

Learning with the Collection of the CAAC: An Educational Resource on the Contemporary Art Andalusian Centre Web

Rocío Arregui Pradas, University of Seville, Spain

Abstract: The Contemporary Art Andalusian Centre (CAAC) web recently offered an educational resource called Learning through the Collection. We participated in the design and want to explain the purpose of the didactic materials. The main goal of the project is to relate the formal education curriculum and the artwork belonging to the CAAC. The didactic materials have been designed to use the works of art as a reference to develop the didactic units. Some works in the art collection have been selected and categorised into four thematic areas: sign, body, city and archives. The information about the artworks attempts to relate them into common ideas and everyday problems, and they have been tagged with topic than can appear in the scholar curriculum. The teacher and pupils can search the information by thematic areas or tags. We also designed complete didactic units to be followed in the classroom. The project is based on previous research where secondary school students from two high schools were objects of an educational project and research into their concept of art. The subjects were taught all units of visual art with the assistance of recent artwork images, in order to understand the point of view and the solutions given by the actual artist about the contents of the curriculum. The attitude of the teenagers towards the artworks changed notably, forgetting preconceptions and giving value to the ideas and reflections that recent art can offer. The experience from the research has been used by the Contemporary Art Centre of Andalusia in an educational project that offers clues to discussing different problems through its artwork.

Keywords: Educational Resource, Resource Network, Didactic Programs in Museums

The Origin of the Project

“Learning with the collection” is an educational project of the Contemporary Art Andalusian Centre (CAAC), which, basically tries to relate the works of art in its collection with learning objectives of the official curriculum, in order to be used by teachers in the classroom. The project has been materialized with the designing of a web site in which strategies of approach and debates on modern art are offered. The artists and their works are organized around thematic areas and key words or tags are highlighted, which help to relate them with educational content and with other works or authors. Some lesson plans has been created but the aim is teachers may continue elaborating their own ones, following these designs.

This Centre of Art is an institution dependent on the government of Andalusia, whose task is to exhibit, conserve and spread contemporary art in the Andalusian area. As well as organizing temporary exhibitions, CAAC is safe keeper of a permanent collection whose works are exhibited not only rotating in its headquarters but also and more widespread through the network¹. These materials are shown without any interpretations or additional information. As Hsiang-Yi² said, *many museum web sites only offer static information but many of them are being influenced by the rapid development of the World Wide Web, increasing their resources to create online communities and to attract new markets*. So that using the CAAC collection for its didactic dissemination through Internet could also be a great opportunity to attract public.

¹ The CAAC website is <http://www.caac.es/>, the collection is shown at <http://www.caac.es/coleccion/frame.htm> and the educational resource “Aprendiendo con la colección” is linked to <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/cultura/b/caacdesa/caac/index.html>, accessed March 14, 2012.

² Alison Hsiang-Yi Liu, “Using online communities to attract museum visitors”, *International Journal of Education through Art* 4: 3 (2008): 223.

The educational proposals in the museum web sites must not only try to attract visitors, but they must be conscious of the capability of new web2.0 to exchange and create knowledge in a critical and constructive way. Both, museums and schools are responsible for creating the place to experience art, as a fundamental way of personal construction. Eisner (2009) says: '... my first point is not only that minds are made, rather than being biologically unfolding organs, it is that the museum, like the school, has an extremely important role to play in shaping the direction of its development.' We think that this project can unite the advantages of school and museum to play this role more effectively.

Previous Studies

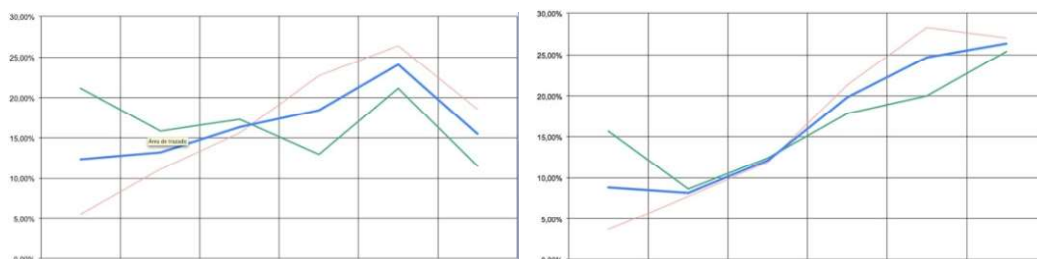
The idea of carrying out this project arose from a personal proposal to the team at CAAC, based on previous research on the application of contemporary art as an educational resource in the classroom. At that time (at the beginning of the project in January 2007) the director, José Lebrero Stals, and the educational services were contemplating the organization of the collection into thematic areas with an educational goal, which meant that our proposal was well received.

