

'Art is our contemporary' - preparing art educators of socially disadvantaged children for meaningful museum education at the Ludwig Museum Budapest

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Abstract

Teaching about contemporary art is a problematic curricular area with a constantly growing knowledge base and methodological repertoire from teachers. This paper presents an effort to mentor art educators of disadvantaged educational institutions to appropriate socially focused contemporary arts with special relevance for their students. The programme is based on constructivist educational methodologies and critical arts pedagogy practices. We briefly introduce the venue: the Ludwig Museum of Budapest, placed spiritually and geographically at the intersection of Eastern and Western Europe, and discuss the contents, assessment methods and results of the mentoring programme.

Introduction

Exhibitions may reveal astonishing new discoveries, or works of art with international professional acclaim, but if they are unable to enchant their audience and make people reflect and be enriched by knowledge relevant for their lives, they cannot be considered successful. The museum visitor – or, to use a more authentic, contemporary phrase, the exhibition user – has recently become an important target group for more and more museums. On the eve of modern museology, in the first decades of the 20th century, it was the erudite and ready-to-learn elite only that were approached. It was a matter of common

understanding, that visitors shared the interest and also some of the professional knowledge of museologists, and therefore were able to comprehend and appreciate the exhibition based on results of research (Rule, 2017). These exhibitions barely contained text. Objects were labelled to be identifiable in catalogues. Guides were knowledgeable, mostly male museum staff members with a narrative style you can easily imagine.

The democratisation of the museum that happened gradually in the second half of the last century, required a profoundly different approach, embracing visitors with little or no previous knowledge. Among them, school groups appeared, with little or no motivation and interest. Around the eve of the 20th century, didactic installation pieces were introduced. Explanations appeared beside or around the showcased objects. In museums of natural history, animals and plants were placed in a setting modelling their natural habitat in dioramas. Scale models and mock-ups of ancient monuments were installed and publications intended for the public at large offered in museum shops sometimes turned into designer boutiques. Besides exhibition guides, and illustrated catalogues, publications for museum learning: task sheets, exercise booklets, collaborative, interactive discovery leaflets for groups or families appeared. First encounters of museum staff and visitors gradually shifted outside the museum building and started with science communication and exhibition marketing through the media. Mass communication efforts have substantially broadened the potentials of museum staff to deliver messages about exhibitions – and also forced scholars to act as educators. Explainers appeared beside guides, their name expressing their mission: to lead and mentor, not to guide (Kárpáti & Vásárhelyi, 2013).

Nowadays, museums are open and responsive cultural institutions that cater for the interested and motivated public. The next step in museum education should be to invite those who would not voluntarily come, namely socially disadvantaged children and youth, often living within a stone's throw from the museum walls. The 9th district of Budapest is home to cultural opposites: shabby blocks of flats for impoverished and marginalised citizens – among them, large groups of Hungarian Roma –, who were not flexible enough to adapt to the drastically changing economic circumstances of the Hungarian version of capitalism in the 1990s. In order to integrate their children, we need to win their teachers first. They do not only need motivation and encouragement to enter the Ludwig Museum, situated in the elegant part of District 9, at the Danube embankment. Teachers in their fifties – the majority of

the educational professionals in Budapest – have not learnt about modern art during their training in the 1970s and 1980s. Museum curators and educators have to furnish them with knowledge and methodology at the same time, and create a welcoming, collaborative atmosphere that inspires them to share the experience with their students. If they understand our slogan: “Art is our contemporary”, they will be able to build bridges between high culture and everyday reality. The museum educators of the museum use in their everyday practice the varied toolkit with the methodology of the team working, dramatic scenes, and the multimodal approach.

Learning theories that have proven to be best suited to museum-based educational processes are constructivism and triological learning. According to the *constructivist theory*, the learner should be encouraged to activate a wide range of previously gained information and experiences to construct new meaning and integrate it with his or her knowledge base (Lankford, 2002). Knowledge construction should be guided and promoted, but not dictated by the teacher who is invited to assume the position of mentor. As a result, visitors will come up with narratives related to the exhibition theme, new insights about their naive scientific theories based on hands-on displays and lab experiments or changes of taste and development of a flexible set of expectations about contemporary art.

In the *trialogical learning* model, even the object of study is jointly selected, and the inquiry process is a democratic sharing of ideas and resources. A successful art or science project involving works exhibited, a video film contextualising an idea presented in a display, an object offered to the museum because of its relations with an installation may all be products of triological learning in museums. (For educational examples of the use of both theories in educational interventions in Multigrade schools catering for many disadvantaged children, cf. Kárpáti & Dorner, 2010).

