledge a child's ideas, we are affirming an infinite number of possibilities in the language of form, enlarging their capacity to think, exciting their curiosity, and emboldening their willingness to take risks.

Open, Inquisitive, and Imaginative

Words provide an essential way to make sense of the world, but they provide only one way, one currency of thought—one *means to meaning*. It would be unfortunate indeed if, in our conscientious effort to prepare children for testable, word-based skills, we unintentionally diminish their overall capacity to think and to apprehend meaning.

The value of art in education is almost always spoken of in terms of fostering creativity and self-expression. This is unfortunate. The result is that when children come to regard themselves as not particularly creative, they feel that what art has to offer is not for them. This sentiment is often tacitly reinforced by teachers who feel similarly. All individuals, however, begin their lives as open, inquisitive, imaginative beings. It is in the very nature of being a child. The question is: What happens along the way that most of these children will no longer think of themselves as receptive, creative individuals by the time they are young adults?

The real importance of art in education is not a matter of creativity, or self-expression—nor, for that matter does it have to do with developing an aesthetic appreciation of painting and sculpture or honing

fine motor skills. Rather, its importance lies in the vital awareness that art is thinking and that as the activity of making art disappears from a child's life, a realm of thinking disappears with it.

By taking the time to acknowledge the ideas within a child's work of art, we not only reinforce an entirely other way to think, but we help preserve that curious, creative, receptive self from which art emerges as embodied thought.

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The Existential Territories of Global Childhoods: Resingularizing Subjectivity Through Ecologies of Care and the Art of Ahlam Shibli

by Laura Trafí-Prats

The Resonant Image of the Natural Child

Some images of children resonate more than others, creating cultural frames for seeing and understanding childhood (Holland, 2006). One of these resonant images of childhood is the natural child. It is an image that has traveled through time and space, emerging and evolving in interconnection with different cultural texts. It was first discussed in Locke's (1689/1996) An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, and it was later recaptured in Rousseau's (1762/1979) Emile. Both scholars identified an ideal state of innocence, curiosity, and playfulness in childhood that had to be cherished. That idea was consistently represented in the art of Locke's and Rousseau's contemporaries; it is visible in portraits of children comfortably engaged in playful, unrestrained situations in communion with natural environments and animals. The use of painterly strategies such as naturalistic color tones and classically balanced compositions reinforced a sense of harmony between children and the natural world (Higonnet, 1998).

As Holland (2006) argues, sometimes resonant images of childhood are used to negotiate different subjective relations in response to specific sociocultural contexts. For instance, through the introduction of nonnormative, curious, and adventurous characters in hypersensorial and stimulating worlds that included fantastic places, eccentric creatures, and unexpected encounters, such as those in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (published in 1865), the resonant image of the natural child was used to resist the Victorian myth of the good, disciplined child. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland slammed the door on the swiftly changing realities of urbanization and social regulation brought about by the first Industrial Revolution and left them behind. In this respect, resonant images of childhood tend to exist in the gap between the ideas and expectations that adults project and the historical conditions defining children's lives (Duncum, 2002; Jenks, 1996; Pufall & Unsworth, 2004).

Such a gap also is evident today in the context of integrated world capitalism (IWC), the term Guattari (1996, 1989/2008) uses to describe late postindustrial capitalism in the age of globalization. Characterizing world capitalism as integrated expresses two of IWC's most distinctive aspects: its deterritorialized nature and its infiltration into all aspects of life:

> Capitalist power has become delocalized and deterritorialized, both in extension, by extending its influence over the whole social, economic,

and cultural life of the planet, and in 'intension', by infiltrating the most unconscious subjective strata (Guattari, 1989/2008, p. 33)

By combining Guattari's ecological critique of IWC with a postcolonial critique of childhood (Cannella & Viruru, 2004), we can see how the resonant image of the natural child functions as an existential refrain that intends to limit the ways we think and the ways we actively create existential possibilities for childhood, numbing our awareness of more diverse and localized contemporary childhood subjectivities.

In considering the postcolonial context, it is important to remember that in many parts of the world, there have been mass migrations of children to urban centers for the last 30 years. More than one billion of the world population of children between 0 and 19 years-old   live in urban centers looking for increasing resources realted to shelter, health, education, and family income (Aslam & Szczuka, 2012). The number of children living in poverty increases year after year, including in highly developed societies, such as the United States. According to Jiang, Ekono, and Skinner (2014) of the National Center for Children Poverty, in 2012 "children under 18 years represent[ed] 23 percent of the population, but they comprise[d] 34 percent of all people in poverty" (para. 1).

As critical pedagogy and the movement for school reform have effectively documented, there are connections between poverty, race, and ecologically damaged urban areas (Kozol, 1991, 1996, 2005, 2007; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001). In places that are highly affected by industrial exploitation, real estate speculation, social and national conflicts, and different forms of pollution, there are large numbers of homes and schools with limited access to social and natural resources.

When reading about the state of contemporary childhood from a Deleuzoguattarian perspective, it seems clear that the current ecological crisis is not limited to the destruction of natural resources. It is affecting and diminishing subjectivization as well as all social and intimate aspects of existence (Guattari, 1989/2008). Within this theoretical framework, we can assume that under IWC conditions, designers and manufacturers of toys and material culture are the ones who produce the resonant image of the natural child as a creative learner who inherently develops through sensorially rich interactions in carefully constructed environments. It is an image that embodies adults' ideals and longings for a less restrictive life—while also reinforcing a white middle class myth of heteronormative family life—as well as an inward move from a collective experience of engagement with the environment to a private realm of care and play in the controlled and protected space of the single family home (Ogata, 2013).

Second, from the perspective of a postcolonial critique of childhood (Cannella & Viruru, 2004), we can initially recognize in this resonant image the global progress of discourses associated with apparently benign westernized child-centered ideas of growth, freedom, and playfulness. However, by digging deeper, we can also interpret how such rhetoric renders the economic and imperialistic powers of the image invisible. It does so by disconnecting the discourses on the development of the concept of childhood from the history of colonial practices that historically served the advancement of capitalism within which such discourses emerged. Capitalism and imperialism have invoked ideas of innocence, primitive knowledge, and paternalistic supervision to justify the conquest, occupation, and control of other peoples and places. As Cannella and Viruru claim, we need larger interdisciplinary frameworks to decolonize childhood:

> *We believe that we must stop looking at childhood as an isolated phenomenon intelligible only through the lenses of "experts"...we must start thinking about those who are younger as people who are part of a much larger and complex whole, as linked to and influencing the larger and more complex world. Otherwise, we are not doing justice to the lives of children and to their existence as human beings. (2004, p. 3)*

In Guattari's (1989/2008) ecological critique of IWC, the "complex whole" that Cannella and Viruru describe is conceptualized in relation to three ecologies: the environment; social relations; and the intimate forms of existence—almost imperceptible aspects of existence, including sensitivity, affects, and body rhythms. Parr (2010) calls the latter "molecular forms" (p. 176) and writes that they are "micro-entities that transpire in areas where they are rarely perceived: in the perception of affectivity, where beings share ineffable sensations" (p. 176). He also notes that "molecular forms can be associated not only with deterritorialisation but also the very substance and effect of events that begin and end with swarms and masses of micro-perceptions" (Parr, 2010, p. 176). The ultimate goal of an ecological critical practice, like the one outlined by Guattari (1989/2008), is to ensure that singularity is not crushed out of every aspect of existence, including childhood.

The Existential Territories of Childhood

The term existential territories (Guattari, 1989/2008) refers both to the ways through which dominant economic and mass-mediated conditions repress and limit existence and to the potential for the development of new ecological practices that distance themselves from normalized subjective positions. Guattari (1989/2008) points out in particular that the worlds of childhood are among the most highly managed by the expert discourses and institutions of IWC and that there is an urgent

need for processes of singularization to occur within "the domain of mental ecology in everyday life: individual, domestic, material, neighborly, creative or one's personal ethics" (p. 33). "It seems to me," he states further, "that the new ecological practices will have to articulate themselves on these many tangled and heterogeneous fronts, their objective being to processually activate isolated and repressed singularities that are just turning in circles" (Guattari, 1989/2008, p. 34).

Existential territories are not preexisting places, but malleable sites formed and reformed through subjective passages of derritorialization and reterritorialization. They are movements that either standardize or produce change, loosening fixed relations that exist with a body or a collective, while exposing them to new organizations (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005). As mentioned earlier, such movements have the potential to make the singular existences of children (as individualities or collectives) within the highly homogenized and controlled environments of IWC sustainable (Guattari, 1989/2008).

Based on these ideas, and with the aim of expanding upon them, I am going to elaborate on a possible understanding of the existential territories of childhood by connecting a number of concepts: the aesthetics of assemblage; a pedagogy centered on the micropolitics of daily life; an ecology of care; and photodocumentation as deterritorialization of childhood.

The Aesthetics of Assemblage

In The Three Ecologies, Guattari (1989/2008) provides extended examples and arguments to show that existential resingularization is only attainable through ongoing aesthetic-existential processes similar to an artist's processes of creation and research. This implies that attempts to deterritorialize childhood from any physical, cognitive, or moral control exerted by modern disciplines such as psychology, pedagogy, and pediatrics (Cannella & Kincheloe, 2002) will not come from causative and descriptive forms of knowledge connected to those disciplines. Instead, it will entail an expressive aesthetic process that allows the incorporation of accidental elements that come from outside and alter our current knowledge [of childhood]:

> The new ecosophical logic—and I want to emphasize this point—resembles the manner in which an artist may be led to alter his work after the intrusion of some accidental detail, an event-incident that suddenly makes his initial project bifurcate, making it drift far from its previous path, however certain it had once appeared to be. There is a proverb, 'the exception proves the rule', but the exception can just easily deflect the rule, or even create it. (Guattari, 1989/2008, p. 35)

In A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Deleuze and Guattari (2005) also discuss such practices as assemblages or heterogeneous groupings of specific coexisting, localized, related aesthetic qualities—such as color, smell, sound, touch, movement, repetition, and density—that coalesce locally to create new knowledge. Assemblages have a territorial aspect; they constitute forces that unmake and make territories. They refunctionalize the territory and how we exist in it by making it become something new (Parr, 2010). In connection with this, I try to argue below how a pedagogy centered on the micropolitics of daily life uses such aesthetic assemblages to deterritorialize childhood from dominant existential refrains like the resonant image of the natural child.

A Pedagogy Centered on the Micropolitics of Daily Life

In Deleuze and Guattari's (2005) framework, the molecular aspects of life are the basis for micropolitics. The molecular allows for flexible connections that are local and singular and that often occur at the level of everyday existence. A molecular logic of production functions as the inverse of molar politics (and American education), which emphasize processes of standardization. These molar politics subscribe to an underlying logic of commodity, a wasteful repetition-of-the-same, and a predefined childhood subjectivity. By enacting productive forces—such as desires, affects, and anxieties—that molar politics intend to control, a molecular logic enables the becoming of difference and the emergence of the minoritarian within dominant conditions (Guattari, 1989/2008; Parr, 2010).

The movement in Italy and other European countries in the 1970s to reform public early childhood education in order to liberate childhood experiences from a model of standardized services of care, which is best represented by Reggio Emilia's city-run early childhood program, is an example of a pedagogy that attends to the micropolitcal (Malaguzzi, 1998; Vecchi, 2010). Over more than 40 years, Reggio Emilia has developed a system of schools based on dynamic, localized, interrelational networks of interdependence between children, teachers, families, and the city.

The way that Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia program, describes the social ecologies and subjective possibilities that developed in these schools has many things in common with molecular processes as well as the aesthetics of assemblage. The social ecologies of learning in Reggio Emilia schools are localized and generative and relate with others and with the environment. New connections are not created by the teacher or a textbook, but indirectly encountered by the children in their school and city environments. Like the aesthetics of assemblage, learning in Reggio Emilia schools allows for the unfolding of multiple engagements, derivations, and reconstructions of the idea that children often negotiate through sensorimotor and graphic languages. In addition, such learning

often occurs in small groups, respecting the affective and intimate level of many discoveries and therefore connecting to the molecular aspects of experience.

The complexity and heterogeneous character of learning interactions in Reggio Emilia is exemplified in many places in Malaguzzi's (1998) writing. I have selected a passage in which he describes how teachers work without preexisting lesson plans, relinquishing their control and content expertise to rely on children's potentialities and viewing the classroom as a dynamic organism with a variety of fluid moments and directions that can be guided at different paces:

> *We do know that to be with children is to work one third with certainty and two thirds with uncertainty and the new. The one third that is certain makes us understand and try to understand. We want to study whether learning has its own flux, time and place; how learning can be organized and encouraged; how situations favorable to learning can be prepared; which skills and cognitive schemes are worth bolstering; how to advance words, graphics, logical thought, body language, symbolic languages, fantasy, narrative, and argumentation; how to play; how to pretend; how friendships form and dissipate; how individual and group identities develop; and how differences and similarities emerge.*
>
> *All this wisdom does not compensate for what we do not know. But not knowing is the condition that makes us continue to search; in this regard we are in the same situation as the children. (Malaguzzi, 1998, p. 89)*

As Vecchi (2010) notes, a view of care as an ethical position of social responsiveness and interdependence with the outside world emerges from this invested immersion in the environment.

An Ecology of Care

In Reggio Emilia's pedagogy, care is about promoting aesthetic engagements that resist indifference and conformity to the rapidly changing environments of global societies. Vecchi (2010) writes that care evolves in

> *constant daily ways, made up of many actions, of attention and choice, [which] can be a positive element for participation and conscious solidarity with all that surrounds us and with other human beings of all cultures and backgrounds; an indispensable attitude for the future of democracy and the human species. (p. 94)*

Such an ecology of care is consistent with Guattari's (1989/2008) three ecologies and their three levels: It exemplifies a responsible interdependence with the environment (the first ecology); it requires a permanent assessment of how any given environment is transformed and mediated by sociohistorical conditions (the second ecology); and it fosters the formation of new relations and connections through such experiences as sensation, movement, coexistence, and manipulation (the third ecology).

Photodocumentation as Deterritorialization of Childhood

To localize, amplify, and develop emerging learning moments, Reggio Emilia educators use documentation, which involves listening to and taking notes on conversations, observing and taking notes on actions and relations, gathering documents produced by teachers, collecting work produced by students, and taking photos. It also involves the process of interpreting these various documents and discussing their possible impact on the direction of a project (Rinaldi, 1998).

A key aspect of documentation is the creation of image sequences, also called ministries, centered on capturing the flow of singular moments of individual or small-group learning. Their aim is to communicate to teachers, families, and the community that young children are dependable subjects who not only have needs but who also create intentional and sophisticated actions that are valued by and of interest to adults and other children (Malaguzzi, 1998). Often these ministries present singular moments when learning intensifies. The time frozen in each image combines with time that expands in the cluster of images that compose the ministry. The images tell a story, carrying the complexity of the connections, digressions, choices, and affects comprising a singular learning experience:

> *[They] make us pause on children's expressions and actions with one another and in the work they are doing, seeking to convey as much as we can of the learning and atmosphere, the sense of life flowing within the group. It is not a simple thing at all, and one learns by doing it. (Vecchi, 2010, p. 134)*

One of the more compelling aspects of Reggio Emilia's practice of documentation is its criticality. Photodocumentation carries the potential to be successful in capturing the complexity of a learning moment, but it can also fail to do so. It operates in a liminal space, in between the children's and the teachers' memories about the lived experience and what the images intend to narrate. It is an indispensable site for critical dialog and reassessment of the viewpoints that we adults use to publicly represent children, the things that capture our attention, and the things that we miss and that might be key for conveying the singularity and complexity of a learning situation. Documentation is, therefore, a site for the resignification of past experiences.

The complex social ecology fostered through documentation connects not only with progressive ideas of childhood, but also with art-centered ideas about how documentary photography has the power (or not) to steer awareness in a particular direction and with the concept of the *citizenry of photography*. Azoulay (2008) elaborates on this concept, which was influenced by the ecological crisis exacerbated by the revitalized practices of imperialism and war following the events of 9/11; the new outbreaks of historical conflicts defining the geopolitics of the Middle East; and the socially engaged practices of photography that international artists have developed in response to those phenomena. As Azoulay (2008) describes, the citizenry of photography is a concept radically different from what she calls the "image fatigue" that occurred when people "simply stopped looking" (p. 11), which dominated postmodern theories of photography addressing the documentary effect:

> *The world filled up with images of horrors, and they loudly proclaimed that viewers' eyes had grown unseeing, proceeding to unburden themselves of the responsibility to hold onto the elementary gesture of looking at what is presented to one's gaze. (Azoulay, 2008, p. 11)*

Writing as a critic of the state and the visual-culture politics practiced by the Israeli government, Azoulay (2008) claims that photography depends on a civil contract where virtually everybody becomes a citizen. Photography becomes enacted through an encounter of a plurality of gazes, which can result in many forms of exchange, depending on who is looking—the photographer, the photographed, a close viewer, or a distant viewer. Many of the photographs that Azoulay (2008) discusses in *The Civil Contract of Photography* capture difficult and disjunctive moments in which such dialog between the photographer and photographed occurs. Some of these examples may include images in which we see the person who is photographed guiding the photographer to what urgently needs to be captured; others may include images in which the person who is photographed partially covers her- or himself, protests, or escapes from the picture to resist being part of it. While those performances show different attitudes toward the photographic act, they both represent the civil contract of photography because they reaffirm the agency of the photographic actors. The political agency that the photographic act enables is precisely what is denied in the actual world when one is a refugee or an alien in her or his own land. As Azoulay (2008) explains:

> *Photographed persons are participant citizens, just the same as I am. Within this space [of the photograph], the point of departure for our mutual relations cannot be empathy or mercy. It must be a covenant for the rehabilitation of their citizenship…When the photographed persons address me, claiming their citizenship in photography, they cease to appear as*

*stateless or as enemies, the manners in which the sovereign regime strives
to construct them. They call on me to recognize and restore their citizenship
through my viewing. (p. 17)*

While it is not my intention to include an examination of the deep historical and cultural complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as part of my argument, I do want to argue that the statements of plurality and recognition contained in the concept of the citizenry of photography coincide with Reggio Emilia's use of documentation as a site to engage in critical dialog in the community, nurturing aesthetic engagements as a way of resisting indifference and fostering responsibility.

