



2021 Symposium Program: Presenter profiles and abstracts

The symposium theme is 'the elephant in the room', an opportunity to confront some of the big issues and challenges related to early childhood visual arts pedagogy and practice; and to present new ideas, effective theories and inspirations for practice. There are six topic focus strands and several art workshops.

2021 International Art in Early Childhood virtual symposium: Commencing February 21, 2021.

Introduction to the International Association of Art in Early Childhood

The Association is a non-profit organisation that aims to connect those around the world who have an interest in the visual arts for young children.

It aims to:

- Provide a forum for an exchange of ideas and research about young children and the visual arts
- Encourage and support the visual arts in early childhood contexts
- Connect researchers and practitioners in the field
- Support a biennial international conference of art in early childhood

The organisation is a big, noisy family of volunteers, artists, teachers, parents, researchers and educators who are passionate about the possibilities the visual arts hold for young children. This diverse group of people comes together at the International Art in Early Childhood Conference which is usually held every two years to celebrate, play and discuss art and young children.

History

The first Art in Early Childhood Conference was held in London at Roehampton University in 2005. Margaret Brooks (University of New England, Australia) and Rosemary Richards attended this conference and realised that this was too good to be a one-off event. Consequently, the event was taken back to the University of New England in Australia in 2007.

From the interest shown about early childhood art research, the International Association of Art in Early Childhood was formed in 2007. This was followed by the International Art in Early Childhood Research Journal which was established in 2009. Since then, there have been conferences in the USA, Singapore, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Bhutan and New Zealand.

Responses and Solutions:

During 2020, a small group of colleagues who had developed friendships and collaborative partnerships at previous IAEC conferences connected organically via ZOOM and continued meeting weekly throughout the 2020 Covid19 restrictions.

We were seeking connection and somehow these weekly conversations sustained us professionally, academically and emotionally. For easy reference, we called ourselves 'The Possums.'

As it became clear that our much-anticipated reunion at the scheduled 9th International Art in Early Childhood conference in Exeter, UK (2021) would have to be postponed until 2022, we began to think about how we might sustain the important information sharing, connections and collaborations afforded by the conference and tide us all over until we can reunite in person.

We hope that as symposium delegates you will aspire to join us in person at future conferences and become part of the very special community of artists, teachers, creatives and academics who share a common goal to ensure all children experience the right to high quality visual arts experiences and pedagogy in early childhood contexts and beyond!

Symposium Coordinators:

Dr Margaret Brooks (University of New England, Australia)




Dr. Gai Lindsay (University of Wollongong, Australia)




Denise Savins (EC Teacher/Artist, Australia)


With wonderful consultative and practical support from 'The Possums':

Dr. Sylvia Chard (Retired, France), Rachel Denée (EC Teacher/Director/PhD Candidate, NZ), Joke den Haese (Erasmus Brussels, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Belgium), Dr. Evelyn Egan (Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland), Catherine Lee (EC Teacher/Director, Australia), Dr. Lisa Terreni, Victoria University, NZ).

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Theories



There seems to be a mismatch between the theoretical frameworks guiding practice in the visual arts and the more general framework for early childhood. While early childhood professionals have mostly shifted to teaching practices informed by contemporary social constructionist theories, the arts in early childhood often appear to be 'stuck' in outdated theoretical approaches.

Some approaches to visual arts pedagogy, perhaps located in myth and the absence of critical reflection, are not compatible with current sociocultural theories and pedagogical approaches. For example, according to Piaget and Lowenfeld the artistic development of young children unfolds naturally in an individualistic, developmental sequence. They proposed that ability in the arts was an innate gift or capacity that one had little control over.

Such beliefs indicate a hands-off approach for teaching art that proposes the teacher should stand back and not interfere with children's natural development in the arts domain. This response is not compatible with current practices of scaffolding, intentional teaching and active pedagogy; nor with practice exemplars that position children as agentic, capable learners.

Another dominant framework for the arts is the 'Discipline Based' perspective from the Modernist era. It involves an elemental viewing and analysis where, for example, paintings are analyzed according to qualities of shape, line and tone. Such traditional perspectives do not address how we might respond to contemporary artforms such as installation, video, ephemeral and performance art. A Discipline Based perspective does not acknowledge the intent of the child; nor does it support the child's exploration and meaning-making through the arts.

Frameworks and beliefs that fuel a 'hands-off/non-intervention approach to the arts with young children are not compatible with current socio-cultural practices. More worrying, the result of minimal adult/expert guidance and children's minimal engagement in high quality visual arts pedagogy, is children's decline in artistic efficacy. Around the age of eight; many children give up the arts believing they do not have the talent for it. When this occurs, a child's human right to appreciate, explore and make-meaning in and through the arts is denied. The aim of this topic in this symposium is to discuss this problem and offer new contemporary theories for the arts inspired by Vygotsky, Dewey and a range of creativity theories.

Dr. Margaret Brooks (Australia)



Dr. Margaret Brooks is a senior lecturer at the University of New England, Australia. Her research focuses on young children's drawing processes and the relationships between drawing and meaning making from socio-cultural perspectives. She uses arts-based and visual ethnographic methods to examine the drawing processes of young children. Margaret is both artist and early childhood lecturer. Her art practice brings together her two disciplines. She believes in the power of art to facilitate "transactions" between people, issues and places. She creates educational and participatory installations where she can explore social, cultural and environmental issues with young children through the arts.

TITLE: Vygotsky just makes sense

ABSTRACT: I believe there is a theoretical crisis in the visual arts for young children. In the absence of a more contemporary theoretical framework, educators are hanging on to practices that are outdate and incompatible with current theories, concepts and practices. There is still a belief that artistic talent is an innate gift and that artistic development should unfold naturally with no interference. Such hands-off beliefs leave children unsupported in their efforts to create art. Eventually the children abandon their efforts and loose an important way of making sense of their world. Art in the 21st century, with its wide range of genres, and interactivities like installation and performance, is rarely addressed. Yet it offers so many new ways to see and think about the world. Current practices like intentional teaching and active pedagogy have not yet filtered through to the arts and children are left to figure it out by themselves. This would not be tolerated in any other area of the curriculum.

This presentation takes a Vygotskian lens to the pedagogy, beliefs and myths surrounding the visual arts in early childhood. I want to demonstrate what a more socio-constructionist theory might look like for the visual arts, in particular drawing. Drawing is foundational to the visual arts. When drawing, like play, is considered a leading activity in learning, we need to have a clear theoretical framework and a deep understanding of how we can best support children's use of this essential tool for learning.

Dr. Gai Lindsay (Australia)



Dr. Gai Lindsay is a lecturer in The Early Years degree at the University of Wollongong. Her PhD thesis explored the visual arts beliefs and pedagogy of early childhood educators. Her research interests focus on early childhood visual arts education, John Dewey's philosophy, and the Reggio Emilia educational project. She is currently engaged in research projects exploring visual arts pedagogy and training in Vietnam and Abu Dhabi. Before entering academia, Gai worked for more than twenty years as a preschool teacher, director and early childhood consultant. Her goal is for all children and their educators to experience the joy and satisfaction of meaningful mark-making and quality visual arts learning experiences.

TITLE: Revisiting John Dewey to move toward more progressive visual arts pedagogy

ABSTRACT: Visual arts pedagogy in early childhood settings has for too long been limited by adherence to a range of unexamined beliefs which assume a child's natural expressive capacities and creativity may be corrupted if educators' model or teach visual arts skills and processes. Provoking such assumptions, this presentation will outline a Deweyan inspired conceptual framework; developed to inform research that examined the visual art beliefs of early childhood educators. A literary analysis of Dewey's philosophies of art, education and democracy, suggests that the core values of the Italian Reggio Emilia project, including but not limited to ideas about community engagement, children as active and capable learners, and the centrality of visual languages within project-based curricula, find significant alignment with John Dewey's philosophies of art, education and democracy. Justifying and grounding the framework, a historical and socio-political analysis of both scholarly and original sources outlines the core principles of Dewey's approach to early childhood arts and the active reception of his progressive ideas by Malaguzzi and his Italian colleagues in northern Italy and particularly in Reggio Emilia. In sharing these conceptual provocations, along with guiding principles for quality visual arts pedagogy, delegates will be offered the opportunity to explore their own beliefs about the capacities and potentials of children, and to consider strategies for supporting both themselves and children to encounter the wonder, truth and beauty available to them (Dewey, 1902, p. 31).

Pete Moorhouse (UK)



Pete Moorhouse is an early years creative consultant and artist educator. He is an honorary research fellow at the Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, researching creative and critical thinking in the Early Years, and regularly presenting research at international conferences. Pete is an associate trainer for Early Education and delivers training both nationally and overseas. His work in school is centred around developing children's creativity and his practice is inspired by Froebelian principles and practices in Reggio Emilia. Pete is the UK's leading authority on woodwork in Early Years education and has written several books and journal articles, including 'Learning Through Woodwork' (Routledge) and Outdoor Learning. He is currently writing his latest book – 'Creativity in Practice: Nurturing creative and critical thinking in early childhood education'.

Pete won the national award (2019) from the Creative Learning Guild for his work promoting creativity in education. He was awarded a Churchill Fellowship and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

TITLE: A theoretical framework of creativity: The beauty of complexity

ABSTRACT:

In this presentation I will be emphasising the importance of creativity and its place within early childhood contexts. We start by taking a close look at what we really mean by creativity, do we have a common understanding? We'll then be

looking at the dynamics of creativity and defining the key elements. I will be sharing some models of creativity gathered from an extensive literature review and then provide a holistic theoretic framework of creativity looking at the components that interweave throughout the creative process, examining key individual capabilities and external facilitating factors. The presentation is based on ongoing action research, collating empirical evidence taken from case studies of situations that have led to creative flow and also data from teacher surveys.

I will be sharing this research looking at ways in which early years teaching staff can best be supported to encourage the key 'thinking' components of creativity; creative and critical thinking as well as nurturing contributing learning dispositions. I provide a model for observing children's thinking skills and ask the question - is there value in monitoring progression? Building on the work of Claxton 2012, Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein 1999 and Craft 2008, we have trialled a creativity assessment tool at St Werburghs Park Nursery School, Bristol. This is a formative assessment 'for' learning, not 'of' learning. The purpose is to aid teacher observation and to better support the development of children's ideas on an individual basis.

We will look closely at the facilitating factors found to have a significant impact on children's creative development, such as sensitive adult engagement, open-ended resources, the enabling environment, extended time and especially highlighting how the arts can support this journey.

Dr. Sarah Probine (NZ)



Dr. Sarah Probine is a lecturer for the Bachelor of Education (Early childhood teaching) at Manukau Institute of Technology in Auckland, New Zealand. Her PhD thesis explored the contextual influences that shape how young children come to value the visual arts in their lives and learning across the contexts of their homes and early childhood settings. Sarah is currently working on research which examines the impact of tertiary assessment practices on how pre - service teachers develop their self-efficacy and pedagogical knowledge in order to engage in and teach the arts effectively in early childhood education. She is also in the initial stages of a research project exploring how inquiry based project work is interpreted and enacted by early childhood communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Sarah is passionate about supporting early childhood educators to develop rich, culturally responsive arts curriculum and practices that position both children and teachers as co-protagonists as they construct understandings through the visual arts.

