

# ART AND ARTISTS IN KINDERGARTEN – ASSUMPTIONS AND EXAMPLES

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The paper investigates the use of artworks in the early stage of art education. In the first part, basic assumptions are discussed. Individual characteristics of artistic expression in the early stage (two to six years) are presented. This is followed by a presentation of individual pedagogic and didactic implications and instructions for successful preschool art education. The connections between children's artistic expression and artworks are emphasised. The methods of aesthetical transfer and artistic expression on the basis of direct observation of artworks are discussed. In the next part, two examples of artistic activities in kindergarten are presented. The case study research is done within the framework of the Slovenian preschool curriculum, though the methods used might be applied internationally. The first example relates to the art of Pablo Picasso, and the second, to the art of Jackson Pollock. The basic aims, methods and stages of the didactic process are presented, and the differences and characteristics of both activities are discussed. In the last part, individual criteria for the evaluation of the educational process and children's artwork are analysed.

KEYWORDS: art education, early childhood, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, aesthetic transfer.

## INTRODUCTION

Children love to draw. The main reason why children love to make art is because it is fun<sup>1</sup>. This is especially true for their preschool period. In this period, the drawings of preschool children are similar<sup>2</sup>. They

all scribble, draw shapes, outlines, radials<sup>3</sup>, they all draw cephalopods, composite symbols, use very vivid colours, etc. In the period until about five or six years of age, all children, irrespective of their cultural, social or geographical differences, go through the same developmental stages regarding art. This means that the development of artistic expression is largely written in the human genetic code<sup>4</sup>. Visual art expression,

1 Robert Watts, "Attitudes to Making Art in the Primary School", in: *Readings in Primary Art Education*, Eds. Steve Hern, Sue Cox, and Robert Watts, UK Bristol, USA, Chicago: Intellect, 2009, pp. 287–299.

2 Rob Barnes, *Teaching Art to Children 4–9*, London: School of Education, University of East England, 1990.

3 Richard Hickman, *Why We Make Art and Why Is It Taught*, Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2010.

4 Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of*

especially drawing, is an indispensable tool for human cognitive development. In the theories of children's graphic development, children's artmaking is understood as creative self-expression, a significant form of formal order and cultural production, etc.<sup>5</sup> One of the essential meanings of artistic expression in the preschool period is getting to know and understand the space in which we live<sup>6</sup>. Once a child is born, he enters an entirely new three-dimensional space defined by shape, colour, surface, distance, direction and relations between them. A child does not comprehend space, and so he starts exploring it rapidly as soon as he becomes aware of it. The easiest way to do this is by movement. He crawls, walks, runs, climbs, falls, overcomes distances, touches items, places them one atop of the other, in interdependent spatial relationships, throws and rolls them. At the same time, he thinks about these relationships and tries to find the basic laws that govern space. He undertakes the latter – thinking about spatial relations – in such a way that he creates his own symbolic space<sup>7</sup> in which he has the power to investigate without the bumps resulting from falls and without restrictions imposed by gravity, his small size and weakness. “For children, drawing is not just a simple reflection of psychological parameters of their development, nor a reflection of their inborn aesthetical need, but a development tool and cognitive necessity.”<sup>8</sup> The importance of early artistic expression

is emphasised by Matthews<sup>9</sup> saying that children's ability to deep-read the various ways in which their worlds are written may, to a great extent, be dependent on the formation of early representation in infancy and how well this has been supported and nurtured.

When working on a two-dimensional surface, the child uses different colours for what he draws, and places three-dimensional works of art in real space, builds towers from blocks, and buildings from cardboard boxes. At the same time, the child sharpens his senses with the use of artistic means, techniques, materials and tools, and even more so with the active use of artistic expressions (lines, shapes, colours, volumes, etc.). The essence of children's visual art activities in the preschool period could be best illustrated with the words of Jacqueline Goodnow. She affirms that a child's visual expression is visual thinking<sup>10</sup>.

#### ARTISTIC ORDER AND THE SENSE OF BEAUTY

The child's artistic development is interconnected with their environment and culturally conditioned<sup>11</sup>. This is at least partially reflected in the development of artistic order and the sense of beauty. The sense of artistic order tells us how to allocate things in space and in what relation individual components, objects and forms should be so as to form harmony. The sense of visual order dictates us where to put the vase on the table, where to fix a picture on the wall, in which corner the flower will make a room more beautiful, on which side and how to move the camera in photographing so that the picture would be the most *beautiful*, and so on. A fully developed sense of visual order

*the Creative Eye*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954/1974/2009; Jožef Muhovič, “Odnos med otroškimi likovnim izražanjem in likovno ustvarjalnostjo odraslih” [The Relation between Children's and Adults' Artistic Creativity], in: *Athropos*, 1990, 22 (3–4), pp. 9–20.