But unlike Reggio Emilia's documentation, the concept of the citizenry of photography emerges far from the contexts of Western progressive pedagogies and therefore extends our perspectives to worlds that were previously unknown to us. It invites us to commit to them and to encounter and recognize the singular existences of other childhoods. It invites us to look at images as a civil practice through which children are seen affected by, but also intervening in, the precarious or catastrophic environments in which they are living.

In the final section of this article, I intend to elaborate on this civil practice of looking via the concept of *prosthetic visuality* (Garoian, 2010) and in connection to Palestinian photographer Ahlam Shibli's artwork.

Ahlam Shibli's Photographs and Prosthetic Visuality

From Deleuze and Guattari's (2005) perspective, we can describe Shibli's photographs as the manifestation of a minoritarian artistic language dissenting from majoritarian communication practices (Parr, 2010). The documentary as a major language of IWC offers a rendering of world events as a spectacle that relies on a constant repetition-of-the-same. It eventually leads toward the invisibility of the singular, the exceptional, the marginal, or the difficult. Shibli's photography functions as a deterritorialization of this mainstream discourse through a photographic art that Demos (2013) has described as a "rearrangement of the visual" (p. 11), in which molecular manifestations, existing in the margins of state and media-regulated practices, become visible.

In most of her photographic series, Shibli's subjects are subalterns: Muslim and Arab LGBTQ people living in the margins, refugees, orphans, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, and others. Shibli's photographs operate in the interval between the visible and the invisible (Garoian, 2010). As Demos (2013) states, they intend to capture

those living on the boundaries of exclusion, threatened with disappearance, as well as documenting the commemoration of those who have succumbed to absence . . . Shibli's photographic practice pledged to recognize the unrecognized, challenging the visual regimes that would otherwise consign those subjects to erasure. (p. 11)

It is in this respect that Shibli's photographs can be thought as instances of what Garoian (2010) denominates as prosthetic visuality, in which

art evokes the visible in the invisible…[and has the] ability to give presence to what can only be imagined … exposing and challenging the cultural assumptions that occlude our seeing and understanding in order that we may see and understand in other than the ways we have been taught. (p. 182)

This is clearly present in the project Dom Dziecka: The House Starves When You Are Away (2008), in which Shibli documents the everyday lives of children living in several orphanages in Poland. The photos reveal how these children construct a new communal home and a collective society and build intimate and family-like relations without having their own family homes. The visuality of the photos prevents the construction of a space for voyeurism that engenders victimization or other sorts of paternalism. Many of the photos are not directly accessible. They offer peripheral views and contain blurry areas (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). In general, the project creates an in-between space in which the fundamentally human attributes of affect, care, and interdependence appear as social transgressions since they do not occur within the social milieu of the family where we would normally identify them (Demos, 2013). The artistic photographic act of pausing and choosing and capturing these situations shows a point of view that seeks a type of visuality capable of destabilizing assumptions (Garoian,

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

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2010). It creates a new organization and consequently deterritorializes childhood existences into something new and unseen, which has a prosthetic effect.

Shibli's series Death (2011–12) centers on the political images of Palestinians who have been killed by Israeli security forces as a result of what is known as the Second Intifada. This series reflects on the constant presence of absences through depicting banners, posters, graffiti, and photographs that are placed in a variety of public and domestic sites and often bear similar images: the bust of the so-called martyr, holding an automatic rifle or a similar weapon, surrounded by poetical and political messages reaffirming the resistance and independence of Palestine. Some of the images include the colors of the Palestinian flag and some include green, representing Islam.

Despite the homogeneity of these images, Shibli's photographic project seeks to create an amplified territory of uses and gazes. The images can thus be seen not only as ideological instruments, but also as mementos, shrines, and rituals that become part of the entirety of everyday life.

In these photographs, children appear repeatedly as dynamic forces, engaged in unfolding actions, movements, relations, and games, bringing a degree of resuscitating life to the scenes (Demos, 2010). In contrast with the fixity of the images, children's scripts are open ended, implying possibility. Often the images of the martyrs appear monumental in relation to the bodies of the children. Sometimes such images take over the center or majority of the frame, which seems to suggest the marginality of children under these conditions.

In one of the photographs, we see a group of three boys playing soccer at night in front of what seems to be an apartment building. The photographic effect blurs parts of their moving bodies and faces; we feel the instantaneity of the ball bouncing, a moment of affective touch, and a wide, open smile, all situated in the darker right corner. In the center of the image, we see illuminated banners with portraits of the martyrs, all mounted in light boxes and surrounded by pots of flourishing plants. If we pay close attention, we also see a fourth child there, dressed in dark sports clothing with the name of the Spanish-Argentinean soccer star Messi on the back (see Figure 3). In another photograph, we see several boys engaged in an indeterminate interaction at the entrance of a cemetery, where a group of male adults is already inside. The adults look toward the photographer and point at her. The graveyard is in a ruinous state; old, faded images of martyrs hang at the threshold. We see the shadow of the photographer on the center wall and numerous tombstones beyond it (see Figure 4). Another image presents a very young boy standing in a street, where a variety of graffiti and banners as well as a sharp-edged shadow of roofs with many silhouettes of satellite dishes are visible on the façades of the buildings. The landscape of the street appears monumental in relation to the tiny boy. Nothing in this

Figure 3.

haunting view seems to affect him. He stands still in front of a door, perhaps waiting for someone to open it. The photograph stages a contrast between established forms of global and local communication (through the satellite dishes, graffiti and banners), and the possibility of entering another space of potentiality (see Figure 5).

As Demos (2013) suggests, Shibli's art "investigates non-recognition as a space for existential exposure . . . her photography acknowledges precarity as a source of human community, even while contesting its forms of social exclusion and political-economic inequality, which become the targets of common struggle" (p. 26).

Shibli's photographic projects, like prosthetic visuality, deterritorialize resonant images that limit the existential territories of childhood. They open a space for a plurality of gazes through an aesthetic that encompasses diverging and contradictory forces and excessive and difficult elements that challenge any universal ontology trying to define children and their environments and how the two interact. They focus on the micropolitics of everyday life and the minoritarian and intensive-expressive aspects of existence.

Shibli is a Palestinian citizen of the Israeli state who is a refugee in her own land; her photographic projects thus should be understood as contributing to what Guattari (1989/2008) describes as the aesthetic-ethic processes of resingularization of existence—both her own and that of others living in similar subaltern conditions.

Shibli's projects enable a civil practice of looking, through which teachers, artists, parents, and others living in the West assume the responsibility of not being at home in one's home (Said, 1998).

Figure 4.

Figure 5.

This is not being in the home of images, theories, institutions, and environments that stabilize, romanticize, and intend to perpetuate naturalist ideas of childhood and that deny the differential existences of children and the interdependence of children and broader worlds.

Finally, Shibli's photographs show how art can be a way of thinking anew. They show that the singularization of childhood can be imagined in the virtuality of a photographic art that pauses on liberating and flickering moments of play, affect, and intensity even when these occur in the precarious and anomalous spaces of global childhoods.

Conclusions

The current ecological crisis not only involves the destruction of biodiversity and natural resources, but also homogenizes subjectivity, affecting all of everyday life and the intimate realms of existence (Guattari, 1989/2008). Such standardization limits children's experiences and ties them to unrealistic and oppressive images that may pass as innocent or naïve. This presents a need, as well as an opportunity, for pedagogies centered in the various elements of the experiences of daily life and in the aesthetic intensities located at the level of the intimate, embodied, and sensorial aspects of the learning experience—pedagogies that continually deterritorialize images, discourses, or praxes that aim to crush and oppress children's existences.

In this article, I have tried to elaborate a three-point connection between global childhoods, ecologies of care directed at resingularizing the existential territories of childhood, and the use of photodocumentation as a critical site to radically reimagine childhood. This three-point connection allows us to become participants in a virtual space, the citizenry of photography, which prompts us to understand the act of looking as an ethical-aesthetic-existential opportunity for living in in-between worlds and for civil engagement in broader, more just concepts of childhood.

The citizenry of photography demands a committed looking that pursues the recognition of the singular, molecular, differential aspects of childhood subjectivities and ecologies, while preventing indifference to the realities of childhood poverty, displacement, instability, and subalternity. It

constitutes an ethics of spectatorship and a prosthetic visuality and asks: What are the relationships between the visible and the invisible when children participate in a photographic act? What is actively shown and concealed? What are the visually expressed tensions between virtuality and actuality and between limitations and potentialities? How may visuality function (or not function) as a prosthetic space in which to deterritorialize dominant existential refrains limiting childhood existences? These types of question emerge when artists, educators, and caregivers are willing to examine their own convictions and the implications of those convictions in the broader world, share their perspectives, and discuss possibilities beyond the existing policies that dominate American education and American cultural views of childhood.

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Figures

Fig. 1 Ahlam Shibli, Untitled (Dom Dziecka no. 23), Poland, 2008, gelatin silver print, 38 x 57.7 cm. Dom Dziecka Lubien Kujawski, May 17, 2008, Saturday afternoon. Emil K., Jula R., Dagmara S., and Bartek K. spending time together in the TV/computer room. Courtesy of the artist, © Ahlam Shibli

Fig. 2 Ahlam Shibli, Untitled (Dom Dziecka no. 27), Poland, 2008, gelatin silver print, 38 x 57.7 cm. Dom Dziecka Lubien Kujawski, May 17, 2008, Saturday evening. For supper, the children are divided into small groups and each group is responsible for its own meal. Przemek K. is serving Adrian Z., Damian Z., □ukasz Z., Dawid C., and Marcin W. Courtesy of the artist, © Ahlam Shibli

Fig. 3 Ahlam Shibli, Untitled (Death no. 58), Palestine, 2011-12, chromogenic print, 38 x 57 cm. Balata Refugee Camp, February 16, 2012. Attached to the house of the family, a memorial for the martyr Khalil Marshoud, a militant from the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. On the wall, light boxes with the martyr's portraits and writing describing his beliefs. Most of the children of Marshoud's various brothers are named after him. Courtesy of the artist, © Ahlam Shibli

Fig. 4 Ahlam Shibli, Untitled (Death no. 12), Palestine, 2011-12, chromogenic print, 66.7 x 100 cm. The graveyard, the only green area in the camp, is used by the locals as a meeting place and a shortcut to the main road. The posters above the entrance represent martyred key figures from the Balata Refugee Camp branch of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. Courtesy of the artist, © Ahlam Shibli.

Fig. 5 Ahlam Shibli, Untitled (Death no. 56), Palestine, 2011-12, chromogenic print, 38 x 57 cm. Balata Refugee Camp, November 22, 2011. On the wall of the house, a poster reading, "Neither prison nor guard terrorize me / The prisoner Haitham Ka'abi / The son of the Balata Refugee Camp's resistance / Arrested on August 2, 2006." Next to it, the lower part of the wall is full of graffiti supporting the prisoners. Courtesy of the artist, © Ahlam Shibli

Visualizing Spaces of Childhood

by Heather G. Kaplan

Exploring Playgrounds in an American City

Spaces established by adults, such as playgrounds, where children's activity and play is so greatly monitored and regulated, can be examined in order to explore and understand constructions of childhood and the politics of the spaces children inhabit. In a class dealing with notions of the city, built environment, and material culture, I attempted to locate evidence of children's spaces and focused my photographs and observations on city playgrounds. While I found evidence of children's culture, I also found complex spaces created for and about children that were, however, not necessarily exclusively children's spaces; while intended for children, the playground spaces reflected as much or more about adult positions and needs. This paper seeks to examine the constructed nature of the barrier between spaces of childhood and adulthood through an exploration of cultural and political representation. These modes of representation can not only give us insight into our understanding of children and children's culture, but also provide a lens with which to look back at our culture and ourselves.

At the lively playground just down the road from my apartment, I observed children play; they were often accompanied or assisted by adults. Their play took many forms, and I returned to this playground over several weeks, capturing interactions with my camera and feverishly trying to jot down representative notes. It was not the only playground I visited, but it was the closest and reliably flourishes with activity. Fortunately for my purposes, it continued to be a busy place even into the cooler months, and I was able both to chart my progress across the city, gathering data from playground to playground, while spending the most time at my neighborhood playground. Throughout the process, I was hopeful that my observations, both written and photographic, would help me understand the nature of the architectures, the built environments, and the city spaces of childhood and their relationships to the politics and visualization of space.

In an attempt to make sense of the built environment and childhood places, I reviewed my notes and revisited my photographs. Through the selection and review process, I realized the complexity of visualizing and describing a place, a space, and a moment. I began to examine my choices and to examine my own ideas about children and childhood. Photographic and written representations are certainly helpful research tools, but at the same time, they describe only a single moment and a single perspective within a far more complex threshold of space and time. That threshold contains the

potential for a myriad of competing and complex perspectives, not just in the meaning and politics of the space, but also in its representations, visualization, and form and structure.

Images and Spaces of Childhood

Both photography and observation are visual methods of examination and interpretation. In choosing to record or document space through visual methods, I inadvertently set up a conundrum for myself—the difficulty of translation between the visual and the actual, between two-dimensional theoretical space and three-dimensional lived space. I also had to contend with the possibility of multiple viewpoints and the politics of representation. These factors combined and came to a head in my methodological decision to use photo documentation and written observation, leading me to ask what could be learned about spaces of childhood through visual representations. Essentially, I came to ask: How do representations of children and images of childhood affect our understanding of children and children's spaces?

In seeking to understand the relationship between images and space, I am in essence asking what the relationship between imaging and ontology is. In other words, I am questioning how representation affects ways of being and living by asking: How do images frame reality, contribute to our understanding of others, and hold sway in our conceptions of others and ourselves? Furthermore, how can we reconceptualize these spaces and relationships in order to picture a more accurate and principled paradigm? What forms of visuality would this reconceptualization take?

When visualizing children and childhood, it is important to examine the relationship between images and ideology. Images are constructions or cultural productions which convey messages that can affect or impact our understanding of our selves, our culture, and others. Images can affect our ideology and our system of belief, which are also culturally constructed and flexible. Because images impact our system of belief, they in turn affect our ways of being, doing, seeing, and understanding. Images are so closely linked to our beliefs that the two terms are interchangeable. "An image of a child" can refer both to the literal image of a child or to the idea of a child and the belief of what a child is. Additionally, our beliefs about children and our images of them affect our understanding of children's spaces and the space of childhood.[1] Similarly, children's spaces have much to tell us about the philosophical, epistemological, and ontological impact of our views about children.

1The term children's spaces refers to spaces that children might claim for themselves, often where children are provided ownership and power to claim a space of being and knowing. Conversely, the term space of childhood refers to a space that adults set aside for children, one that is defined by, in relation to, and for the express purpose of defining the construct of adult.

What images do we see when we speak of the child, children, and childhood? This epistemological and ontological question abounds in assumptions regarding agency, ability, power, and control. How we identify, know, name, and set the child apart from the adult, and how we differentiate the space(s) of childhood from those of adulthood, has as much to do with our conceptions of ourselves as it does with the children we are identifying (Duncum, 2002). According to Duncum, children never were what they were. He elucidates the constructed nature of childhood, claiming, "Our ideas about children are constructed from historical processes and contemporary social pressures" (Duncum, 2002, p. 104). Additionally, he describes the ideological and theoretical implications of this construction, which creates a notion of childhood that is a misrepresentation, a selfish delusion, or a falsehood. Just as important, he identifies the idea of visuality and the process of imaging (meaning both picture-making and the ability to imagine or conceive of an idea or image) as key components in both creating and dismantling cultural concepts.

According to Moss and Petrie (2002), questioning the image of the child reveals the constructed nature of the terms children and childhood. Moss and Petrie also note that such questioning is central to reenvisioning childhood and children. By questioning the assumptions underlying the construction of childhood (i.e., the images of children and childhood), educators at the world-renowned Reggio Emilia childcare centers are able to reenvision a different construct of childhood, one where children are fuller, more powerful, more capable, and more agentic citizens within the community. Malaguzzi (1993), the first head of early childhood education at Reggio Emilia, explained:

> *Our image of children no longer considers them as isolated and egocentric, does not see them as only engaged in action with objects, does not emphasize only the cognitive aspects, does not belittle feelings or what is not logical, and does not consider with ambiguity the role of the affective domain. Instead, our image of the child is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all, connected to adults and other children. (p. 10)*

Childhood as Heterotopia

Our modern conception of childhood is a construction, one that is created in stark opposition to adulthood; the child is neither adult nor recognizable without being compared to the adult. This quality of being neither here (adult) nor there (recognizable without the construct of adult) is the hallmark of what Foucault (1967/1984) terms a heterotopia. Childhood is a space set aside from or a countersite to adulthood. It is both a space and a time carved out of the space and time of adulthood, and yet the thing (childhood) that is carved is both made of and set aside from what it was carved from

(adulthood). It is a space imbued with ideals that are greater than those found in adulthood, such as safety (Blackford, 2004), innocence, and potential (Duncum, 2002). Childhood becomes a space of restriction and caution set against privileges and affordances of adulthood.

According to Foucault (1967/1984), a heterotopia is an enacted utopia—i.e., a real, performed, lived space. Because a heterotopia is both a utopia and a real space—unlike a utopia—and because heterotopias are "absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about" (Foucault 1967/1984, p. 4), these spaces might be considered both reflections or illusions and sites of otherness, difference, alterity, and liminality. Childhood is a utopia in its idyllic fabrications. Childhood is a heterotopia.

Foucault (1967/1984) uses the following metaphor when elaborating the difference between spaces of utopia and heterotopia:

> *The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. (p. 4)*

Hultquist (2001) also employs the metaphor of the mirror to describe the space and apparatus of childhood and states, "Childhood… is not the natural space of the child…[but] a technology that fabricates the child in the 'mirror' of the imaginaries, theories and ways of reasoning that delineates such a space for the child" (p. 21).