The aforementioned research on the use of contemporary art as a resource was the theme of my Ph.D. thesis *The Teaching of Contemporary Art in Plastic and Visual Education through drawing*³. A curriculum for the subject *Plastic and Visual Education*, in Secondary Education, was designed to carry out the dissertation research. This subject, at that time, was being taught in four consecutive courses, from the ages of 12 to 16. This curriculum was applied in a systematic way to my pupils in two different Secondary schools from 1997 to 2002. Within this, all the objectives and contents of the subject were associated with works of contemporary artists in such a way that the processes of creation of these were used as guidelines for learning and for carrying out activities. Some selected artists were distributed throughout the curriculum and related to different aspects about the concept of art.

We carried out a monkey survey about six different aspects of artwork: 1. the value of beauty, 2. the importance given to technique, 3. the importance given to the underlying concepts of a work of art, 4. the relation of the work with its context, 5. the capacity to innovate and 6. the capacity to transmit emotions. The main objective of the study was to investigate these six aspects of the pupils' concept of art and to check if significant changes took place after applying the project. To achieve data and to carry out statistics, the same questionnaire was given both at the beginning and at the end of the course and differences in answers were contrasted.

The following graphics show the percentage of responses given to each value: the first column corresponds to the higher value and the sixth column to the lower one.

The green line corresponds to the male students' answers, the red line to the female ones and the blue line represents the global results.

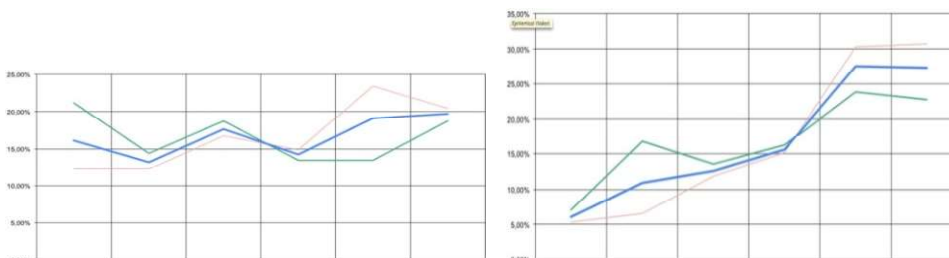


Graphics 1 and 2: Value given to beauty at the beginning and end of the academic year

³ Rocío Arregui Pradas, "La enseñanza del arte contemporáneo en Educación Plástica y Visual a través del Dibujo" (PhD diss., Sevilla (Spain): Fondos digitalizados de la Universidad de Sevilla, 2006) accessed March 14, 2012. <http://fondosdigitales.us.es/tesis/tesis/470/la-ensenanza-del-arte-contemporaneo-a-traves-del-dibujo-en-educacion-secundaria-obligatoria/>

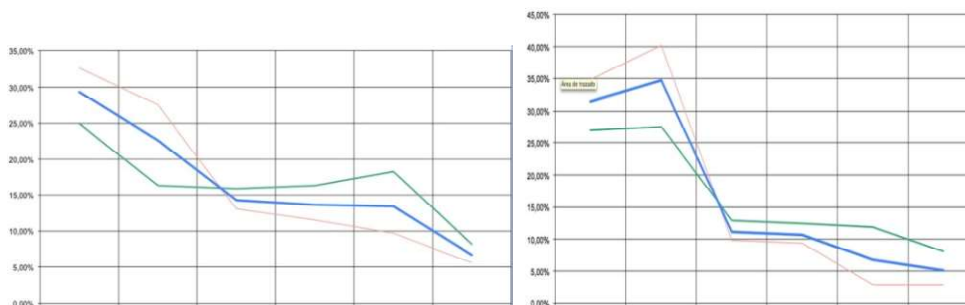
ARREGUI PRADAS: LEARNING WITH THE COLLECTION OF THE CAAC

The highest position of the blue line in the first graphic is located in the fifth position, and at the end of the year the position changes to the last place. This is not a great difference but reveals an exacerbation towards thinking of beauty as insignificant.