- 5 Arthur Efland, *Art and Cognition; Integrating the Visual Arts in the Curriculum*, New York: Teachers College Columbia University, 2002, p. 50.
- 6 Jožef Muhovič, *op. cit.*; Tomaž Zupančič, *Likovno-ustvarjalni razvoj otrok v predšolskem obdobju [The Artistic and Creative Development of Children at Preschool Age]*, Ljubljana: Debora, 2001.
- 7 Jožef Muhovič, *op. cit.*
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

- 9 John Matthews, “The Art of Infancy”, in: *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*, Eds. Elliot W. Eisner, and Michael D. Day, New York, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 253–298.
- 10 Jacqueline Goodnow, *Children's Drawing*. London: Fontana, Open Books, 1977.
- 11 Brent Wilson, “Child Art After Modernism: Visual Culture and New Narratives”, in: *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*, Eds. Elliot W. Eisner and Michael D. Day, New York, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 299–328.

can lead to masterpieces, as is clearly visible in the total architecture of ancient Greek temples, where all parts, from the smallest detail to the whole, are subject to strict compositional criteria.

A preschooler is, of course, not (yet) able to design a Parthenon – it is only the initial awakening of the sense of visual editing. The simplest task of artistic composition, suitable for the preschool level, is the placement of one simple shape on the surface. And, like we, adults, still put a vase with roses in the middle of the table, the children in this task placed their shape in the middle of the surface. When a preschool child solves the problem where he has to put a shape on a larger square surface by not placing it in the middle, but somewhere on the edge or in a corner, this is usually a pre-level where he is not yet aware of the basic artistic relationship between figure and background, rather than an upgrade where he would consciously play with different compositional possibilities. Since we are aware of the sequences of development, we know how to pedagogically manage this and similar cases. We do not teach the child where to place the figure on the surface; he should come to this solution on his own through his development.

The sense of visual order is a human ability that develops in the early childhood period, primarily in art activities. This is an important segment of development, which is emphasised by the curriculum for kindergartens. The Slovenian Curriculum for Kindergartens states that artistic expression reflects “the child’s innate sense of artistic order and the nurtured sense of beauty, which are shaped by the social and cultural environment”<sup>12</sup>. In its primary role as a device for learning about spatial features, artistic expression

is also a means for developing a sense for art, art elements, and the relationship between visual and artistic components. An artistically developed person is sensitive to the relationship of shapes, colours, and objects, is able to perceive and understand the rhythms, proportions and balances, artistic compositions, etc. Despite the fact that the basic sense of artistic order is a partly innate characteristic of the child, as the curriculum states, it can be further developed and pushed to enviable levels with the help of purposeful and high-quality artistic and educational work.

Having a sense of artistic order is not the same as having a feeling for beauty. The first one is innate, and the latter has to be imparted. A feeling for beauty or an aesthetic feeling for art is a developed ability of an individual to feel, perceive and enjoy works having artistic value. The feeling for beauty can only be developed through the child’s contact with art. Without direct contact with works of art, paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures or spatial installations, the feeling for beauty cannot be grasped. This is why art didactics especially emphasises cultivating the contact with art. The ability to perceive and enjoy objects and phenomena of artistic value allows a person to give his life a new quality; it would be a shame if it remained unused.

#### THE LEVEL OF REQUIREMENTS

Artistic tasks in the preschool period are, like those later in school, planned by taking into account the developmental stage of children and their achieved artistic abilities and skills. The tasks in various artistic fields contain requirements that are not too demanding, and at the same time, not too easy. If the tasks are too demanding or much too easy, the potential for dead and deadening lessons will be enormous<sup>13</sup>. It is important that children view them as challenges that can be

12 Eva Dolar Bahovec, Ksenija Bregar Golobič, Simona Kranjc, Igor Cvetko, Ljubica Marjanovič Umek, Mateja Videmšek, Tatjana Vonta and Barbara Japelj Pavešič, *Kurikulum za vrtce [Curriculum for nursery school]*, Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, [online], 1999, p. 23, [accessed 10-01-2017], [http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci\\_kur.pdf](http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/vrtci/pdf/vrtci_kur.pdf).

13 Richard Hickman, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

overcome. For a child, a challenge is a task, which he deems solvable, even though he has to use some effort. This kind of task evokes an internal motivation for work. The child can also solve a task that is too easy, but he does not derive any motivation from it, since he feels it is too simple. A task that is too difficult, where the child cannot understand what is expected of him, or where he cannot understand how to perform it, does not motivate him; rather, it deters him from working. The lack of adequate challenges in tasks that are too easy, or deterring from work in tasks that are too difficult over time leads to the development of a negative attitude towards the activities in the field where the child experiences frustration.

#### STARTING POINTS FOR PLANNING ART ACTIVITIES

Art didactics offer several starting points for planning art activities<sup>14</sup>. These are: a problem, a motif, a technique, an artwork, etc.

Although art activities in preschool are integrated into the context of classes and designed holistically, the decision to choose one of the aforementioned starting points as planning guidelines is recommended. Thus, the activity becomes more transparent and targeted more precisely.

When an art problem is taken as a starting point, motivation is based on one of the art phenomena discussed in the preschool period. Art problems in this period are dealt with at the basic level, and presentations are simplified and tailored to the developmental stage of children.

In the activities related to painting on the basis of artworks by Pablo Picasso and Jackson Pollock, we used the works by the famous painters as a starting point. In these cases, the starting points are combined,

14 Matjaž Duh and Tomaž Zupančič, *Likovna vzgoja v prvi triadi devetletne osnovne šole [Art Education in the First Triad of the Nine-Year Primary School]*, Ljubljana: Rokus, 2003.

as depending on the nature of the selected artist's work, the starting points mix with artistic issues as well as technical and thematic aspects.