TITLE: Becoming an artist/teacher: Diverse interpretations of sociocultural theories and what this means for children's learning

ABSTRACT: Since the 1980's sociocultural theories have increasingly influenced the early childhood sector impacting both curriculum design and teachers' practices. Despite this, in the domain of the visual arts, a myriad of theories, approaches and macro level beliefs about childhood, learning, knowledge and the role of the teacher continue to create confusion about what is appropriate practice and why. This presentation will unpack these assumptions and will explore the key issues currently contributing to the confusion in this domain. Differing interpretations of sociocultural theories in relation to visual arts pedagogies will then be examined. Rich practice-based examples will be provided, demonstrating how these ideas have been enacted in three early childhood communities in New Zealand. The narratives shared about these settings will reveal how each teaching team developed their pedagogical ideas over time, and will offer stories of children's engagement in the visual arts and the impact these experiences had on their learning both in their early childhood settings and their homes. The session will conclude with some new proposals and provocations about the role of the teacher within a sociocultural paradigm and will consider what such interpretations could mean for both the role of the teacher and the agency and involvement of children when learning through the visual arts.

Working with artists and museums



The creation of art work, artist's processes, and art museums have an aura of mystery about them. Sometimes art seems to be an exclusive enclave that is almost impenetrable. For many, artist, galleries and art museums are not familiar or something they know much about. Yet there is an incredible richness, joy and delight that interacting with artists, the art process and art museums can add to our life experiences.

Young children, who do not yet read or write, are dependent on art forms as a means of representing their ideas and thinking. However, not only is there little connection between children and artists, we also do not spend much time teaching our early childhood student teachers about the arts. We do not demonstrate the multiple ways we can represent information, ideas and imagination. Consequentially, many early childhood teachers are reluctant to engage in the arts with young children and often have little to offer them.

When teachers do not have the essential skills to develop multiple ways of representing ideas, thinking, information and imagination with children, then children are left with few ways to express themselves. How can we address this gap in children's learning? How can we upskill teachers and embed arts in our teacher training? In this strand we aim to analyse arts experiences, identify the fundamentals of art processes, apply the 'incomplete manifesto' and look at working with art institutions and artists. Our overall aim is to support and expand educators knowledge of art and meaningful arts experiences.

Dr. Claire Britt and Amanda Palmer (Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia)



Dr. Clare Britt is a teacher, author, researcher and Honorary Lecturer at Macquarie University. For many years, she was the Lecturer in Early Childhood/ Primary Creative Arts (Visual Arts) at the Institute of Early Childhood (now the Macquarie School of Education). Clare's research centres around young children's engagement with art, and creative approaches to pedagogy in early childhood settings, primary schools and art gallery/museum contexts. Her current research is the 'Art & Wonder: Young Children and Contemporary Art' research project, in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, (MCA) exploring how very young children encounter contemporary art in a gallery space, and how rich pedagogy might emerge from these encounters.



Amanda Palmer (Early Learning Coordinator) is passionate about bringing young children, contemporary art and artists together. She advocates for all young children, their teachers and families, to be empowered as cultural citizens through active welcome and wholehearted participation within all museums and galleries. Before coming to the MCA in 2011, Palmer developed and delivered family programs at Penrith Regional Gallery. In her current role, she leads the *Art & Wonder: Young Children and Contemporary Art* research project, in collaboration with colleagues from Macquarie University, Mia Mia Child and Family Study Centre, Lalor Park Kids' Early Learning and Blacktown City Council.

TITLE: Creative reciprocity: Connections and threads between contemporary artists and young children

ABSTRACT: The *Art & Wonder: Young Children and Contemporary Art Research Project* is a collaboration between the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, and Macquarie University, working with children, families and teachers from Mia Mia Child and Family Study Centre, and Lalor Park Kids Early Learning (Blacktown City Council). Our research explores how very young children encounter contemporary art in a gallery space, and how rich pedagogy might emerge from these encounters. Creative reciprocity between young children and contemporary artists continues to be a fascinating element of this research project. In our research, the children show us the connections they make not just with artworks but with the artists as people, as well as the creative processes that these different artists engage with. We are also interested in what contemporary artists might be experiencing as they engage with and create connections with babies and very young children in the art museum context. In this session we will explore findings from our research around children's cultural citizenship, creativity and play, and the creative exchange and reciprocity in aesthetic, expressive, tactile, imaginative, encounters between contemporary artists and young children.

Cara McLeod



Artist Educator
Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

Cara MacLeod has 20 years' experience teaching visual arts in schools, coordinating art education programs in galleries and museums and facilitating creative learning experiences with diverse audiences including young children and Early Childhood teachers at the MCA. She works across diverse media with recycled and found materials and builds connections to place and community through her art practice.

Brook Morgan



Artist Educator
Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

Brook Morgan is an artist and art educator at the MCA and Casual Academic at UNSW Art and Design. Brook's art practice is characterised by her use of and response to naturally occurring materials through the mediums of textile, painting, mark making and assemblage. Brook has a particular interest in how play can help facilitate meaning making through testing, shaping and inquiry into materials.

"Throughout the Art & Wonder project, I have come to be acutely aware of the myriad of connections and threads between the way in which young children experience the world and the way in which many artists work – close looking; non-linear, inquiry-led investigation; the body and its empathetic sensory experience; making meaning, connections and asking questions, to name a few. As an early learner, meaning is not fixed yet and as an artist we describe the world trying to un-ravel these fixed definitions and find new ways of seeing the world in which we live. Watching [a child] work on building an installation or combining materials from different parts of the room is not dissimilar to my own practice as an artist. The outcome is unknown, the meaning can shift and change as the work progresses, the pleasure of testing and transforming materials. " (Brook, MCA Artist Educator)

Christine McMillan and Dr. Margaret Brooks (Australia)



Christine McMillan is a contemporary artist who works across a broad range of media. She is Art Out West's 'Art and Health' coordinator and was co-curator of Cementa Contemporary Art Festival 2014-19.

Christine has exhibited in regional and national galleries and museums, including Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, Western Plains Cultural Centre, Bundaberg Art Gallery, Orange Regional Gallery, Cementa13 and Cementa15 Contemporary Arts Festivals, the Wirksworth Arts Festival, UK, the Subak Museum, Indonesia and 'Sydney Contemporary, Installation' 2015.



Dr. Margaret Brooks is a senior lecturer at the University of New England, Australia. Her research focuses on young children's drawing processes and the relationships between drawing and meaning making from socio-cultural perspectives. She uses arts-based and visual ethnographic methods to examine the drawing processes of young children and is both artist and early childhood lecturer. Her art practice brings together her two disciplines. She believes in the power of art to facilitate "trans-actions" between people, issues and places. She creates educational and participatory installations where she can explore social, cultural and environmental issues with young children through the arts. She regularly consults with the Royal University of Bhutan and Ministry of Education on the development of Early Childhood Education and art in Bhutan.

TITLE: What do artists do all day?

ABSTRACT: Christine McMillan and Margaret Brooks are both artists. Christine works in arts and health and Margaret in early childhood education. They often work together in both the arts and education, and recognise that many educators and students sometimes struggle to teach the visual arts to young children, especially in authentic and meaningful ways. This can leave a gap in pedagogical practice when it comes to art, and this gap leaves children unsupported in their art making endeavours.

How artist work and what they do all day is not often visible and can be a bit of a mystery. Margaret and Christine have decided to unpack their art making processes and try to make them more transparent. Among the many processes they have unearthed there are many that could enrich children's art making. These processes are also helpful for adults who want to know more about how to do art and the thinking behind art making.

From the unpacking of their processes they have developed two simple tools that might prompt some productive ways of doing art with children and other novices. One tool is a manifesto for pedagogy in the visual arts and the other is a set of possibilities. Their presentations hope to offer a lifeline to those for whom art is a mystery and only to be attempted on Friday afternoons and rainy days.

Dr. Barbara Piscitelli AM & Stella Read (State Library of Queensland, Australia).



Dr. Barbara Piscitelli is an independent consultant and researcher. In 1986, she established an archive of children's art and has created several exhibitions and catalogues from her collection. In 2004, she donated the collection to the State Library of Queensland.

Her research explores cultural policy and childhood, children's learning in museums, and early childhood visual arts education. Dr Piscitelli was recognised in the Australia Day 2006 Honours as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM). The citation for her Award reads: 'For service to early childhood education as a teacher, to the establishment of programs in cultural institutions for children, and as a collector and curator of children's art.' In 2015, she was honoured with the Chime Bell Award for foreign experts by the Hubei (China) Provincial Government.



Stella Read is the Curator of *Big Voices: Children's Art Matters*, an exhibition at the State Library of Queensland. Stella is the Coordinator of the Young People and Families Program at State Library of Queensland.

TITLE: BIG VOICES: Children's art matters

ABSTRACT:

Children's art is often seen in homes, schools and centres, but rarely in the public arena in galleries. Even so, children have important ideas and messages to share with the world through their art. This session will focus on why children's art matters, and what we can learn from collecting, exhibiting and interpreting children's art, stories and ideas. The presentation focuses on the Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive, and showcases stories by children 12 months to 12 years.

Our session will feature the exhibition *Big Voices: Children's Art Matters* and will provide participants with the chance to learn about the Dr Barbara Piscitelli AM Children's Art Archive at the State Library of Queensland (Australia) through a digital tour of the exhibition, several digital stories, and a fully searchable online collection guide to more than 2,500 children's drawings and stories from Australia, China and Vietnam.

Curator Stella Read and Collector Barbara Piscitelli will provide an online chatroom to discuss why children's art matters.



Mother and child (1995),
Jessica Charlton, Aged 5
years
Crayon and watercolour

**Chapel Hill Kindergarten,
Queensland AUSTRALIA**

St Peter's preschool, Australia



Louise Valente

Louise Valente, Bachelor of Education ECE/Primary

After completing her degree at the University of Wollongong, Louise spent a couple of years travelling overseas and around Australia. During this time she also lived in London and taught children in preschool and primary schools. Louise moved to Armidale in 2007 with her husband and they now have two young children. She has worked in early childhood in the Armidale area for the past twelve years as both a teacher and a director. She has an interest in the creative arts and continues to explore ways to integrate various mediums into the program.



Natalie Rich

Natalie Rich, Advanced Qualified Child Care Worker – Diploma in Children's Services

Natalie has over 25 years experience in the early childhood sector and has worked in a diverse range of settings in Sydney. Natalie relocated to Armidale in 2007 with her young family. After taking time to raise her young children, Natalie returned to work in 2014. She currently holds the positions of Group Leader and Educational Leader at a regional community based preschool. She has a strong interest in exploring visual documentation with children and as a non artist, strives to learn more about the visual arts to inform her practice with children. As Educational Leader, Natalie is a strong advocate for embedding critical reflection and is passionate about mentoring new and experienced educators to continually improve practices. Natalie is currently completing her Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood Education).