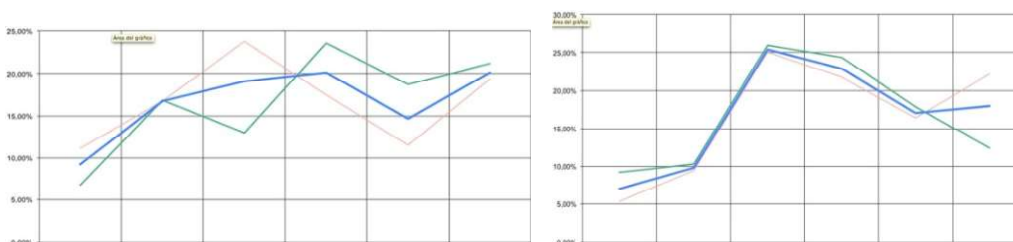
Graphics 3 and 4: Value given to technique at the beginning and end of the academic year

Students clearly tended to rate lower the importance of the technique in a work of art at the end of the course.



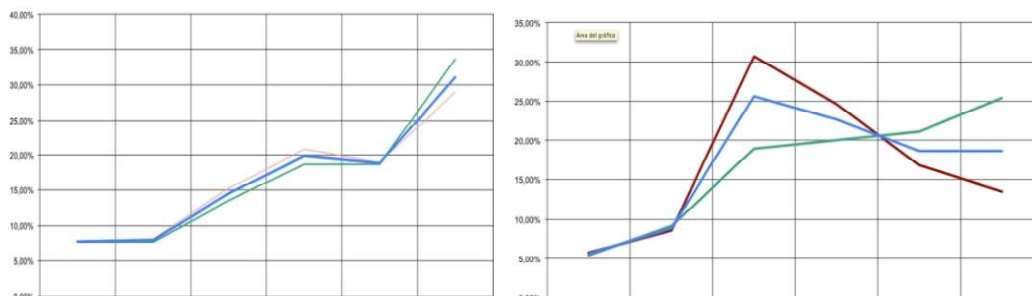
Graphics 5 and 6: Value given to concepts at the beginning and end of the academic year

The blue line represents that most students chose the second place and the first one to rate the importance of the concepts arising in a work of art. This is one of the most important achievements we got as our students, and most of the people surrounding them, in the beginning of the academic year, usually appreciate the difficulty and the classic beauty rather than concepts or meanings.



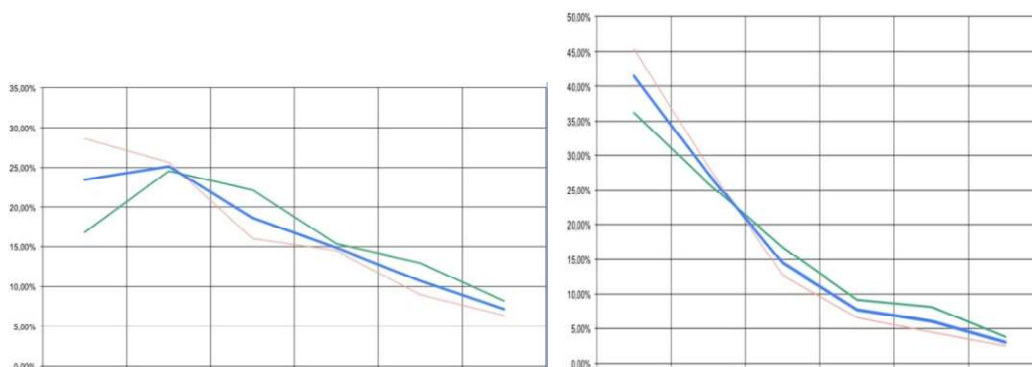
Graphic 7 and 8: Value given to context at the beginning and end of the academic year

The third position is clearly elected to value the importance of the contexts. We now think that the graphic reveals that contexts were not sufficiently noticed at the end of the instructing. At that moment perhaps we didn't insist on the significant changes that a work of art can suffer depending on the place and time.



Graphics 9 and 10: Value given to innovation at the beginning and end of the academic year

A high percentage of students changed their election from the last number, at the beginning, to the third one, at the end of the course.



Graphics 11 and 12: Value given to emotion at the beginning and at the end of the academic year

The most significant change occurred with the question about emotion. Students highly value the importance of emotion in artwork in the beginning, but mostly in a second position. However they clearly chose the first position at the end.

In conclusion, changes before and after instruction using works of art as guidelines for learning activities were very significant. Some prejudices, like the importance given to ability or aesthetic harmony, which were evident in the first survey, began to disappear. However in the last survey, the worth given to the concepts and the contexts related to a work of art increased.

