

Introduction to Scientific and Social Interventions in Art Education

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This Synnyt / Origins special issue is edited based on presentations given at the European InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) 2018 regional congress, held in Aalto University, in Finland, on June 18-21, 2018. The InSEA 2018 European congress concentrated on European and global issues around art education and its connections to societal and scientific topics. At the time the congress was held, Europe and the rest of the world were going through (and continue to go through) significant changes and facing major challenges. At this congress, art educators, artists, art teachers, curators, museum educators and researchers discussed these challenges and changes, bringing their local perspectives and experiences into the discourse. Participants were offered the possibility to learn from the strong Finnish art education structures and practices throughout the congress program, developed alongside local art and art education professionals. Art and its education met with Eco/Bio/Tech/Digital/Societal connections in Aalto University, on many levels.

The congress offered multiple presentation and participation formats, such as artistic participation in a curated exhibition, round-table presentations for inclusive conversations, “brainstorming” presentations to develop new ideas, short presentations for visual perspectives, workshops for art-making activities, along with academic traditional paper delivery.

The congress included 375 participants from 41 countries. It was particularly interesting to see InSEA gaining new members through this congress, perhaps due to its transdisciplinary

nature between the arts and science. During the congress, multiple different social and cultural events were held. Espoo city hosted a reception in the EMMA museum where President Tarja Halonen, among other important speakers, gave a remarkable speech on the significance of arts in society. The artistic program was extensive, including a curated art exhibition as a form of congress participation, and students' exhibitions from Aalto University and other educational institutions around Finland. Polkuja 2.0, organized by the Finnish Art Schools for Children and Young People, was particularly well-received. The four intensive days ended with much-enjoyed parties celebrating midsummer.

This issue contains all the presentations from the congress in their different categories. The call for proposals provided an option for the presenters to go through the academic peer review process and consider the submission format between paper proposals and visual essays. We received proposals in each category: peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed academic papers and peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed visual essays. As the congress had many more presentations than we received as submissions, the rest of the presentations are published in this issue as abstracts. We hope this collection provides a good perspective on the active and contemporary art education discourse!

The peer-reviewed submissions have gone through one round of critical peer reviews. Some of them were decided to be published without peer review. We have gathered the abstracts and the peer-reviewed submissions under the titles Digital and new materialist artistic and art educational practices and theories, Contemporary artistic and art educational approaches to diversity and cultural changes, and Artistic and scientific collaborations.

Digital and new materialist artistic and art educational practices and theories

Maria Letsiou discusses the problematic nature of contemporary art teaching conditioned by the tensions and contradictions experienced in public life. Letsiou presents a case study undertaken at the Art High School in Thessaloniki. A mode of video production, inspired by a student's unsolicited video production on an Instagram account, together with other images and in-class art productions, constituted the studio-learning product and the exhibition items for a school event dedicated to Declaration of Human Rights Day. With her study, Letsiou aims to open up a dialogue on art education in the context of new spaces (such as social media) for participative and creative practices as a practice-based learning. Letsiou gives an interesting insight into the intersection between in-class art production and out-of-school creative practices and discusses further possible outcomes, leading to important conclusions about art teaching social engagement.

Wolfgang Schreibelmayer gives a new perspective on art study and offers methods and tools which he suggests to be implemented in arts education. Schreibelmayer describes two tool constructions: "The pendulum" and "The 4 fields of potential." He also links these to other recently created tools such as the cockpit simulation in a shoebox "The Navigator Tool for visual arts education," the real walk-in installation "Do You Commit Analysis?!", and the 3-dimensional visualizations "Tower of Learning" and "Sounds of the Mothership." Schreibelmayer argues that these methods do not only serve for visualizing complexed interrelations, but also for demonstrating visualization model tools, dealing with questions on the potential of these processes in the context of visual arts education. In the end, Schreibelmayer discusses the importance of understanding that these art classes are not only significant for students within the school, but also provide wide perspectives for society.

Hajnalka Kovács writes about visibility as an essential characteristic of communication in

the 21st century. This is caused by the rapid development and accessibility of mobile technologies: for example, most elementary schoolchildren have a tool which they can use to create digital pictures. Making and sharing these pictures has become a daily routine for them. Kovács states that the abandonment of the traditional way of making pictures – on paper, with a pencil, pen, brush, etc., affects the self-perception and sets up new trends of visual expression. The author presents and discusses the results of a research project which involved more than 300 students from 15 classes (Grades 1-4) in two primary schools in Kecskemét (Hungary), who performed four drawing and design tasks. The author's aim is to show how media and theme affect the communicative value of children's drawings, and to explore what aspects (e.g. media, sex, age, etc.) determine the characteristic trends of visual expression in the examined works of children.