Jane Schutz

Jane Schultz trained in South Australia and worked for 8 years as head teacher, teaching in Child Parent Centres (Preschools) and 6 years teaching in Junior Primary Schools focusing on the first 3 years of formal education as a classroom teacher with a focus on environmental education and technology. She moved with her family to Armidale in 1997. In 1998 she was elected President of the Board of Management of St Peter's Preschool, a position she held for 12 months.

Jane took on the role of Director in 2016 and now works full time.

Title: Let's talk about the elephants!

Abstract: This is a story that comes from between the lines and beyond the art project. An artist went to a preschool to do a project on painting for several weeks. The artist wrote up her version of the project; a nice tidy account of some successes that will no doubt be useful to educators. However, for the educators in the preschool the project was not so tidy. The reality of working with an artist in a preschool is not always tidy, smooth, and understandable. The educators have added another layer to the narrative. They talk about their 'elephants'. They give us a few insights about doing art with children and artists from their perspective. With permission from the artist, they interrupt the 'instagram' version of the project to insert a few side stories of their own.

Effective pedagogies



While visual arts materials are regularly used in early childhood settings, it appears that many early childhood educators are unsure about how to define the features of effective visual arts pedagogy and how to effectively plan for children's visual arts learning and engagement. Pedagogical confusion is evident as early years educators routinely debate questions such as: Is it enough to offer arts materials for exploration and experimentation?; Should adults stand back and allow the child's natural skills to emerge, or does the role of the educator need to be more intentional?; Is it OK to gather ideas from Pinterest and social media posts?; What about stencils and colouring-in sheets?; Is the process more important than the product?; Should freedom and fun be the central goal?; Is mess making a pathway to development and creativity?; What does quality visual arts pedagogy actually look like?; How can we confidently integrate the visual arts into our curriculum?

The aim of this topic in this symposium is to engage with ideas and high-quality examples of visual arts practice and curriculum design from around the world. Presentations and online resources will provide information and inspirations to provoke and expand our thinking about:

- utilizing the arts within projects of inquiry,
- building a whole of team approach,
- how to set up arts-centred environments,
- the features of effective visual arts pedagogy.

Symposium participants will be inspired, challenged and equipped to critically evaluate their own pedagogy and practice; consider new possibilities for their own contexts; and to network with each other to extend our thinking and approach to visual arts pedagogies.

Dr. Theresa Giorza (with contributions from colleagues*) (South Africa)



Theresa Giorza is a teacher, educator and researcher based at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. She is a member of the Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance and the Makers Valley Partnership through which she supports the work of a range of community-based practitioners and organisations. Her research focus is on the relational and ethical possibilities of sensory and arts experience in early years education. Her forthcoming book “Learning with Damaged Colonial Places: Posthumanist pedagogies from a Joburg preschool” will be published by Springer in 2021.

ORCID ID <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1512-6741>

TITLE: Pedagogical conversations from South Africa: Issues of arts and justice in early childhood.

ABSTRACT: A range of private and civil society organisations based in urban centres in South Africa offer vignettes of practice and explore ideas relating to the arts and their role in navigating some central issues facing us as a company of earth dwellers on the Southern tip of our continent. Inspired by the ideas of Reggio Emilia and our own historical struggles for democracy and justice, the presenters grapple together with their young participants with questions about their place in the community as citizens, and as caring co-inhabitants of the spaces of the city.

Collaboration team (see next page for more information about some of the presenters)

- Thandiwe Sekhibane (Mimosa school)
- Jaqueline Flint (Mimosa School)
- Tessa Browne (Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance)
- Nora Saneka (Point and Inner City ECD Forum)
- Mfanafuthi Mbongwe (PlayAfrica)
- Stephen Hobbs (ArtmyJozi)
- Mitra Mäki (CDP)
- Vuyo “Lassie” Ndalela (CDP and Changemaker children)

Thandiwe Sekhibane (Mimosa School)



Thandiwe is a PhD candidate in early childhood education. She is a qualified facilitator, moderator and pre/in-service trainer. Her fields of research are African philosophy, science in early childhood, quantum physics and Reggio Emilia in early childhood.

Jaqueline Flint (Mimosa School)



Jacqueline Flint is an independent writer, editor and curator with a particular interest in the role of the studio as a generative collaborative space that contributes to the positive development of individual artist's practices and culture at large. In recent years she has also taken a keen interest in the application of creative processes as part of early childhood and foundation phase pedagogical approaches, as a way to develop and enrich research with children.

Tessa Browne (Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance)



Tessa Browne's many years in early childhood education in South Africa, and her desire to foster children's creativity and critical thought, led inevitably to Reggio Emilia in Italy and a lifechanging passion for and interest in the Reggio Emilia approach. As co-founder and director of the non-profit Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance (AREA) she has been involved in its vision since 2011 to strive towards a hope and a better future for children through the vehicle of the Reggio Emilia approach. As coordinator of professional development initiatives on the approach she has been responsible for promoting it in SA through national and international conferences, seminars, workshops, webinars and mentorship programmes. She works with educators from all sectors but particularly enjoys working with "practitioners" (educators) from early childhood centres from resource constrained settings in South Africa.

Nora Saneka (Point and Inner City ECD Forum)



Nora Saneka is Chair of the Point and Inner City ECD Forum, Principal of Clare Ellis Brown Pre-Primary School in the Point Area, and is a teacher/researcher. She is a D Ed student in Educational Psychology through UNISA. She is a children's rights activist and was a founder-member of the Children's Rights Centre in Durban. She is also a member of the Africa Reggio Emilia Alliance (AREA). Her research looks at the intersections between language, agency, identity, culture and power, with 'language' as multi-modal semiotic meaning-making, the material-discursive – therefore language as activity. She uses cultural historical activity theory as a heuristic, to understand language as activity, and a praxeological approach - uBuntu-praxis. She has had two articles published in peer-reviewed journals and a chapter on infant and toddler pedagogy in Ebrahim et al (2021) *Curriculum, Pedagogy, Assessment: A Handbook of ECE in SA*. (Pearsons International). ORCID No: 0000-0002-7532-6326

Mfanafuthi Mbongwe (PlayAfrica)



Mfanafuthi is currently Operations Supervisor at Play Africa, a children's museum in Johannesburg, South Africa. As a social entrepreneur, he has helped build Play Africa into a pioneering platform to catalyse innovations in creative learning, children's rights, parent engagement and social cohesion in a divided society. He has held various roles at Play Africa, including Project Lead, Play and Learning Facilitator and Programme Coordinator. Prior to his work at Play Africa, he has worked with various reputable NGOs and businesses such as GIBS, Endeavor South Africa, Dahlak Exchange, Gracefully Consulting, I-Innovate and Corpcom in roles ranging from being a Programme coordinator, project assistant to being an intern. He has a passion for entrepreneurship and putting children's rights and education at the forefront and uncovering the potential of every African child.

Stephen Hobbs (ArtmyJozi)



Since 1994, Johannesburg has served as a critical reference point for Hobbs' artistic and curatorial insights into the - apartheid city turned African city - with a particular interest in the impact of defensive urban planning and architecture on the behavioral aspects of city and society. The resultant urban decay that develops in such conditions evolved Hobbs practice into consultative processes on the role of art in public space relative to urban renewal and place making initiatives commissioned by the city. Hobbs' near 10-year relationship with David Krut Projects has broadened his artistic repertoire through print making, book making and publishing. In addition, David Krut Projects New York has produced a variety of Hobbs' talks, presentations and workshops in numerous Universities and Institutions through-out the USA. Stephen Hobbs graduated from Wits University with a BAFA, in 1994. He was the curator of the Market Theatre Galleries (Johannesburg) from 1994 to 2000, Co-Director of the purpose-built Gallery Premises (2004-2008) at the Joburg Theatre. Since 2001 he has co-directed the artist collaborative and public art consultancy - The Trinity Session. And since 2004 has co-produced a range of multi-medium urban and network-focused projects with Marcus Neustetter, under the collaborative name Hobbs/Neustetter. In 2017 Hobbs joined the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Johannesburg, as Unit Leader and resident critic. Since 2002 The Trinity Session has provided consultative and turnkey services with regards to the development and procurement of various scales of public art, in Gauteng, Ethekwini, Ekurhuleni and Nelson Mandela Bay. www.stephenhobbs.net

Mitra Mäki (CDP)



Mitra is an art teacher and a skilled visual communicator with a comprehensive knowledge of digital media, narration and development cooperation based in Sweden.

For the past 15 years Mitra has been working in public schools as well as within different civil society organisations, ranging from small grass root associations to NGOs and social movements in South Africa, Moçambique, Brazil and Sweden.

Mitra is trained in both ceramics and glass and holds an art teaching degree from Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. During her studies at Konstfack she received a scholarship for exchange studies at Wits School of arts at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Vuyo “Lassie” Ndalela (CDP and Changemaker children)



I grew up doing art: I mean all different forms art drawing, painting, sculpturing and performing and the hands of Tshepo Tswaogong. I finished up my high school and went along and studied performing arts and a bit of project management, through my profession as a performing artist.

I got introduced to Early Childhood Development and went ahead to becoming a practitioner for 5 years. I acquired necessary training from CDP and from that I created Uncle Lassie Mobile a program which focuses in a creative and fun ways of learning through art and physical activation.

I am currently busy going around on my bicycle with a trailer full of fun tool in my city in the ECD centres and youth centres doing our fun full learning.

Marghanita Hughes (Canada)



Marghanita Hughes is an educator, artist, author, and illustrator, deeply committed to reuniting children with the natural world through art and the power of play. She is the founder of “Educating the Heart with Nature Art,” an international nature based art program which provides solutions for educators, parents, and organizations wishing to reconnect children with nature and encourage them to explore and celebrate their creativity. Marghanita’s art projects focus on the interconnectedness we have with one another and all living things and can be integrated into any curriculum. She has written and illustrated many children’s picture books and is a passionate advocate for outdoor play. She is a member of Artstarts in Schools. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, she currently resides in Canada with her husband David and their 3 grown up children.

TITLE: Learning through nature-based arts

ABSTRACT:

- There exists a need to rediscover our relationship with the natural environment.
- Children should be allowed access to natural resources.
- Providing freedom to explore, discover, and express creatively.
- Develop understanding of relationships.
- Finding an empathy for Nature’s creations and respect for the world they exist in.

In this presentation I will share with you, my method and practice and how you too, can infuse the arts into all subjects – by putting our imaginations to work. I truly believe we are all artists and I wish to help you rediscover the artist within, using nature as your muse. Creating art in nature evokes joy, sparks imagination and laughter, awe and wonder, love, peace, contentment and enthusiasm. Embracing the nature art teacher within – I will share with you how you too can become an effective nature-based art teacher enabling you to nurture the whole child, body, mind, heart and spirit.

