

CREATE: Creative School Partnerships with visual artists

Catarina S. Martins
csmartins@fba.up.pt



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

i2ADS.

INSTITUTO DE
INVESTIGAÇÃO
EM ARTE, DESIGN
E SOCIEDADE

PORTO
FACULDADE DE BELAS ARTES
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

- The arts in Portuguese primary education
- School art subjects are not about the arts (the alchemies of school subjects)
- Challenges and risks of introducing contemporary art practitioners in schools
- A political statement: the art educator as a virus

The arts in primary education in Portugal

- The arts are a compulsory field in the Portuguese primary education curriculum
- The teachers are 'generalist' teachers, not having a strong background in the arts
- The support by specialists (artists) in the artistic areas is a legal possibility, but sporadically explored
- The arts are seen as peripheral subjects
- 2017 is the first year in which 7-year-old students are being assessed in the arts through the administration of tests

“The school became a sort of apparatus of uninterrupted examination, [...] increasingly a perpetual comparison of each and all that made it possible both to measure and to judge. [...] The examination transformed the economy of visibility into the exercise of power. [...] It is this disciplinary time that was gradually imposed on pedagogical practice - specializing the time of training and detaching it from the adult time, [...] arranging different stages, separated from one another by graded examinations; drawing up programmes, each of which must take place during a particular stage and which involves exercises of increasing difficulty; qualifying individuals according to the way in which they progress through these series. [...] A whole analytical pedagogy was being formed, meticulous in its detail (it broke down the subject being taught into its simplest elements, it hierarchized each stage of development into small steps)”
(Foucault, pp. 159, 186)

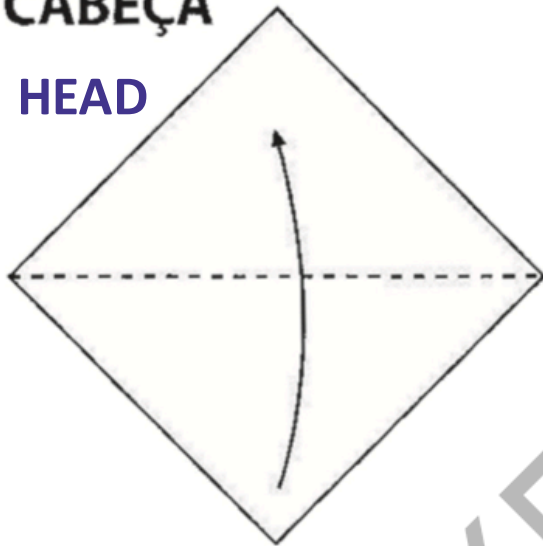
“Just as language makes some ways of saying and doing possible, it makes other ways of saying and doing difficult or even impossible. This is one important reason why language matters to education, because the language or languages we have available to speak about education determine to a large extent what can be said and done, and thus what cannot be said and done” (Biesta, 2005, p. 54)

“In my experience assessing children’s or student’s artwork has always been a problematic aspect of teaching art in schools. [...] My purpose is to consider how assessment as a discursive practice can be considered as an apparatus of visibility and surveillance. I want to discuss how assessment in art practice actually constructs or makes visible both student’s and teacher’s pedagogized identities” (Atkinson, 2007, p.107)

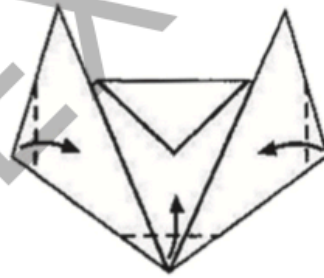
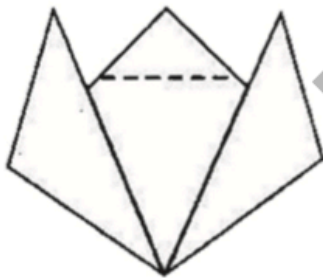
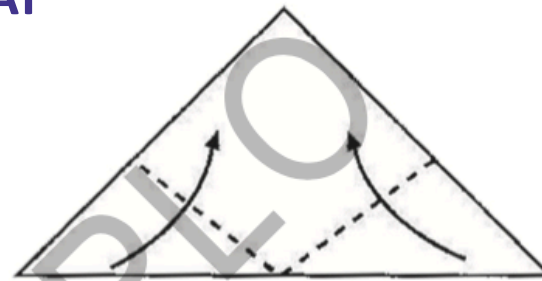
GATO

CABEÇA

HEAD

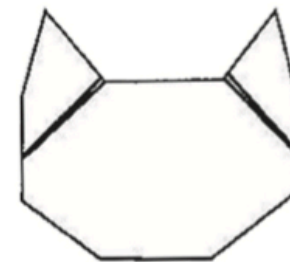


CAT



*virar para o
outro lado*

Turn to the other side



Are the arts in school about the arts?: the alchemies of school subjects

Pedagogy can be thought of as analogous to the medieval metallurgy that sought to transmute base metals into gold. A magical transmutation occurs as academic knowledge is moved into the space of schooling. The governing principles of the alchemy are no longer those of the arts, science or mathematics but those of pedagogy. The focus on children's communication and the selection of the curriculum content conform to the organization of the school grade level, class timetables, and models of children's development for primary and secondary schooling. The alchemies are achieved through inscription devices that translate and order the school subjects.

“The arts came to be introduced into the school arena by its disciplinary and moral effects. It was not a power through corporal punishment, but, rather, arts were seen as capable of molding the child from the inside. The deployment of drawing practices in school through copying the great masters, printings, or engravings was similar to the practice of scripture in monastic life. [...] Art practice in school, from drawing to music, has been viewed as promoting disciplined and self-governing citizens. It emerged in relation to the issue of the deviant child, the immigrant or the children of the poor. These kinds of people became a recurrent issue to justify that certain children, believed to be born with evil tendencies within families where vices proliferated, could be saved through intensive work on their souls. Police technologies were not only about the maintenance of order through an exhaustive knowledge of the populations to be controlled and governed but also about the productive making of each individual as a moral and civilized piece of that populational body. [...] What was important was not art in itself but the ways in which artistic practices worked at the level of to provide strategies to supplant immoral thoughts and acts. “ (Martins, 2014, pp. 72-74)

Create: the challenges and the risks of contemporary art practitioners in schools



CREARTE's starting points

- Collaborative work between artists, teachers, students
- Experimentation and approximation to contemporary artistic practices
- Avoid the alchemies of school subjects, the rhetoric of effects and narratives of salvation
- Disrupt the existing frameworks of arts practices and knowledge in schools
- Deconstruct the notion of the artist as a 'genius' and of art as an exceptional field
- Construct learning spaces and interrogatory practices that avoid the world of binaries (good/bad, desirable/undesirable, success/failure...)
- The becoming and the unknown instead of fixed and stable identities and knowledge

The art educator in school as a

virus

/ˈvaɪrəs/ 

noun

1. an infective agent that typically consists of a nucleic acid molecule in a protein coat, is too small to be seen by light microscopy, and is able to multiply only within the living cells of a host.
"the hepatitis B virus"
2. a piece of code which is capable of copying itself and typically has a detrimental effect, such as corrupting the system or destroying data.

“Shock to the system, weakness, resistance, adaptation, renewal. This self-infection by art education must go on if we do not want to let the bacilli of art die” (Groys, 2010, p. 32)