Although at present the design of that educational program could be reproached, as it was set within an artistic education only based on the interpretation of images, it contained some keys which we consider valid for the design of this new project. These are basically, the distribution of the artistic works throughout the curriculum on the basis of the themes they entail and the organization of debates on these works with the objective of relating the works with pupils' interests. The materials produced were really useful for the daily work in the classroom, as artwork became a tool to facilitate the development of the lessons.

The proposal we made to CAAC consisted of applying the results of the research to the collection of contemporary art at the Centre and designing a new curriculum using these works as resources to deal with the educational content.

At that moment, we were not sure if the resources could be developed in interactive network material or only as a text for teachers and students to be used in the classroom. Our main intention was to facilitate a daily, constructive learning with the contemporary artwork as a reference.

We had a look at the resources that other similar museums, with similar budgets and art collections, were offering at that moment, especially those to be used in the classroom. We found that some programs were designed only to complement a temporary exhibition (Artium)⁴, others were interactive games for only one user (IVAM)⁵ or even physical resources like “the portable museum” (Macba)⁶.

Some of these resources had similar aims, like the project at the Guggenheim *Learning through art*⁷, an international project that was implemented in Bilbao, Spain, in 2006, only one year before we started designing our project. The main difference of this program with ours is that it is based in physical communities, which means that only local users can enjoy it. The CAAC collection belongs to all the Andalusian community, not only to the city of Seville, and it would be very difficult to work physically with all the Andalusian schools.

We looked, of course, at great contemporary art museums, that are continuously increasing their educational resources in many directions, but we needed to be conscious of our shortcomings and thus, tried to design an original program, that would be user friendly in a variety of contexts.

We found two different projects with some coinciding features:

One was the way the Tate Museum has tagged its collection⁸ so each work can be related many kinds of items. For example, the image *Study for a portrait of Van Gogh IV*, by Francis Bacon, is tagged with words related to different subjects, and by clicking on one of the words, like *despair*, you can find other works with the same tag. However this tool is not used as a learning resource which is what we had in mind.

Another useful model was the project *transversalia*⁹, from the artist Clara Boj, which relates works of contemporary art and educational objectives related to social values.

The First Debates about Our Concept of Art and Education

Once the proposal was accepted, we negotiated with the director of the CAAC the general approaches that would guide the project. We drew up a document in which we specified, as Eco¹⁰ already did a long time ago, *our notion of art as an act of interpersonal communication and dialogue*.

Art, we understand, is a process in continuous change, a result of a relationship that exists between individual-artist-society and is evidenced through the work of art. The art product possesses a structure or a shape through which the artist's aesthetic vision is projected and the viewer's felt response is stimulated, provoking at the same time emotion and reflection and connecting these with the worries of an epoch. The different conceptions of what a work of art should be usually condition the way in which the work is accepted and interpreted by society. José Jiménez¹¹, philosopher and art critic, indicates some points which distinguish some contemporary art from what was traditionally considered artistic work. Contemporary art is a dynamic and open structure, it has lost the sublime conception, it can be unfinished and it doesn't need to be unique and original.

This concept presents process of creating contemporary art as changing and unstable interactions with different elements that cannot be fixed. Each culture and historic moment

⁴ Artium is located in Victoria, Spain. Accessed March 14, 2012. <http://artium.org>.

⁵ Ivam is located in Valencia. Accessed March 14, 2012. <http://www.ivam.es/alfaro/index.html>.

⁶ Macba is located in Barcelona. Accessed March 14, 2012. <http://www.macba.cat>.

⁷ Accessed March 14, 2012. <http://www.learningthroughart.org/>.

⁸ <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/SubjectSearch> Accessed March 14, 2012.

⁹ www.transversalia.net Accessed March 14, 2012.

¹⁰ Umberto Eco, *La definizione dell'arte*, (Milan: Garzanti, 1983), 161-162. (All translations are mine)

¹¹ José Jiménez, *Teoría de arte* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2002):111-114.

develops its own shapes and its own concept of art, as does each individual and each community. "Art is a form of cultural production destined to create symbols of a common reality"¹².

The act of understanding art as a process in continuous transformation must be assimilated in a real and experimental way, relating the working of the artists with student's experience and learning activities.

Both the reflection on one's own artistic work, and that of others together with the creation or contemplation, must be contextualized. Only in this way will the sense of art become personalized and will anyone who approaches it be able to incorporate it as part of his own experience.

The Objectives of the Project

Once this concept of art has been agreed upon by museum collaborators, we determined that the main objective of this project consisted of creating resources which would permit familiarization with the most recent artistic processes through the works at the Andalusian Centre of Contemporary Art, that could be used as learning resources in the classroom. In this way we tried to convert the images of the works in the collection into reference materials, a starting point for deal with lesson contents of artistic education, and contributions to achieving the student learning objectives.