We will explore how we can reawaken our deep- rooted connection to the natural world and our unique language with which the arts ignite. This is an incredibly fun and joy-filled experience, exploring possibilities and learning along-side our students.

Playful nature art helps develop a child’s unique perspective and individual style of creative expression.

You will have access to videos, PDF’s and follow up conversations on request. www.marghanita.com

Yvonne Kogan (Mexico)



Yvonne Kogan is the Co-founder of Eton School in Mexico City (1990), where she still currently works as the Principal of the Early Childhood and Elementary Departments.

Yvonne is a bilingual international educational consultant and presenter. Her published works as co-author include: *Picturing the Project Approach: Creative Explorations in Early Learning*; which was awarded the Academics' Choice Award, the Third Edition of *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*, and *From My Side: Being a Child*.

TITLE: Nurturing creative expressions: Designing aesthetic and meaningful contexts and experiences.

ABSTRACT: The arts and creative expression play a vital role in young children's development. They invite children to look at things closely, take on new perspectives, explore emotions, and examine their own thinking. Art encourages communication with other children and adults.

In this session we will examine the role of the teacher in designing aesthetic contexts filled with rich possibilities and experiences for children that provoke curiosity and promote dialogue. We focus particularly on contexts that are engaging and provide entry points for investigations that can broaden children's understanding of the world. This session will also invite participants to consider selecting materials that offer a variety of possibilities, and suggest ways of guiding children in communicating their understandings, emotions, discoveries, and interests.

Victoria Mazlenikova (Australia)



Victoria Maslenikova is the Founding Director Wonderlab Kids studios in Sydney, Australia. While working with children in a preschool setting and studying early childhood pedagogy at university, she found her passion – children’s art. Victoria worked in the early childhood sector for five years while developing her knowledge and skills in collaboration with an artist colleague who taught her about children’s art and how to develop young children’s artistic skills. Taking a leap, she decided to open her own art studio for children, initially teaching preschool aged children before researching art pedagogy for primary school children. She currently offers classes and arts experiences for children aged 2-10 years. Victoria’s early childhood background significantly influences her visual arts philosophy and pedagogy as she seeks to consistently offer open-ended, process arts projects for all children in the studio

TITLE: Offering guided arts experiences for young children (ages 3-4)

ABSTRACT: This presentation will address the issue of developmentally appropriate guided arts experiences for very young children. Young children (ages 3-4) do not connect as effectively with representational arts expectations as they do with arts experiences that are process-based. However, this does not mean that very young children cannot be offered guided arts lessons. Instead, the arts experiences that we offer to children need to be adapted to their age, developmental levels and individual capabilities. This presentation will share an example of how a guided lesson with young children saw the teacher present three to four art materials to support children to explore materials and processes in open-ended ways.

The materials that children were offered to explore included: Black paper / White oil pastels / Newspaper / Glue / Watercolour paints / Coloured soft pastels

Utilising such processes enables teachers to effectively facilitate meaningful arts processes while guiding children towards effective exploration of materials and techniques.

Renee Smith and Marki Watson (USA)



Renee Smith holds an Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education from Durham Technical Community College and a Bachelor's in Public Health Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She also has a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Intervention and Family Support from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Renee has worked with children and families in an array of facets since 1993. Before coming to Duke School in 2010, she worked at Bright Horizons Family Solutions for nine years as a teacher and assistant director. Renee is married with 2 children and is the parent of a Duke School alumnus.



Marki Watson holds a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Louisiana Tech University and a Master's Degree in Christian education from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education. Additionally, Marki has completed classes in art education at North Carolina Central University. She has been with Duke School for many years and has worked as a fourth-grade teacher, middle school art teacher, and lower school art teacher. She currently is the overseer of the 2nd-4th grade Lower School After School Program and is the lead teacher for lower school art. For fun, Marki makes handmade books and paints.

TITLE: Implementing art in project work

ABSTRACT: At Duke School, art is an integral part of our early childhood program. As a Project Approach school, children are encouraged to represent and communicate their understandings in a variety of ways and art is central to that process.

When a new project topic is introduced, children share memories related to the topic and use drawings to represent those memories. These drawings provide a window into student understandings so that teachers can plan experiences to deepen their understandings of the project topic. Drawing also plays an important role during field work. Clipboards in hand, students look closely at the ladder and hoses on a truck for their Fire Fighters Project so that they can accurately draw and label them. When they return to class, children use a photo to help them elaborate on their drawings and remember what they learned.

An array of art materials in the early childhood classroom also allows students to represent their thinking in a way that best represents their understandings and interests. One child might use boxes and toilet tissue tubes to build a representation of the Fire House she visited while another paints and labels a Fire Fighter's Gear at the easel. In this session, presenters will share photos and student work samples from preschool classrooms that illustrate the many ways art is integral to project work. They will also share articles and planning documents to help teachers develop rich projects.

Specifically, presenters will:

- Discuss how teaching art in early childhood education promotes healthy social and academic needs of children.
- Define the Project Approach and discuss the benefits of project work in early childhood.
- Share a peek into classrooms to see how Duke School implements art in project work, preschool through 1st grade.

Art at the centre of the curriculum



Art, when used as a language of expression and communication, when documented and discussed, can act as a tool of reflection which facilitates the exchange of the multiple perspectives of children, ECE professionals, children's families, and the wider community. When encountering and being in exchange with another's thinking and through materiality, there is opportunity for contagion, tension, conflict, and possibility where ideas rise up, collide, fall, multiply, amplify and become entangled.

This place of exchange becomes a complex and generative space for creativity and the birth of new ideas that are constructed through seeing/hearing/feeling multiple descriptions and a plurality of perspectives. Gregory Bateson spoke of how two descriptions are always better than one, helping us to reveal the complexity in any inherent context. However, despite the complexity, children's growth and education seems to be increasingly approached in a very reductionist, linear and/or fragmented way. Being in exchange and by growing through art, new ways of thinking can emerge. The ECE professional of the future, will need to observe, describe, document, interpret and reflect upon children's creative thinking and action. In recognizing the potential of young children's One Hundred Languages (Loris Malaguzzi) future ECE professionals will require One Hundred Languages too. These hundred languages can facilitate a socio-cultural awareness about their own personal narrative that is formed by experiences obtained throughout life. This enables future ECE professionals to connect to stories that are different from their own and to become increasingly aware of their own bias.

The aim of this topic, in this symposia, is to explore how art and creativity can be placed in relation to curriculum in ECE that explores the blurred boundaries of what makes I, I and you, you and us together; where we can build acceptance, appreciation and value, through our diverse points of view.

We ask:

- How can we build a greater awareness of children's and adult's perspectives, through a creative arts-based pedagogy and curriculum?
- How can we make thinking and narratives of the group visible in contexts of mutual learning through the arts and with materials?
- How, in the formation of future ECE professionals can art be used to build sensitivity to bias, to increase the understanding of socio-cultural awareness and to generate new ways of seeing/thinking/being in a diverse and complex world?

Dr. Shana Cinquemani (USA)



Shana Cinquemani is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teaching + Learning in Art + Design at the Rhode Island School of Design. She has worked as a museum educator, preschool teaching assistant and elementary and middle school art teacher. Her research interests are grounded in theories of early childhood art education, the conceptualization of children's art as a meaningful socio-cultural practice, connections between art and play, curriculum inquiry and theory, ethical research practices with children, and relationships between children and adults in the art classroom space.

Shana has published her research in *The Journal of Art Education*, Bank Street College of Education's Occasional Papers and *The Journal of Visual Inquiry*. She has authored chapters in edited texts: *Communities of Practice: Art, Play, and Aesthetics in Early Childhood* and *Ethics and Research with Young Children*. Recently, she served as co-editor for a special issue of *Art Education* titled *Art and Early Childhood: Explorations of Practice and Research*. In addition, she has presented her research at various national and international conferences, including the National Art Education Association, *Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education*, The International Congress on Qualitative Inquiry and various state art education conferences. She currently serves as past-president of the Early Childhood Art Educators Interest Group for the NAEA and as an editor for *The International Journal of Education and Art*.

TITLE: Becoming nomadic: Playful material engagement in art curriculum

ABSTRACT: This session will explore how teachers can re-think the early childhood art curriculum to offer time/space for deep and authentic engagement with materials and artistic ideas. Through this lens, the early childhood art curriculum transforms into a space that is full of possibility rather than singular identities or understandings. An art curriculum is not simply a process vs. product debate, but rather opportunities for children and adults to engage in deep engagement with materials and ideas, and come to know each other and "art" more deeply.

Within this session I will share examples from my own work that bring life to these ideas. Participants will have the opportunity to view images and videos of young children's nomadic engagement with materials and play within the art classroom specifically. These examples also draw upon ideas related to emergent curriculum in early childhood art education specifically and will offer insight into how this kind of art curriculum was enacted with the children enrolled. Additionally, I will share the ways in which the early childhood art curriculum can be multi-dimensional and rich – allowing time and space for material engagement, play, artist studies, gallery/museum experiences, reflections, and exhibition. In sharing these examples, it is my hope that participants will begin to see how they can integrate these ideas into their own teaching and artistic encounters with young children.

Joke Den Haese, Debi Keyte-Hartland, Louise Lowings & Kaat Verhaeghe (Belgium/UK)



Joke Den Haese is a lecturer in visual art, intergenerational dialogue and cultural education in the Bachelor in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) at Erasmus Brussels, University of Applied Sciences and Arts. She developed a vision and method described as 'growing through art'. She uses 'dialogue and real meeting' between cultures, genders and generations as a mirroring act to confront students with their cultural experiences and background. She has a background in visual arts and combines her lecturing with her activities as an artistic coach and atelierista in a childcare center. She is motivated through research to discover how art influences (future) professionals and the effect on children's development. Creative processes and play as a form of (in)formal learning is a strong part of her methodology in 'How to use art and materials as a way of dialogue'



Debi-Keyte Hartland is a MA lecturer with the Centre of Research in Childhood, in the UK supporting students in research on creativity and the arts. She also works as an independent artist-educator and consultant working in the UK and internationally with schools and educational organisations developing creative and reflective ways of working, often inspired by or in dialogue with The Reggio Emilia Approach.

Her interests are in 'pedagogical listening as an approach to learning', 'ecological and creative enquiry' and also in how materials/resources found in and near early childhood centres are materials with agency that interact with the agency of children.



Kaat Verhaeghe is a pedagogue in the Bachelor in Early Childhood Education and Care at Erasmus Brussels, University of Applied Sciences and Arts. She is also a researcher for the research centre Urban Coaching and Education. Her main interests are in 'identity', 'child and society' and 'parenting'. She tries to stimulate professionals to look critically at society and the way of interacting with families and children. How identity develops and is formed through interaction with others is a central theme of her work. Her research explores the role of narratives in professionalization. Together with colleagues, she developed a narrative coaching method validated through in-practice testing. In her research the focus is on qualitative data with child-centred and participative approaches that use art-based methods to value and acknowledge the voice of children.