Kajsa G. Eriksson and **Lena Berglin** write about revisiting outdoor learning and an exploration of de-centering human agency as part of post-human art and technology education and research. They explore material sound as a part of an outdoor vague event using art-based research. As outdoor learning stimulates more and other senses, the use of outdoor learning and pedagogy are often promoted as a part of education that reaches for social and environmental sustainability goals. The authors draw our attention to a possible risk that, due to the dichotomization of outdoor and indoor learning, teachers and researchers will just situate human-centered learning into the outdoor environment, missing possibilities of developing less human-centered education and research. Eriksson and Berglin suggest improvisation as a tool for this transformation, and as a possible transformation toward de-centered human perspectives in art and technology education and research. Overall, the article discusses the necessity of acknowledging human experience as limited and differentiated for developing de-centered human perspectives in education and research.

Levent Çoruh and **Yusuf Osman Taşdelen** propose a new approach to the development

of Augmented Reality-based innovative course material. This approach is demonstrated based on an application developed for a digital character modeling course. The ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) method was taken as an example for the development of the methodology used for the course. Features of the software include smartphone and Google cardboard compatibility, offering a shareable experience between teacher-student-student and a 3D virtual environment that can be represented within the physical world. Students can monitor the progress of the modeling work using individual controls with a phone-compatible Bluetooth device (rotate, zoom, navigating through the modeling stages), managing virtual objects through physical objects (orbit): it is possible to explore the relationship between the physical reference (blueprint) and the virtual model during the modeling phase through virtual images superimposed on the physical medium.

In her article, **Kim Snepvangers** investigates key questions of storying as research using the 1848 marriage of her paternal great-great-grandfather (GGF) as a catalyst for re-opening the discourse on how cultural divides and quasi-acceptance of diversity as “novelty” and “industriousness” can be reconsidered and disclosed as micronarratives of colonization with resonance today. The marriage was one of only a handful of reported intermarriages in the early days of colonial Australia. The text about the author’s GGF from an 1848 Sydney Morning Herald (*SMH) article reports on the “Marriage of an Aboriginal.” Snepvangers uses arts-based A/r/tographic research and her artworks comprise lightboxes, aprons, documents, embroidery, and a performance.

Contemporary artistic and art educational approaches to diversity and cultural changes

Ruth Gabriele Mateus-Berr, Simona Bergmann and **Violeta Hinojosa** present an interesting case study based on the “Oresteia” project. The project aimed to involve students with

“Oresteia,” the Greek tragedy by Aeschylus, through individual artistic approaches, and presents the outcomes at the National Theatre. This article raises complicated and important issues in art education, such how to approach affective art works with young people aged between 10 and 15 years. How could the experience, possible fears and final reflection on the results shift and shape our understanding of art-based practice as a teaching approach for studying art?

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In her article, **Janeke Wienk** raises problematics of the current discourse on contemporary arts education provoked by the instrumental approach to art. She argues that the predominant tendency to value art’s role in education in instrumental terms leads to a cavity in terms of art’s true educational potential. Wienk emphasizes art’s natural ability to reach the core of human existence and provides theoretical perspectives on redefining art’s crucial role in education.

Noura Shuqair analyses the model of the esthetics of cognitive mapping developed by Fredric Jameson as a new approach in art pedagogy. Shuqair argues that the model of esthetics of cognitive mapping can become a visual pedagogical tool for art researchers and art students to produce art that reveals more clearly the unseen connections between a problem or an object

and its relationship to the larger, invisible global world. The author demonstrates that the model enables art educators to conceptualize the complexity of interconnected economic, social, and political realities using artistic practices and helps to produce new artistic forms actually capable of imagining the complexity of the interrelated layers of the social realm.

Olaia Miranda Berasategi continues the discussion on the social engagement of art teaching by analyzing the theory of Jacques Rancière. Berasategi accentuates that esthetic configurations, as shapers of experiences, can result in important learning processes when subjectivities and ways of experiencing the common are represented. The author then depicts relational esthetics as a more experiential, affective, and relational learning process in pre-school education based on Nicolas Bourriauds theory of relational esthetics together with Claire Bishops critical review. As the outcome of this study, Berasategi offers to consider the concept of relational esthetics as an art form which can reshape other ways of experiencing the common in pre-school education.