Teachers with their school group in a museum often have to play the role of museum educator or explainer. ECSITE, the European network of science centres and museums established the Facilitation Group, (<https://www.ecsite.eu/activities-and-services/thematic-groups/facilitation-group>). Based on results of their studies, the group revealed the major features of a successful training programme for explainers that include many skills directly related to exhibition communication. These skills are useful for educators embarking on museum visits with their students as well:

- Development of self-perception and professionalization (as communicator, a museum professional, a science teacher etc.).
- Expanding theoretical knowledge (e. g., theories of learning through conversation).
- Acquisition of the dialogue model of communication with visitors and new formats of animation.
- Training for tackling controversial issues.
- Enhancement of professional negotiation skills (e.g.: conducting successful conversations to improve the relationship between explainers and management).

Teachers should also be mentored in navigating the exhibition venue. At a blockbuster exhibition, it is impossible to wander around because other visitors define one's own route and the time to be spent in front of an installation. These routes are usually linear as visitors are part of a crowd moving slowly and deliberately through the halls in the sequence indicated by the signs and guards. Such a seemingly endless tour is not appropriate for our target visitors: teenagers who are novices in a museum experience. Teachers must learn how to view the exhibition in a "hypertext" manner, walking from one piece to another, driven by the appeal and relevance of works. Students may approach an artwork because it catches their eye or they heard some information about it. Disregarding the "correct" sequence indicated in the map or short guide is highly characteristic for young audiences. Museum education should give them hints about a meaningful visiting sequence.

Need for a training for art educators of socially disadvantaged children for meaningful museum education in Hungary

In the Hungarian museum sphere, the *Art as our contemporary*, an accredited (recognised by state educational authorities) teacher training programme is unique, as it aims to introduce educational methodologies to be employed at a museum of art and create a learning community with a limited number of participants (maximum 18 teachers). The Hungarian Professional Development Programme for Teachers, an obligatory career path, requires 120 hours of accredited professional training every seven years. The required continuous self-development aims to develop teacher's knowledge and skills, and ensures a high-quality pedagogical standard at schools. In fact, this learning obligation means a measurable learning attainment target for the

teachers. Furthermore, our art-based pedagogical training is a rarity on the list of accredited training options.

Characteristics of the arts-based teacher training's characteristic:

E-learning and blended training are in demand in the times of the COVID19 pandemic. E-learning as a teacher education format may be designed to provide a customized learning environment and support independence in deciding the time, place, and speed of learning. Blended and e-learning have a specific methodology-curriculum design and the way of monitoring the development of knowledge. The museum educators in the Ludwig Museum have not had previous experiences with e-learning. Therefore, the staff of the Centre for Contemporary Art Education and Methodology organised a blended learning environment, using online platforms and face-to-face workshops at the same time. An argument against employing e-learning only was that teachers often claimed to feel isolated during the home-schooling period of the pandemic.

The design of the training's structure was influenced by different aspects such as the teachers' time management and their teaching hours as well as other factors indicated as a response to our pre-training survey. The curriculum was spread over four days, essentially on Friday afternoons, after school and Saturdays. The training programme was divided into an online learning session of three days and a final workshop at the museum. The learning units were built on each other and ensured continuous elaboration. The three-day, online training programme focused on the contemporary concept of the museum as a public service provider. It informed participants about the collection of the Ludwig Museum, through diverse methodological toolkits. While getting acquainted with contemporary art through various tasks, they have become a knowledge building community and used the artworks for creating a community.

The first task was to choose one artwork from the Collection and use it to introduce themselves. Many times, they chose the same artwork, and this similarity of taste created the opportunity to compare their interpretations. The second day was dedicated to modern and contemporary art with a brief presentation of the significant schools, styles, artists, and questions of the international art scene after the Second World War till our days. We also discussed the interpretation possibilities of guided tours. The programme of the second training day was built on the concept of the variation of the

presentations (one-directional communication) and art practice based on new knowledge and conversation with the participants (bidirectional communication). The third day was dedicated to museum education and consisted of a brief international overview of modern art and contemporary museum education practice as well as its unresolved issues. The trainers presented the methods with practical examples involving drama pedagogy, project method, debate-based interpretation, etc. The presentation and discussion about the educational programmes for children with mental and physical conditions that require special educational care gave rise to considerable interest, as many schools that cater for deprived communities have students who face similar challenges. The Ludwig Museum staff have a rare and significant experience in this unique field of art education. The fourth and last day was dedicated to museum practice to ensure personal encounters with the staff and professional discussions. Teachers received a guided tour at the Ludwig Museum. They explored the exhibition rooms and selected artworks to be used in their course paper for their own school community.