We thought that one of the unique aspects of this project could be its capacity to be used daily by teachers, and to integrate it into their curricula.

The design of these materials would be based on approaching art through processes more than through acquiring contents. Above all, the enrichment of culture and pupils' personalities thanks to experimenting with artistic action were sought. In agreement with Rudolf Arnheim¹³:

To perceive in all its fullness what to love truly means, to take an interest in something, to understand, create, discover, wish for or expect is in itself the supreme value of life. Once this has been understood, it is just as evident that art is the evocation of life in all its fullness, pureness and intensity. Art, therefore, is one of the most powerful instruments we have to fulfill life. To deny this possibility to human beings is certainly to disinherit them.

With this objective clearly in mind, we tried to coordinate it with objectives of the Organic Law of Education in Spain which states that Artistic Education should contribute to "cultural and artistic competence. This means students should critically appreciate, understand and value different cultural and artistic manifestations, use them as a source of enjoyment and personal enrichment, and consider them as part of the cultural patrimony of the people"¹⁴.

This project could satisfy this objective in a direct and essential way, but artistic education covers the development of many other aspects of personality. Artistic education focuses directly on the individual's capacity to make connections between different disciplines and use several ways of thinking. So we thought that the way to develop the project might assume the deconstructive methods with the intention of discovering the conflicts that appearances may hide, in such a way that all possible interpretations become evident. The objective is not to come to conclusions but to use the works of art to get different points of view about any every day subject.

An objective of this collaboration was to promote the use of the so called by Lyotard¹⁵ "small narratives" about ethnic or social minorities or local circumstances, and to revise history

¹² Arthur Efland, Kerry Freedman and Patricia Stuhr, *Postmodern Art Education* (Reston: The National Art Education Association, 1996):126.

¹³ Rudolf Arnheim, *Consideraciones sobre la educación artística* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1993): 48.

¹⁴ BOE (Estate Oficial Boletín) 106, June 4, 2006.

¹⁵ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge* (University of Minnesota Press, 1984)

ARREGUI PRADAS: LEARNING WITH THE COLLECTION OF THE CAAC

instead of using the typical of modernity bigger groups. We sought a genealogy of the present by contextualizing it and giving it meaning. We agreed that the significance of a work is not only that which the artist gives it, but that which is multiplied with the many spectators who perceive it. Likewise, time and determined contexts will vary the significance of the work.

With these premises in mind we set the following objectives:

- To educate artistic thinking as a way of knowledge and of constructing meaning through artistic experience that integrates perception, creation, reflection and emotion.
- To develop the capacity of perception with the object of interpreting and understanding the world which surrounds us in a deconstructive, conscious and critical way.
- To encourage visual and artistic creation, providing processes and strategies which also permits reflection and self assessment.
- To promote experiences produced by the processes of perception and creation, relating them with images of the world that must be interpreted.
- To relate the representations of visual culture and especially works of art, with the concepts, processes and contexts out of which they are produced.
- To apply artistic thinking in every day life situations as a form of personal enrichment.
- To encourage the development of one's own identity and its relation with social and cultural representations.
- To develop recreational traits of artistic education.
- To raise an awareness appreciation of the surroundings (whether they are natural or created structures) for their symbolic, aesthetic, social and historic values.
- To contribute to an intercultural and attentive vision of diversity, through deciphering the processes and meanings of artistic and cultural manifestations.

To achieve these objectives in an effective way, we related:

- The contents and objectives of artistic education set out by the educational curriculum.
- The topics or groups of topics dealt in the works of art of the Collection of the Centre.

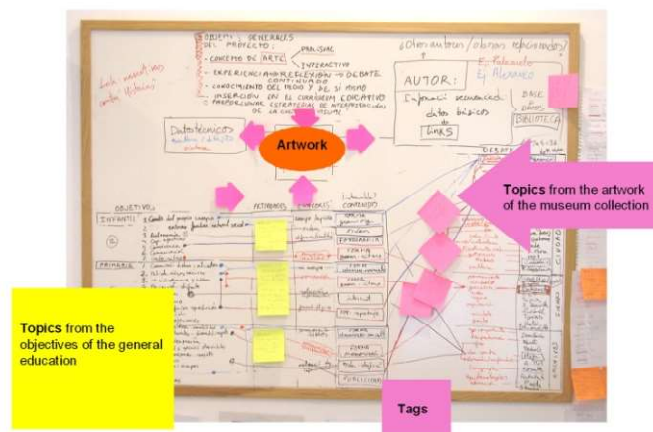


Figure 1: A cloud of tags relating topics from the curriculum and the artwork

The process of organizing contents, objectives, artists and artworks of the collection involved arranging a cloud of tags or key words that could be associated with one another around the major theme (Figure 1).