Kenji Koike discusses the constructivist approach used by the International Baccalaureate programs to see if this approach could be efficient for making Japanese art education better by both improving the curriculum and successfully engaging the interest of ninth-grade students at a non-IB school. Koike revises the Course for Study of Japan (2017), where the curriculum was organized by clarifying competencies and constructivist learning principles were used. Koike examines students' understanding of concepts used by IB in art classes at a junior high school that is not an IB school in Japan. By applying the learning of concepts of the MYP, the author demonstrates the merits of conceptual learning, as well as how Japanese art education can benefit from them. Using a combination of lessons and postproject questionnaires, Koike worked with the students to explore and help them understand such concepts as esthetics, culture, expression, and others within a global context in the manner of IB's MYP program.

In his paper, **Jaakko Jekunen** discusses the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière,

where he analyses the reconceptualization of politics and discusses what it implies for our understanding of society. Jekunen uses Rancière's concept of the distribution of the sensible and explicates the intricate connection between politics and esthetics it displays. Further, the author discusses the notion of an esthetic community and connects the threads in elaborating a conception of Rancièrian esthetic education. Jekunen demonstrates how esthetic education can be seen as a polemical intervention in the conceptual space of art education. The author argues that this intervention gives an important insight into the complex issues found in today's classrooms and other sites of learning, evaluates the aims of art education, and even discusses some practices that can be used for trying this theoretical framework in practice.

Annika Hellman and **Ulla Elisabet Lind** write on changes in visual art education through gendered visual, pedagogical, and theoretical interventions. They base her work on two independent research projects and examples from published research. Hellman and Lind work with images and video diary recordings by young people and didactic examples of working with gender in visual art education. In this article authors answer questions regarding the ability of visual art education to change and transform stereotyped thinking and the binary oppositions of gender. Based on analyses of visual and verbal material from a post-humanist perspective, Hellman and Lind show that visual art education should engage with the gender problem; moreover it has the capability to dissolve gender binaries and stereotypical thinking by facilitating fabulation, imagining, speculation, and fantasizing about the future.

Natalie LeBlanc and **Rita L. Irwin** explore the potentiality of the arts for reflecting upon and provoking complex understandings of contemporary national identity. In addition, the authors explore a set of cosmopolitan practices and positions that enlarge the quality of teaching and learning in various educational settings. The authors are also investigating how art can create a space for exploring and strengthening identification with place.

In her article, **Elina Härkönen** discusses the principles of cultural sustainability and the

role of continuity in art interventions as a form of community art. Härkönen discusses an art-based action research project that took place in northern Finland 2016-2017. The project was a collaboration initiative between the municipality of Enontekiö and the Department of Art Education, University of Lapland, and aimed to increase the accessibility of art for people living outside the municipality center. Härkönen analyses the workshop that took place as part of the project through constant evaluation of the actions and gradually increased engagement of people involved in the project.

Estrella Luna Muñoz and **Isabel Cristina Trindade** discuss their work “Multiculturalism as a point of union,” which was part of an international project entitled CREARTE. The project aimed to foster contemporary art studies in primary schools to create collective and integrating multiculturalism in education. The learning process involved artistic strategies with the body, sounds, traditions, and rituals, which helped to generate a diversity of experiences in the group. Muñoz and Trindade explain how this approach helped children to develop new sensibilities and enriched them with established connectedness in the group. The generated interactions, experiences, and learning were the foundation for gradually breaking social barriers and evolving the understanding of the different cultural backgrounds of the peers, and as such to build a bridge to open-mindedness. The authors demonstrate and discuss the way in which this approach leads to the discovering of the Self and the Other and to the establishing of the Collective Self.

Artistic and scientific collaborations

Andy Ash writes about artists and scientists’ collaboration in terms of new knowledge production. In this work, Ash considers Visual Art Practice as Research and brings as an example his own art practice – the exhibition entitled ‘Talking Brains’ at King’s College Cambridge (February 2018). Ash offers a discussion on the concept of “artful inquiry,” and how this concept as a research model can be generative. He further raises questions of personally situated knowledge

production as a research strategy that crosses disciplinary boundaries of art and science. By generating transdisciplinary conversation on the brain, ways of seeing, and ways of being, Ash then analyses how collaborative knowledge production generates multiple perspectives and thus unanticipated knowledge.

Writing this editorial is historical, as this is the last issue in the journal with the name *Synnyt/Origins: Finnish Studies in Art Education*. The journal, with this name, goes back to 2004. The journal was developed to connect theoretical research and art educational practices: to connect knowledge that directs practices and solutions in our fields. Its purpose early on was to build a bridge between theory and practice, and to provide a place to archive important voices from the field – including students’ voices. This is what the journal also intends to do in the future. We have realized that the journal is becoming more and more international, when most publications are in English, and hence wanted to give a more approachable name to the journal: **Research in Art Education**. We hope our colleagues all around the world will find this academic journal an important place to publish now and in the future, with a new name, but similar goals!