The artistic background of the training

The Collection of the Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art Budapest is based on the donation of the German collector couple Irene and Peter Ludwig. In 1989, the Hungarian Republic became the owner of 70 artworks from the Aachen Ludwig Foundation. The Permanent Collection is successfully rearranged year by year, based on the concept of the collecting mission that focuses on social and artistic issues of the Central European region, and is focused on the art world of the 60s and 70s. The interest of Irene and Peter Ludwig can also be revealed both in the Hungarian and the international collection (Cf. Ludwig Museum, 2021a) Therefore, some art styles are highly present, such as Pop Art (Andy Warhol: Single Elvis, 1964; Roy Lichtenstein: Vicky, 1964; Tom Wesselmann: Landscape #4, 1965; Claes Oldenburg: Lingerie counter, 1962; Joe Tilson: The Five Senses, 1968-69) and the iconic artworks of the photo and hyperrealism (Richard Estes: Rappaport Pharmacy, 1976; Chuck Close: Nat, 1972-73; Malcolm Morley: Race Track (South Africa), 1970). (Cf. Ludwig Museum, 2021b) <https://www.ludwigmuseum.hu/en/catalogues?s=&page=3>). Following a decision to create a cultural bridge between East and West, the original characteristics and mission remains the same till the present day. Before the change of the political system in 1989, the Ludwig couple provided means of communication and attendance for the marginalized artists of the Soviet area in the West. This marginalized status could be discovered until the present day.

Ludwig's Collection provides parallels to the diverse cultural and artistic worlds of East and West. The comparison of the artworks from the 60s could give us unquestionable evidence about the connectedness of Eastern artists to the global art scene. Despite their limited possibilities to access cultural news, opportunities to exhibit and win a scholarship abroad, successfully connected to global aesthetic issues and artistic trends. Some examples about artistic convergences (similar formal and / or thematic aspects of works but different artists): *FS67-154 Black Adder* (1968) by Frank Stella and *Stripes No. 1* (1968) by Imre Bak or the previously mentioned photorealistic painting of Malcolm Morely compared to the *Cotton pickers in Kazakhstan* (1972) by László Lakner are all on the show of the exhibition entitled *Time Machine* (Ludwig Museum, 2021c).

Living and acting on the periphery is still a relevant question in our region. Therefore, this comparative approach manifests itself in the exhibition strategy of the Ludwig Museum even today. In harmony with the Central European focus, political question of the area is highly represented in the Ludwig Museum. The exhibition entitled *The Permanent Revolution. Ukrainian Art Today* (Ludwig Museum, 2018) gave an artistic insight into the situation of this country. The importance of the exhibition that won the You-2 Price, the People's Choice Award of the Global Fine Art Awards. This recognition proved the international interest in the art of the Central European region.

The long-term project of CAPP – Cooperative Art Partnership Programme and its final exhibition, *Common Affairs – Collaborative Art Projects in 2018*, (Ludwig Museum, 2018b), provided the possibility and the methodological framework for artists working together with various communities, including marginalized people or groups with specific problems such as pupils in Budapest and Pécs, young people living with mental illnesses, people with visual impairments, inhabitants of small villages, agricultural entrepreneurs, and Hungarian Roma living in a disadvantaged area. The project's artistic process is being used as a basis for the museum education research programme of the Ludwig Museum, realised in the framework of the AMASS Project.

Participants of the in-service training course

The main goal of the 30-hour accredited teacher training course at the Ludwig Museum was to introduce contemporary arts as a pedagogical and communication tool; and acquaint teachers with the museum as an informal pedagogical space. We consider contemporary arts a rich knowledge repository for everyone. Art appreciation programmes targeting contemporary works may best be realised through methodologies that are best realised in an informal learning environment of the museum. Teamwork, dance, drama pedagogy, diverse creative processes, and educational debate are examples from the toolkit we shared with the participants during our training. During the 4-day training series, we dedicated a session of four hours to explain our pedagogical practice and our museum education practice concerning disabled and marginalized people.