But the curriculum immediately looks like simple and narrow, and a new question arose: What do works of art speak about? Well, the truth is that they speak about everything, not only about themes concerning visual education but about any theme that affects the human being. What then, is the thesaurus of life, of the totality of knowledge? Can we remake from the beginning a kind of “encyclopedia” starting with artistic works? Although we considered multiple classifying possibilities, convinced at the same time of the impossibility of giving a closed answer, we asked in a more humble way: What are the themes art may teach?

Thematic Areas to Learn through Art

Artistic education, since the nineties has been extended in our surroundings (Andalusia) after the incorporation of visual culture, in such a way that curricular objectives of the subject increased towards the understanding, interpretation and construction of images of all kinds and towards criticisms of the massive means of dissemination of images and artistic works. Some publications like *Educación y cultura visual* by Fernando Hernández had a great repercussion on some sectors of education, as well as the Simposiums of Art Teachers or magazines propelled by teachers such as www.redvisual.net.

The themes on which art focus become investigations on the human being in all its complexity and can be integrated with other academic disciplines, such as science, mathematics, geography or language. So we asked: why, instead of teaching art, don't we use art as a resource for learning any theme of life? Regarding this, Fernando Hernández¹⁶ talks about the expansion of visual culture to all fields: “Hence, visual culture cannot be conceived as any other subject... It is a perspective that intends to establish links between problems, places and times...” (My translation). We can also find in Edgar Morin¹⁷ reflections on how to consider learning from the humanities: “A restructured teaching of human sciences should be instituted and branch out according to the disciplines, on the individual destiny, the social destiny, the historic destiny, the imaginary and mythological destiny of the human being.” Since we are not within a regulated system of education we have freedom to consider categories or areas of knowledge which are not closed, rather symbolic, which would permit great mobility between them. Thus, we began to list and order any kind of theme that we could find in modern works, but, above all, in works of the collection and we (José Lebrero Stals and me) discovered presented ideas around which many themes could be grouped:

Starting from the individual, as a biological and psychological entity, we developed a group of themes around **Body** and identified works that dealt with configuration and anatomy, human development, pain, states of mind, humor, sexuality, illness, death, the place of the body in space, etc. Artists whose works were chosen were José Luis Alexanco, Louise Bourgeois, Pepe Espaliú, Francis Bacon, VALIE EXPORT and Bruce Nauman.

Thinking about the most habitual surroundings of the body, suggested another grouping of themes around the **City** understood as the most common space of modern life (in opposition to the country), as a conservation of the environment or a space for the hybridization of cultures. This group is represented by works made by Dan Graham, Miguel Trillo, Jorge Yeregui, Alex MacLean, Francesco Jodice and Zhou Xiaohu.

Knowledge itself was also considered a thematic area; how we store, distribute and classify what we know, so that a third group of themes was called **Archives**. The artists selected for this

¹⁶ Fernando Hernández Hernández, Espigador@s de la cultura visual. Otra narrativa para la educación de las artes visuales (Barcelona:Octaedro, 2007): 48.

¹⁷ Edgar Morin, *La mente bien ordenada*, (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2000): 106.

group were Candida Höfer, Alexandra Mir, Allen Ruppersberg, Joan Fontcuberta and Pere Formiguera, and Juan del Junco.

Finally, a fourth group was called **Sign** and entailed various works in which the artist tried to get close to poetic or conceptual expressions. Both gesture and geometry are formal manifestations that imply determined ways of processing the perception of surroundings and which many artists use to reach non-verbal expressions of universal orders. The works chosen for this category belong to Elena Asins, Luis Gordillo, Pablo Palazuelo, Manuel Barbadillo, José Guerrero, Equipo 57 and Soledad Sevilla.

The Methodology of the Project

At present, four examples of application of the project in the classroom, corresponding to one work within each of the thematic areas, are offered on the web site. Each example concentrates on three different lesson plans: for infant education, primary education and secondary education. They are intended as just a methodological proposal that teachers may follow when elaborating their own lesson plans.