#### ARTISTIC FIELDS IN KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten Curriculum in the field of Arts provides guidelines for work in various artistic fields. These are: drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and design of space. The current curriculum for art education in Slovenian primary schools in the second and especially third triennial connects artistic fields and talks about expression on two-dimensional and three-dimensional planes, while during the first three years, division by fields is maintained. The changes in the Slovenian curriculum have also been introduced due to the appearance of a new field, i.e. the use of digital media<sup>15</sup> and expression in the virtual space. Planning and implementation of visual art activities in individual art fields at the preschool level ensure that the child is systematically and clearly informed and engaged with various artistic elements. This is especially important when he is at the stage of initial introduction to the world of fine art. Drawing is an area where the child can explore the world of forms. He expresses himself in dots, lines, shapes, surfaces and light-dark relations. This is a very important area, since it enables the child to gain insight into the most important findings about space. Matthews emphasises that "it is always going to be the case that making marks on two-dimensional surfaces, of one kind or another, is going to remain central to the way human beings think and live"<sup>16</sup>. Fortunately, creativity in general and drawing in particular is also a field that educators consider as the most important among all artistic fields<sup>17</sup>. Painting

15 John Matthews and Peter Soew, "Electronic Paint: Understanding Children's Representation through Their Interaction with Digital Paint", in: *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 2007, 26 (3), pp. 251–263.

16 John Matthews, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

17 Tomaž Zupančič, Branka Čagran, and Matjaž Mulej, "Preschool

is a field responsible for the child's contact with the world of colours and their relations, in printmaking (basic printing), children get acquainted with the phenomenon of printing in a variety of ways, in sculpture, they learn to express themselves through volume, to explore phenomena such as concave, convex, rounded, protruding, depth, and raised. In designing space, they playfully learn about the basic rules of building a space, and learn concepts such as an open space, a closed space, a semi-closed space, and a barrier.

The fully artistically developed child perceives and is able to handle a variety of artistic elements. Targeted art activities, resulting from the specific objectives of the field, help enormously. In preschool art activities, painting and drawing are the most common; however, all artistic fields are taken into account and take turns. Of course, whenever is sensible and justified, the fields can also mix and match, just like activities from different educational areas can be interwoven and enriched.

The presented activities are based on painting, as they are conditioned by the nature of the chosen artists.

#### AESTHETIC TRANSFER IN ART EDUCATION

Art didactics recognises the importance of introducing children to the world of art<sup>18</sup>. The role of museums and art organisations in providing art education to public school students has increased dramatically over the past two decades<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, contemporary

Teaching Staff's Opinions on the Importance of Preschool Curricular Fields of Activities, Art Genres and Visual Arts Fields", in: *CEPS*, 2015, 5 (4), pp. 9–29; Svjetlana Novaković, "Preschool Teacher's Role in the Art Activities of Early and Preschool Age Children", in: *Croatian Journal of Education*, 2015, 17 (1), pp. 153–163.

18 *Researching Visual Arts Education in Museums and Galleries*, Eds. Maria Xanthoudaki, Les Tickle, and Veronica Sekules, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003.

19 Eugenie Joo, Joseph Keehn II, and Jenny Ham-Roberts, *Re-thinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education*, New York and London: Routledge, 2011; Brigita Strnad, "Children's Engagement with Contemporary Art in the Museum Context", in: *Multimodal Perspectives of Language, Literacy, and Learning*

art didactics develops methods that bring art closer to the child. The purpose of these methods is to motivate the child internally to observe artworks accurately and sensitively, to prolong their attention span for the artwork, to try to discover interesting details in it, etc.<sup>20</sup> The basic method in this area is the method of aesthetic transfer<sup>21</sup>, and the specific method that we used in the presented activities is painting on the basis of observing an artwork directly.

Tracing already depicted motifs, copying drawings of adults and similar ways of creative activity are advised against from the viewpoint of art didactics. Instead, modern preschool art didactics emphasises creativity, freedom, undirected work without affecting the children's performance, etc. The activity presented should not be confused with the aforementioned unsuitable procedures.

With the direct viewing technique, the child does not copy a quality artwork, as happens with simple picture books and low-quality colouring books. A work of art is an artistic composition so complex that it is impossible to copy it. The child should always translate his art into his own unique artistic language. Thus, in the resulting picture, the child's individual expression is maintained, the stages of development, as well as the peculiarities of the child's handwriting and other characteristics that distinguish children from one another can be seen. Painting based on direct observation of an artwork helps the preschool child develop his unique and necessary mark.

Painting on the basis of direct viewing of an artwork is a recognised method of museum pedagogy, which in recent years has permeated preschool and

in *Early Childhood*, Ed. Marilyn J. Narey, Pittsburgh: Springer, 2017, pp. 169–190.

20 David Bell, "Seven Ways to Talk About Art: One Conversation and Seven Questions for Talking About Art in Early Childhood Settings", in: *International Journal of Education Through Art*, 2011, 7 (1), pp. 41–54.