Both Hultquist (2001) and Foucault (1967/1984) address the idea of exteriority and difference as illusion. Foucault (1967/1984) declares:

> *The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes the place that I occupy at the moment I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since*

in order to be perceived it has to pass through a virtual point which is over there. (p. 4)

In both instances, the mirror is a metaphor for displacement: displacement of self through vision, displacement as a space of the other, and displacement as an ontology that bewilders wholeness through notions of the real, unreal, and virtual. It is this metaphor of visuality, through the illusion of the mirror, which helps to elucidate how heterotopia functions and reflects the gaze of the panopticon. It is not that the subjectivity created through the gaze and self-surveillance is negated, but rather that its very claim to reality is confused, complicated, and critiqued. The gaze is absorbed and reflected from two different positions: one real, the other unreal.

The mirror creates an unreal illusion of the child, an illusion that reflects virtues, such as innocence or purity, that are outside of or fantastical to the adult realm. At the same time, the adult recognizes, through the image of the child, a real lacking in her- or himself—a sort of dislocation or difference. Here again the visual principles—illusion and recognition—place vision central to ontology and epistemology, knowing and being. The image of the child and the way we envision childhood space reflect a politics and a position, a way of seeing and being in the world. If we view children as merely mirrors to our own politics and position, might we eclipse children's seeing, knowing, or being?

Playground as Visionary Space of Childhood

Space, like images and imaging, involves politics and power. And when we refer to the space of childhood, we can mean either quite literally the physical space of the child as defined by adults or the state of being that childhood connotes. Two different conceptions and visualizations of the same space, the playground, will be explored below. These disparate iterations of playground space conceptualize two very different visions of childhood. The first notion of space, the panopticon, envisions a totalizing, utopic notion of surveillance and institutional control. The second conception of space, heterotopia, imagines a complex countersite of exteriority.

The panopticon is a theoretical model that describes how systemic power hinges on architectures of the gaze, relying on the mechanisms of site and sight. Foucault (1975/1995) describes it as way to understand the dispersed yet utopic, totalizing power of gaze as it is played out through architecture and designed to promote self-policing. He explains how the power of the collective is dispersed through the structure of individual cells and limited visibility: "The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separate individualities" (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 198). Blackford (2004) notes that the

overall structure affords the few control over the many and that the architecture creates a visuality that embodies "the very suggestion of constant surveillance" (p. 227).

According to Foucault (1975/1995), the modern prison is a prime example of the architecture of the panopticon. He explains how this architecture engineers control through both sight and site:

> *The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on [those within]…an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order… If the inmates…are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no noise, no waste of time. (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 197)*

Playground architecture often mimics the panoptic prison and prison tower that Foucault (1975/1995) articulates as utopic prison architecture. What is important about this similarity is not just that the architecture of the two is alike in form, but that it is alike in function and purpose as well. Considering that the panopticon was not merely a marvel of modern architecture but also a mechanism of systemic power achieved by controlling the individual, primarily through visualization and visuality, the structural comparison between the playground and a prison has staggering, serious implications. Our conceptions of the playground and children's play as innocent, politically neutral, safe, or sweet are shattered by the comparison to a prison and the realization that playground structures educate children about power and self-policing through exercises in visuality. It is difficult to view children's spaces and play sentimentally when one is confronted with the ramifications of children's subjectivity under such circumstances.

The neighborhood playground near my apartment is a prime example of such architecture. It is in a park that is located where two streets converge, forming a "Y." As a result, the park and playground resemble a shield or rounded triangle. The park is surrounded on all three sides by houses that face toward it. At the apex of the triangle, there is a relatively open grassy area where sporting games can be played. Because neither trees nor large structures obstruct the line of sight to that area, it becomes a stage that is visible in the round, and all the actors there can be scrutinized from multiple vantage points. The main play area, with a towering jungle gym, is at the base of the triangle, directly across from a row of onlooking houses. At the central and highest point of the structure there is a hexagonal turret, open on all sides, which effectively offers multiple vistas. The structure strongly resembles a watchtower (see Figure 1).

A centralized and elevated watchtower is the hallmark of playgrounds that conforms to Foucault's panopticon in both form and function. The politics of the gaze play out in this elevated arena.

Characteristically, this architecture allows children to climb to a level that is usually one to two times their standing height and takes the form of a circle or multisided polygon such as a hexagon or octagon. This design allows for an unobstructed 360° view of the surrounding area and makes the viewer visible to those below being viewed. This elevation and visual access provide both an understanding of the way that vision and visibility work and an increased sense of vulnerability and exposure.

It is this dual nature of vision that reinforces the lesson of the gaze. As the child plays on this elevated stage, the position and power of prison supervisor, manager, teacher, parent, and adult are played out and become real through the watchtower vantage point. The child experiences what it is to see, to gaze out upon others, and to take in vistas. S/he quite literally experiences and internalizes the gaze as s/he wields it. Because this action is twofold, it is important to heed Foucault's (1975/1995) tocsin, "Visibility is a trap" (p. 197).

Figure 1. Watchtower play structure in my neighborhood

The playground reverses the power of the panopticon; while children play, learning the ways vision and the gaze work, the adults in the community, unseen from nearby residences, can effectively gaze upon the children. According to Foucault (1975/1995), ordinarily "the panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (p. 198). The playground effectively flips this relationship, and the see/being seen dyad is the affective tool for reinforcing the power of the gaze. The child understands that in seeing, s/he is also being seen by an unseen entity. Whether that entity is real or imagined is of no consequence; what does matter is that this visual system is internalized.

In other words, it is the child's awareness of his/her own vision and understanding of visuality that are the mechanisms through which the child internalizes the gaze. The community no longer needs to regulate the child on the playground, because the child has internalized the possibility for policing and polices him-/herself. As Blackford (2004) states, "Adults want children to believe that they are seen.

Figure 2. Another example of a centralized play area

Although supervision is equated with keeping children safe, panopticism also seeks to produce a certain kind of subjectivity in children, an internalization of discipline through self-monitoring" (p. 228).

There are many versions of the basic watchtower design, including structures with various kinds of add-ons and offshoots as well as unique variations—for example, a watchtower with musical symbols and mechanisms for making music, built within a larger playground pavilion dedicated to the same theme (see Figures 2 and 3). But however varied and unique these structures are, they all adhere to the same archetypal lookout or prison watchtower structure, embodying systemic power and dispersed control through visuality.

While the playground is often a site of institutional control, are there times when it isn't? The totalizing, utopic, and inescapable narrative of the playground panopticon might seem ubiquitous, but there may be countersites, alternative spaces, and different ways to understand that narrative. Indeed, Foucault (1967/1984) describes one such space, the heterotopia—a small or sustainable utopia outside of a larger system. He defines the heterotopia as a countersite where all the other sites of a culture are represented, even if they are challenged or upturned, and states:

> *There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places— places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society— which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (Foucault, 1967/1984, p. 3)*

For Foucault, a heterotopia can be either a physical space or a condition of being. He describes crisis heterotopias of primitive societies as states of being that are set aside as "privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis" (Foucault, 1967/1984, p.4). Adolescent children, menstruating women, pregnant women, and the elderly are among those in a state of crisis. The common thread between these states of being is that (depending on the society) they take place exterior to the space

Figure 3. Music-themed watchtower play structure

of everyday societal norms and states of being; they "take place 'elsewhere'" (Foucault 1967/1984, p. 4).

As discussed above, childhood is a heterotopia, a countersite set aside from and exterior to—yet directly related to and entirely dependent upon—the construct of adulthood. While the playground is quite literally a space set aside for children and could therefore be considered a heterotopia on that basis alone, below I elucidate additional criteria and instances of heterotopic counternarratives located within and about the playground.

Repurposing, misusing, reusing, and reappropriating—climbing upon or onto equipment and exploring it in irregular ways—are all means through which children interrupt institutional control and create spaces of their own cultural production, whether intentionally, accidentally, or spontaneously. Yet these productions are viewed in relationship to or as a reflection of—and different from—the "intended" or institutional purpose of the space. As such, these sites of reuse, misuse, and reappropriation are counternarratives that reflect the institutional narrative. They are heterotopic.

For example, the slide is a piece of equipment that is recurringly misused or, rather, reused. I prefer the term reused because it implies that children have reappropriated the slide and created multiple possible uses for it, rather than that those alternate uses are inferior or improper. The towheaded toddler depicted below (see Figure 4) is testing her physical boundaries by using her whole body to climb on a metal slide. This action is just barely within her physical limits and, balanced on her belly, she explores and accomplishes. While we may dismiss her actions because we consider her too young to climb any higher or normalize her actions as merely the explorations of a toddler, she is nonetheless ascribing her own purpose to and offering a different use for this apparatus.

Figure 4. Towheaded toddler on slide

The following photographs (Figures 5 and 6) depict the enactment of counternarratives to adult prescriptions of safe or predictable playground play. We see a young girl climbing up the exterior of a slide. She is exploring its form and function in a manner that is consistent with her ability and agility. In fact, her actions might be considered quite tame given how capable and careful she is. However, in relationship to the "intended" or "agreed upon" use of the apparatus, this kind of behavior is often deemed by adults to be unsafe, unwelcome, objectionable, or even out of control. While the photograph allows us to view the counteractions of a young girl perched on the exterior of an enclosed twisted tubular slide, what we do not see is the child's point of view. Not only is she reinterpreting and reusing the slide, but as she does, she is also changing her vantage point and viewpoint. If she used the slide in a conventional way, her vision would be obscured by the shape and enclosure

Figure 5. Young girl perched on slide

of the tube. By crawling along the exterior of the slide, she is able to reenvision and reestablish her perspective. Vistas, views, scenes, and sites open up to her.

The following observation offers another example of heterotopia:

When the "age-appropriate" or "size-appropriate" swings are already occupied, and therefore unavailable, two seven- or eight-year-old girls opt to play on the baby swings. One child plays the role of mother, the other of baby. Their conversation reveals that they both are conscious of the constructions and restrictions that the apparatus places on their play and on their bodies.

Figure 6. Young girl twisting to look around

First, the girl who plays the baby exclaims that her "butt doesn't fit" in the baby swing, and she swings, perched with her legs bent over the edge of the bucket, as the second girl pushes her as a mother would a child. Later, after repositioning her body, the girl on the swing is able to sit inside

the small bucket. Exclaiming, "This is embarrassing, I'm too tiny!" the girl acknowledges the poor fit between the size of her body and the markers of age and childhood. She senses a space for silliness, caricature, and critique, and her remarks become sing-song-y, playful, and more abundant. She teases, "I have a tiny butt. Mama, I'm in the baby swing. Push me!" The girl playing along in the role of the mother replies, "You're going to go to preschool on Monday!" This statement sets off a round of silly giggles and further requests of "Push me!" As the performance progresses it becomes sillier. The girl who had previously called attention to the small size of her bottom now draws attention to the act of being pushed on swing. She simultaneously giggles and speaks in a baby voice. "No touchie," she says in response to the awkward necessity of having her bottom touched by the other girl in order to be pushed on the swing— while at the same time, she implores, "Push me as high as you can!" She intermixes these orders with a made-up song that hovers between talking to herself and baby talk. "Baby swing…Na na na!" she repeats, again and again.

The girls make a game of this reuse. They play with the constructions of childhood and childhood spaces as they reuse and reappropriate the swing. The girls mimic and mirror the conventions of age-appropriate play as they perform age-specific roles. Neither girl "acts" her age, yet each age and action, like Foucault's mirror metaphor, is interpreted through the space (or actual age) the girls are in.

Children's Spaces and the Possibility of a Third Space

Reworking Bhabha's (1994) postcolonial notion of hybridity or "third space," Wilson (2003, 2004, 2005) theorizes three pedagogical sites of art education. Because Wilson's theory, like Bhabha's, imagines new, hybrid structures of authority, it is also referred to as "third space." In an attempt to break structural binaries and to embrace new forms of community and collaboration, this theory visualizes three distinct spaces of art production. The first site is defined by spaces of production exterior to formal art educational institutions. Wilson (2005) refers to this as "the vast 'territory' containing many informal spaces outside of and beyond classrooms where kids…construct their own visual cultural texts and consume the visual cultural texts made by others" (p. 18). The second site consists of conventional art classrooms as defined by schools, museums, and community art studios. The third pedagogical site is a site of hybridity, betwixt and between (Bhabha, 1994), where the traditional art classroom and Wilson's (2005) first space of "self-initiated visual cultural spaces" (p. 18) collide to create a kind of community though collaboration between adult and children.

While Foucault (1967/1984) addressed heterotopia in terms of the condition of being, the notion of space as a countersite harkens to Bhabha's (in Rutherford, 1990) notion of difference, alterity and liminal spaces, or spaces betwixt and between. Similarly, Wilson's (2003, 2004, 2005) first site, the site

of self-initiated cultural production, is also a site of liminality, difference, and alterity. It is set outside of and in counterproduction to the institutional site of traditional art education. It is heterotopic in that Wilson conceives of it as somewhat of a lived utopia, an idealized space and Lord-of-the-Flies-esque site of unsupervised counterculture; however, it is also a space that is defined by, and a reflection of, another space.

This paper explores the first and second sites of cultural production as they pertain to playgrounds. What is left unexplored are the implications for a more inclusive cultural production, one where "creative play and participation with wood, hammers, nails and fire, [evolves] to creative play and participation with the total process of design and planning of regions in cities" (Nicholson, 1973, p. 8), or rather, one where children are viewed as contributing, capable members of a community.

As Bhabha (in Rutherford, 1990) claimed, the notion of a third space of difference, alterity, and hybridity hinges on an in-betweeness, a space of fluidity where new forms and structures are possible. He states:

> *But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which a third emerges. Hybridity to me is the third space, which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. (Bhabha, in Rutherford, 1990, p. 211)*

When addressing childhood and childhood spaces, what if we were to embrace Bhabha's notion of hybridity and Wilson's notion of collaboration and to search for new structures and spaces of authority and power? What might they look like? While Wilson's work focuses specifically on the spaces of schooling and education, the underlying notions of authority, collaboration, and community that this theory addresses has the potential for wider application. If we address present sites of power and authority, identifying sites of institutional power and countersites of difference and alterity, might we be able to begin to imagine a third site of fluidity, collaboration, and hybridity? Might we present new possibilities for understanding, imagining, and imaging children, childhood, and childhood spaces? How might the space and the architecture of the third space look, function, or manifest? Specifically, what would childhood spaces constructed in the spirit of collaboration look like? What would the architecture of Bhabha's hybridity yield as its structure? What would its visuality imply, constitute, or construct?

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A "Widespread Atelier" for Exploring Energy

"From Wave to Wave": A Unique Place where Science, Art, and Design Intersect and Converge in an Open and Dynamic Way

by Giulio Ceppi (translated by Marissa McClure)

> It is known that childhood is an interpretation, a cultural construction. Each society, each historical period defines its own childhood, what it means, dedicates to and expects from childhood...The image of the competent child is, I believe, by now familiar to all those present, the image on which the very experience of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia is founded. Competent at doing what? At forming relations with the world.
>
> —Carla Rinaldi, Questions in Educating Today

From Architecture to Territories, from Perception to Relationship

As an architect and designer, I have had the good fortune to be involved with the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia for almost 20 years. In 1997 Michele Zini and I provided the editorial and narrative structure for research conducted by the Domus Academy on the relationship between architecture and pedagogy, which is presented in Children, Spaces, Relations: Metaproject for an Environment for Young Children. The project included a multidisciplinary team comprised of designers, architects, educators, and various artists, including Paolo Icaro, a sculptor, and Luca Pancrazi, a painter. In addition, we asked art critic and curator Alberto Veca to write a short but significant essay on the representation of children in art throughout history. This book has been translated into several languages, including English, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, and Korean. Now, after 15 years, it is a milestone in early educational culture. The project is perhaps one of the endeavors of which I remain most proud. I consider it a living and active project that has the capacity to stimulate and to aid architects and educators as they address the issues of designing spaces for children.

Almost every year since then, I have had the good fortune to attend conferences, workshops, and seminars in Reggio Emilia. Recently, we sat around the design table once again to work through a new challenge: creating a water and energy atelier to be located inside a power plant in the Apennine Mountains. The plant is owned and managed by Italy's ENEL (National Electricity Board). It was built in the 1920s and still has the capacity to produce over 50,000 MWh per year through a sophisticated system of dams and reservoirs.

Located in the municipality of Ligonchio near the slopes of Mount Cusma in the Emilia-Romagna region, the facilities are about 1,000 meters above sea level. Ateliers are an integral aspect of the educational philosophy of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. They are places where design is integrated with exploration and experimentation and where creativity connects to action and thought. They are poetic sites where theory and pragmatism combine and where imagination and expression mingle with cognition and rational thought. Similar interactions had occurred previously in Reggio Children ateliers that were devoted to special subjects—for example, the Ray of Light atelier located in the Loris Malaguzzi International Center in Reggio Emilia.

For over 30 years, the philosophy of the Reggio approach has conceived of the atelier as a place where learning involves sensory exploration as well as experimentation with and manipulation of the languages of ideas and media. In fact, the name "atelier" clearly references art. It is a place of artistic production and construction—a space in which an artist produces art, a space devoted to art, a specific and intentional space.

In Ligonchio, learning in the atelier moves outward from sensory exploration to investigations of significant questions of relationships between the environment, architecture, and energy production. With this in mind, we decided to create an atelier that would "spread"—a workspace that is not concentrated in one place. This atelier takes up an entire territory—a complex of forests and rivers that invites exploration and experimentation within a web of relationships that are connected to wider issues of science and ecology. It is an atelier where we can observe and explore nature and reflect upon its potential, which promotes the understanding that humankind and its habitats are in constant interaction and change one another. In this expansive sense, the ecological specificity of the park's native plant species, animal species, and waterways become sites for investigation that are closely intertwined with the system of the hydroelectric power station.

