



## The importance of creativity for a child

*«Art is necessary to a child's balance. A sense of beauty is about respect for others and thus of self-respect. Art is a medium to give children the desire to grow, dream, speak freely.»*

*Gérard Garouste.*

The well-being of a child depends on his or her opportunities to discover, to experiment, to develop creativity, to seek and find new ways to use objects. A child who can react significantly to what it means to see, touch or feel more easily develops the capacity and desire to communicate with others. Artistic expression is one of a child's most natural forms of expression.

Through drawing, collage, painting, sculpture, puppet theatre, dance, poetry, etc., children create, reveal themselves and express their needs. Children's paintings, for example, show what is pleasant and what is unpleasant in their relations with their own world and the world that surrounds them. To do so they combine their knowledge of things and their own unique relationship with them. As children grow, these relationships change, they become more aware of what surrounds them, and their emotional interests also change. Any creative activity makes children more sensitive and helps them to understand. By creating, children exercise their right to feel free, without inhibitions and tensions, to develop their thoughts and feelings about themselves and those who surround them, to use the ability to think, perceive and feel in order to better understand others and to develop opportunities for cooperation and solidarity, and to enjoy their discovery of the world and recognize their own worth.

### Art and creativity

Psychologist L. S. Vigotsky has studied the nature and development of the artistic imagination in children. For him, "any human activity that does not merely reproduce experienced facts or impressions, but creates new pictures, new actions, belongs to the creative combinatorial function. The brain does not limit itself to being an organ capable of storing or replicating our past experiences; it is also a creator, a combiner... It is the creative activity of man that made man a being who looks toward the future, a being that contributes to create and modify his own present situation."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, N. Ros argues that "during creative activities, drama, mime, sculpture, music, etc., children repeat much of what they have seen but are not only limited to remembered experiences; they recreate them in creative ways, building other things through new combinations."<sup>2</sup>

Carl Rogers proposes conditions which allow the development of creativity: teamwork, environment of freedom, free expression, encouragement of new and original ideas, climate of confidence, acceptance of and respect for the individual; elimination of the threat of evaluation, independence, freedom to project and to select several options.<sup>3</sup> For Bisquert, in 1977, "What enriches the child in his creative capacity is not the created work but the creative process, i.e., it is the continuous future of decisions and positions taken, during an open dialogue with what he or she is creating. This strengthens the child's personality."<sup>4</sup>

Creativity can be regarded as the supreme manifestation of intelligence, conceived as an expression of the balance of the cognitive structure of human beings with their entourage (Piaget, 1976); as the

<sup>1</sup> Vigotsky L.S., "La imaginación y el arte en la infancia," *Ensayo psicológico*. Fontamara, México, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Ros, N., "El lenguaje artístico, la educación y la creación," *Revista Iberoamericana de educación*, No. 41/2 – January 10, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Rogers, C., *Freedom to learn*, Prentice Hall, 3th edition, 1994

<sup>4</sup> *Cité par* Vera Berjan, B-L, "El arte factor determinante en el proceso educativo," *Revista de Educación / Nueva época*, No. 15, October-December 2000.

ability to develop abstract thinking (Lewisterman, 1921); as the ability to analyze and construct relations of thought (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966), as adaptability, balance and efficient use of creative thinking when it is an autonomous, original and significant act (Duncan, 1985). Or, as it is a spontaneous act, without any predetermined purpose that allows the emergence of something of oneself.

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### **Relevant projects**

The association **La Source** emerged from the encounter of Gerard Garouste, painter and sculptor, with Christian Gotti, specialized educator. The project combines art, social action and education. La Source, based on an artistic and cultural dynamic, encourages young people to explore and develop their creative potential. It operates in rural areas to promote art and culture. In accordance with Gerard Garouste's wishes, this approach to creativity "promotes the development of the child, not in the perspective of making him an artist, but a desiring being." Since 1994, The Source has developed its educational and social action through artistic activities in three directions: prevention, education and artistic and cultural dynamics.

The **Museum of Children's Educational Art MUPAI**, of the Complutense University of Madrid wants to arouse children's interest in the art world through activities in which they develop their creativity, such as workshops and exhibitions. Moreover, it is an interactive center for educators to study educational opportunities through children's visual arts, to serve as an open center for research and make it available to centers and organizations nationally and internationally. And of course, it is a museum for admiring, learning and creating with a specific educational purpose. There is also the CurArte project (a play on words: cure-art) through which creative games are developed as therapy for children in hospitals for long periods whose movements are limited.

**UNESCO** presented "**Create: a space for the creativity of the child**", a project which aims to promote the development of creativity, expression and self-esteem through art projects among boys and girls aged 6 to 12 years in situations of social risk. For UNESCO "the functions and roles of school for all as set out in the last century, namely learning to live together and learning to be, are inseparable. As stated by the report, to know others, one first must get to know oneself. Along with this idea, research in the social sciences recognizes the creative dimension of human beings as one of the fundamental aspects of action. To the two major current approaches, action and knowledge, rational thought and normative thought, it is now necessary to add a third, the creative nature of intelligence." From these statements, "it follows that creativity is the most fundamental dimension, the one on which all other means of acting can be based."

Some believe that art therapy can go beyond the framework of psychotherapy and have broader humanitarian and therapeutic aims, i.e., help the disabled, sick people, or persons dealing with chronic pain. For example, the American association **Draw Bridge**, which works with abandoned and very vulnerable children, is convinced that the experience of being understood and valued gives children the freedom to grow. It believes that children develop fewer destructive emotions through art.