Louise Lowings is the head teacher at Madeley Nursery School in Telford in the West Midlands of the UK. Her pedagogical approach is based on contextual relationships between children, their ideas and their encounters with the world. Together with the whole school community she has developed a place where educators and children are researchers. In 2000 she came across the work of the preschools in Reggio Emilia and continues to be inspired and delighted by their work. This led to encounters with other ideas and entangled influences. The most important of which were the ideas of Gregory Bateson, initially through dialogue and professional exchange with pedagogues in Stockholm and more recently through the International Bateson Institute. This line of professional enquiry has transformed her understanding of the place of learning, children, educators and schools. Louise was originally trained in art and design and brings this into every aspect of her work and life.

Title: Blurring the boundaries through art in curriculum

Group Abstract:

Through a socio-constructivist lens, art, when used as a language of expression and communication, and as a way of making-meaning can facilitate the exchange of multiple perspectives of children, of ECE professionals, children's families and the wider community. Thus 'we grow' through processes of artistic encounter and exchange. When encountering and being in relationship with another's thinking and through materiality, there is opportunity for contagion, tension, conflict, and possibility; where ideas rise up, collide, fall, multiply, amplify and become entangled.

This place of exchange becomes a complex and generative space for creativity and the birth of new ideas that are constructed through seeing/hearing/feeling multiple descriptions and a plurality of perspectives. Gregory Bateson spoke of how *two descriptions are always better than one*, helping us to reveal the complexity in any inherent context.

The ECE professional of the future, will need to observe, describe, document, interpret and reflect upon children's creative thinking and action. In recognizing the potential of young children's *One Hundred Languages* (Loris Malaguzzi) ECE professionals will also require *One Hundred Languages* so as to be able to see and respond to them....cont. overleaf

Building and 'growing' a socio-cultural awareness that informs our own personal narrative is formed by experiences obtained throughout our lives. By 'Growing Through Art' it can enable future ECE professionals to connect to stories/experiences/narratives that are different from their own and to become increasingly aware of their own bias.

So, the aim of these two connected presentations/conversations explore how art and creativity can be placed in relation to curriculum for both young children, and adults who are training to work with young children. They explore the blurred boundaries of what makes I, I, and you, you and us, together, where we can build acceptance, appreciation and value, through our diverse points of view.

Presentation 1:

Title: Creating *diversattude* through meeting 'the other'

Kaat Verhaeghe & Joke Den Haese

Presentation/Conversation 1 (1 hour)

Abstract:

If socio-cultural awareness of ECE professionals is pursued, in what way does this affect the wellbeing of the young children and the families they work with? Is it plausible that, if we take care and give attention to the narrative of these professionals and how they construct their identity, this will enable understanding for others and comprehension for different contexts? Educators working in Early Childhood should become the democratic educators we need in today's world. Therefore, they should be aware of their bias that steers their frame of reference. Through 'narrative imagination' and reflection, they are enabled to take the perspective of 'the other'. Part of the process of becoming aware involves the encounter with multiple voices.

To connect with others, observing children provides a powerful reflection tool to rebuild our own imagination. In each of us, a child is still present and it is a challenging adventure to make this child visible again. Art and culture activate stories and connections, empathy and understanding and have a positive influence on the mental, physical and social well-being of all.

Art and culture can give rise to the meeting of alternative perspectives, and inspire us to look outward and to question and challenge some long-held beliefs. This offers challenges as well as opportunities for expanding educational professionals' understanding of the world. Being sensitive to art facilitates the interaction (with children) and empowers reflective thinking. Socio-cultural awareness creates openness and comprehension towards deep pedagogical interaction and is the starting point for a strong 'diversattude'.

This presentation wants to show, when we are aware of our own narrative identity, what we believe in, where we stand for and what made us to who we really are, it will create an openness to the otherness of others. To do so, instead of teaching how to look at art, we dialogue how to look at life, through art.

Presentation 2:

TITLE: Materials in dialogue

Debi-Keyte Hartland & Louise Lowings

Presentation/Conversation 2 (1 hour)

ABSTRACT:

Learning is a beautifully entangled process where creativity, the arts, materials, and curriculum do not stand in silos, separated from each other or positioned as opposites. Rather we reclaim the arts as an essential and vital component interwoven throughout the curriculum. By revealing the learning that is occurring, and making evident how creativity, the arts and materials activate learning, we can make the argument for multimodal, poly-sensorial, multi-contextual practice in educational institutions.

Using the work of Gregory Bateson (a 20th century thinker), we can begin to see some of the richness of learning in relationship with all aspects of the curriculum that embraces the arts.

This presentation and reflective exchange will demonstrate how we can bring the thinking of children & adults into a public space and reveal some of the inner workings of the essential and vital inter-relationships between the arts and curriculum

Dr. Sylvia Kind (Canada)



Sylvia Kind, PhD is a faculty instructor in the School of Childhood Studies at Capilano University, Canada, and an *atelierista* at the Capilano University Children's Centre. Her work is guided by a/r/tography and research-creation methodologies and is motivated by an interest in young children's studio practices, their lively material improvisations and collective experimentations, and in developing understandings of studio research in early childhood contexts. She has co-authored the book *Encounters with Materials in Early Childhood Education*, co-edited *Drawing as Language*, and has written several journal articles and book chapters on studio practices in early childhood.

TITLE: The early childhood studio as making a life together: becomings, choreographies, materialities

ABSTRACT: This session considers the early childhood studio as a site for making and composing a life together. The studio is not intended to be an art room, art area, or container for creative acts and materials. Rather than bounded by walls, the studio is an idea, an event, a situation, and field of experience. It is a site of ideation, of working with and through ideas, materials, places, spaces, and others, as we cultivate a relational space of investigating, composing and creating together. The studio arranges situations and creates the conditions for inventive and experimental practices and collective improvisations. It considers an assemblage of relations and attends to what takes place in the play between things. In doing this, the studio seeks to activate sympoietic relationalities, creating conditions and inventing ways of being-with and making-with others, both human and non-human.

Creating a collective practice takes time as we learn to move *with* children's movements and approaches, move *with* the rhythms, flows, and temporalities of materials and ideas, think together, and compose with others. Thus, the studio is configured as an entangled, intersectional space where educators, atelierista, and children move together in fluid ways, learning from and with each other, cultivating life-living pedagogies, engaging in art practices as a form of research, in correspondence with lively materials and with each other, collectively immersed in living inquiries. What takes shape is a living ecology and choreography of practice.



Catherine is the early childhood teacher and director of The Point Preschool, Oyster Bay, NSW. She has been teaching for over 30 years in early childhood and special education and also teaching in undergraduate diploma programs.

Catherine is passionate about listening to children's voices, education for sustainability, children's rights, reconciliation, visual arts, nature play and social justice. Catherine takes inspiration from the principles of Reggio Emilia and is especially interested in listening to children's voices and how children see themselves in our world and how they reflect on their identity, culture and learning.



Lisa is a senior lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Education, School of Education, teaching in the early childhood education degree programmes. She has been involved in early childhood education for many years—as a kindergarten teacher, a senior teacher, and as a professional development adviser for the Ministry of Education. She is also an artist. Her Masters in Education research focused on children's and teachers' use of an Interactive Whiteboard for visual art learning experiences in a kindergarten setting. Her PhD investigated the current extent of art museum visiting by the early childhood sector in New Zealand, and investigated barriers to access. It also investigated existing practices between art museums and early childhood centres and examined ways in which art museums and early childhood centres can effectively work together to create meaningful learning environments for young children. Lisa's current research interests focus on exploring how visual art can be used to enhance young children's thinking, and the types of ECE environments that best foster visual art education.

TITLE: Turning boxes inside out: Connecting materials to place and sustainability

Materials “can evoke memories, narrate stories, invite actions, and communicate meanings. Materials and objects create meeting places” (Kind, 2014, p. 865). Visual art materials that are regularly used in early childhood education contexts, such as clay, paint, brushes, wire, paper, recycled cardboard boxes, invite children to use these creatively to explore and express their ideas. The artefacts that the children create can generate narratives and stories which make connections to their sense of place and lived experiences.

This presentation will explore how young children at The Point Preschool, Oyster Bay used recycled cardboard boxes to create new and exciting artefacts. It demonstrates how their encounters with this material enabled and afforded opportunities for them to practise and learn new skills, connect to each other and explore their creativity.

Through the children's encounter with boxes, they developed a deeper knowledge of these materials and an understanding of the potential and capability of the boxes. Their playful interactions and art making supported their connection to place and increased their awareness of issues that relate to sustainability. As Kelly (2013) identifies, the visual art practice is an important place where teachers and children can reduce, reuse and recycle materials in new and creative ways.

Dr. Lisa Terreni and Sola Freeman (NZ)



Dr. Lisa Terreni is a senior lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Education, School of Education, teaching in the early childhood education degree programmes. She has been involved in early childhood education for many years—as a kindergarten teacher, a senior teacher, and as a professional development adviser for the Ministry of Education. She is also an artist. Her Masters in Education research focused on children's and teachers' use of an Interactive Whiteboard for visual arts learning experiences in a kindergarten setting. Her PhD investigated the current extent of art museum visiting by the early childhood sector in New Zealand and investigated barriers to access. It also investigated existing practices between art museums and early childhood centres, and examined ways in which art museums and early childhood centres can effectively work together to create meaningful learning environments for young children. Lisa's current research interests focus on exploring how visual art can be used to enhance young children's thinking, and the types of ECE environments that best foster visual art education.



Sola Freeman is currently completing her PhD in Early Childhood Education. She has been involved in ECE in many different ways; mother, teacher, school principal, playgroup coordinator, Board of Trustees chair, Montessori Association president, policy advisor and most recently as a lecturer in the Early Childhood teaching programme at Victoria University where she coordinated courses on Curriculum and Maths, Science and Technology.

Her research has explored what influences science experiences for children in ECE. Doing action research allowed Sola to share her passion for science with enthusiastic teachers and together they investigated how to incorporate more 'sciencing' in their centres. For Sola, science is being interested in the world around you, knowing about things, how they work and why, and through this wonder gaining an appreciation and gratitude for all that is around us. She'd like to think wondering and a love of all that is science creates people who care.

TITLE: When art meets science

ABSTRACT: The New Zealand early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* encourages teachers to "integrate domain knowledge (for example, science and arts knowledge) into the curriculum" (Ministry of Education, p. 59).

It is important, therefore, for teachers to recognise the contributions that each of these important learning domains can give to each other. This presentation specifically looks at:

- The encouragement of children's careful and focussed observations
- The importance of purposeful and intentional teaching in these areas

We conclude that the establishment of an ECE centre culture and kaupapa (pedagogical principles) that values art and science teaching and learning must involve the encouragement of curiosity, active inquiry, discussion and documentation.