We realised two training courses with 35 participants. Course participant data quoted below represent the key aspect in the selection of the applicants. Teachers from the countryside and disadvantaged schools were given priority. Formation of participant groups of the two iterations of the training course happened at the same time, and we received 84 applications for 30 places. In the applications, female and secondary school teachers were overrepresented. We specified two criteria in the selection process: a training agreement with the supporting statement of the director of the school and a completed motivation form. Information collected by the motivation form helped us understand the teachers' background and interest and define their knowledge about contemporary art.

In the first iteration, we had two participants who work in a secondary grammar school for adults, one from a primary school with a unique educational programme, and one teacher from a foster home with mostly Romani children from the countryside. Two teachers came from foundation schools where the students with special needs can learn in smaller groups than in the state schools. We invited an artist and a drama therapist who works as a freelancer.

Research questions

Teaching about contemporary arts is a difficult task for overburdened art teachers who find it difficult to follow current art trends, because of their high teaching loads. Therefore, we have developed an *in-service course for teachers*,

entitled '*Art as our contemporary*' to introduce methodologies of teaching contemporary arts. We support the teachers to integrate arts-based methods into the teaching practice of the discipline "Visual Culture" and eventually in other disciplines as well. Our teaching aids include the necessary background knowledge to realise the programmes and specific intended learning outcomes. We intend to provide tools for assessing student development, so that the teachers could reveal the usability of the school-based interventions. Our research questions were as follows:

Can arts-based interventions, mixing traditional methods of art education with innovative, informal methodologies of museum education be integrated in the art history-focused Hungarian curriculum of Visual Culture (the discipline for art education) at schools?

Can teachers acquire an open and flexible attitude towards contemporary arts that they are unfamiliar with during the 30-hour intensive course? Can our educational interventions, originally based on face-to-face encounters and direct experiences with art works be transferred to the digital learning and teaching platforms?

Can we form a knowledge building community from a group of teachers with different backgrounds during a short training period of 30 lesson hours? Will they be able to show peer support and learn from each other?

The training process was documented in detail, through participant observation (with checklist), video films of training events (with participant consent secured) and through pre- and post-hoc questionnaires that reflected participant satisfaction as well as changes of attitudes. The online sessions were recorded and the continuous feedback from the participants also contributed to our rich research dataset. The documentation of the final projects (scenarios, photo and video documentation of the educational programmes and the artworks of the children, self-reflected diaries of the teachers), and the data of our satisfaction survey made possible reveal the efficiency of the training and aspects to improve.

The most spectacular development could be noticed in the case of teachers who never used art in their educational practice and had hardly any knowledge about contemporary art. A good indicator of the success of the programme were reports on the multiple uses of the museum educational toolkit. In the

next part of our paper, we will discuss examples of the arts-based projects that teachers designed and realised as a final work of the training course.

| Question | Rating |
|--|--------|
| Implementation of criteria for innovative art education projects | 4,7 |
| Innovative quality of the knowledge / attitudes / values transmitted | 4,4 |
| Appropriateness of teaching methods | 4,77 |
| Practical use of museum education toolkit received during training | 4,88 |
| Feasible requirements | 4,83 |
| Monitoring of the knowledge acquisition process | 4,88 |
| Satisfaction with the knowledge of the trainers | 4,94 |
| Quality of technical conditions | 4,83 |
| Quality of organization | 4,94 |

Table 1: Data from the satisfaction survey

Several aspects of the programme involved **ethical issues**, what needed special prudence from the participants, the trainers, and the researchers. The learning community was carefully managed, and protection of the copyright of the final presentations and the educational projects was secured. The documentation requirements for the research programme were disclosed to the participants who gave written consent to the recording and use of the training sessions, the visual materials produced and their final projects in publications and doctoral dissertations. We used a secure online platform and ensured the safe storage of sensitive data of the participants.

Artistic outcomes of the training

As the final stage of the five-week-long mentoring and training period, participants were invited to design and implement an art education programme using the museum educational methods learned and the toolkits. On 9th April 2021, we finished the first iteration and presented the 18 participants final projects. Due to the pandemic and lockdown, the projects were implemented online or in the open-air, as a city tour. The participants could work with their regular students, and they tried to fit their programme into the school curriculum. According to the participants' feedback, the strength of the training was not just the knowledge that was transmitted. Our

educational results were manifest in the improved communication skills of the participants, who could share their experiences, widen their methodological repertoire and establish a learning community. The final presentations show the strong effects of the museum collection and the methods of the trainers. Changes were especially conspicuous in the case of the teachers who did not use contemporary art before the training. We now present some projects to illustrate this result.