21 Matjaž Duh, and Tomaž Zupančič, "The Method of Aesthetic Transfer. An Outline of a Specific Method of Visual Arts Didactics", in: *Croatian Journal of Education*, 2011, 13 (1), pp. 42–75.

school art activities. With these activities, we develop a whole range of artistic skills and abilities. When in contact with reproductions of artworks, the child develops a sense of beauty and aesthetics. The aesthetic sense, the ability to separate artistic worth from kitsch, is not innate in the child, but is the result of years of education, development and sharpening his sensitivity. The following activity allows it to a great extent.

#### THE RESEARCH

The research and case studies are done within the framework of the Slovenian preschool curriculum, though the methods used might be applied internationally. The purpose of the research is to shed light on the importance of developing the aesthetic sense in the preschool period. It aims to present this with the help of an analysis of two activities that connect practical art activities in the kindergarten with works of art. We further sought to present two specific work methods in the aesthetic field, i.e. the method of aesthetic transfer, and the method of artistic expression with direct observation of artworks.

In addition to the main objective of familiarisation with an artwork, in preparation for the activity, other didactic requirements also had to be considered. The most important include the level of requirements and the starting points for planning art activities. We also briefly present the artistic fields.

The following research questions were posed at the concrete level:

Is working on the basis of direct observation of a work of art reflected at the level of artistic expression of a preschool child?

- Where are the differences?
- Does direct artistic expression affect the choice and use of colours?
- Do the works of art show a more diverse use of the formal artistic language (rhythms, composition, etc.)?

- Does the observation of a work of art affect the level of depicting figural motifs (human figure, objects, space)?
- Do children respond differently to figural (Picasso) and abstract works of art (Pollock)?
- What is the level of interest and motivation for work during direct observation of works of art?
- Are children able to capture the expressive power (aesthetic charge/power) of the observed works of art in their work as well?

#### METHOD

Our research is based on a case study. Two different artistic activities related to artists and their artworks were developed.

A qualitative methodology was used to collect the data. We monitored the activity with sound and images, recorded the children's responses and analysed their final works of art. Their artwork was assessed by a team of experts comprising kindergarten teachers who work with the children every day, and two art education teachers.

#### PARTICIPANTS

The data were collected from a non-random sample of two groups of preschool children aged five and six. A total of 40 children were involved. The research was conducted in two different kindergartens in Maribor.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses each of the two implemented activities separately. First, the activity based on the work of Pablo Picasso is presented.

The basic structure of the activity, the main objectives, theme and technique are shown in Ill. 1.

In the beginning, reproductions of artworks are made available to children. In this case, the selected

Operational objective of the art activity	Children copy an artwork of their choice
Objectives	active contact with the artwork, developing a feeling for art, developing aesthetic sense
Art field	painting (artistic expression with colour on a surface)
Art technique	painting with opaque water colours
Art theme	art world
Motif	paintings by Pablo Picasso

1. The structure of the “Pablo Picasso” art education activity in kindergarten

„Pablo Picasso“ meno užsiėmimų darželyje struktūra

paintings were by of one of the most important painters of the twentieth century, Pablo Picasso. For artistic and educational work in the preschool period, artworks of a wide range of periods and styles can be used. Children are drawn both by figurative and abstract works. Younger children are interested in works with clear and strong colour contrasts. Iconographically speaking, we choose motifs that are appropriate for the child’s age. In works pertaining to twentieth century modernism, we avoid motifs, which we determine to be foreign and incomprehensible to children. We avoid works displaying violence or extreme erotica. Nudity as such is not inappropriate, as the naked human body has always been one of the major motifs in art. Still, in selecting works of art, the principle of quality<sup>22</sup> has to be abided by at all times. For artistic and educational work, only artworks of good quality are suitable, which have to be recognised by art professionals as well. When in doubt, we reach for works that are known to be treasures on the global or local scale in the fields of art and history.

When selecting reproductions, we have to take care of the following. In figurative art, we choose designs that are close and familiar to children (the human

figure, animal motifs, nature, landscapes, still lives, etc.). In abstract art, we choose works that clearly illustrate the selected visual problems (colour contrasts, light-dark, cold-warm, art rhythms, tonal transitions, compositing solutions, etc.). Depending on the age of the children, we choose works with more or less vivid colours. For display, we select quality reproductions of sufficient size. If we choose works from the Internet, we make sure that the files are large enough to be printed; we do not change the dimensions of the reproductions, which means that they must not be stretched or compressed. Before choosing them, we make sure that the work is really an artwork by the chosen artist (the Internet browser alone cannot guarantee this).

After viewing the reproductions and talking about them, each child chooses a picture that he likes the most. When preparing the material, it is important to offer children a surface of the same proportion as the format of the chosen artwork. The format is adapted to the chosen art technique and the age of the children. The space has to be organised in such a way that every child sees the reproduction directly in front of him. The reproduction should be placed about three to five diagonals away from the children. The child may have smaller reproductions placed in front of him on the table. The spatial arrangements are seen in Ill. 2, 3 and 4.