Dr Kit-mei Betty Wong (Hong Kong) –(with colleagues Ka-ki Ho & Man-wai William Cheung)



Dr Kit-mei Betty Wong has over 9 years' experience teaching in early childhood classrooms. She was an assistant professor at the Department of Early Childhood Education at The Education University of Hong Kong (former The Hong Kong Institute of Education) for 25 years, teaching pedagogies in early music and visual arts. Her ongoing research interests are an inquiry into the teaching and learning of art from children's and teachers' perspectives and voices.

TITLE: Bring public art to children through picture books

ABSTRACT: There is a growing concern and urge to recruit young audiences into the public and community art, and to make aesthetic and art appreciation part of the life-blood of society. Unlike US, Australia and other European countries, appreciating public artworks and visiting museums is not a usual leisure activity for Hong Kong families or regular activity in kindergartens. Although more resources have been put into public art, many people do not value or do not know how to value public artworks. The general public in Hong Kong has very little knowledge about public art.

Few studies investigated the responses of children to picture books in which famous works of art feature as part of the storyline. It was found that children had more in-depth, detailed responses to fine art. Noting the creative and aesthetic links between picture books and art, a picture book about a public artwork in Hong Kong is published in 2020. In this presentation, we will report children's responses to this picture book and the public artwork.

Research



There is an abundance of educational theory and research on the importance of creativity in child development. When children engage in meaningful visual arts experiences they can express their ideas thoughts and feelings. This interconnectedness of mind, body and heart fosters holistic development. Emergent brain research claims that high quality visual arts experiences during early childhood are crucial for the development of healthy, happy, capable and competent children. Creative activities and experiences which encourage positive relationships have a direct bearing on strengthening synapses, leading to positive attachments, high self-esteem and better mental health.

Early childhood educational research is an evolving field and one which can positively impact theory, international policy and practice. Emerging research topics and methodologies bring fresh lenses through which we can see the possibilities for early childhood and extend our understanding of young children and the visual arts. There is an increased acknowledgement that high quality, rigorous research assists in informing creative policy and practice across the international early childhood spectrum. It is through the development, evaluation and dissemination of theory, that those working with and on behalf of children are better placed to advocate for the importance of rich meaning-making, through authentic visual arts activity. The perennial conundrum of how to address the disconnect between theory and practice is the topic of much debate among researchers, academics, policy makers and practitioners.

This symposium offers participants the opportunity to partake in an event which provides first-hand accounts of international research on a variety of topics. Presentations will highlight the socio cultural contexts of visual arts research and acknowledge the wide range of cultural and social contexts that influence young children's art making and educators approaches. Hopefully, the symposium will stimulate novice researchers to add their voices to the ever-evolving discourse.

Rachel Dennee (NZ)



Rachel is a current doctoral candidate at Victoria University Wellington, studying ECE teachers' professional learning about visual arts. Rachel's research interests include leadership, professional learning, visual arts and Reggio-inspired pedagogy.

Having been an ECE teacher for over twenty years, she is now a pedagogical leader and co-owner of a small centre in Wellington, NZ, called Daisies Early Education & Care Centre.

TITLE: Transforming ECE teachers' visual arts pedagogy: shifts in thinking, shifts in practice.

ABSTRACT: Visual arts pedagogy in New Zealand ECE remains largely hands-off, while in other areas of the curriculum teachers have embraced intentional teaching approaches. International research suggests two common factors that perpetuate the hands-off approach: teachers' low self-efficacy in art, and the underlying belief that childhood creativity is sacred.

In this presentation I review the effects of a nine-month project to improve art teaching through a network professional learning community (PLC). Seven teacher-participants in the community engaged in reflective dialogue and practical workshops with artists. Participants challenged long-held beliefs and developed confidence engaging in art with children, resulting in changed practices within their workplaces and the teams in those workplaces. I will discuss enabling and challenging factors from the PLC experience, including conditions that enable application of learning in ECE settings, and propose recommendations for visual arts professional learning with a view to transforming practice.

Dr. Evelyn Egan(Ireland)



Evelyn Egan has been a lecturer in the Visual Arts EYE BA programme at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) since 2006. She previously worked at Scuola di Grafica Venice, and as Head of Art at British International School Padua, Italy. She's a member of Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) Scientific Committee and was vice president of OMEP Ireland, 2017-2020. She regularly contributes to the ECI blog: <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/?s=Evelyn+Egan> She's developed podcasts for the Irish National Council of Curriculum and Assessment, Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide and Better Start Practitioner Resources for use in Continuing Professional Development: <https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/cpd/birth-6-years/creative-arts-birth-6-.pdf>. A more in-depth view of her work on Initial Professional Education programme (CIT) is published in World OMEP Journal Theory into Practice 2019; https://worldomep.org/index.php?hCode=PUBLICATION_05_01_02

TITLE: Inquiry-based emergent curriculum using a transdisciplinary approach to the visual arts in early childhood education and care: Implications for policy, education and practice.

ABSTRACT: This presentation is based on research in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), conducted at Doctoral level. The aim of the study was to garner information on approaches adopted by practitioners in the design and delivery of a visual arts (VA) curriculum for early years, and to identify challenges to the effective delivery of an inquiry-based emergent curriculum (IBEC), as advocated by the Irish National Curriculum Framework (NCCA,2009). Data was collected by in-depth, semi-structured interviews amongst two cohorts; practitioners currently employed in the ECEC sector in Ireland, and experts in the field of early childhood education (authors, mentors, researchers). Findings show that the majority of practitioners interviewed do not implement an IBEC, and a confluence of challenging factors were identified. The main obstacle is the low status accorded the arts and creativity in the majority of third-level Early Years Education (EYE) training programmes, as well as a lack of experiential engagement with art processes during initial professional education (IPE). The focus is on theory- based education, which ill-equips future practitioners to offer child-centred, developmentally appropriate, visual arts opportunities to children. Other salient findings are; a disconnect between rhetoric and practice, low self- efficacy, the ethos of an institution, differing expectations of regulatory bodies and parents, as well as a lack of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities. One of the main research recommendations is to locate the arts centrally within IPE degree programmes in EYE and make available continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities specific to inquiry-based learning using a transdisciplinary approach to the VA. Emerging from these findings, two models to assist Higher Education Institutions in Initial Professional Education and CPD for practitioners have been devised. These act as a strategic drive to address research findings, in a practical sense, to equip current and future personnel with the requisite knowledge, skills and expertise, to effectively implement an emergent, inquiry-based, visual arts curriculum, using a transdisciplinary approach, in the pursuit of best practice.

Dr. Mike Emme (Canada)



Michael Emme is professor emeritus of Art Education with the University of Victoria. He is an artist, teacher and researcher who has taught, co-created, co-researched, exhibited and published with students and colleagues of all ages in classrooms and studios across Canada and in the US. He is also co-editor with Dr. Anna Kirova of *Good Question: Arts-based Approaches to Collaborative Research with Children and Youth*. A comic book for the classroom combined with readings for teachers and researchers. https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B075LWSQRR/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_UfzPFb4KR_XY24

His own artwork combines experience as an editorial cartoonist, children's book illustrator, printmaker and photographer. Dr. Emme has also served as the art director and editor of the *Canadian Art Teacher* magazine for 16 years and is co-editor of *Starting With Art...* the main textbook for preservice elementary Art Education in Canada. <https://csea-scea.ca/publications/ebooks/>

NOTE: a substantial portion of the session will be informed by work done together with early childhood educator, Dr. Anna Kirova of the University of Alberta

TITLE: Engaging with the world through wonder and doubt: The art and science of children as researchers

ABSTRACT: This presentation is built around the familiar notion that children often play like artists and scientists. In the early 1960s, Reggio programmes pointed to the classroom as atelier, and cold war panic lead US educators to identify 'Discipline-based' education which asked students to mirror the ways that scientists worked in the laboratory. These goals impact educational practice today.

Unfortunately, adults in the lives of children have a tendency to idealize the purposes and practices of both artists and scientists, separating and constraining the authentic wonder and doubt in children's lives and learning, (and also constraining our roles as teachers, parents and researchers). Assuming that teachers and children alike are creative, critical and passionate learners, this session explores some theory behind 'Wonder' and 'Doubt' in an attempt to 'Romanticise the laboratory' and 'Pragmatize the studio', by suggesting ways that these habits of mind and practices can and should overlap and be supported in children's engagement with the world.

This presentation is based on early childhood scholar, Anna Kirova's, discussions about the phenomenology of play and our shared research focused on developing a range of arts-based approaches for co-researching with young children. Our specific interest in the non-verbal experiences and expressions of immigrant and refugee children in Canadian elementary schools invited young researchers to use photography, performance, and drawing to develop arts-based practices of observation, documentation, analysis and expression. Through the creation of 'fotonovela', photo-based comic books, those children shared findings that described their experiences, feelings and challenges. This session will present theory, research and offer practical examples of children's art as inquiry. It will invite participants to engage in guided, arts-based inquiry (creating a globally networked studio together?). Shared discussion will model talking about art as the core expertise that is important in supporting a safe, co-creative and challenging classroom.

Dr. Louisa Penfold (Australia)



Louisa is an Australian-born, Boston-based art educator who works as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Education at Harvard University. From 2015-2019 she undertook her PhD in the United Kingdom with her research looking at the design of children's learning environments in modern art museums. This study was run as a partnership between the Tate, the Whitworth Art Gallery, and the University of Nottingham. Her writing on art education has been published in MIT's Journal of Design and Science, Medium, and The Australian. Louisa also runs the blog Art Play Children Learning.

TITLE: Connecting young children's learning with art museums' curatorial practices

ABSTRACT: Young children have become an increasingly important audience for art museums around the world with many institutions developing specialised activities, spaces and staff for this age group. However, curatorial practices for this audience differ significantly across the sector, leading to great diversity in perspectives on how museums can best support children's learning.

This presentation shares outcomes from my PhD research run in partnership between the University of Nottingham, the Tate and the Whitworth Art Gallery (UK). The focus of this enquiry looked at how young children's learning can be connected with art museums' curatorial practices. An action research methodology was mobilised to investigate the research focus, with activity theory used to analyse the data across the two different art museum settings.

The first action research cycle, conducted in the early years' department at The Whitworth, drew heavily on constructivist learning principles to produce a planning guide, reflection strategies, and practice principles to support learning curators' practice. The second action research cycle, run in partnership with the early years and family team at Tate, built on these outcomes to investigate how New Materialist critical theory could both expand and connect the outcomes of the first cycle.

Outcomes of this study illustrate that for children's learning to be better connected with art museum practices, art museum teams need curatorial practices that have clear pedagogical foci. When curators and artists actively plan for, facilitate and reflect on children's learning and their practice, learning and pedagogy become concrete and visible. In this presentation, I will share the practical outcomes of the study including the planning guide, principles and reflection strategies. This research has direct implications and applications for learning curators, artists and educators working with children in both art museums and beyond.