In one of the projects that was realised with secondary school fashion design students, the selected artworks from the Ludwig Collection (István Nádler: *Violence*, 1968; Endre Tót: *Hats*, 1969; Karel Appel: *Femme*, 1967; Ilona Keserü: *Painting No. 1*, 1966; János Szirtes: *Twosome*, 1987; György Szőnyei: *Gift*, 1986-1990) seemed to be a rich inspiration.

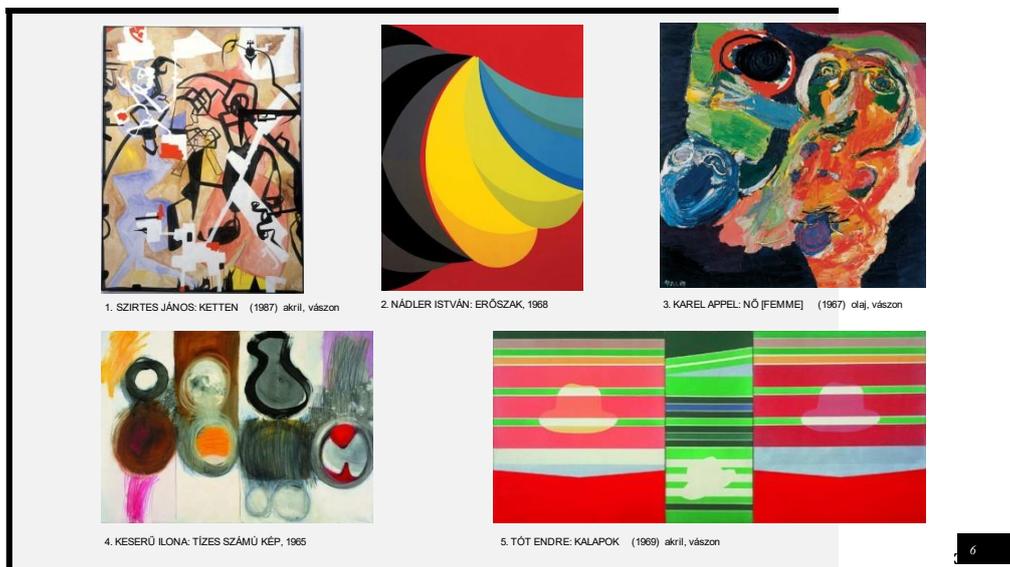


Figure 1: Slide from the teacher presentation with the selected artworks from the Ludwig Collection

The visual language elements that the teacher selected were the colour, forms, and textures of the artworks to ensure real motivation for the students and facilitate their creative process. Although art school students were experienced in viewing paintings, the teacher decided to start the lesson with a slow looking exercise to get students in the mood of art appreciation. Later, she asked them to assemble household items and everyday objects to reproduce the artworks they prefer. Then, they had to take a photo of their assemblage and use this photo as a fabric to design a garment.