Emilia-Romagna has some of the richest and most fertile land in Italy. It is traversed by the Po River, lapped by the Adriatic Sea, and shielded by the Apennine Mountains. In addition to its significant artistic and cultural heritage, Emilia-Romagna also boasts remarkable and widespread economic wealth, which was created by the development of agricultural, manufacturing, and tourist industries. Emilia-Romagna is without doubt the region of Italy that has invested most heavily in social policy and has been especially committed to supporting the elderly and children. As Bruner said:

> *knowing where you are, where you find yourself, helps you to develop your sense of personal identity, your uniqueness, as well as your place in the world. After my first week of observation in Reggio Emilia, I was struck by*

the fact that these are not only "Reggio schools," but the expression of a kind of "Reggio spirit." Every place has its own spirit, its own past, its own aspirations. This spirit comes straight from the land. In Greek they say "autoctono" – coming from the land. (Reggio Children, 2008, p. 36)

Bruner's description of Reggio Emilia helps to clarify what we mean when we describe the atelier that "spreads." It is not only a geographical condition, but mainly a cultural one. The attention that the city of Reggio Emilia has always given to the education of its youngest citizens becomes even more essential for creating a future where individuals will respect and value differences rather than fear them. In fact, in the city and in the region, the public-private system of educational services and continuous research about innovative methods in response to families' requests allows Reggio Emilia to achieve a high level of school attendance from the earliest years. Behind this is the conviction that a population that values childhood and recognizes children's rights is the foundation of higher standards of citizenship. This is necessary for maintaining the atmosphere of civil coexistence that characterizes the city and region itself.

A new type of atelier integrates fields, themes, and practices. In this sense, we wanted to define this new type of atelier as widespread— interdisciplinary and experimental; sensitive to sustainability, seasonality, and local context; and aware of the complexity of these conditions. Our working group included child psychologists Carla Rinaldi and Claudia Giudici, studio teachers Vea Vecchi and John Piazza, professor of physics at the University of Modina and Reggio Emilia Olmes Bisi, executive coordinators Benedetta Barbantini and Marco Storchi, architect Tullio Zini, and myself.

Our team interacted and dialogued on three levels of parallel work for about one year in preparation for the project. We worked with the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines National Park and ENEL as formal partners. We defined the territory of the "fields" (a geographical term, but also one that is significant in the language of physics) with a base camp (the power plant) and three other satellite camps. The base camp is the main place where water can be explored as a raw material that produces energy and where this transformational process is highlighted.

We have defined three major narrative themes in parallel:

The water cycle. Water has qualities that support life and humankind's development. Driven by the sun, the water cycle has provided energy for the development of modern society. Throughout nature, water exists in several states, passing from solid (ice) to liquid (water) to gas (water vapor). An awareness of these dynamic processes is fundamental for understanding how human ingenuity has led us to achieve extraordinary projects such as the Ligonchio hydroelectric power plant. In particular,

the different outlets and substations, the plant itself, and the basins become places for observing, analyzing, and understanding water as a carrier of life (and energy). In this way, they are comparable to the specific ecosystems of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines National Park.

Energy as a change in state of matter. Matter is anything that has mass. Energy—even though it has no mass—can produce physical effects on matter. The context of the plant is a starting point for understanding what is happening not only upstream (the water cycle), but also downstream (the production of energy). This understanding supports a pathway for energy education and sustainable development. From this, a constant relationship between the macroenvironment (the hydroelectric power station in relation to the natural environment and the territory) and the microenvironment (the interior of the atelier) emerges. In the atelier, the phenomena of science and the concepts related to them transverse the two dimensions of the relationship.

Complexity and Randomness in Nature: The Story of a Drop of Water. The complexity and precision of the design underlying the natural world are often difficult to understand and visualize. But they deserve, in the context of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines National Park and the plant, to be examined and studied as closely as possible. For example, consider a few drops of rain that fall on the park, which lies along the mountain ridge. These drops of water are essentially the same as they fall, and then they land on the ground, where their long journey toward the sea begins. But toward which sea? It depends on where the droplets hit the ground. A slight variation in where they land leads to a drastic change in their trajectory, with a difference of hundreds of kilometers. One drop of water can reach the Adriatic Sea, at the mouth of the Po River, while her twin sister, who hit the ground just a few millimeters from her, can reach the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Ultimately, we designed five large interactive installations (which the working group called "machines") that would be placed in the environment of the station and then used by educators and children to explore different properties of water in a direct, open, and progressive way.

The smart design

Ligonchio is a "crest park," a place where Mediterranean and Continental climates match and generate a unique ecosystem—where micro and macro are connected and adaptation and evolution generate a unique biodiversity. Change and project are the same in nature lifecycles. So, the context of this atelier helps people to understand the application of the production of energy and its transfer to the daily life of consumption. This parallel understanding follows the direction of an "energetic education" that is linked to sustainability and to the awareness of complexity in both nature and industry.

The Specificity of the Design Process: An Integrated and Open Space and Communication System

The design of the communication systems and spaces—of, we would say, the whole identity of the atelier—was a complex and involved process. In August 2009, after a year of working with the project team in which I hoped to make a contribution to the concept and the definition of a "widespread atelier," or an atelier that spreads, we presented a feasibility study with a special exhibition called "From Wave to Wave—Atelier of Water and Energy in the

Pipeline." We hoped to show the entire region and community the policies and objectives of the project.

In July 2010 we began to create Field 1. As an architect, I was responsible for the entire design of the space in the power plant. In the so-called disassembling room, I had to consider both functional and aesthetic aspects of the project and work under the constraint that everything had to be temporary and easily dismantled and that the design had to allow operators access to one of the adjacent turbines in an emergency.

We had to soundproof the room. We divided it along the turbines and erected a large retractable wall made of iron and glass elements. The transparent wall maintained the space's industrial look. We also air-conditioned the room by suspending innovative heating elements, made of carbon fiber, from the trusses. These units are low power consuming and have a reduced environmental impact. The furnishings were all custom made from colored polycarbonate that they would be translucent and create an energetic feeling. They were produced in a variety of hues and textures. We used water-steamed polyurethane foam to make sitting areas and soft working spaces that were warm and welcoming.

Our graphic design, from the logo to signage system to the website and Facebook page is intentionally simple. The yellow and blue typography incorporates waves as identifying elements. In our selection and use of materials, we privileged those that are certified green and have a low environmental impact. We also reduced the number and type of materials used in the project to encourage and facilitate future recyclability.

Today's active base camp, located inside the historic ENEL hydroelectric plant, offers a close-up view of the phenomena that underlie the functioning of power plant itself and of the natural spaces there and encourages new, focused explorations. We are completing Field 1, located in the building that houses the headquarters of the community park. Here young visitors will be welcomed, share

information, consider possible directions for the visit, and later discuss the explorations that took place. In the outdoor fields, children, teens, and adults will soon have the opportunity to explore natural phenomena through immersion in a seasonal environment and in their perceptions of and emotional responses to that environment, which will generate different forms and subjects of research. In fact, this project proposes a new approach to science that invites children, teens, and adults to look at things in an unusual way, to be curious and ask about the things that cannot be explained, to search and try again, to build hypotheses and theories, and to try to verify them with experiments, as we often do in the art world. We think of the "From Wave to Wave" atelier as a "pulsating soul," where the mind and hands and rationality and imagination work together, intertwining and complementing one another as they generate new knowledge about the world: an interesting, surely unique, place where art, science, and design intersect and converge.

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# Art Education at Bank Street College, Then and Now

by Edith Gwathmey and Ann-Marie Mott

Beginnings

One of our constant joys of teaching art in Bank Street's School for Children and its Graduate School for the past 40 years has been witnessing children's curiosity—and adults' for that matter—while they explore the sensorial nature of art materials. Just as fascinating is seeing how their discoveries emerge into developmental patterns that change and become more complex and differentiated over the months and years. We think that the founders of the School for Children (originally called the Nursery School) and later, of the Graduate School, must have felt this joy, since the visual arts were a vital component of the daily experiences offered to children during the school's early years. Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who in 1916 founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments (which later became the Bank Street College of Education), and her colleagues, Harriet Johnson and Caroline Pratt, believed that the arts were central to children's developing understanding of their world.

After teaching children and adults at Bank Street for so many years, we wanted to investigate how our present thought and practice relate to the history of art education in our institution. We were fortunate to have Lois Lord as our mentor and teacher from our beginning years at Bank Street through the end of her long life. We researched the archives located in the Bank Street Library, including pamphlets and books that documented the founders' thoughts and practice. Antler's biography of Lucy Sprague Mitchell (1987), Cenedella's doctoral dissertation, *The Bureau of Educational Experiments* (1996), and Nager and Shapiro's book, *Revisiting a Progressive Pedagogy: The Developmental-Interaction Approach* (2000), were three other important resources.

In the school's beginning years in the West Village in New York City, Mitchell, Pratt, and Johnson wrote about how they provided two- to five-year-old children with open-ended art materials such as unit blocks (invented by Pratt), paint, clay, and wood. From their observations of young children, they understood that the "work" of childhood is all about playing with these materials. Their classroom
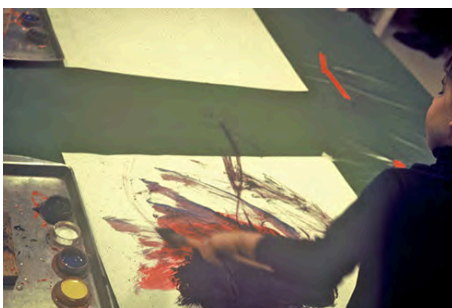
The basic materials: Paints, clay, blocks, and woodworking materials.

was filled with the sights, sounds, and industry of young children's imaginative inquiry about their world. Mitchell (1950) referred to the combination of young children's inner excitement when making a discovery and their creative acts as "interest drives" (p. 6) and wrote that young children "approach the world creatively, full of active impulses to do: they are young artists, young thinkers" (p. 6). Children were encouraged to freely experiment in their block buildings, wooden constructions, drawings, paintings, and clay sculptures.

Two Pioneering Early Studies

Using what was an unusual method for educational research in the 1920s, Mitchell, Pratt, and Johnson combined the roles of teacher and researcher as they worked with children at the Nursery School (Antler, 1987; Cenedella, 1996). Influenced by the emphasis on quantitative data collection at that time, they accumulated massive amounts of scientific data and information about children's physical growth, IQ, and behavior during the early years of observing children in the nursery school. However, they

Archival photo from the Nursery School

became overwhelmed with the quantity of information they were collecting and discouraged that these measurements offered little understanding about patterns of children's growth. Mitchell was thinking of abandoning the research element of the Bureau.

Fortunately, during that period Johnson and Barbara Biber were also pursuing another methodology for researching children's behaviors that was influenced by John Dewey's belief in studying the whole child in child-centered situations. Along with their quantitative data collecting, Johnson and Biber had been observing and recording children's interactions with the teachers, other children, and open-ended materials. Instead of viewing children's behavior in discrete segments or compartmentalized categories in artificial isolated settings, the two of them focused on observing and recording children's play with materials. Johnson studied children's block play, and Biber collected and analyzed children's drawings. These observations led to ideas and plans for curricula based on children's interests and abilities. Mitchell came to believe that these two studies were just as scientific as measures of quantitative

norms. These research efforts were critical in confirming Mitchell, Pratt, Johnson, and Biber's belief in Dewey's psychological and social view of the child in society.

During Johnson's study of children's block building, she discovered patterns of development in their structures. In *The Art of Block Building* (1933), she articulated her view that children's work with blocks revealed aesthetic decision making. She saw children as artists as they repeated and varied the shapes in their progression of explorations, arrangements, designs, and representations.

Johnson's block sequence

1. Exploration

*2. Control of the material; patterns*
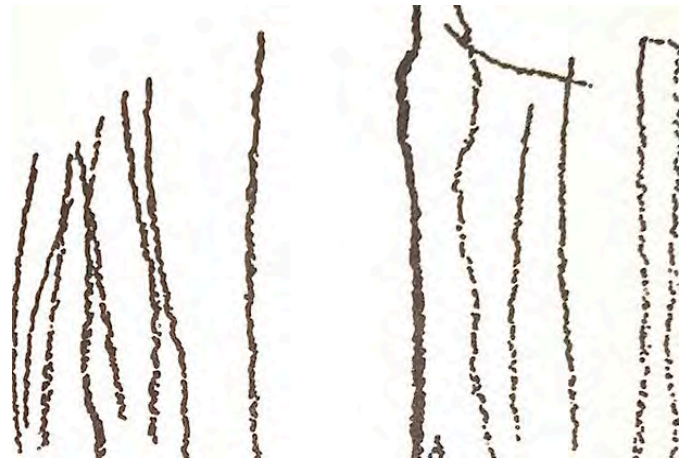

3. Design

4. Representation: Shea Stadium

Today, nursery schools and early elementary classrooms still provide children with Pratt's inventive blocks. She designed her sturdy and easily handled blocks based on mathematical relationships between shape and size. Cuffaro (1991) views blocks and other open ended materials as the "textbooks" of the early childhood curriculum.

When Biber, a developmental psychologist, joined the faculty in 1928, she began a study of the drawings of children aged eighteen months to four years, in which she organized and analyzed the artwork qualitatively in a developmental sequence (Biber, 1934/1984a). In her study, *Children's Drawings from Lines to Pictures*, Biber viewed the cognitive, physical, and emotional aspects of young children's growing control of the material as integrated. This synthesis is basic to the developmental-interaction approach that Shapiro and Biber (1972) articulated. We find it fascinating that these two studies occurred in these early years and that they were based on children's play with art materials, such as blocks and drawing materials, instead of on other modes of expressive behavior, such as language or movement.
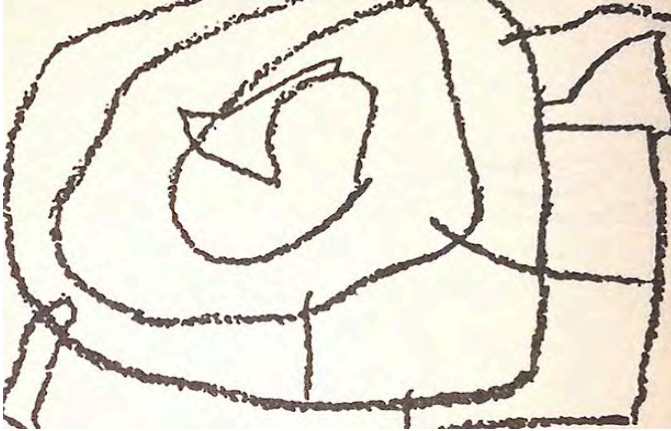
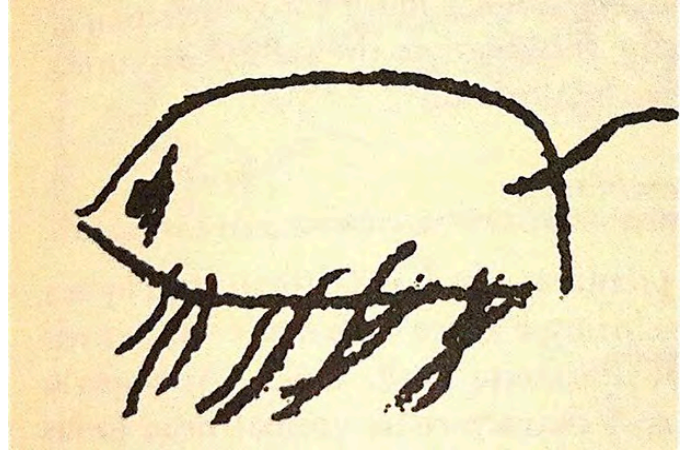### Drawings from Biber's book (1934/1984).
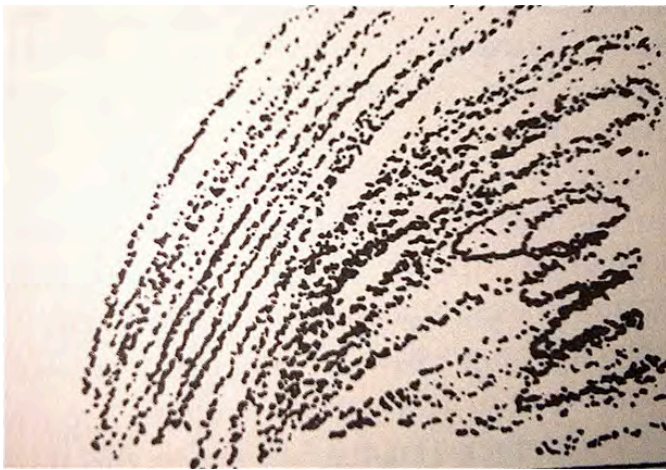
1. Motoric exploration

2. Control: patterns

Drawings from Biber's book (1934/1984a):

3. Design

4. Representation

One reason that Johnson and Biber made those choices might be that block buildings and drawings can be easily documented and studied. Moreover, young children's expressive play with materials is more developed than their abilities with the spoken and written word. Blocks and drawing materials were available during children's uninterrupted play periods. Children built and drew spontaneously in designated spaces with materials that were provided daily by the teachers. The adults observed children in an environment that was safe and that encouraged children's self-initiating play. Researchers and teachers did not control or direct children's experiences. Instead, they organized the materials and discussed their availability and then, as the children worked, supported their ideas and inquiry. This approach was in opposition to the rigid, direct modeling and demonstrating by the teacher that was typical in most classrooms at the time. Instead, Biber (1934/1984a) explained, "the purpose was to allow the child's interests to develop apace with his needs" (p. 157). Teachers' leading questions, such as "What is it?," "What are you drawing?," or "What are you building?," were discouraged. Instead, teachers were encouraged, as they are now, to articulate the unique elements of the children's work, with a remark such as "Look how you moved your arm when you made these long curving lines." The teacher's role was and is to help children become conscious of their intuitive actions.

Young children from all cultures are able to realize these unfolding stages of development without formal instruction (Biber, 1934/1984a; Kellogg, 1969). Johnson and Biber also may have been aware that, unlike the world's many spoken and written languages, art is a universal mode of expression, especially during the early childhood years. Biber (1934/1984a) wrote that as soon as young children are able to hold a drawing tool, a stick, a crayon, or a magic marker, they begin to make marks on any available surface. Their early rhythmic arm movements or their scribblings soon create recognizable

shapes. These shapes at first are explored at various places on the drawing surface and eventually become arranged and organized into unified compositions that for us are extraordinary aesthetic delights to behold. Finally, around the age of four or five, children are able to match and assemble their graphic symbols, such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, dots, and lines, with what they perceive as necessary for representational imagery. These ideas have been elaborated, and at times challenged, by later researchers (e.g., Burton, 1980; Gardner 1990 Golomb, 1992; Kellogg, 1969; Kindler & Darras, 1997; Lord & Smith, 1973correct date; Lowenfeld, 1947).