22 Tomaž Zupančič, and Matjaž Duš, *Art Education and the Art of Pablo Picasso*, Opatija: Dječji vrtić Opatija, 2009.



2. A child observes Picasso's painting.  
(All photos: the archive of the author)

Vaikas stebi Picasso kūrinį

3. A child observes Picasso's painting

Vaikas stebi Picasso kūrinį



4. The space is organised in such a way that every child sees the reproduction directly in front of him

Erdvė sutvarkyta taip, kad kiekvienas vaikas matytų reprodukciją tiesiai prieš akis



Speaking about art techniques, we choose them according to the reproductions. In this case, the paintings are full of colours and colour tones, so we chose the technique of painting with opaque water-colours. Painted works of art are colour-rich, with a wide variety of hues, which makes working with a palette almost mandatory.

After completing the activities, the final evaluation is carried out. When organising an exhibition, the reproductions, which served as the basis for the children to create their works, are also displayed. Information about the artist, the title of the work, perhaps even the technique is given. The exhibition is also equipped with a brief explanation of the goals that were pursued, and the importance of painting with the direct observation technique in the preschool period.

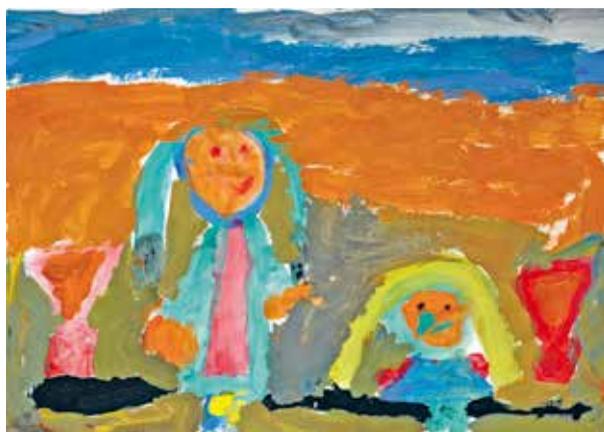
The results of the described activity are surprising, almost without exception. Children are able to translate even the most complex and sophisticated artworks into an equally surprising artistic language of their own.

In Ill. 5, made by observing the artwork in Ill. 2, the child followed the unique art rhythms of Picasso



5. A child translates Picasso's artworks into a surprising artistic language of his own

Vaikas paverčia Picasso kūrinį į nuosavą išpūdingą meno kalbą



6. A child simplified the depiction of human figures and translated them into his own artistic language

Vaikas supaprastino žmonių figūrų vaizdavimą ir transformavo jas į nuosavą meno kalbą

with exceptional perseverance, as well as the relations between bright and less bright colours and between the concepts of large and small. He used the wealth of different tones of grey, which gave him the opportunity to work with the palette.

In Ill. 6, the child simplified the depiction of human figures and translated them into his own artistic language. The child at preschool age generally paints a figure in its entirety, which is not the case in the artwork observed [Ill. 4]. He also simplified the composition, but maintained an amazing similarity in the choice of colours and the atmosphere of the entire colour composition. Since the pictures are fully painted, the child does the same and thus learns another important rule: a painting is, by definition, a surface entirely covered with paint.

Picasso's playful way of depicting motifs (as seen in the reproduction in Ill. 3) is close to children. Although Picasso's simplification of artistic expression is a substantial result of in-depth and lengthy work and his brilliant artistic sense, children do not experience problems with similar strategies, as seen in Ill. 7. They approach such work playfully and lightly.



7. A child uses the same colours as seen on Picasso's artwork

Vaikas naudoja tas pačias spalvas, kurios yra Picasso kūrinėje

The second presented activity was designed using the works by Jackson Pollock.

Although both activities presented here are based on contact with the artwork, their approaches and intentions are quite different.

Painting on the basis of the direct observation of artworks by Pablo Picasso is an activity in which we sought to familiarise children with the artistic,

aesthetic and conceptual quality of an artwork. The method of aesthetic transfer was used. It is an artistic and pedagogical method that ensures the transmission of aesthetic messages into the consciousness and perception of a young person. "The method of didactic transfer is in fact a set of didactic choices, the objective of which is to create optimal conditions for the development of aesthetic sense and aesthetic conduct with the participants in the learning process."<sup>23</sup> The child observes a work of art and simultaneously creates one. He observes a work of art for a few minutes, then sketches something on paper, observes the work of art again, then paints some part of his artwork, observes the work of art, creates, observes, creates, etc. The product resulting from this process presents a translation of the work of art into an artistic language that corresponds to the child's age. The resulting product reflects the child's development as well as his cognitive, sensory, emotional world and unique thinking logic. Through the motives that the child re-created, we can evaluate the degree of his artistic development, his method of observation, development of perceptions, and a sense of visual order.

During the painting activities on the basis of the artwork by Jackson Pollock, something else goes on. Jackson Pollock is an American painter and the most visible representative of the movement called Abstract Expressionism. He is known for his large canvases, onto which, placed in a horizontal position, he dripped blotches of different colours with wooden sticks soaked in paint. He worked with vehement, decisive strokes, spraying canvases with colour. His paintings are completely abstract and radiate incredible energy.