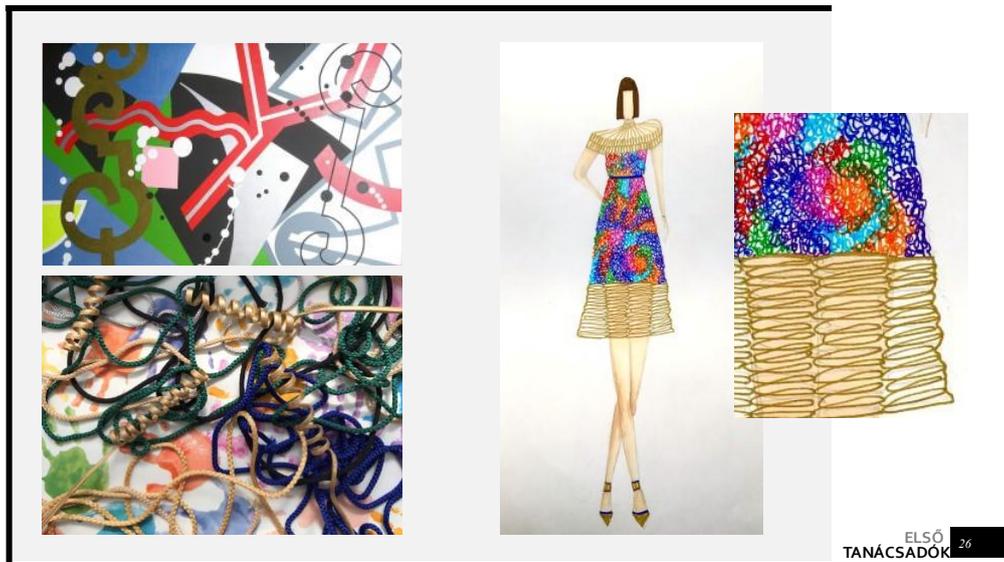


Figure 2: Slide from the teacher presentation with work of the student

Online learning resulted in unexpected difficulties for the teachers. They were obliged to start a lesson of Visual Culture, a discipline based on creativity, early in the morning. Senior primary and secondary schools were online, and inspiring students was a challenge in the demotivating circumstances, even with an exciting and spectacular art form like photorealism. The project worked with the concepts of reality and illusion, and the aim was to depict the urban environment of the students. The lesson consisted of a preparatory discussion and the teacher's presentation about the international icons of photorealism (Richard Estes, Chuck Close) and contemporary Hungarian artists (Dezső Szabó, Levente Baranyai, Ábel Szabó). Their works were meant to be a multilevel inspiration, with diverse approaches to representing the characteristics of the city. The students could work on their project at home and start taking a photo series (photo diary) of their rural environment. They could use these photos as a photo sketchbook to create their portrait of the city in drawing. In the final stage of the creative process, the students could leave out the undesirable elements or replace with a required one. In this project, the photo-based artworks could be an inspiration to change perspective of the students in observing the city and help them define their well-known environment as a source of creative ideas.



Figure 3: Slide from the teacher presentation with work of the students

The acquaintance with contemporary art should start at an early age. The aim of the online art education project managed with seven-year-old primary school students was to increase their interest in contemporary art. The programme was expected to adopt the online art education programme in the activities of the school job orientation day. The main artwork of the programme was a sculpture, *The worker of tomorrow, deployment outfit* by István Csákány (2009). Based on Csákány's sculpture, the children were asked to create statues or installations using everyday objects, toys, and materials at their home to represent their dream job. The method of interpretation was again slow looking which ensured enough time for the children to notice the most relevant characteristics of the artwork. The methodology of slow looking asks the viewer to spend a determined time observing the different characteristics of the artwork and notice the feelings and emotions that the artwork created. During the discussion, they learnt about the function of a statue. The online platform limited the possibilities of observation, and in the museum, the effect of the artwork could have been more forceful. Nevertheless, the teacher could design a brilliant, multimodal programme activating the whole family of the student.



Figure 4: Student works are inspired by the sculpture of István Csákány

We selected teachers who are marginalized as professionals in different ways (living in the countryside, far from peer support and in-service training opportunities, working with children with special needs or learning difficulties). The teacher who works with children of Romani background, who live in a foster home, enriched the group's pedagogical experiences as her students were marginalised and challenged in many respects. The crucial artwork in her project was the series by Mara Oláh (alias Omara, cf. Secondary Archive, no date). a Romani autodidact painter, who could perpetuate the difficulties and restrictive practices used against her that are typical for other Romani people as well. Omara was a perfect choice to work with underprivileged youth because they could identify themselves with the artist of Romani origin. Omara's visual language draws inspiration equally from classical modern art (Picasso's Blue Period) and Romani visual culture. Omara had a natural talent to condense complex, high-intensity emotions and actions in a composition, and besides her effective figural representation, she underlines the thoughts and sentences of the actors. During a personality development training, young people could work up the atrocities they had encountered, articulate their emotional reactions in specific situations and reveal restriction general experience of exclusion because of their Romani origins, and make use of their visual cultural heritage in a creative process. The art education programme aims to increase the openness to contemporary art, enhances conscientious visual self-representation, and introduce Omara as a real Romani icon to the youth living in a foster home.



Figure 5: Student work is inspired by the paintings by Omara

"Everybody could be a responsible artist!" Joseph Beuys, whose artwork, *Sealed Letter* (1967, cf. Dia Community, 2018) was chosen by two teacher participants as the inspiration of their final project. In the first programme, the teacher

reflected on Beuys' performances and his creative process, and in the e-learning phase, she tried to use a mix of offline and online methodology. In the preparatory period, she sent packages with the materials needed during the programme to the participants via post. During the online workshop, she introduced the complex theoretical and creative meaning of performances by Beuys to the children and their families. The programme's first aim was to ensure the feeling and experiences of creativity, the second to provide isolated and separated family members in quarantine the feeling of community and collaboration.