Formation of the Cooperative School for Student Teachers

As the Bureau was gaining renown through the 1920s, Mitchell and Johnson realized that they needed to educate teachers who could implement this child-centered approach to learning. In 1931 the Cooperative School for Student Teachers (which later became the Bank Street College Graduate School) was formed. From the beginning, art played a central role in the curriculum for teachers. William Zorach, an artist/sculptor and instructor at the Art Students League, was among seven advisors in the Cooperative School. According to his vitae in the Cooperative School's first catalog, he was "one of the first artists who worked out progressive ideas in art in the various experimental schools" (Bureau of Educational Experiments, 1931, Advisors, paragraph 7). He had written a number of articles in *Arts Magazine*, including "The Child in Art" and "The New Tendencies in Art." Many years later, Biber (1984b) wrote that she wished that she had been a student of Zorach's, saying that his "way of guiding expressive potential through an evolutionary course of open experimentation to the technical mastery of line, space, and form would have provided me with another language with which to think" (Biber, 1984b, p. 155). When viewing his stone sculptures of children with animals, you can imagine how his work with children influenced his own art.

The first catalog also lists Ralph Pearson, an independent modern artist, as a member of the Cooperative School's teaching staff. He was the director of the Design Workshop at the New School for Social Research, another progressive institution for adult learning that Cooperative School students attended and that the Cooperative School was working closely with at that time. In the Cooperative School's 1931–1932 catalog, he wrote that students in his workshop would "create form and color harmonies for the pleasure and mental health to be had from the doing" (Bureau of Educational Experiments, 1931, 2. Studies in the Arts, paragraph 6.) The catalog stated, "Many of the skills acquired in Mr. Pearson's Design Workshop may prove to be of decided value in the direction of children's art work" (Bureau of Educational Experiments, 1931, 4. Classroom Techniques, paragraph 4.) Another entry in the catalog noted, "We should like every student to attempt an expression of some

A trip to a pottery studio shop inspires a 4/5s class at the Bank Street School for Children to create their own.

of his own experiences or observations through one of the arts—language, painting, music or drama—not for the sake of the product but for the meaning that such creative expression will have for him" (Bureau of Educational Experiments, 1931, Curriculum & Its Basis, paragraph 5). The catalog listed art workshops in dance, music, block building, drawing, painting, clay, woodworking, and mask making. Mitchell believed that the student teachers' artistic growth would influence their teaching of children. As Nager and Shapiro (2007) noted, "In this sense, the curriculum for teachers was designed as an analog to that for children" (p. 25).

The Early Social Studies Curriculum and Art

Because of Dewey's influence on Mitchell's, Pratt's, and Johnson's thinking about children's school learning, children and teachers in the Nursery School in the 1920s went on trips in the neighborhood as a means of engaging in inquiry and developing the children's understanding of the world around them. Starting with the child's frame of reference and interests, teachers provided experiences in the outer world that were followed by the children re-creating those experiences in the classroom. The outside world entered the early childhood classroom through children's symbolic use of materials and their play with each other.

Mitchell continued developing her ideas about experiential learning while collaborating and teaching with Elisabeth Irwin at P.S. 61 and Little Red Schoolhouse in the early 1930s. Moving beyond nursery years education, Mitchell developed studies for six- to 12-year-olds that included direct encounters with the outside world. Again, open-ended materials were transformed into symbolic communications, both artistic and scientific. Mitchell was fusing Dewey's ideas about educational thought and practice with her research on children's development. As children grew older and had ever-widening experiences, they were able to extend and relate personal thoughts and feelings within a larger and more complex cognitive and social framework. The focus on trips and on children's active and direct engagement with ideas, people, and materials became a powerful influence on developing the philosophy and

6/7s at the Bank Street School for Children painting a mural of La Marqueta, 1980s.

8/9s at the Bank Street School for Children building a long house for their Lenape study, 1980s.

practice of the Bureau of Educational Experiment's children's school and later of Bank Street's Graduate School and School for Children as well as of other progressive private and public schools.

While Mitchell and Dewey deeply believed in scientific thought, they also valued artistic expression as a means for children to emotionally identify with and internalize their learning from their studies. Dewey (1934) wrote, "Science states meanings; art expresses them" (p. 84). In *Young Geographers*, Mitchell (1934/1991) demonstrated how a classroom becomes both a scientist's laboratory and an artist's studio. Unlike the practice in typical classrooms at that time (and today as well), in Bank Street classrooms the basic materials of art—paint, clay, drawing materials, blocks, and wood—continued (and continue) to be available for children through the age of thirteen to use in recreating their experiences, instead of disappearing after the early years of childhood. The classrooms at Bank Street (and other progressive schools) were—and still are—filled with the industry of children's work and play: block buildings, murals, drawings, paintings, and models of their artistic, scientific, and social learning.

In *Young Geographers*, there are photographs of children's work beyond the nursery years, from kindergarten through junior high school. Mitchell (1934/1991) wrote that when they are able to represent their experiences through symbolic imagery, children reveal the learning they have acquired from the teacher's "input." The input consists of trips in the outside world, discussions, and readings. She observed how children visualize and verbalize their world through their art and other symbolic work in all areas of study. She called children's work the "output," which becomes increasingly differentiated with children's growth. These developing outputs then become integrated into more complex modes of thought as children mature. Antler (1987) wrote that Mitchell "understood that a child's creativity incorporated an intellectual impulse" (p. 298).

Then and now, these developmental considerations were and are the basis for the content and artistic recreations of the social studies curriculum, the "core curriculum." Although Dewey acknowledged that children passed through stages of growth, he was not interested in investigating the unique qualities of each stage (Cenedella, 1996). Mitchell and the Bureau wanted to study and document these stages and how they related to curriculum studies. The relationships children discover and the connections they make in their thinking at different stages were at the heart of Mitchell's educational philosophy and practice. Just as she addressed the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs and interests of the whole child, the content of the core social studies curriculum involved the whole culture, including the interactions between the physical and social environment. Instead of relying on assignments and rote memorization based on textbook readings and the teacher's lectures, teachers and children became interactive learners, using all their senses. Together they went on trips, interviewed workers, read relevant books, discussed ideas based on their ongoing inquiry, and re-created through visual and verbal symbolic work the salient characteristics of the culture they were studying. This is how art became an integral part of children's studies in the school.

Art Education at Bank Street in the 1950s to the Present

As the years progressed, art instructors in the Graduate School continued to develop and refine developmental theory and practice in art education. Lois Lord and Jane Bland, who were teaching the Arts Workshop in the '50s, were influenced by the thinking of Viktor Lowenfeld at Pennsylvania State University, who wrote *Creative and Mental Growth* in 1947. Like the educators at Bank Street and other progressive institutions, he deeply believed that children's art reflected emotional, social, aesthetic, intellectual, and physical growth. He also formulated a theory of stages in artistic development that paralleled Biber's research. He pioneered the idea that good teaching was a dialogue with children. He

Texture collage by a four-year-old, paper collage by a five-year-old, and texture collage by a 10-year-old.

advocated focusing not only on the visual and physical levels of the experience but also on the personal emotions that art making evoked in the child.

While teaching graduate students at Bank Street, Lord and Bland were also working with Victor D'Amico at the Museum of Modern Art's Education Department. Using the museum's collection as a primary resource in their family workshops, they pioneered the use of found materials for collage and assemblage experiences for their students. For Lord and Bland, these materials became as important as paints and clay in the development of the art curriculum. It's hard to imagine now that collage and construction were not considered serious art forms in schools at that time, despite the early use of found materials by artists in the beginning of the 20th century. Many of these artists, such as Picasso, Miró, and Klee, were influenced by children's intuitive artwork. Their interest may have in turn inspired a renewed focus on and valuing of children's art education at the museum and by art educators elsewhere.

Throughout her career, Lord was passionate about communicating her ideas about teaching art to every teacher, not just to art teachers. In 1961 in the film *Collage: Exploring Texture*, she documented her use of collage with children at the New Lincoln School. In 1970 she published *Collage and Construction in School: Preschool/Junior High*. In both the movie and the book, Lord offered practical strategies, both visual and verbal, regarding the aesthetic presentation of the materials. For Lord, the clear organization of any art material was of primary importance in attracting children to the art experience. Instead of a scattered jumble of collage materials, jars of muddied paint, or lumps of clay that was too wet or too dry, she offered children materials in prime condition. At the beginning of a collage experience, children were asked to choose from neatly organized and categorized piles of papers and textiles in a variety of colors, patterns, and textures. Red, yellow, and blue (the primary colors) as well as black and white tempera paints were poured into small shallow containers or coasters that children carefully placed on a metal tray along with a brush, sponge, and water container. Clay was offered in large malleable lumps.

Lois Lord teaching in her 90s in 1996.

While teaching children at the New Lincoln School and graduate students at Bank Street, Lord continued to refine her ideas about

developmental stages in children's art. Like Lowenfeld, she looked beyond the schema or symbols that children use in their art. She was interested in how children's developing imagery was transformed into a work that expressed the creator's unique vision and emotional connection to the art experience. She began thinking about how she could help teachers provide materials and a structure that enabled children to visualize their deepest feelings and ideas about their world. We were both fortunate to be among the art teachers Lord mentored in the School for Children and in the Graduate School in the 1970s and 1980s. She deeply influenced our philosophy and practice as art educators with children and adults.

As a professional photographer, Lord documented children's work with art materials throughout her life. She showed her slides to illustrate her thoughts about teaching art. These remarkable slides mesmerized audiences, and we were fortunate to see them again and again in her many presentations to teachers in the Arts Workshop, faculty in the Bank Street College Graduate School, and teachers in the School for Children as well as to those who participated in the many outreach programs she offered during her career. We were very affected by Lord's insights into how to help children and adults connect to art experiences. Using an approach similar to Lowenfeld's dialogues, at the beginning of the art experience she asked a carefully worded question, which she referred to as the motivation. The motivation invited and inspired studentsto respond from their own experiences, which was different from having children start with a dictated topic that was unrelated to their lives. Lord felt that the teacher's narrow choice of a subject didn't allow students' experiences to become the focus of their art. Together with Nancy Smith, her student teacher at New Lincoln (who later became a head teacher), she mapped out a developmental sequence of motivations designed to inspire personal subject matter.

In 1973 Lord and Smith wrote a manuscript titled *Experience and Painting*, which Smith (1983) later finished as *Experience and Art: Teaching Children to Paint*. In their manuscript, Lord and Smith (1973) offered examples of motivations for children who are able to represent their experiences in the world, such as "What animals do you know that are fierce and what animals do you know that are friendly?," "What games do you like to play with your friends?," and "What do you like to do with your family on the weekend?" These seemingly simple questions encourage children to identify and create imagery that often reveals compelling subject matter from their lived lives. Lord believed that every child deserves access

Eight year old painting a boat on the Hudson River.

to this means of communication. As the art consultant in Bank Street's Follow Through program, she visitedand led art workshops for teachers in many public elementary schools where children rarely had the opportunity to express their deepest feelings and thoughts about their lives through visual means.

At the New Lincoln School and Bank Street College, Lord became involved in the integration of art in the social studies curriculum, based on Mitchell's (1934/1991, 1950) principles. For Lord, art offered a means of connecting who you are—your inner self—with the world outside. While Lord felt that motivations about children's personal lives outside of school were crucial, she also felt that classroom teachers needed to include art within their curriculum studies. Her thinking about motivations is alive in past and present integrative social studies curricula as enacted in the Bank Street School for Children and other private and public schools. For example, nursery and early elementary school children study their relationships to families, neighborhoods, and school, as young children did in the Bureau of Educational Experiment's nursery school. After a trip to the post office, for example, the kindergarten or first-grade teacher gathers all the children to discuss the trip. The teacher poses a motivating question, such as "What was your favorite part of the trip to the post office?" Children offer a variety of responses and use drawing materials to represent their favorite experiences.The next day, before the work period, the teacher asks children questions, such as "What do you remember about the workers in the post office?," "Where were they and what were they doing?," and "Who would like to build a post office out of cardboard?"

Second and third graders are able to understand concepts based on the here and now and relate them to the more abstract long ago through concrete experiences with historical objects and sites. Teachers at the Bank Street School for Children may begin a study of the Hudson River, past and present, with a painting experience. They might ask a series of motivating questions, such as "If you could take a trip on the river, what kind of vehicle would you go in?," "What would you do, what would you see?," "Will you begin your painting with a vehicle or with the water?," and "What colors will you choose?"

Table model of the flooding of the Nile and mural for a play about the Aztecs.

A trip to the Hudson will inevitably follow. During the study of Lenape tribes of Manhattan, a painting motivation may begin with the question, "If you were a Lenape child, what games would you play?" After children respond, the teacher may ask, "Will you begin with the background or the people?"

Older children from fourth through eighth grade are able to understand past and present cultures of distant lands, with increasing depth and complexity at each age level. At Bank Street, while children are studying ancient Egypt, they frequently visit city museums. They investigate the tombs, murals, and small models that depict daily living through visual imagery and hieroglyphics. In their drawings on trip sheets at the museum, they record their observations of paintings, sculptures, architecture, and possessions they have seen in the collection. Back in the classroom, using what they've seen and recorded, they make models of the Nile River and life around it, using clay and other materials. As the culminating experience to this half-year study, children create a play about life in ancient Egypt. They write the script, make the scenery, props, and costumes, and present the play to their families and the school community.

Just as critical to the creative work being expressed and communicated is the process of working together in a democratic community. A curriculum study based on children's interests provides a common purpose. Children's individual and group artworks are shared and become contributions that benefit the developing study and the progression of living, working, and playing within the classroom community. Instead of competing with each other for top grades and awards for intellectual, physical, and social dominance, children and teachers share their unique ideas, interests, and abilities during the course of the study. A living and dynamic community of learners develops from experiencing and creating together (Vascellaro, 2011).

Teaching Teachers Today

We have been teaching the Arts Workshop and refining the curriculum together since the middle of the 1980s. We are amazed at how modern Bank Street's early founders were in their thinking about children and teacher education. Mitchell and her colleagues knew that if their ideas about development and their understanding of curriculum were to be enacted in their school, they needed to educate teachers about the theory and practice of their progressive approach. Similarly, we have been reminded of this again and again when teaching teachers the importance of working directly with art materials. Teachers need to feel successful as artists in order to have the desire and ability to include art in their classrooms. As the artist El Anatsui said in a recent radio interview, "Every one of us has an artist in us. Really, some may be asleep and some are fully awake, you know. So I think I have a kind of

commitment to waking up some people in whom it is asleep. Teaching—my work is still teaching" (Goodman, 2013).

In addition to Bank Street's early founders and Lord, the previous instructors of the Arts Workshop— Jane Bland, Naomi Pile, and Rachel and Wilbur Rippy—have strongly influenced us. To this day, we assign Lord's *Collage and Construction* and Pile's *Art Experiences for Young Children* (1973). Pile's writing, like Lowenfeld's, is especially compelling, reflecting her sensitive understanding of children's emotional lives. She includes many lively anecdotes that illustrate how art gives children a means to express feelings they are not able to articulate verbally. From participating in the Rippys' Interrelated Arts Workshop, we realized the importance of including trips within the community and crafts as ways of fostering students' confidence, their relationships with each other, and a respect and awareness of the cultural diversity within our classrooms and the society at large. The Rippys' artistry, humor, and supportive teaching styles were influential models of which we hoped to gain some measure.

Every time that we teach the Arts Workshop, we realize that it is not enough for teachers to work with the materials and to learn about children's artistry at different stages. Helping teachers discover "the artist within" is one of the biggest challenges. Like Mitchell, we believe that teachers need to feel confidence and pleasure in their creative abilities. As Nager and Shapiro (2007) noted, "In highlighting the teacher as artist, Mitchell's emphasis was on the importance of the aesthetic dimension, not only the appreciation but also the expression of creative impulse" (p. 14). Unless they feel a personal connection to art making, teachers are unlikely to use art materials in their classroom. Many of the graduate students we teach have had few experiences with the basic materials of art as children. Often students remember teachers who expected exact replications of an object. Some students recall laissez-faire art teachers who gave no motivations, guidance, or support during their art lessons. Others recall teachers who singled out a student as a class artist. The effect on the rest of the class was that they felt that they could never measure up to this "artist." As a result, many students enter the Arts Workshop with trepidation and fear; during the introductions at the beginning of the first class, many say, "I'm not an artist." We share the concern about students' lack of confidence in their creativity and skill with art materials that Mitchell (1935/2000) expressed in her article, "Social Studies for Future Teachers." She wrote about the need to train traditionally taught teachers for the progressive classrooms that she and her colleagues were establishing: "As individuals, few had experimented with raw materials in the 'arts'—they were critics rather than creators" (Mitchell, 1935/2000, p. 130).

By the end of the semester, most of the students in the Arts Workshop have gained confidence and competence in their artistic abilities. Some students ask about places where they can continue making art. We feel that their growth as artists is the result of the cumulative and progressive art experiences

they have over the weeks and months of the course. As students gradually become more comfortable, they share their insights, problems, and successes with each other. Together we have created a community of interactive learners and artists. We can only hope that the pleasure and joy felt from their artistic transformations will help our students implement art making to the children they teach.

We realize that there are many other obstacles within our schools that prevent teachers from including art in their classrooms. Practicing teachers who take our workshop lament the lack of time in their teaching schedule for including any of the arts during the school day. During financial crises in our cities and towns, arts teachers are often the first to be dismissed. As a result, classroom teachers need to have the desire and the skills to make art a part of their curriculum.

Throughout our country's educational history, the arts have been excluded from the academic curriculum in too many of our schools, both private and public. Some educators perceive art materials as messy and uncontrollable, unlike the neat and precise tools for academic work: pencils, pens, paper, computers, and books. Other barriers to art education in our society include beliefs that the arts are frivolous and emotional. In the hierarchy of cognitive processes, intuitive and sensory artwork is believed to involve lower levels of intelligence. Even though researchers have documented the intellectual progression in children's and adults' art, this prejudice persists. Arnheim (1969), Langer (1953), Gardner (1990, and Werner (1957/1978) have written that the arts are in the domain of higher levels of cognition, along with linguistic, logical, and scientific thought processes.