We decided on the didactic use of the art by Jackson Pollock due to his painting technique. With Picasso, we focused on the quality of the artist's aesthetic world, the perfection of artistic composition, the harmony of colour and design, imagination and creative

approaches to subjects. With Pollock, we searched for something else (in didactic terms). We based the artistic activity on the energy radiating from his way of painting. We used the playfulness of his approach to painting to design art activities. Artworks resulting from this exercise are not a result of a child's conscious effort to produce an artwork, they are accidental art games. They do not reflect the level of the child's development and we cannot determine the child's level of perception from them, or the degree of control over the use of artistic means of expression, etc. In this case, the basic artistic means of expression is coincidence. For this reason, these works do not have great value for the outside observer. However, their value is not found in a high-quality finished product but rather in the relaxation and energy of the work process itself. Panels of experts usually do not include such works of art into competitions, as they do not reflect the child's artistic potential; still, they are aware of the didactic value of the activities from which the work arose.

Art activities based on random art games may represent a pleasant and high-quality enrichment of the work done in kindergarten, but only if they are used occasionally or rarely, because they cannot replace the classic set of artistic activities. Nevertheless, if they are well thought out and perhaps related to the work of a top-notch artist, they are of a sufficient quality, which is why we decided to include an example here as well. The basic structure of the activity, the main objectives, the theme and the technique are shown in Ill. 8.

First, the children learned about the artist's work. Monographs about the artist were prepared, as well as high-quality reproductions from various sources and direct access to information on the Internet. The talk about the artworks was relaxed, and the children were more interested in the video showing the painter's style of painting than in the artwork itself [Ill. 9].

Practical activity was divided into three different workshops. In the first one, children emulated the artist's artistic technique by painting on a larger

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Operational objective of the art activity	Abstract toying with colour
Objectives	Enjoying the freedom of playing with artistic means Getting to know the art of the painter Jackson Pollock Maintaining an open approach to artistic-creative game Developing a sense of colour and colour relations
Art field	Painting (artistic expression on a surface)
Art technique	Painting with opaque water colours and wooden sticks Painting with crayons
Art theme	World of art
Motif	abstract

#### 8. The structure of the “Jackson Pollock” art education activity in kindergarten

„Jacksono Pollocko“ meno užsiėmimų darželyje struktūra

format with brushes and wooden sticks. At this point, the reproductions were not observed directly. The children were stimulated by watching the painter at work as seen in Ill. 9. When painting on a larger format, three or four children simultaneously worked on it. Additional work incentives were not needed. Despite the fact that they did not have a particular motif to paint, they started working immediately. The given artistic tools, wooden sticks instead of brushes, also contributed to this. The children immediately started to drip paint on the surface [Ill. 10]. When selecting individual colours and deciding where to use them, they were guided by their intuition.

In the second workshop, reproductions of Pollock’s artworks were available and children used crayons and A3 drawing sheets. When drawing with crayons and directly observing reproductions of artworks, the process was different. This part of the activity was similar to that of the artistic expression based on direct observation of Pablo Picasso’s works. In accordance with the method of aesthetic transfer, the child enriched his aesthetic sense while observing the artwork; he immediately transferred his feelings onto paper [Ill. 11].



9. Children are stimulated by watching the painter at work

Vaikus motyvuoja stebėti, kaip dirba tapytojas



10. Children drip paint on the surface

Vaikai varvina dažus ant popieriaus



11. A child observes the artwork and transfers his feelings onto paper

Vaikas stebi meno kūrinį ir perkelia savo jausmus ant popieriaus



12. A child decides to transform the abstract artistic language into a figurative motif

Vaikas bando transformuoti abstrakčią meno kalbą į figūrinį motyvą

Children's works in this workshop are a clear example of how we can decidedly influence the orientation of an artistic activity depending on the given artistic technique. In this case, the children, on the basis of directly observing the artwork and taking into account the characteristics and options of the given art technique, decided upon a different work strategy than their peers who used the large format. At the same time, the approach to the work was influenced by the individuality of each child. Some imitated the artist's expressive gestures and thereby recreated the energy of the artwork. Others relied on the colour composition of the observed work and its structure. In Ill. 11, we can admire the child's incredible ability to grasp the essence of the artwork's message.

In the next example [Ill. 12], the child decided to translate the observed work into his own artistic language, which is based on figural motifs. The child decided to transform the abstract artistic language into an image of a human figure or something else. The child's decision should be respected, honoured and admired. Even when a child completely changes the motif, this represents a unique response to the observed artwork and artist at his work; therefore, such works should be exhibited along with the reproduction, which served as the basis for the child's work.

In the third workshop, "painting boxes" were prepared. Black-coloured papers were glued to the bottom of the carton boxes, opaque watercolours, as well as marbles were prepared [Ill. 13].

In this workshop, the work was carried out in a largely different manner than usual. Each child painted different colours of their choice on the bottom of the box, added some marbles and then shook and tilted the box. At the same time, the marbles scurrying across the black paper on the bottom of the box created random colour compositions. Children enjoyed doing it, despite the fact that they could not directly influence the marbles in the box and the creation of colour compositions. Their influence was confined



13. Painting box

Tapybos dėžė

14. Marbles scurrying across the black paper on the bottom of the box created random colour compositions

Akmenukai, slystantys per juodą popierių dėžės dugne, sukuria atsitiktines spalvines kompozicijas

to the decision which colours will be used and how fiercely they will shake and tilt the box; the rest was done by chance. Although art products resulting from this process are interesting in their own right, it is necessary to note that these are not artworks made by children. In this case, this was a demonstration of how exciting and relaxing playing with artistic means is; it was a relaxing activity, not a work of artistic expression that would demonstrate the child's artistic abilities. With this unusual artistic activity we wanted to enable children to play in a relaxed manner. We are aware that this activity does not indicate the level of children's artistic skills, but is a game of chance, which the child cannot affect. The main objective of the activity was to enjoy playing with artistic means and developing a general creative potential, and had less to do with specific artistic abilities and skills. Such activities cannot replace the classic set of art activities, but can occasionally enliven them.