The educational programme related to diverse school disciplines: Visual Culture, Language and Communication, Biology and Environmental Studies, Literature, and Music. In the first part of the programme, students were shown a presentation by the teacher and listened to the music of John Cage (*Dream*, 1948). After this frontal activity, students had started the active work and opened the package. Primary school students and their families, altogether twelve participants were asked to draw the imaginary portrait of a creature which can grow out of a seed. After they finalized the drawings, the children had to plant the seeds; this action reflected Beuys's action called *7000 Oaks* (1969, cf. Dia Community, 2018). The participants' last task was to send seeds to a person they chose, and with this simple action, they became an artist practising mail art. The second art education project was inspired by the artistic activities of Beuys. The teacher, who designed this project, is a painter and drama educator, and therefore she has a complex and diversified methodological repertoire for the interpretation of art. The project intended to initiate a dialog about the goals, tools and possibilities of art in a group spanning several cohorts (participants were aged 13-25 years) and help participants to understand the idea of thermoplastic art and a way of perception focusing on bodily sensations.

The venue of the workshop was the studio of the teacher, where she pre-selected ten artworks with different media (drawings, paintings, and objects). In the first, introductory round, participants had to choose one artwork which could help them to present themselves, then they could vote for one artwork which they want to know more about and work with it during the programme. The selection of artworks on the voting-paper included one artwork by Beuys, and she decided to use it as a visual citation to underline the comprehensive character of modern art. During the programme, members of the group created their own associations about the chosen artwork and then wrote a narrative story to interpret it. In creative drama session, participants had recalled the

actors and elements of the story to life and after finishing the drama the teacher gave them time to share the experiences. As a closing activity, the participants were invited to create their own visual messages according to specific characteristics like size (20x20x20 centimetre), colour (to use maximum three colours), to have a tactile aspect, (to represent the 'secret' and Beuys' thermoplastic idea), and finally to make it in short time (20 minutes).

The remaining two art education project could represent an important characteristic feature of working with art: it could be used as a starting point, a possibility to find specific interpretation of individuals and the whole group.



Figure 6: Voting-papers used during the art educational programme

In the second iteration of the in-service training programme, teachers will be asked to end their final projects with assessment to identify the effects of arts-based interventions on children and their teachers. Three types of evaluation may be used to determine how likely it is that our exhibition visits and creative workshops have successfully communicated educational and artistic messages:

1. *Front-end evaluation* identifies what visitors already know about the subject matter of an artwork and brings to light naive theories, pseudo-scientific ideas, and misconceptions they may have about the topic. It also reveals questions and concerns regarding issues that are already part of public discourse. It is typically conducted early on in the exhibit development phase. Front-end evaluation consists of visitor and/or questionnaires.

2. *Formative evaluation* methods can be used to observe the ongoing educational process. An interesting alternative targets visitor experiences in the exhibition space. This study, executed by participant observers who notice how children and their teachers interact with certain exhibits, reveals the highlights and disregarded works of a show for a special visitor group, and suggests design ideas that may communicate the message of the exhibition more clearly. The evaluation of an exhibition while “in use” may result in a more accessible display, both physically and intellectually.

3. *Summative evaluation* is conducted once the educational programme is complete, to determine immediate impact and focuses and what the group and their teacher has learnt from their museum experience. A retention study, following the interventions by 2-4 weeks may show knowledge gained and retained and experienced powerful enough to be stored in long-term memory. Naturally, many aspects of the impact will only be revealed months or years later.

To provide authentic and meaningful educational programmes, all these methods should be employed. However, most of the effects will be manifest months or years later. Like the outcomes of projects supported by the ArtSocial Foundation (2020) that provide creative opportunities and arts-based social encounters for children experiencing social conflicts, our interventions may also reveal hidden talents, inspire creative actions, and motivate for a more meaningful life.

Ethics declaration

This study was approved by the Ethics Review Board of Corvinus University Budapest.

Acknowledgement

This presentation relates to AMASS - Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture project, 2020-2023, Reg. No. 870621, supported by the Socioeconomic and Cultural Transformations in the Context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution subprogramme of the EU HORIZON 2020-SC6 Framework Programme.

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