The approach to modern art cannot be something occasional or sporadic, it must be given time so that the interrelation is produced and ideas are assimilated efficiently and critically. In agreement with Gardner¹⁸:

If one wishes to enhance an individual's (artistic) understanding, the most successful way is to involve him deeply during a meaningful period of time in the symbolic domain in question, encourage him to mix regularly with individuals who are a little more (not much) sophisticated than him and give him lots of opportunities to reflect on his own emerging understanding of domain.

We therefore propose a methodology which will permit a continuous relation with the works created by the artists, which will include regular visualization, debate on the processes of creation and transfer of what is learned to real situations of application of knowledge.

This methodology emphasizes the connection between the work of art and all the individual's social aspects. The inclusiveness of art is the main value which teaching can make use of. Eisner¹⁹ comments that "qualitative intelligence, which is that employed in artistic creation, is used in the widest spectrum of activities in life".

Artistic education should contribute to the development of 'qualitative' intelligence, reflecting the processes that artists follow, encouraging debate and interaction with surroundings and situations. Also, fostering multidisciplinary techniques, that would permit development of different types of artistic thought and language.

To favor this interrelation, the objectives and contents of the different educational curricula were coordinated with the artistic processes that the works in the collection of CAAC propose. Each thematic unit was related with artistic movements and artists.

Bearing this in mind, we propose the following methodological steps.

Observation and Analysis of CAAC Work

To achieve a continuous relation to contemporary art, fluidity of images and artistic contributions are essential. This implies a great variety of resources, which may be accessed on the web site by surfing through links and watching images. Tools such as puzzles or zooms have been included on the web. These permit students to study closely and become familiar with works in their own time and in an enjoyable way.

¹⁸ Howard Gardner, *Art Education and Human Development* (L.A.:Getty Publications, 1990): 42.

¹⁹ Elliot W. Eisner, *Educating artistic vision* (Oxford: Macmillan, 1972):100.

Appropriate contexts to show the images and start the debates about them will depend on the thematic unit, but they will always be introduced at the same time as the contents of the theme. Debate could continue when conflicts arise carrying out the activities. Once pupils develop their activity and look for solutions to their own artistic problems they will get able to understand how the artist in question has determined the process. In the units proposed in the project we included recommendations about the time to introduce the debate and visualization of the works.

Direct observation is the ideal one, so it is advised whenever circumstances permit. In fact, CAAC plans to organize complementary exhibitions to the web site *Learning with the collection* in the future. However, these are not the basis of this project as these activities can only be sporadic and do not permit daily integration in the curriculum.

Questions about the Works

The astonishment produced by viewing a work that does not respond to the pupils' cultural construction could cause distancing or lack of interest. The best way for pupils to approach a work is by posing doubts without any complex, demonstrating their previous ideas and elaborating a reconstructive discourse. We are looking for a contextualized reflection, forming a framework of multiple connections which will interest pupils. According to Kerry Freedman²⁰ "the teaching methods based on research, such as associative interrogation, are especially appropriate for the study of contemporary images".

It is important to provide a strategy that pupils are capable of developing by themselves not only in the classroom but before any image or representation which they may face. Therefore, we insisted on always following some steps which begin with a mere "description" to continue with a phase of "contextualization" or relation with what pupils know and finally, "question" the whys, deduce or create new doubts. Reflections that arise about the work may, in this way be the basis for new constructions.

All texts on the works that the web site offers are structured following three steps: description, relation and reflection; so that teachers may easily structure their own debate using these as a starting point. In any case, in the twelve lesson plans elaborated, we raised a number of questions which in our opinion may be interesting. They are not the only possible ones and some are almost answers, so that they should not be carried out until pupils' interest has been aroused. They must be understood only as ideas that may be useful, but the specific questions we must ask will be those that arise in a spontaneous way when speaking about the works shown.

The questions should be posed according to the educational objectives proposed in each unit connected with the process of creation that the work shows. We must always bear in mind where we want to take the conversation, what elements we want pupils to pay attention to. Although other doubts and other themes may appear we must not abandon the objective marked.

However, what is important is to get to the questions, not to give the answers. These may even be contradictory. Each pupil as an individual should elaborate his opinions or doubts. The objective is not to come to standardized conclusions but to provide deconstructive strategies of the discourses that the images represent, with the objective of interpreting the visual representations.

At times, it is important to begin with mini reports to observe how values change as the surroundings change. Knowledge of other cultures provides references when judging works of art by people of other cultures and challenge universal or pre established truths.

Apart from questions we may pose about art works an important aspect of art education is to inspire students to participate in an artistic experience, in the enjoyment of gazing. According to Arnheim²¹, "as long as the debate clearly intends to intensify the experience and the

²⁰ Kerry Freedman, *Teaching Visual Culture*, (Columbia: Teacher College Press, 2003): 166.