Because of our concern about these problems in the field of art education, in 1992 we applied for a research grant from Bank Street College to document how children think and learn as they work with art materials. Our project was funded, and we proceeded to videotape children of different age levels painting in their classrooms. Our initial goal was to find concrete evidence of children's thinking as they responded to the teacher's motivations, the presentation of the painting setup, and the support they received during the painting experience. The tapes confirmed the importance of the teacher's role before, during, and at the end of painting. What we were surprised to discover in the tapes was the lively dynamic of children's interactions with each other throughout the experience and how these social exchanges promoted learning. For instance, we saw how crucial the setup of group painting at a large table was for both visual and verbal exchanges.

Paintings of giraffes are inspired by the work of the five-year-old in blue at the head of the table.

Children were continually looking at each other's artwork, asking questions, and making comments about their own or their friends' paintings. As they worked, even the youngest, the three-year-olds, were exchanging and communicating ideas in both verbal and nonverbal domains. Their visual perceptual behaviors, physical gestures, and verbalizations to themselves, to each other, and to their teachers seemed to bounce back and forth around the large table (Gwathmey & Mott, 2000).

As we reflect back on our research, we are struck by the importance of our viewing and studying the context of children's art making. In their revisit and critique of Bank Street's developmental-interaction approach to education, Shapiro and Nager (2000) emphasize the relevance and congruence of Kurt Lewin's contributions, noting that "his central concept of the 'field,' the necessity of viewing behavior in context, had a major impact on developmental-interaction" (p. 25) and citing Franklin's (1981) statement that "Lewin [was] distinguished from his contemporaries…by his view that psychology should be concerned with conceptualizing and studying the actions of persons in situations" (p. 75). Shapiro and Nager propose strengthening the implicit but underemphasized "context" or "situation" within the developmental-interaction approach. Postmodern theorists have written extensively about the role of culture and socialization in children's learning in art. We find deep connections between postmodernists and the writings of Dewey, Mitchell, Biber, Shapiro, and Nager. In *Teaching Visual Culture*, for example, Freedman (2003) writes that "Individuals are part of their socio-cultural milieu" (p. 80). She advocates that researchers study the social setting of the classroom, the importance of which is reflected in early and later writings about progressive classrooms and in the discoveries we made while viewing the tapes of children painting.

We were delighted that, like Bank Street's early founders and the many Bank Street researchers who followed them, we had integrated the roles of researcher and teacher within the context of the classroom. The lively interactions between the children and adults in our videotapes of children painting verified for us Dewey's (1916/1966) earlier insight that the self is both social and individual, or—as Cuffaro (1995) says of Dewey's perspective—"It is not either the social or the individual but the *social individual*" (p. 23).

As we videotaped, we watched a four-year-old paint the entire paper space with muddy dark colors. While she was worked she occasionally looked at a child nearby making a series of representations of people. She then asked the teacher for another paper and proceeded to make her first visual representation of her family. When children adopt the ideas and symbols of others, sometimes we hear those being emulated say, "Stop copying me!" This objection may originate from the popular image of the solitary artist creating unique original imagery within the studio. When we say that we learn from each other's good ideas, usually children are able to accept this suggestion. In the Arts Workshop and

with older children, we give examples of how artists influence each other, work together, and copy the work of others—past and present—in order to learn a new way of making art (Gombrich, 1960).

When we show our videotapes in the Arts Workshop, we refer to the work of Piaget (1962) and his influence on Bank Street's developmental-interaction approach in the 1960s and subsequent years (Shapiro & Nager, 2000). The children's art making in the tapes verifies his contributions about the role of imitation in learning as well as the crucial experience of "disequilibrium" that occurs when new ideas clash with older ways of thinking and doing. Similar concepts are embedded in Vygotsky's (1934/1986) emphasis on the role of socialization in children's learning, such as the zone of proximal development and scaffolding by peers and teachers. He emphasizes the importance of verbal exchanges while new ideas are being accommodated to existing forms of thinking. In our tapes, children are commenting on and asking questions about each other's work. Their various zones of development are closer to their peers than the teachers. Understanding the importance of children's conversations and encouraging such talk in the classroom is contrary to the practice of requiring silence during an art or other subject class period, as some teachers do.

Visual imagery is a powerful means for expressing and integrating emotions and thoughts. Children's artwork often reveals their innermost feelings and ideas about what they know and see in the world around them. Much of their artwork communicates the joys, wishes, and dreams experienced within the context of family, friends, and cultural celebrations. Young children are aware of and are able to visualize what they know about the wars, violence, disease, and prejudices within our society. We believe it is important to help teachers and children feel safe and supported when their visual imagery expresses their knowledge about the ills within ourselves, our families, and the larger society. After the destruction of the World Trade Center, children in the School for Children preferred to use the materials of art to express their fears and strategies for coping with this disaster, rather than verbalizing their thoughts at the morning meeting. In the kindergarten, children built the twin towers with blocks and provided their block people with possibilities for escape: slides and parachutes. In the Upper School, many children drew or painted the towers, before, during, or after the tragedy. When educators are not permitted to address these difficult issues or are too uncomfortable with them, we are not helping children clarify and resolve their understandings about the frightening realities around them. Similarly, we are sometimes confronted with issues around children's need for privacy as well as reactions from the public when upsetting artwork is displayed within the classroom or in the halls of the school. As Shapiro and Nager (2000) wrote, general principles about development and growth along with cultural expectations need to be evaluated in respect to each particular context, and vice versa.

We are hopeful that in the future, the pendulum will swing and society will view the arts as vital to our humanity. Parents and educators are already questioning the lack of the arts in our schools. Despite the present hurdles, we still retain the excitement and passion that our predecessors felt when they saw that all children and adults can learn how to express their innate artistry. Our research into the past and present has confirmed how important it is to continue advocating Mitchell's (1950) mission of imparting the joy of learning in the arts and sciences to all our children in our schools.

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Theorising through Visual and Verbal Metaphors: Challenging Narrow Depictions of Children and Learning

by Sophie Rudolph

Introduction

The current education climate typically casts subject areas into a hierarchy that fails to recognise connection and relationship. The examination of ways in which art and literacy practices are mutually supportive tools in understanding the thinking of young children is, therefore, an important endeavour. In this article I present and discuss a small part of a larger collaborative class project undertaken at an inner-city government primary school in Melbourne, Australia. This project, and the teachers and children participating in it, valued the interrelationship of arts and literacy practices and sought ways that these knowledges could deepen our understandings of the world and each other. The class was made up of children in their first year of primary school who came from a range of ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds. A team of two teachers taught the class, and I was the students' art teacher. Part of my time in this role was spent working within the regular classroom program to develop creative and artistic elements of the collaborative project.

The pedagogical approach employed in this class was inspired by the work of educators in the town of Reggio Emilia in northern Italy, where listening to children is highly valued (Rinaldi, 2006), and enacted through recording conversations with children and documenting their thinking processes. This practice contributes to the active cultivation of a democratic learning environment in which "diversity is prized, not seen as a problem" (Apple & Beane, 1999, p. 11). Children are encouraged to bring their diversity of life experience to their learning experiences and collaborations at school, and the teachers look for differences in children's responses to their questions—a practice also in accord with that of educators in Reggio Emilia (Rinaldi, 2006). The teachers also see themselves as researchers and look particularly to the work of MacNaughton and Smith for guidance in this approach. MacNaughton and Smith advocate "reconceptualist action research," which "offers a space in which practitioners can practice ethical teaching as they 're-meet' their truths and take a conscious decision about how best to practice equitably and justly as teachers" (2001, p. 32). Teaching practices that include self-reflexivity, conversation and debate, reflection, and change are cultivated in this school.

In this article, I begin by exploring the notion of children as theory makers. In doing this, I examine some of the theoretical and conceptual framing offered by the work of educators in Reggio Emilia. I

then indicate how this understanding of children and learning sits within the contemporary education policy and school landscape in Australia. This discussion, although necessarily brief, explores the complex and often competing discourses that typically see children as either "active learners" or future contributors to the economy. Next, I present some pedagogical documentation, consisting of excerpts of a class conversation and black fineliner pen drawings that develop the theories proposed by the children in the conversation. These excerpts are used to illustrate the capacity children have to create and use metaphor both verbally and visually to enhance conceptual understandings, communicate meaning, and build theories. Finally, I examine the power of drawing to enable children to demonstrate a complexity of thinking they may not otherwise be able to express and, through this examination, I advocate the pedagogical use of art and literacy practices in relationship with one another as a democratic tool that supports multiple ways of participating. I argue that seeing art (and specifically, in this case, drawing) as a language enables children to use English literacy and art practices to explore deep ideas and communicate responses to complex questions about the world. This then allows teachers to gain a greater understanding of the ways in which children build knowledge together—the ways they negotiate, borrow, and manipulate ideas to construct theories and the ways they use metaphor verbally and visually to make meaning. This also contributes to generating understandings of both children and learning that challenge the narrow and restrictive views proliferated through standardised testing and neoliberal constructions of success.

Children as Theory Makers

The concept of children as theory makers used at this school is also inspired by the work of educators in Reggio Emilia. The system of early childhood education developed in Reggio Emilia following World War II has become world renowned, and the city and its schools host professional learning for hundreds of visiting teachers each year (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998). This schooling movement grew out of the socialist movement in northern Italy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Rinaldi, 2006). The growing women's rights movement was also influential, with prominent Reggio educator Carlina Rinaldi observing that "an increasing awareness of the rights of women was also linked to an increasing awareness of the rights of children" (2006, p. 179). Thus, the schools and the pedagogical approaches that evolved there were formed by the community and reflected the values of collaboration, dialogue, interdependency, equality, and justice (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 178-189; for further historical context, see also Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998; Millikan, 2003).

The pedagogical approaches developed (and constantly reviewed and debated) in Reggio Emilia draw on the work of a range of educational theorists, such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey, and Bruner

(Dahlberg & Moss, 2006; Rinaldi, 2006). These theoretical perspectives offer guidance but are never restrictive; they are used to construct perspectives specific to the Reggio Emilia context (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006). Theory then becomes visible and embodied in place (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006), which has enabled Reggio Emilia schools to offer authoritative contributions to debates about quality early childhood educational provision.

There are two related concepts developed by Reggio Emilia educators that I draw on in particular in this article. The first is that of children as theory makers. This is a belief that "theorising" is an important way of making meaning and of exploring and constructing knowledge. Rinaldi (2006) explains the way this concept is understood in Reggio Emilia:

> *For adults and children alike…understanding means elaborating an interpretation, what we call an "interpretive theory", that is a theory that gives meaning to the things and events of the world, a theory in the sense of a satisfactory explanation. (p. 113)*

Although a theory is seen as a "satisfactory explanation," it is also seen as "provisional" (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 113) and thus always open to be tested, debated, and elaborated further.

Related to the concept of children as theory makers is the belief that children have "a hundred languages." This concept is developed from a poem, "No way, the hundred is there,"[1] written by Reggio Emilia educator Loris Malaguzzi. Rinaldi (2006) describes this "theory of the hundred languages of children" as "full of democracy" (p. 192) and relays how it grew out of a debate about the tendency to privilege two languages in schools, which assumed the power not only of particular knowledges but also of particular experiences and subjectivities. She notes, "I think that the number of a hundred was chosen to be very provocative, to claim for all these languages not only the same dignity, but the right to expression and to communicate with each other" (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 193). With these theoretical and conceptual frameworks in mind, pedagogical practices are designed to allow children to be theory makers and to express their theories in many different ways. In the sections that follow I will attempt to illustrate how my colleagues and I have been trying to adopt similar approaches in our Melbourne school.

It is important, however, to also briefly elaborate the particular cultural, political and policy context in which we are positioned in a city in Australia a long way from Reggio Emilia. Contemporary schooling in Australia has increasingly seen students as "active learners" in need of "real tasks" (Greene, 1995, p. 13). This has produced a movement toward inquiry learning and a resistance to transmission models

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1 The text of the poem can be found in Millikan, 2003, pp. 35–36, and Edwards, Gandini, and Forman, 1998, pp. 2–3.

of learning (Aulls, Shore, & Delcourt, 2008). The growing awareness of student diversity in schools has also sparked research into how different knowledges and experiences can be used, valued, and understood in schools (see, for example, Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti , 2005; Zipin, 2009; Zipin, Sellar, & Hattam, 2012). However, the implementation of such approaches has also been complicated by an increasingly neoliberal policy climate, the marketisation of the schooling landscape, and a focus on schooling for the purposes of entry to the labour market (Lingard, 2010).

The introduction of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Australia in 2008—which mirrors national standardised testing programs in Britain and the United States—has also influenced the delivery of the curriculum and impacted pedagogical approaches (Berliner, 2011; Milner, 2013). Many educational researchers have pointed to the ways in which these changes have caused a narrowing of curriculum and a growing distrust of teacher and student capacity (Dulfer, Polesel, & Rice, 2012; Lingard, 2010; Smeed, 2010). Yates (2013) observes that in Australia, "the current period takes a more centralized and managed approach, emphasising the data-driven comparisons between schools of 'like' demographics and sticks and carrots to engage in reform" (p. 40). The teaching of literacy and numeracy has, therefore, become an increasing priority due to particular pressures placed on schools to perform in these areas. As Rizvi pointed out in the mid-1990s, however, the placement of literacy and numeracy at the top of the hierarchy of subjects was also prominent then: "most primary school teachers view the arts as peripheral to what they see as their main responsibility—the teaching of literacy and numeracy" (Rizvi, 1995, p. 55).

This focus on (English) literacy and numeracy indicates the ways other subject areas can become relegated to the margins in what is often referred to as a "crowded curriculum," a term that has gained ubiquitous use in debates across media and educational spheres. Art tends to be one of the subject areas that becomes less valued the further children progress through their schooling (McArdle & Wright, 2013) and now, with the first NAPLAN test being administered when children are eight or nine years old, the pressure to focus predominantly on these limited learning areas has increased. The place and purpose of art in the curriculum in early childhood education, however, has been subject to its own debates. Wright (1991) summarises these "philosophical disputes in arts education" (p. 3) as follows: creativity versus artistry, natural unfolding versus guided learning, and segregation versus integration. While these don't have to be either/or debates (Wright, 1991), they are often used to justify particular approaches to arts education. Over the last decade, these debates have evolved to include the investigation of ideas of multimodal meaning-making and ways in which children might have greater agency in their participation in arts learning (Binder, 2011; Bokhorst-Heng, Osborne, & Lee, 2006;

Narey, 2008; Simon, 2011). These approaches attempt to discount the view of children as tabulae rasae and instead work with and honour what children already know and can do.

In designing learning opportunities for children that are based on an understanding of their theory-making capacities, the teachers I was working with were not only joining the resistance to a deficit view of young children but also creating opportunities for knowing our students better. To see students as theory makers, we needed to be open to many possibilities, we needed to give students opportunities to build theories using a range of knowledge and skills, and we needed to value a diversity of knowledge and responses. This approach, therefore, attempts to genuinely work with difference, and in doing so, to disrupt some of the ways schools and curriculum continue to be both quietly and overtly ethnocentric and exclusionary.

The questions that guided the pedagogy and teaching practices that led to the documentation presented in the following sections are: How do English literacy learning and arts learning interrelate and support each other? How do arts practices enable children to demonstrate complex engagement with meaning-making processes? How does seeing children as theory makers enable us to better understand the ways children think and how they build both English and art skills and knowledge?

Children Theorise Using Metaphor and Graphic Art Practices

The excerpts analysed in this section were part of a whole-class collaborative project, a feature of the pedagogical approach at this school. These projects encompass the state-mandated curriculum, and reporting is done according to curriculum and assessment standards. There has been a choice made, however, to refuse to be confined by what is mandated. Although teachers plan classes with clear goals in mind, those goals encompass an openness to learning opportunities that evolve unexpectedly as well as a commitment to ongoing reflection and adaptation of planning.

The project in this instance centered around the concept of connections. The overarching question presented to the children as a beginning point was: What is a connection? The teachers predicted that this discussion could lead in many different directions, including exploration of material connections, physical connections, electrical connections, and social connections.

The conversation segment presented below emerged out of the convergence of investigations into electrical connections and connections in the body. The children had become curious about whether the body has electricity in it, and the following question was posed to the whole class: How do messages travel from the brain to other parts of our body? The subsequent conversation explored issues of signal and sign and raised questions about whether the signals passed through the body are

actually electricity or just signals like electricity. Owen[2] had been central in provoking thinking in this area, and we enter the conversation here as he builds on a point made earlier.

> *Owen: Your brain sends signals through your body and signals go through your brains too.*
>
> *Lily: I've seen a brain in the museum, what it looks like and it's little circles twisting around each other in different places.*
>
> *Wilhelmina: Your brains are like phones and the veins in you are like the wires, up there, out there, those wires, and it sends electricity to the people who are trying to talk to their friends on the phone.*
>
> *Sophie: And so how is that like your body?*
>
> *Owen: Because your brain sends signals like the telephone wires.*

This segment of conversation demonstrates the ways in which the children are hypothesising and theorising. It also highlights the ways children build on their experiences to explain their thinking, reasoning, and arguments. Here we see Lily draw on an experience of going to the museum, bringing that knowledge to share in the discussion and to support an assertion that the brain is configured in a particular way. We also see Wilhelmina refer to the telephone wires that are visible from the classroom where we were sitting in a circle to have this conversation, as she conjures up a simile to illustrate her theory.

During the conversation, we were also struck by the way in which the children used metaphor and simile to illustrate their thinking and to communicate their theories, some of which are presented below:

> *Hoses are like electricity wires…because it's like a wire for water instead of electricity. Owen*
>
> *The brain has little pieces of paper and it writes the word and it puts it in a little bubble and then it goes out from your brain and then…to your mouth. Aryan*
>
> *I think that when you talk the brain sends little letters down to your mouth and others are going down to tell your mouth how to move. Augusta*

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2 Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of students.

There's a little box inside your body, it's like a little radio box, but it's different, and it sends out the words. Wilhelmina

It's a bit like a train travelling along the train tracks. Laszlo

After the conversation, the children were given paper and a black felt-tip pen and asked to draw their theories for how the messages travel through the body. We encouraged them to think about the metaphors they had shared and collected during the conversation and to build on or develop those in their drawings if they felt inclined (see Figure 1 to Figure 5).