What is the pedagogical and didactic value of the finished artworks seen in Ill. 14? The products themselves can be artistically interesting, just like these. They contain the energy of Pollock's artworks, which the child used as a model. However, it could also be the other way around. Artworks could be uninteresting, a pile of crumpled, wet, torn paper with scribbles on it. Such products would be thrown straight into the rubbish bin instead of being exhibited, and products in the classical sense would not exist at all. However, this is irrelevant, as we did not decide to undertake this activity for the sake of the artwork. The maximum value of such art activities lies in the work process. The Slovenian Curriculum for Kindergartens emphasises that the process of making art is much more important than the result. Artistic activities are carried out in order to promote the development of the child, and not for the finished products. Many excellent art activities do not even require to create a final product. It is true, however, that children's wonderful artworks emerge from many others. This activity may offer some of both.

## CONCLUSIONS

In light of the posed research questions, the following was established.

When children engage in artistic activities on the basis of direct observation of works of art, this is greatly reflected in their products. The effect of the works of art is evident at multiple levels. When painting, children use a larger number of colours than usual, while also mixing these colours [Ill. 5 and 6]. When painting while observing a work of art, the children's artistic language is also enriched. An in-depth focus on the art rhythm [Ill. 5] appears, as well as interesting combinations of colour tones and unusual compositional solutions [Ill. 7]. Depicting the motifs of the works of art is adapted to the child's developmental level [Ill. 7]. A more animated depiction of figures than is characteristic of the preschool age appears, such as, for example, depicting a figure in motion [Ill. 7]. By comparing the two activities, it has been established that the children were equally drawn to the two activities, both to the first, which is based on figural art, and to the second, which is based on abstract art. However, children responded differently to the works of art by these two artists. With Picasso, all children depicted figures, while with the abstract world of Jackson Pollock, they expressed themselves abstractly; however, individual children also depicted figures [Ill. 12]. It was partially due to the fact that children were shown a video of the artist at work, and perhaps they depicted the artist. We further presume that the figural world is much closer to a preschool child than abstract playing with artistic means, and this is why they draw figures also with abstract templates.

It was further established that the expressive power of the works of art greatly showed in the children's artwork. The children translated the works of art into the artistic language of their developmental period, while they also observed the works of art so well that the external similarity between the work of art and the

work of children can be seen in all final products. It was also established that many children's works, in addition to similarity, also emanated at least a part of the aesthetic charge of the work of art. When comparing the two activities, it was established that children were equally attracted to figural and abstract works of art. Both activities lasted approximately one hour, the children gladly participated and did not leave early to engage in other activities. With abstract works of art, they were perhaps additionally attracted to the playful manner of working, i.e. painting with colours in the boxes and marbles.

In general, we can again emphasise that artistic expression in early development is extremely important. In that period, the foundation is created for further artistically rich expression. The purpose of art activities in the early period is not to prepare the child to become an artist. Instead, it has the overall role of the main manual in cognitive development. With the help of the rich, daily and varied artistic expression, the child will be able to develop normally. A special role is played by early artistic expression in the development of fine arts, visual literacy, spatial conception, abstract thinking and, of course, creative thinking and creative talents in the broadest sense.

As regards aesthetic development, we emphasised the child's innate sense of artistic order and the nurtured sense of beauty, which are shaped by the social and cultural environment. The difference between them lies in the fact that a child is born with the first, while the second is fully the result of his upbringing. Nevertheless, pedagogical activities aimed at developing both senses are not as different as one might expect. Both senses can be developed and pushed to enviable levels using appropriate approaches, some of which are presented in this paper. By employing different approaches to the method of aesthetic transfer, we make sure that at least a part of aesthetically coded messages is transferred from the artwork to the child. The method of artistic expression based on

direct observation of a work of art sees to the child's in-depth and active absorbing of the chosen artwork. Playful work using modern approaches to art develops an open relation to artistic expression while also nurturing the aesthetic sense. Active use of the language of contemporary art during playful activities in the kindergarten is the best way for an open acceptance of this language at contemporary art galleries and museums<sup>24</sup>.

Even though the basic objective of the activities that relate to the world of art is the development of the child's sense of artistic order and sense of beauty, we nevertheless have to mention the creative components. The works of art, which the child observes while working, promote his creativity. Creativity here is understood not so much as a possession, but more of a potential, one that signals a dynamic and dialogical way of relating to others and the environment, which can be developed by most people, given suitable social and pedagogic conditions<sup>25</sup>. Artmaking on the basis of direct viewing of an artwork is an art education method that certainly provides a suitable pedagogical condition. With its complex artistic and aesthetic design, a work of art does not allow simple, generalised and superficial understanding. The child comprehends the artwork holistically<sup>26</sup>, and gets an impression of it, a feeling that is conditioned by his age and developmental level. When he makes art on the basis of direct observation of artwork, his artistic expression always includes something new, different, original, statistically rare, which are the basic terms

24 Lucy Dawe Lane, "Using Contemporary Art", in: *Critical Studies & Modern Art*, Eds. Liz Dawtrey, Toby Jackson, Mary Masterton, Pam Meecham, Yale University Press, 1996, pp. 137–144.