²¹ Rudolf Arnheim, *Consideraciones sobre la educación artística* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1993): 78.

understanding of art... such a debate should start out with what can be seen in a specific work, in fact, seen in the specific sense of the expression that the composition transmits”.

Posing Processes Similar to those Followed by Artists

Each thematic unit will be related with artistic movements and artists as references for reaching specific objectives related to learning about contemporary art. Research may bring about understanding of the process a selected artist followed when carrying out his work.

Activities proposed do not imply a literal following of particular artists methods of creation. We are not talking about reproducing techniques or formal solutions, but about reflecting on the circumstances under which the artists’s works were produced, including circumstances of geographic or cultural surroundings, personal life events or historic moment. It is convenient that the activity or process proposed to pupils differs formally to that carried out by the artist and that it only coincides conceptually. The activity should permit the transfer of what was learned in the debate to their daily interests and approaches that affect their complete training as individuals. It is important that they acquire strategies of knowledge and of resolution of conflicts that are applicable to other situations.

The Subsequent Reflection on the Work Itself

Assimilation of the objectives proposed is only possible if the pupil is aware of what he has learned and knows how to talk about it. Therefore, all activities should be accompanied by a comment that reflects on the process carried out and on application of the contents of each unit. The pupil must acquire deconstructive strategies which may be applied both to works of the proposed artists and to his own. The form of artistic construction is interdisciplinary, so that the strategies and methods may be varied. Then we can research if the findings of the activity are repeated among classmates, artists or in our surroundings and what relations can be established with other activities or daily experiences.

It is quite usual for a pupil, especially an adolescent, to question if what he has done is of any use. We can make him see that the utility is in the experience he acquires and in its assimilation as something that belongs to him. If the activity and the contents do not relate to his close reality, learning will be a mere anecdote. Critical capacity will depend on the acquisition of these strategies. Pupils will know how to discern and to take decisions on their own work when they are capable of interpreting it and of establishing relations with meanings.



Figure 2: Three steps to debate about a work of art

For example, Spanish photographer Miguel Trillo is one of the artists selected for the group of contents called *City* (Figure 2). The web site offers the images of three works, biographical data and a text about the photographs. This text is divided into three sections following the explained strategy: description, contextualization and questions. Some words are remarked as tags to relate to other works from the collection.



Figure 3: Amaya transforms herself



Figure 4: Amaya finds a new character

Then, three different level lessons are offered. We will talk about the one for infant education: the lesson plan is related to the knowledge of self-image, differences and similarities to others, and is called *Am I like the other ones?*

The debate is divided into the same three sections as the text about the works: describe, relate and think; posing some questions to follow these three sections. The suggested activity consists of transforming self-portraits and the construction of tales that link the different characters they have created (Figures 3 and 4).

The Design of the Web Site and Forecast

To publish these contents through a web site that would be attractive for teachers and pupils, the work team turned to a graphic design company, *El viajero*, a text and web publisher directly related to CAAC, Alejandro del Pino and an educator with experience in art didactics, Dr. Amalia Ortega Rodas. In the design, the intention of emphasizing themes over data was highlighted and we sought agility together with interrelation through tags which group the works by content, context, artistic proceeding or with other disciplines with which artists are related. Links are abundant in order to increase the search for information.

We consider that the work carried out up to now as being more a foundation than an end. We believe that there are great possibilities that the project will increase and that it will go beyond the confines of CAAC and local ones. We hope, on one hand, that the participation and interest of teachers will materialize in the creation of new lesson plans which may also be published on

ARREGUI PRADAS: LEARNING WITH THE COLLECTION OF THE CAAC

the web, and that the work carried out in classrooms may be shared through a complementary blog. We also hope that it may be extended to other languages to cross frontiers with more facility, and above all that it may permit greater inter-activity.

Although its origin is modest, we think that this project has been strongly argued in order to be able to apply it to other contexts, creating possible networks of relationship between museums and schools. If we are not able to narrow ties in a daily and meaningful way, modern art will continue to be in some circles a luxury, which may be rarely enjoyed and not an opportunity to understand the world and ourselves with satisfaction and pleasure.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Rocío Arregui Pradas: Dr. Rocío Arregui Pradas is interested in critical and sustainable learning, expressed through her recent artwork. The exhibitions (painting, drawing and installation) try to inquire into the difference between the country and the city shapes and behavior, responsible consumption and urban vegetation.