Figure 1. These bits are where the letters are going up and down. The letters travel around your body through tubes. Nikita.

These two examples both pick up on metaphors and similes that were offered during the conversation. Nikita, in particular, seems to have built upon both Aryan's and Augusta's metaphors of the brain, which suggested that "little letters" are sent in a "little bubble" to different parts of the body. Nikita's depiction of letters travelling through "tubes" inside the body gives clarity to this theory. Lily also seems to pick up on these metaphors but combines them with both the knowledge of what the brain looks like (which she gained from a visit to the museum) and with Wilhelmina's suggestion that there is a "little box" that "sends out the words." Here, Lily has turned the idea of a signal box into a "little dot" that "makes the message" to be sent to other parts of the body.

In both Wilhelmina's and Dorothy's drawings (see Figure 3 and Figure 4), the difference between the inside and the outside of the body is contrasted. Wilhelmina builds on the simile she shared in the conversation, showing how the brain sends messages from a "box inside me" to help her to talk and sing, while Dorothy's illustration picks up on the idea of brain "waves" that help us to "think." It is interesting that Dorothy, not usually a contributor verbally, has used this opportunity to draw a theory to propose another metaphorical explanation for how messages move through the body: as waves.

In Elouan's response above (see Figure 5), we can see him combining a number of different understandings of the body that he is developing through this study. He picks up on Lily's description of the brain as "little circles twisting around each other in different places" and describes his drawing of them as "little swirls." His drawing also seems to illustrate quite intricately the journey of a "message" from his brain through his body and along his left arm.
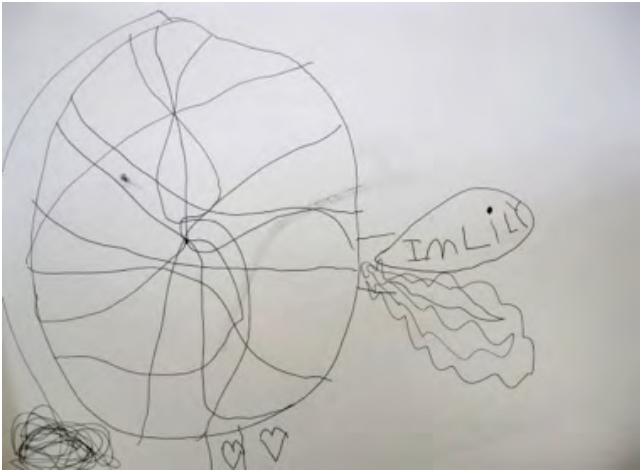
Figure 2. My brain is telling me to talk and then it told me to breathe. It sends a signal from the little dot in the middle, it makes the message. Lily.

In this selection of visual responses to the question, "How do messages travel from the brain to other parts of our body?," the children demonstrate a powerful use of symbol to communicate ideas, an ability that various theorists (for example, Dewey, in Art as Experience, as discussed in Wright, 2010) recognise as a sophisticated mode of thought. Drawing is also seen as a language children communicate with competently because drawing and mark-making are the first processes children use in developing symbol systems (Brooks, 2009). Many researchers have examined the importance of an understanding of abstractions and symbol systems for building school-based literacies such as mathematics, reading, and writing (Brooks, 2009).

Others, however, consider that images created by children can be read and interpreted in their own right, both as a powerful form of expression and as a way for educators to better understand their students (Binder, 2011). This connects with the Reggio Emilia notion of a hundred languages—the view that the "language" of the "image" is a valuable and useful form of communication that should not be placed in a hierarchy with other forms of knowing, but instead seen as being in dialogue equally with other "languages" (Millikan, 2003). The examples from the case I present above show the ways that the verbal and visual languages these children engage with converse with each other and interrelate as the

Figure 3. This is the inside of my body. That's the outside. I drawed [sic] me singing. There's a box inside me. The brain controls it so you can talk and sing. Wilhelmina.

children theorise and create meaning. This illustrates not only the necessity of seeing these different literacies in relationship with one another, but also of recognising the role of imagination and power in making this relationship possible. Greene suggests that "to think in relation to what we are doing is to be conscious of ourselves struggling to make meanings, to make critical sense of what authoritative others are offering as objectively, authoritatively 'real'" (1995, p. 126).

Figure 4. This is inside of my sister's brain and this is outside of my sister's brain. There are waves in her brain. They make her think. They go into the rest of her body. Dorothy.

In the material presented in this section, relational thinking, the struggle to make meanings, and critical engagement with objectivity, authority, and reality were all being enacted on a number of levels: through the literacy and artistic practices the children used to construct theories, through the pedagogical approaches employed by the teachers, and through the reflection about and analysis of these ways of working. This illustrates both how powerfully children's work with visual and verbal metaphor demonstrates their strong capacities as thinkers, theory makers, questioners, and collaborators, and what great opportunities that work affords teachers in learning about how children construct and communicate meaning.

The Visual as a Catalyst for Understanding Thinking Processes and Resisting Deficit-Based Approaches to Learning

In this section, I focus on one child's drawing and on an interview conducted with her about it. The drawing was completed during an art class in which the children were asked to imagine what the brain might look like in various emotional states. In my discussion of this child's response to this proposal, I argue that creation of visual representations of theories can provide rich insight into complex thinking processes in young children. This becomes even more important when working with children who might typically be viewed as having a deficit because they do not meet some of the demands of a school system that recognises particular skills as those that children need to be "successful" students. Below is a drawing completed by six-year-old Erica, whose first language is Vietnamese (see Figure 6). In some settings, Erica's lack of English literacy would be what defines her. However, as she demonstrates here, when she is not restricted by what she is seen to be "lacking," she is able to express her depth of thinking and make rich contributions to the collective construction of knowledge in her class.

> Erica: Yesterday I make the brain is surprised and the brain got blood and some colour. And then when it people birthday some people bring surprise and there's some surprise on the brain and some blood and… some people when it's birthday they got surprised brain.

Figure 5. There are bones and my brain. I thought that brains were little swirls and the lines are my veins and they help you get your blood everywhere. It is showing my brain and my bones and veins and what they are doing. Veins actually have things so if you move your arm your bones have something so they don't rub onto each other—there is something in the middle of them. Elouan.

Sophie: And what are all the colours?

Erica: Some rainbow colours.

Sophie: Why rainbow colours?

Erica: Because there tiny pink and big pink and there some more colour on our brain.

Sophie: Is a surprised brain colourful?

Erica: Um, um, when there birthday, some people hide from their…close the light,

Figure 6. A surprised brain. Erica.

when the people come inside then people open the light, then they put lots of colour up and then all the colour go down.

Sophie: Mmm, and that's what it looks like in the brain?

Erica: [nods]

In this conversation and illustration, we can see how Erica is using some of her prior knowledge to hypothesise about what the brain might look like in a surprised state. Although English is not her first language, and she is still learning to construct English sentences correctly, this excerpt demonstrates that through her use of both visual and verbal languages she is able to communicate a theory about how the brain might look when a person is surprised. Erica's depiction of almost streamer-like coloured lines dancing across the brain mirrors what she knows to be a "surprising" scenario: the activities carried out during a surprise birthday party. In this construction of a theory, we can also see Erica's understanding of the power of imagination, of the brain's capacity to conjure up imagery through memory, and of the exploration of changes in the brain caused by emotional experiences.

In a school system that is founded on Eurocentric understandings of learning, teaching, communicating, and expressing oneself, the valuing of diversity can be particularly challenging, often resulting in tokenistic acknowledgment of "other" cultures (Rizvi, 1995). Rizvi goes on to argue that "within the framework of this set of assumptions, the issues of difference are treated more as a fact to be taken into account rather than as constitutive of curricular and pedagogic relations" (1995, pp. 59–60). The approaches illustrated above attempt to move away from what Rizvi describes as an "add on"

approach and toward the valuing of difference in a supportive and generative way. Again, we receive some guidance from Reggio Emilia educators here, as they advocate practices that "try to understand differences rather than wanting to cancel them…being open to doubt and giving value to negotiation as a strategy of the possible" (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 140). Erica's "difference," therefore, is not seen as being in need of "correction," and her developing English language skills are not seen as holding her back. Instead, as in the material presented in the previous section, an openness to a range of responses and possibilities was encouraged, thus allowing her to draw on her diverse experiences and subjectivities.

Conclusion

In this article I have used a selection of drawings and conversations by five- and six-year-old children to explore the teaching and learning possibilities of using literacy and art practices in relationship with each other. I have demonstrated the way in which metaphor and simile are deployed by these children both verbally and visually to construct theories about how the brain works.

The diversity of responses that the children came up with during this study also encourages them to think about knowledge as socially constructed, flexible, and contested; as Greene points out, this is important in developing critical thinkers who are prepared to engage in dialogue, and through such interaction, navigate difference:

There is always a flux in the things and ideas of this world, and there is always the need to catch that flux in networks of meaning. Whatever the networks, the focus should be one that dislodges fixities, resists one-dimensionality, and allows multiple personal voices to become articulate in a more and more vital dialogue. (1995, p. 183)

If we believe that children can encounter the complexity of "networks of meaning," then we need to ensure that we provide them with opportunities to do so. This requires meeting such complexity with opportunities to engage in diverse and multidimensional ways of exploring and making meaning. The theories children in this Melbourne school developed about how messages travel from the brain through the body and what a brain may look like in various emotional states illustrate how an engagement with interrelated literacy and art practices can support this endeavour. Such projects are also an attempt to allow children who come from diverse cultural backgrounds to enter what postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha describes as the "third space" where the "emergence of new discursive positions" is permitted (Rizvi, 1995, p. 63).

These approaches clearly offer us important ways of seeing and working with young children. However, in the spirit of Macnaughton and Smith's (2001) reconceptualist action research approach, we

are also left with questions that help us to continue to navigate the complex terrain of contemporary education, including: How do we support children to deepen their theories? How do we support children to test their theories and build knowledge from numerous perspectives? What cultural resources do children bring to school that we continue to miss or misunderstand? What assumptions about cultural "norms" do we carry that continue to obstruct our relationships with our students or exclude particular ways of being and knowing? These questions recognise the continually evolving nature of the art of learning and teaching and remind us of the importance of continuing to challenge and negotiate the narrowing forces of a neoliberal education climate in order to honour the important diversity of understandings children bring to their learning.

Acknowledgments

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Time for a Paradigm Shift: Recognizing the Critical Role of Pictures Within Literacy Learning

by Beth Olshansky

In our rush to push children toward our narrow definition of literacy, we often take away the very tools that could help them the most: pictures. Both evolution and child development speak to the natural place of pictures within human beings' innate drive to make sense of their world and record their experiences. One does not have to be a history buff to have learned that the earliest record of human activity exists in the form of pictures painted on cave walls. Nor does one have to explain to parents of a toddler the innate urge to pick up a marking implement and draw on any available surface. In fact, those seemingly random markings (which we adults label "scribbles") are often replete with meaning. Recently, I watched my 18-month-old granddaughter draw what appeared to be two random lines as she sat on the deck of our lakeside cabin; she then pointed to her picture and said, "Boat."

Even the youngest children seem to be hard-wired to make sense of the world around them and, without formal instruction, to represent, express, and share their ideas and discoveries using their natural language: pictures. We observe our young explorers of life following predictable developmental patterns as they discover that they can alter a surface by making marks to express and record meaning. Scribbles morph into recognizable shapes and then into identifiable representations. A circle soon becomes a sun with lines radiating from it representing sunbeams, which then evolves into a person with arms and legs emanating from a round head. No one teaches these young recorders of their world the way to do this; they simply know how.

Hidden Bias

Yet soon after children enter school, they are discouraged from using pictures as a key form of expression. Preschool and kindergarten teachers understand the value of pictures in developing children's thinking, language, and self-expression. However, beginning in first grade, there is huge pressure on teachers to steer students away from their natural visual language and to replace it with written language, which must be taught. Young children receive subtle and not-so-subtle messages that reading and writing in pictures is less valued than reading and writing words. In fact, at some point (usually during first grade), children are told that drawing pictures must wait until after they complete their (real) work—i.e., their writing.

When classroom teachers do allow their students to make pictures before writing, the students are given markers, crayons, or colored pencils to draw with. The message is clear: do a quick sketch before

getting down to the real work of writing. Neither preservice teachers nor school administrators are typically educated regarding the full range of benefits that go hand in hand with infusing art into writing workshop. That omission is yet another manifestation of the bias, inherent in our educational system, that favors the verbal learner.

Unintended Consequence

The pressure of high-stakes testing during the last decade, intensified by the misnamed No Child Left Behind Act, has only increased the devaluing of pictures as a natural tool for thinking and learning. Now, with the adoption of the Common Core by nearly all states, along with the use of more rigorous national assessments, one can only predict that the pressure to pass linguistically driven tests will continue to increase. In turn, the bias against those who rely on pictures to think will likely deepen, and the achievement gap between verbal learners (those who work well with words) and students who are more visual, kinesthetic, or tactual learners will likely widen. This, of course, was not the intended outcome of developing new national standards, but it may well become an unintended consequence of adopting them.

Yet within this disheartening scenario, there is an inkling of hope. One of the key design considerations of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (ELACCSS) is "a focus on results rather than means" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 4). The ELACCSS authors accordingly state that "the Standards do not mandate the full range of metacognitive strategies that students may need to monitor and direct their thinking and learning. Teachers are thus free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the Standards" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 4). This statement clearly leaves room for teachers to teach in the way that works best for their students, which could be in stark contrast to a district-mandated linguistically driven language arts program. Once schools have purchased a scripted program, however, it remains to be seen whether administrators and curriculum coordinators will give teachers such leeway in implementing those lessons.

An Alternative Approach

In an effort to combat the hidden bias within our schools that favors the verbal learner, I have spent the last quarter decade developing, refining, and researching an alternative approach to literacy learning that is designed to support students with a wide range of learning styles and needs. Supported by findings from several large quantitative studies over the last two decades (Frankel, 2011; O'Connor,

2010; Olshansky 2007, 2008), I have formalized what I consider to be a more democratic approach—one that has proven to better serve our diverse student population (Olshansky, n.d.).

Artists/Writers Workshop, as the name implies, expands the notion of writing workshop to include a strong visual component. Artists/Writers Workshop originally grew out of the early work of the late Donald Graves who, during the 1980s, revolutionized the way writing was taught. Moving away from fill-in-the-blank worksheets, Graves was at the forefront of treating students as professional writers and offering them authentic writing experiences (Graves & Stuart, 1985). Students wrote stories about what they knew, and their pieces were brought through the stages of the writing process: prewriting, rehearsal, drafting, revision/editing, and publication. Students in the early grades were encouraged to draw first, creating quick sketches during the rehearsal stage of the writing process. Within the writing workshop that evolved, however, the focus was almost exclusively on students' writing, with more elaborate picture-making saved for illustrating the final text (Calkins, 1986, 2013; Fletcher & Portalupi, 1998; Wood Ray & Cleveland, 2004). Recently, however, the focus has begun to shift (Wood Ray, 2010).

Expanding the notion of text to include visual compositions (Albers, 2007; Albers & Sanders, 2010), Artists/Writers Workshop is designed around three basic premises: (a) pictures are a natural language for thinking, developing, and expressing ideas; (b) not all students work easily with words; and (c) if we are truly interested in supporting the literacy learning of all students, we would be wise to expand the range of thinking tools we provide in the classroom, especially for our emerging or struggling readers and writers. Thus, in Artists/Writers Workshop, words and pictures are treated as equal languages for learning. Creating well-developed pictures (not to be confused with quick sketches) always precedes the writing, thereby providing all students both more time to think while they are creating their artwork and more elaborate concrete visual tools for developing and recording their ideas. With completed artwork in hand, students practice oral rehearsal, "reading the pictures" for meaning. As students read their pictures and then translate that meaning into words (a skill most young children have been practicing for quite some time), the oral rehearsal process provides a natural bridge from picture-making to writing.

One of the benefits of "writing in pictures first" is that pictures are not only subject to interpretation, but also lend themselves to a deepening of meaning as more time is spent "reading the image." Details emerge that students may not have initially noticed, and descriptive language may emerge from those details. Reading the pictures provides endless opportunities for developing the story before any writing actually occurs. Encouraged by a peer's or teacher's questions about their work, students often find engaging in storytelling and embellishing their story quite enjoyable. However, most teachers will agree

that once students (especially young ones) write words down on a page, revision and embellishment of a storyline becomes much more challenging.

In 1990, the very first year I began to explore the relationship between pictures and words, I observed that when given a choice, 96% of the first- and second-grade students I was working with chose to create pictures before they wrote. This observation corresponded with research published by Teele in 1995 that documented that in a classroom of 26 first graders, 25 students displayed preferences for visual learning (Brudnak, 1995). I also observed that students who began by creating well-developed pictures first (again, not just making quick sketches) seemed to gain access to richer imagining, deeper thinking, and more descriptive language.

During those early years, I observed a kind of magic that overtook the classroom; I could feel the air growing thick with creative energy as students engaged in an art process before they wrote. Years later, I discovered that the magic I witnessed time and again as students participated in Artists/Writers Workshop was the result of transmediation, a phenomenon rarely recognized within educational circles.

Transmediation is defined as the act of recasting or translating meaning from one sign system to another (Siegel, 1995). In the case of Artists/Writers Workshop, this occurs when students create meaning in pictures first and then translate that meaning into words. The experience of transmediation serves to deepen students' thinking, generate new ideas, and create opportunities for reflective thinking (Siegel). While transmediation can also occur when students write and then make pictures, if we want to improve students' writing, I have found that a "pictures first" approach is far more beneficial (Frankel, 2011; O'Connor, 2010; Olshansky, 2007, 2008). Christopher, a first grader, describes "the magic" he experienced like this: "I just don't know what happens. Whenever I go to Artists/ Writers Workshop, all sorts of good stuff just pops into my head" (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: One quiet and silent night, a raccoon sat on my snowman's head. A white owl hooted in a whisper. The moon smiled. The snowflakes fell more quietly than ever before. Drooom went the clock. The clock struck midnight and the stars sprinkled away. Art and writing by Chris, grade 1.