Art and culture



Considering Culture

Many countries in the world are experiencing increasing immigration and resettlement by peoples from around the globe. It is very likely that during the course of their teaching careers early childhood practitioners will work with children and families who come from different ethnic backgrounds to themselves and who bring with them the different experiences, customs and values embedded in their particular cultures. Increasingly, early childhood practitioners are asked to address in their programmes issues that relate to the rights of indigenous and first nation's peoples as well as multi-cultural issues in education. Visual art can be an important vehicle for assisting children and their families to interact and engage with these issues. Through visual arts education, children can develop an increased sense of their own cultural identity as well as developing an understanding of other people's cultures.

Increased recognition of the culturally transmitted symbols through the visual arts is an important aspect of learning in this domain. "Cultural voices that may previously have been unheard can navigate their way through the curriculum" via the arts (Fuemana-Foa'I; Pohio & Terreni, 2009, p.31), and traditional art practices can take their rightful place in early childhood education programmes.

This strand provides opportunities for teachers to see examples of how the visual arts have successfully been used to increase cultural awareness and understanding in authentic and meaningful ways

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Stories of practice from Bhutan: Lalita Devi Neopaney, and Yeshi Peday



My name is **Lalita Devi Neopaney**. I am an early childhood educator working in the Centre for Early Childhood Studies (CECS), Paro College of Education under the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). I am from the southern part of Bhutan. I have worked as an early childhood educator with children aged between 3-5 years for six years. When I entered into this career, I had a high school certificate and a 3 months basic training certificate. I worked in a private ECCD for three years and in this particular organization for more than three years. I am currently pursuing my Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Development. I have done a 2 weeks certificate course on Inclusive education which helps me to support children with disabilities. I believe that children learn when the environment is set according to their interest and when they have a strong sense of belonging toward their environment. We as facilitators are the ones who can put light in the children's learning environment.

TITLE 1: Four Harmonious Friends-Exploring Bhutanese Folklore with children through Art

ABSTRACT: Our project is based on children's rich experience with the tale of "The four harmonious friends" (Thuenpa Puenzhi). The project topic was initiated by one of the children as he was sharing his experience of seeing the statue of "The four harmonious friends" while traveling to Thimphu, the capital city of our country. Whereas the ephemeral art on Mandala was an additional interest that developed from the children's interest in playing with natural materials.

In Bhutanese folk art, the 'Four harmonious friends' (namely - the elephant, the monkey, the rabbit, and the bird) can be found on the murals of many monastery walls and stupas. Bhutanese believe that having the painting of the Thuenpa Puenzhi on the walls can bring harmony, peace, and unity in society or even among the people. It signifies interdependence, harmony, friendship and cooperation. While it may seem that the elephant deserves to be accorded the highest respect based on its size and strength, it is actually the little bird that holds this position, based on its seniority. Therefore, the moral value that this tale is trying to impart is that communal harmony can be achieved through respect for one another.

Presented in collaboration with:

1. Ngawang Phuntsho, Assistant Professor, Paro College of Education.
2. Karma Chimi Wangchuk, Lecturer, Paro College of Education.
3. Chimi Dema, Lecturer, Paro College of Education.
4. Tarana Dahal, Centre for Early Childhood Studies



My name is **Yeshi Peday** and I am from Thimphu in the western part of Bhutan. I am the eldest amongst three siblings, and the first to attend university. I have worked in a private early child care centre as a facilitator for six years. I began working at the Centre for Early Childhood Studies under Paro College of Education in 2018, and I have completed a Diploma in Early childhood education from Paro College of Education. I have also attended a few short courses, including basic training in early childhood education and inclusive education in the early years.

Working with children is amazing as it always reminds me of how wonderful and exciting the world can be. I believe that children need to be encouraged and supported by people who bring the same enthusiasm to their experiences. In addition to this, I believe early childhood educators need to have good interpersonal skills and also the skills to multi-task.

TITLE 2: Culturally inspired Ephemeral Art with Young Children

ABSTRACT: Through this presentation we share our story of children's engagement with culturally relevant ephemeral art-Mandalas. This Ephemeral art project emerged from children's' observation of the patterns from Dzongs, chortens, (stupas), and Bhutan's national attire. The children have learned that the Mandala is a highly intricate illustration of religious significance; and are used for meditation on the impermanence of life. With good funds of knowledge from a rich culture, children have compiled a wonderful project on traditional ephemeral art.

The whole project will portray rich Bhutanese culture and tradition embedded in the early childhood centre. The beautiful blend of these helps in building a stronger foundation for a child, a child with rich values, aware of his/her arts and traditions, culture and norms. With this project, we will be sharing our stories to the world.

Presented in collaboration with:

1. Ngawang Phuntsho, Assistant Professor, Paro College of Education.
2. Karma Chimi Wangchuk, Lecturer, Paro College of Education.
3. Chimi Dema, Lecturer, Paro College of Education.
4. Tarana Dahal, Centre for Early Childhood Studies

Stories of practice from CHINA: A series of 3 collaborative presentations.

TANG, Ye

(Daohe Kindergarten,
Guangzhou, CHINA)

Teaching and research group leader of
solar term art at Daohe Kindergarten



SHEN, Min

(Shenzhen Experimental
Kindergarten, CHINA)

Art Teacher at Shenzhen
Experimental Kindergarten



BAI, Xiaoxi

(Shenzhen Experimental
Kindergarten, CHINA)

Pedagogist and PD facilitator at
Shenzhen Experimental Kindergarten



CHENG, Yong

(Xinqu Enji Kindergarten,
Beijing, CHINA)

Kindergarten Director



YANG, Ke

(Wangjiao Art Studio,
Beijing, CHINA)

Artist, Founder of Wangjiao Art studio



ZHOU, Jing

Independent ECE
PD facilitator / researcher



TITLE: Making active connections with Chinese Cultural knowledge and traditional art forms through visual art in Chinese kindergartens

ABSTRACT: How can we encourage children and teachers to make active connections with Chinese Cultural knowledge and traditional art forms through visual art in Chinese kindergartens? This is a topic some Chinese kindergartens have been exploring. In this session, three kindergartens from Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Beijing will share their stories around this question by focusing on the following topics.

Presentation 1:

Guangzhou Daohe Kindergarten -- The Practice of Chinese 'SolarTerm' culture in children's Art

The children and teachers in Guangzhou Daohe kindergarten live their life according to The Twenty-four Solar Terms. Our environment and artistic activities are also rhythmically carried out around the changing of solar terms. In this presentation, we will discuss how the children are encouraged to observe the local natural changes through the five senses (sight, touch, taste, hearing and smell), and to express their thoughts and feelings freely through creation.

Presentation 2:

Shenzhen Experimental Kindergarten -- An Engraving art project in kindergarten

Engraving art is a new artistic form in kindergarten, and this form was born following with the Printing which is one of the Four Great Inventions of ancient China. In this presentation we will share our story about how to introduce engraving art to young children by connecting with this ancient Chinese invention and a local engraving art village.

Presentation 3:

Beijing Enji Kindergarten -- A learning journey: Teachers and children learning Chinese brush painting together

Many Chinese kindergartens have been introducing Chinese brush painting to the children, however, not the teachers. In Beijing Enji Kindergarten, by connecting with a local artist YANG Ke, the teachers become art learners, and learn Chinese brush painting with the children together. We will share the stories about this learning journey.

Louana Fruen and Dr. Lisa Terreni (NZ)



Louana Fruen (Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens, NZ)

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou katoa

No Taranaki rātou, ko Wairarapa, ko Hamoa ahau.

He kaimahi ahau mō He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Kindergartens i te kaitiaki o kaupapa Māori. Kei Wainuiomata tōku kāinga.

I am a passionate Kaiako (teacher) working with young tamariki (children). Warm greetings to you all. I hail from Taranaki, Wairarapa and Samoa. I work for Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens as a guardian of all things Māori. I live in Wainuiomata in Wellington, New Zealand



Dr. Lisa Terreni (Victoria University, Wellington, NZ)

Lisa is a senior lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Education, School of Education, teaching in the early childhood education degree programmes. She has been involved in early childhood education for many years—as a kindergarten teacher, a senior teacher, and as a professional development adviser for the Ministry of Education. She is also an artist. Her Masters in Education research focused on children's and teachers' use of an Interactive Whiteboard for visual art learning experiences in a kindergarten setting. Her PhD investigated the current extent of art museum visiting by the early childhood sector in New Zealand, and investigated barriers to access. It also investigated existing practices between art museums and early childhood centres and examined ways in which art museums and early childhood centres can effectively work together to create meaningful learning environments for young children. Lisa's current research interests focus on exploring how visual art can be used to enhance young children's thinking, and the types of ECE environments that best foster visual art education.

TITLE: Te Wairua Toi: The Spirit of Art

ABSTRACT: In Aotearoa New Zealand, exploring and celebrating Māori art (the art of the first people of this nation) is a significant dimension of visual art education in early childhood contexts. *Te Whāriki*, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, states that it is important that things Māori are valued and used in all ECE settings. This may involve, for example, “retelling stories, and using Māori symbols, arts and crafts” (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 41).

As Wrightson and Heta-Lensen suggest, “Visual arts have always been integral to Māori life” (2013, p. 13), and are evident in many aspects of traditional and contemporary life. The place where Māori visual art is alive and relevant is on marae (meeting places), where the Whakairo (carvings), Kōwhaiwhai (rafters), and Tukutuku (woven lattice panels) tell significant stories about the past and whakapapa (geneology). However, visitors coming onto a marae always enter through a symbolic waharoa (gateway). These also tell stories that relate to the marae and the whenua (land) on which it stands. This presentation looks at how young children connected to Wainuiomata marae explore the waharoa with their kaiako (teachers).

Catherine Lee, Australia



Catherine is the early childhood teacher and director of The Point Preschool, Oyster Bay, NSW. She has been teaching for over 30 years in early childhood and special education and also teaching in undergraduate diploma programs.

Catherine is passionate about listening to children's voices, education for sustainability, children's rights, reconciliation, visual arts, nature play and social justice. Catherine takes inspiration from the principles of Reggio Emilia and is especially interested in listening to children's voices and how children see themselves in our world and how they reflect on their identity, culture and learning.

TITLE: Connecting the Past to the Present and Looking toward the Future

ABSTRACT: Art provides us with other ways of seeing, belonging, communicating, being and connecting.

Art builds relationships and makes visible the lives of others. Our collaborative art project did just this by connecting us to the past and the present and supported us to look towards the future. A future of continued acknowledgement and respect of our Aboriginal people and their culture – the oldest continuous culture on Earth.

We were engaged in conversations with the children each day about art, dinosaurs, history, our Aboriginal culture, heritage, relationships, and our connection to Country. We talked about how art, our words and actions can build and support reconciliation, strengthen our community and build a deep sense of belonging. Our art connected us to our hearts and souls and to our shared Aboriginal history and people.