25 Nicholas Addison, "Developing creative potentials", in: *Understanding Art Education*, Eds. Nicholas Addison, Lesley Burgess, John Steers, and Jane Trowell, London and New York: Routledge, 2010, pp. 43–66.

26 Marja Lenna Rönkkö, Juli Anna Aerila and Satu Grönman, "Creative Inspiration from Pre-Schoolers from Museum", in: *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 2016, 48 (1), pp. 17–32.

for the assessment of creativity in artistic expression. The contact with artwork does not only strengthen the child's sense of artistic order and sense of beauty, but also greatly affects the development of his creativity in the broadest sense.

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# MENAS IR MENININKAI VAIKŲ DARŽELYJE – PRIELAIDOS IR PAVYZDŽIAI

*Tomaž Zupančič*

## SANTRAUKA

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: meno edukacija, ankstyvoji vaikystė, Pablo Picasso, Jacksonas Pollockas, estetiškas perkėlimas.

Teorinėje straipsnio dalyje yra pabrėžiama, kad piešimas nėra tik paprastas vaiko raidos psichologinių parametru ar jo įgimto estetinio poreikio atspindys, tai yra ir ugdymo įrankis bei kognityvi būtinybė. Vizualinio meno užsiėmimų esmę ikimokykliniu laikotarpiu geriausiai iliustruoja Jacqueline Goodnow žodžiai<sup>27</sup>. Ji teigia, kad vaiko vizualinė raiška yra jo vizualinis mąstymas. Vizualinės tvarkos pojūtis yra žmogaus gebėjimas, kuris atsiranda ankstyvosios vaikystės laikotarpiu, pirmiausia per dailės užsiėmimus. Daugiausia tarnaudama kaip priemonė pažinti erdvines savybes, meninė raiška taip pat padeda suvokti meno elementus ir santykį tarp vizualinių bei meninių dalių. Meninės tvarkos pojūtis nėra tolygus grožio pojūčiui. Pirmasis yra įgimtas, o antrasis turi būti išugdomas. Grožio ar estetinis meno pojūtis yra išugdoma individo savybė jausti, suvokti ir mėgautis meninę vertę turinčiais meno kūriniais. Grožio pojūtį galima išugdyti tik per vaiko sąlytį su menu. Straipsnio empirinėje dalyje yra pateikiama atskiro atvejo analizė. Tyrimas ir atskiro atvejo analizė buvo atliekami remiantis Slovėnijos ikimokyklinio ugdymo programa, nors naudotus metodus galima taikyti ir kitose šalyse. Buvo vystoma dviejų tipų meninė veikla, susijusi su menininkais ir jų kūriniais. Duomenys buvo renkami neatsitiktiniu būdu parinktose dviejose penkerių ir šešerių metų ikimokyklinio amžiaus vaikų grupėse. Tyrime iš viso dalyvavo 40 vaikų. Jo tikslas – parodyti, kaip svarbu ugdyti estetinį pojūtį ikimokykliniu laikotarpiu. Tai siekiama atskleisti analizuojant veiklas, kurios jungia praktinius meno užsiėmimus darželyje ir meno kūrinius.

Meno didaktika pripažįsta, kaip svarbu vaikus supažindinti su meno pasauliu, todėl yra vystomi metodai, kuriais siekiama meną priartinti prie vaikų. Tokių metodų tikslas – sukurti vaiko vidinę motyvaciją tiksliai ir jautriai stebėti meno kūrinius, ilginti dėmesio koncentraciją ties vienu kūriniumi, pabandyti atrasti įdomias detales ir kt. Pagrindinis metodas šioje srityje yra estetiškas perkėlimas. Konkreti metodika, kurią mes taikome straipsnyje aprašomose veiklose, yra tapyba, t. y. tapymas stebint meno kūrinį. Naudodami skirtingus požiūrius į estetinio perkėlimo metodą, mes stengiamės, kad vaikas suvoktų bent jau dalį estetiškai užkoduotų meno kūrinio žinučių. Tiesioginiu meno kūrinio stebėjimu pagrįsto meninės raiškos metodo dėka vaikas giliai ir aktyviai įsisavina pasirinktą meno kūrinį. Jis suvokia meno kūrinio visumą, susikuria jo įspūdį, kuris priklauso nuo jo amžiaus ir išsivystymo lygmens. Vaikų meninėje raiškoje, vykstančioje stebėtų meno kūrinių pagrindu, visuomet atsiranda kas nors naujo, skirtingo, originalaus, statistiškai reto – visa tai yra pagrindiniai terminai vertinant meninės raiškos kūrybiškumą. Sąlytis su meno kūriniumi ne tik sustiprina vaiko meninės tvarkos ir grožio pojūtį, bet ir daro didelę įtaką jo kūrybiškumo vystymuisi plačiausia prasme.

27 Jacqueline Goodnow, *Children's drawing*, London: Fontana, Open Books, 1977.