Two Complementary Strands

Artists/Writers Workshop is facilitated in two complementary strands. Teachers follow the same four simple steps to facilitate each strand:

- Literature share/discussion
- Modeling (an art or writing process)
- Work session
- Group share

While this workshop model is nothing new, the implications of implementing Artists/Writers Workshop are enormous. First, teachers must commit to treating words and pictures as parallel, complementary, and equal languages for learning. Within our educational system, this represents a huge paradigm shift. It means adopting a much broader view of literacy learning, one that truly embraces multimodal learning. For writing workshop, this means giving equal attention to pictures and words. For instance, when using picture books as mentor texts, it means reading the pictures for meaning and discussing how the artist made that meaning (i.e., studying the artist's craft) in addition to reading the text for meaning and studying the writer's craft. Second, it means providing students with concrete visual tools for developing, expressing, and recording their ideas at every stage of the writing process. Third, it means treating all students as both artists and writers—and showing them that we mean it. This means giving students access to a wider range of art materials than are typically available in the classroom and teaching them how to use those materials.

Two Simple Approaches

Recognizing that most classroom teachers have varying degrees of comfort "doing art," I have developed two art-and-literature-based approaches to teaching writing and fostering reading that use simple art techniques while offering students a rich artistic and literary experience. It is these two models—Picturing Writing: Fostering Literacy Through Art® and Image-Making Within The Writing Process®—that have been the focus of several large research studies over the last two decades. Both are facilitated using an Artists/Writers Workshop format.

Picturing Writing

Picturing Writing: Fostering Literacy Through Art® uses a simple crayon resist art process. This involves creating a crayon drawing and then washing over it with watercolor (see Figure 2). While most

young children have grown comfortable using crayons, the watercolor wash adds a much more pleasing and nuanced effect than is produced by using crayons alone, markers, or colored pencils. Within the crayon resist process, crayons offer an easily controlled medium for creating representations; the less-controlled watercolor wash creates opportunities for "happy accidents" and interesting, unanticipated results. The watercolor wash also serves to enhance the image. In addition, a wide range of supplemental

Figure 2: Example of Picturing Writing by Gbibari, grade 1.

texturing techniques encourages students to add detail to their paintings. Those texturing techniques do not just enhance students' paintings, but also deepen their thinking. As students create and then read their pictures for meaning, they see more detail in their artwork and think more deeply about it; they are thus able to access more descriptive language when it is time to write. To ensure that all students receive the full benefit of reading their pictures, I have formalized the process by developing a brainstorming sheet for this purpose. The brainstorming sheet requires students to identify "the

Figure 3: Olivia uses brainstorming sheet and desktop easel stand, grade 2.

important things" in the picture and then jot down descriptive language about each of those elements (see Figure 3). This formal brainstorming process ensures that transmediation occurs for every student because it requires students to read their paintings for meaning and then write down words to convey that meaning.

Picturing Writing is not simply defined by its art process. Facilitated in Artists/ Writers Workshop, it offers a progression of art-and-literature-based minilessons designed around a variety of genre studies and integrated into the science and/or social studies curriculum. Teachers are able to teach what they need to teach in a way that engages all their students, not just those who work easily with words. As

a project-based approach to learning integrated into the curriculum, students make carefully crafted picture books that reflect their knowledge of a chosen topic. In creating their artistic and literary work, students give equal attention to both the artists' and writers' crafts.   Children's published books are placed in the classroom library for the remainder of the school year, often becoming favorite reading materials (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Gbibari and Angel read Angel's published book, grade 1.

Image-Making

Image-Making Within The Writing Process® offers a collage-based approach to writing which uses a wide variety of hand-painted papers created by each student (see Figure 5). Image-Making is more involved than the crayon resist process and offers a richer thinking experience. It is easily integrated across the curriculum and can be used to teach a variety of genre studies. In addition, this rich collage medium provides visual and tactile tools for thinking and developing ideas. Students literally construct meaning through placing cut or torn shapes onto each page. As they move these shapes around before finally gluing them down, children gain access to endless opportunities for revision. By its very nature, working with collage provides students with the opportunity to rehearse, draft, and revise their stories before setting pencil to paper. Thus, students' thinking and their final collage compositions are more developed, which, in turn, is reflected in their writing. Both the collage process itself and the wide range of hand-painted textured papers students use to create their collages serve not only to stimulate their thinking, but also to help students access descriptive language (Olshansky, 1994, 2008).
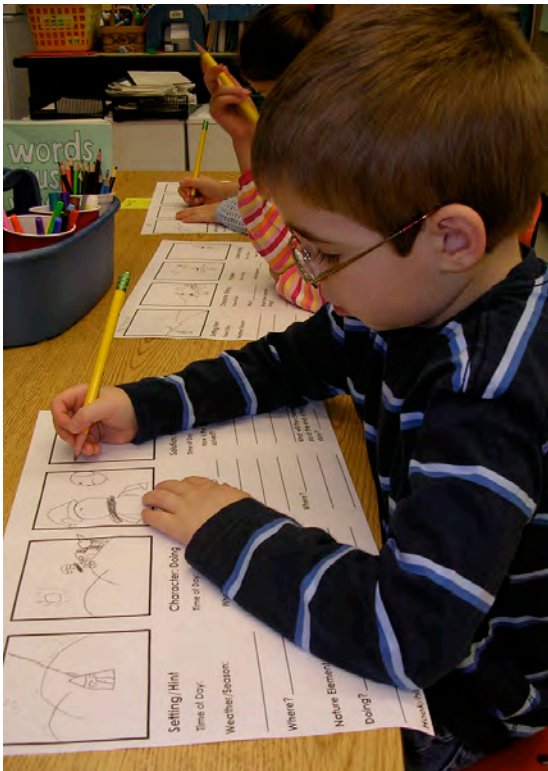

Figure 5: Example of Image-Making, Jamie, grade 1.

Concrete Visual Tools

In addition to providing classroom-friendly art processes, Picturing Writing and Image-Making offer a variety of concrete visual tools. These include storyboards (pictures anchored by key words) used to support the organization and development of story ideas (see Figure 6); specially designed brainstorming sheets that ensure that students read their picture to access descriptive language and that the words they use to describe their picture find their way onto the written page (see Figure 3); desktop easel stands used to prop up works of art during the brainstorming and writing process (see Figure 3); an artist's frame to support the group share process; and an accordion folder which helps students and teachers clarify the literary purpose of each page of art and writing (see Figure 7). In each case, the intention is to ensure that students whose strengths lie outside the verbal realm have the tools they need to succeed.

Figure 6: Devin works on storyboard, grade 1.

Multiple independent research studies have documented that this highly structured visual approach to literacy learning strengthens the writing and visual literacy skills as well as the standardized test scores of both students who struggle with words and those who function relatively comfortably within the more traditional, verbal instructional approach (Frankel, 2011; O'Connor, 2010; Olshansky, 2007, 2008).

Making Literary Concepts Concrete

As we shift toward treating pictures and words as equal languages for literacy learning and cognitive growth, we must reconsider how we treat pictures and words within the workshop experience. Just as we treat writing as both a sign system for making meaning (one that uses print) and a discipline (an art form worthy of focused study), we should treat picturing-making as both a sign system (one that uses visual representations) and a discipline (another art form worthy of focused study).

In addition to teaching the mechanics of writing (recognizing and creating letter shapes, learning letter sounds, sounding out words, writing words, constructing sentences, etc.) and the mechanics of

Figure 7: Brendan's accordion folder, grade 1.

picturing-making (how to draw images to represent meaning), teachers should recognize and study the craft within each expressive form. Just as they are accustomed to using quality picture books as mentor texts for studying the writer's craft in writing workshop, in Artists/Writers Workshop (and Picturing Writing and Image-Making), teachers use quality picture books to study how artists apply simple art concepts to make meaning in their pictures. Indeed, these two languages run parallel.

For instance, teaching students about the role of lead sentences can be enhanced by a discussion of lead pictures. We can analyze both pictures and words for the information they convey. For the young writer, the concept of setting may seem abstract, at best. But when we share and discuss a "lead picture" in a picture book that depicts setting elements, students will discover that the setting picture describes not only the place, but also often the time of day, weather, and possibly the season. They can see what the term "setting" means.

Students may also notice that in order to show where the story takes place, an artist often chooses to use a long-distance view that allows the reader to step back and see "the big picture." In Artists/Writers Workshop, after analyzing the lead picture within one or more picture books that have been selected because they display the elements s/he wishes to highlight, the teacher will model creating a lead or setting picture—depicting place, time of day, weather, and season—from the long-distance perspective. When students then create the setting picture for their own story, they are quite clear

Figure 8: It is a cold, blustering day in the frozen Arctic, even though it is late afternoon in the summer. It is still frigid! Patches of ice are circling around the clear, crystal water. Seals are paying happily. Watch out little seals! There are big footprints in the ice. Griffin creates a visual hook which he references and enhances in his writing, grade 2.

about its literary purpose because they have seen and discussed examples in picture books and watched their teacher model how to take that understanding and apply it in her or his own work.

Lead sentences often include a hook that serves to draw the reader into the story and makes them want to turn the page. First- and second-grade students can also learn about the power of a visual hook to draw the reader into the story. The hook may be a visual hint about the character (see Figure 8) or an indication of where a character might be hiding. If not explicitly visually represented, a hook can be introduced through the inclusion of a sound that serves to draw the reader into the picture as s/he searches for that hidden creature or element. In this case, the hook isn't visible in the picture; it is introduced later when it is time to write (see Figures 9 and 10).

During the group share that follows, students' lead pictures are placed in the artist's frame, a simple black square that serves to frame and enhance the artwork. The student is invited to sit in the artist's chair—the seat of honor—while s/he talks about the picture. As the artist and the class discuss the piece in the artist's frame, the teacher guides the discussion to ensure that all the elements of the lesson are reinforced. During the share process (which often involves two to four students each day, time permitting), the teacher is able to reinforce specific key elements and concepts for those students who might benefit from hearing and seeing them again. Group share also provides an opportunity to practice reading the picture for meaning and accessing descriptive language.

Parallel and Complementary Languages

During the writing strand, the same Artists/Writers Workshop format is followed: literature share/discussion,

Figure 9: One icy winter night, snow drifted across the inky sky. All of a sudden, a howl came out of nowhere… Madeline creates a hook through the use of sound, grade 1.

Figure 10: One starry moonlit summer night a father owl was teaching his owlets how to fly next to a rushing river. The mother owl was out hunting for deer mice. Suddenly the father heard something slithering beside the stream. He heard danger! What could it be? Carter uses sound to draw the reader into his picture, grade 2.

teacher modeling, students applying their understandings during the work session, and group share. This time the focus of the lesson is on the language of words. Studying purposefully selected excerpts from picture books, students analyze the function of the lead sentences. They discover that the words often describe the very same setting elements depicted in the illustration, and thus they have the opportunity to experience the parallel and complementary nature of pictures and words. This relationship becomes even clearer as their teacher models reading her or his picture for the setting information it conveys and then crafting lead sentences that contain these same setting elements. As students write to their own "lead picture", they come to understand that these two parallel and complementary languages perform the same function—the pictures use a visual language to tell the story and the words use a verbal language to paint pictures. Often one language enhances the other.

During the share process, a student's picture is placed in the artist's frame. After taking a seat in the artist's/writer's chair, the student reads his or her accompanying writing to the class while classmates gaze at the picture as they listen to the words. With this simultaneous processing of pictures and words, something magical happens. The words make the picture appear to come alive. Jared, a second grader, described his experience like this: "In my story, when I read it to the class, the animals came to life out of thin air." This is the result of what I refer to as "simultaneous transmediation."

Simultaneous Transmediation

Simultaneous transmediation occurs when the brain processes two or more sign systems at once. We regularly experience this phenomenon without even realizing it. For instance, when we stare at an illustration in a picture book as the accompanying text is read out loud, we experience simultaneous transmediation. When we watch a video that has an audio component (words, music, or both), we experience simultaneous transmediation. Our brains are processing more than one sign system at the same time. Simultaneous transmediation is a dynamic tool that serves to draw readers into an image (moving or still) and into the story. This is particularly powerful when sensory description is used,

creating a multisensory experience. In Artists/Writers Workshop, the simultaneous processing of art and writing makes clear how words and pictures work together to tell the whole story. To experience the phenomena of transmediation and simultaneous transmediation can be transformative. Perhaps this is why young artists/writers refer to the experience as "making magic."

A Changing Paradigm

As we shift our thinking about the role of pictures in story development, it is important to understand that within the "pictures-first" Artists/Writers Workshop model, the terms "illustrate," "illustration," and "illustrator" have little relevance with regard to students' story-drafting process. A quick check in any dictionary reminds us that "illustration" refers to a picture created to accompany an existing text. In Artists/Writers Workshop, because the art always precedes the writing, there is no existing text when creating the artwork; thus, technically the creation of the art does not fall within the realm of book illustration. In students' published books, this nuanced understanding is reflected on the back page, where readers have an opportunity to learn about the book's creator. The "About the Author/ Illustrator" page has been replaced with an "About the Artist/Writer" page. This subtle change in heading reflects a shift in thinking about the story-drafting process that has huge implications.

Common Core

As teachers wrestle with making a significant paradigm shift (and justifying it to administrators and colleagues), they should keep in mind that two decades of research documents the effectiveness of this approach for a wide range of learners and that this uncommon approach can easily be used to implement the Common Core. As educators across the nation engage in unpacking the Common Core, those who embrace Picturing Writing and/or Image-Making are discovering that the format and daily routines of Artists/Writers Workshop are well aligned with the ELACCSS and that Artists/Writers Workshop helps teachers seamlessly address standards for reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language across the curriculum in ways that are effective for a wide range of learners.

Reading Anchor Standard #1, for instance, states: "Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 10). While I am sure that the drafters of the ELACCSS envisioned this standard being fulfilled strictly through interactions with written text, if we expand our notion of text to include pictures, something interesting occurs. We discover that the youngest readers (i.e. , picture readers) practice making inferences naturally and regularly as they engage in "reading a story" when they open a picture book

and begin to read the pictures, i.e., to draw meaning from them. When a teacher asks students to read the pictures in a picture book for meaning, s/he is asking them to practice making inferences. Following students' reading for meaning with a simple question ("How do you know that?") invites them to cite evidence—a practice required by the Common Core. This simple way to practice drawing inferences and citing evidence is developmentally appropriate for young children; it also reinforces an important skill that can later be transferred to the written text. Through equal attention to both picture book illustrations and text, teachers of young children discover they can address the ELACCSS in developmentally appropriate, more inclusive ways.

Higher-Order Thinking Skills

By being defined as artists and writers and assigned the task of creating their own quality picture books designed around curriculum topics, students come to see themselves as creators of important artistic and literary work. Through genuine interest in honing their craft, they engage in deeper study of work created by professionals in their fields. Through the study of the parallel and complementary languages of pictures and words—which focuses special attention on fostering language development across the curriculum—students read, analyze, discuss, synthesize, and then create their own high-quality narrative, informational, and opinion/argumentative pieces.

Picturing Writing and Image-Making naturally cultivate the deeper thinking promoted by the ELACCSS, including 21st-century skills: creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration (the 4Cs). As students become part of a community of learners who craft their own artistic and literary work, they use higher-order thinking skills. The level four depth of knowledge thinking skills[1] outlined in Webb's Depth of Knowledge Chart (Webb, 2005) are seamlessly woven throughout the students' creative process—again, in ways that are developmentally appropriate for young people.

Figure 11: Emily uses dark colors, a close-up, and a shift to a first-person perspective to create drama and suspense, grade 2.

For instance, in order for students to create their own high-quality content-driven research-based stories, they must engage in a picture book genre study focused on narrative writing. They analyze what makes a compelling story from both a literary and artistic perspective, identifying the key

1 Those skills are: design, connect, synthesize, apply concepts, critique, analyze, create, and prove.

(literary and artistic) elements that draw a reader in and move the reader through the story. As students analyze these complementary languages of pictures and words, they connect key concepts in art and writing, observing important parallels between the two. For example, they might observe that both artists and writers use tools of their own craft to create drama and suspense in a story; the writer uses strong descriptive language to achieve those effects, while the artist uses dramatic, often dark, colors. Frequently, artists also use a close-up perspective to bring the action closer to the reader. Shifting from a third-person perspective to a first-person perspective is another visual tool for increasing dramatic tension (see Figure 11).

To create a content-driven story, students must conduct research on their topic and then synthesize their knowledge as they apply key concepts to design their own artistic and literary work. Throughout the creation of their picture books, students critique their own and each other's art and writing, providing endless opportunities for discussion and revision. Supported by daily literature-based minilessons, students work as a classroom community to produce their best artistic and literary work. As they do this, they naturally engage in the 4 Cs. Though the work is intensive, the experience is highly engaging and deeply satisfying. Eight-year-old Jared reflects, "I think my book is the best book ever because I put a lot of hard work into it."

Habits of Mind

As we reflect upon the many ways that adopting a broader view of literacy learning makes sense, one final point to consider is the often unrecognized link between art-making and the ability to visualize. Key habits of mind essential to literacy learning are naturally strengthened when students develop the habits of mind of an artist. When young children see themselves as artists because they are given access to quality art materials, regularly engage in authentic art processes, and study the work of professional artists, they naturally adopt the habits of mind of an artist. They look more closely at the world around them. They not only observe the colors, shapes, and textures within the natural world more closely, but also take mental snapshots of what they see because they understand that this is information that will be useful to them later on, during the art strand of Artists/Writers Workshop. When the time comes, students are able to retrieve those mental snapshots. Without realizing it, they are practicing visualization.

While educators understand that the ability to visualize what we read is critical to comprehension (Bell, 2007) and that the ability to visualize what we write is essential to creating writing that paints pictures in the reader's mind (McClanahan, 1999), we somehow have overlooked the critical link between visualization and the artistic process. Art-making serves to strengthen the cognitive process

of visualization inherent in becoming an effective reader and writer. The ability to visualize is naturally and joyfully fostered through the habits of mind of the artist. The mental processes involved in reading, writing, and creating art go hand in hand. Our students will be much better served once we recognize this truth.

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