Our collaborative art project with the children was inspired by Charlie and Dante, two boys aged 4 and their interest in dinosaurs and what Oyster Bay was like when the dinosaurs roamed the earth. This discussion was shared with all the children and with the support of our Artist in Residence Allison Duff, we engaged with and created art. We used art as a dialogue to bring to life our theories and understandings of our world when the dinosaurs roamed the earth; our theories and understandings of Oyster Bay when the Dharawal people lived here before the houses and roads and our understandings of Oyster Bay now, with The Point Preschool on Dharawal land. The children's understanding of these very complex ideas formed the inspiration for our art project. And like Lady Bird Johnson said, we explored art as a "*window into our world*". An awe inspiring visit to a rock shelter to view traditional hand stencils made by the Dharawal people over 600 years ago gave our art project great meaning and connection. The viewing of this ancient art gave our hearts joy.

This paper will discuss how a group of 3 – 5 year olds explored their cultural citizenship through a collaborative art project and how art connected them to our Aboriginal culture and people and inspired their creativity and understandings of place.

YAO Bingyue & colleagues (China)



Researcher of Institute of Early Education, Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences; Executive vice president of the Straits Children's Education Professional Committee, China Life Science Society; Director of Preschool Education Professional Committee of China Education Association; Chair of Preschool Art Teachers' Studio, Beijing Municipal Education Committee; Vice Director of Ecological Art Education Project, one of the key national projects for educational sciences; 40+ years experiences in teaching and researching in children's art education.

In collaboration with:



LIU Xiaowei:
Principal, Pioneer
Education School,
Chengdu, Sichuan,
China



LI Lihua: Principal,
Xinzhongjie
Kindergarten,
Beijing, China.



ZHANG Lianhe:
Principal, Shidu Town
Kindergarten, Fangshan,
Beijing, China

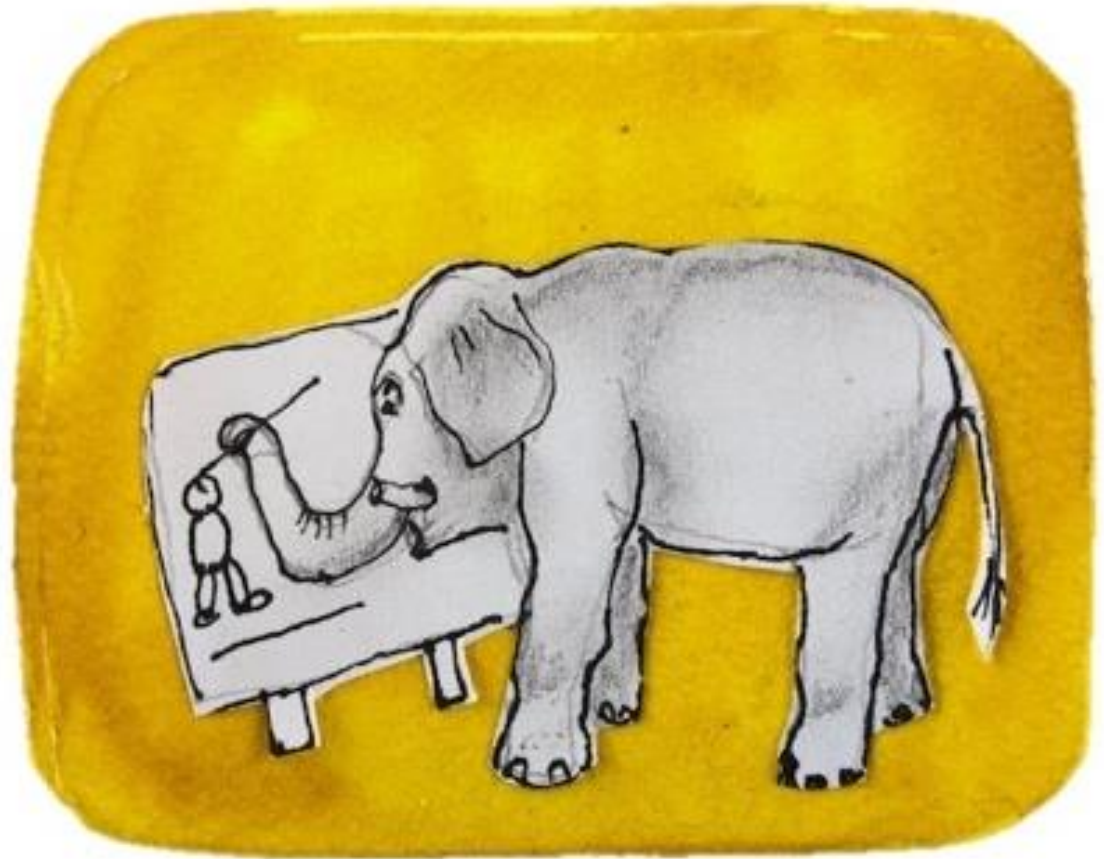


WEI Jie: Principal,
Haijun Jiguan
Kindergarten, Beijing,
China

TITLE: Children's Freehand Paper Cutting and Chinese Cultural Heritage

ABSTRACT: Children's freehand paper cutting means that children, as the main body, use scissors as pen to cut images out of a piece of paper without pre-drawing. The study of this practice of children aged 3~6 years has been conducted since 1997. The paper-cut works of children from three kindergartens in Beijing, China are used as examples to illustrate how children, in the process of experiencing freehand paper-cutting, express their feelings and understanding of traditional Chinese culture and folk art such as Chinese zodiac, traditional festivals, 24 solar terms, mythical stories, poetry and etc. Children's freehand paper cutting is a great process of learning, observation, thinking and creativity. Their paper cut works vividly demonstrate how children are able to construct their understanding of cultural heritage with their daily life and personal experiences.

ARTIST WORKSHOPS



We encourage you to play and learn some new art skills, techniques and processes from artists and artist/practitioners

Dr. Kathy Danko McGhee (USA)



Dr. Kathy Danko-McGhee currently serves as the Program Director of Art Education & Pre-Art Therapy at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her books—include *The Aesthetic Preferences of Young Children* (2000) and *The Impact of Early Art Experiences on Literacy Development* (2007). She has also published 5 book chapters and 24 international and national journal articles, presented her research papers nationally and internationally, and coordinated the 2011 International Art in Early Childhood Conference hosted by the University of Toledo Center for the Visual Arts and the Toledo Museum of Art.

Danko-McGhee has served in editorial roles at *Art Education*, *Early Childhood Education*, *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, and the *International Art in Early Childhood Research Journal*. She also served on the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Task Force for the National Art Education Association. A graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan University, Danko-McGhee earned her master's degree from Indiana State University and her doctorate from Ohio State University.

TITLE: Make your Mark: An exploration of mixed-media and printmaking techniques

ABSTRACT:

This workshop will explore a variety of printmaking methods using mixed-media materials. It will focus on creating designs that can be printed on a variety of surfaces. Because this session is for teacher/artists and also young children as artists, we will look at picture books, fabrics from around the world, and other inspirations that can be incorporated into creating unique printmaking designs.

Dr. Evelyn Egan (Ireland)



Evelyn Egan has been a lecturer in the Visual Arts EYE BA programme at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) since 2006. She previously worked at Scuola di Grafica Venice, and as Head of Art at British International School Padua, Italy. She's a member of Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) Scientific Committee and was vice president of OMEP Ireland, 2017-2020. She regularly contributes to the ECI blog: <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/?s=Evelyn+Egan>

She's developed podcasts for the Irish National Council of Curriculum and Assessment, Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide and Better Start Practitioner Resources for use in Continuing Professional Development: <https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/cpd/birth-6-years/creative-arts-birth-6-.pdf>. A more in-depth view of her work on Initial Professional Education programme (CIT) is published in World OMEP Journal Theory into Practice 2019; https://worldomep.org/index.php?hCode=PUBLICATION_05_01_02

TITLE: Exploring white & the potential of paper

ABSTRACT: This experiential workshop focuses on the qualities, properties and potential of paper as a medium for investigation through the sense(s) of sight, sound and touch. Emphasis is placed on how to present a variety and range of paper to stimulate, promote, encourage and invite exploration. Prominence is given to the importance of categorisation and aesthetics in displaying materials to facilitate creative and imaginative interactions. Moreover, examples of how paper can be used as a provocation to offer rich opportunities for meaning-making, inquiry-based and transdisciplinary learning, is also provided.

Participants can benefit from the experience of observing and engaging in the process of experimentation and manipulation of paper, through the use of different techniques and processes. Additional focus is placed on the transformative qualities as they unfold during the inquiry process. The underlying objective of the workshop is for participants to gain insights into the scope and possibility of paper as a medium for learning and incorporate them in their own future practice.

Jane Gillings (Australia)



Practicing artist for over 30 years, Jane Gillings uses discarded components and objects to create conceptual sculptural installations and visual puzzles that focus on the need to hold on to memory and minimise loss. Her work is guided by the material she uses which is sometimes altered to become a ghost of what it once was, yet maintaining enough integrity to be recognisable with careful inspection from a curious audience. Often her work uses metaphor to create ambiguous meaning and can be interpreted from a number of viewpoints.

Her work has the disquieting edge of the outsider. It is a labyrinth of dissonance, both impressively big and exquisitely small, discourses on our external and internal worlds, and reflects her relationship with the planet and deep connection with the small community in which she lives. She gifts illuminating pieces to her village, uncovers new artists with workshops in her studio and in return locals inspire her with eclectic and eccentric offerings.

She has been a finalist in a number of outdoor sculpture exhibitions including Sculpture at Scenic World, Sculpture at Sawmillers, Sculpture in the Vineyards, Willoughby Sculpture prize, North Sydney Art Prize, Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Hidden at Rookwood, and Sculpture by The Sea where she has exhibited 12 times. She was awarded Kids Choice at Sculpture by the Sea in 2009, and second in the Kids choice voting in 2017 as well as the NSW Art Gallery Volunteer Task force award and staff choice. She was commended for her work in Hidden at Rookwood in 2017.

Jane's experience as an educator is wide and varied, having worked with young and old alike in settings such as the Art Gallery of NSW, National Art School, NSW Dept. of Education, Australian Museum, NGO's, Universities, hospitals, local councils, private colleges and schools. She has worked with people with different abilities, at risk, mental health issues, homelessness and drug and alcohol issues. She currently runs weekly art sessions in her home studio for school aged children, as well as occasional free community art sessions.

Her work is sought-after for public and private permanent and ephemeral commissions and collections including Dolby Sound Australia, Parramatta Council, Brookfield Australia, Royal North Shore Hospital, The Galleries Victoria and M&C Saatchi Sydney, ABC Radio, Darling Quarter and Darling Harbour, Macquarie University, Westfield Doncaster, Mona Farm Braidwood and Parley Adidas in 2018 for the Commonwealth games on the Gold Coast.

TITLE: Creative re-use in early childhood art education

ABSTRACT: This session will provide art and sculpture activity ideas for young children that utilise found objects and recycled materials. Participants will discover how to repurpose familiar materials and encourage creative re-use in their pre-schoolers. Discussions about safe use and handling of these materials will be addressed, as well as where to source materials, how to prepare them, play simple games with them, as well as appropriate and effective tools for children to use. Session participants will be encouraged to participate in an online art activity using materials found in the home.