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Kia ora

Welcome to Issue 5 of ecARTnz

I am delighted to be associated with this e magazine in its second year of publication and to have the opportunity to edit this issue. As always, there is an assortment of inspirational stories from teachers who are ‘walking the talk’ in terms of providing quality arts experiences for young children that are grounded in socio-cultural pedagogies based on relationships with people, places and things.

In October this year, I attended the opening of the REANZ conference and the inspirational Hundred Languages exhibition on tour from Reggio Emilia in Italy. The influence of Reggio Emilia early childhood programmes on early childhood education in our country has been profound. There are many areas where this influence can be seen, for example, the way in which teachers now see children as competent and capable, the recognition of the hundred languages of children, and the increasing strength of pedagogical documentation for making learning visible. However, I am also mindful of our own historical, cultural and social contexts. What we do on our small islands in the Asia-Pacific region, far from the wonders of Europe, is made richer by the influence of Māori culture and tradition in combination with the influences of Tagata Pasifika and other migrant cultures - including fifth generation Irish like me! We have much to celebrate here in Aotearoa New Zealand, and this issue profiles some fine examples of initiatives in the arts. These include: a home-grown CD, a new DVD, and a new book. As usual, we include art projects and investigations involving teachers, infants, toddlers and young children, which highlight a diverse range of interests.

Check out the offerings, spread the word, pass on the links, and get ready to submit your own photographs and stories that celebrate the visual arts ‘Aotearoa-style’ for a future issue of ecARTnz.

Janette Kelly
The Hundred Languages of Children exhibition opening

Janette Kelly

Recently I attended the opening of the Reggio Emilia Association of New Zealand’s (REANZ) Hundred Languages of Children Exhibition Conference. Bringing The Hundred Languages of Children exhibition to New Zealand has been a vision of the Trustees of REANZ for many years and, finally, this dream has become a reality.

The atrium at St Cuthbert’s, where the exhibition was on display, was filled with large panels and installations that made visible the learning and thinking of children in early childhood centres in Reggio Emilia. It “showcased the energy, experience and capabilities that children bring to their learning” said REANZ spokesperson, Lorraine Manuela. Impressively, two of the keynote speakers for the REANZ conference, which was happening concurrently with the exhibition, had literally just flown in from Reggio Emilia for the opening. Paola Strozzi, a pedagogista, and Marina Castagnetti, a teacher in one of the Reggio centres, have made substantial contributions to our understanding of the educational projects from Reggio Emilia through their contributions to Reggio Children’s book Making Learning Visible: Children as individual and group learners.

The exhibition revealed many insights into the teaching and learning experiences of the Infant and Toddler Centres and the Preschools of Reggio Emilia (some of which are celebrating their fortieth and fiftieth birthdays this year). Highlights for me included: the exhibition centerpiece – a large map of the city drawn by several children alongside Loris Malaguzzi’s poem the exhibition was named after, a huge dinosaur sculpted from shoeboxes, documentation panels relating to the Portrait of a lion investigation (featured on video) and the water wheel paddles from the Amusement park for birds (also featured on video), a large fresco about a midsummer night’s dream and many sophisticated clay marquettes made by children. A very old but special photo series of infant Laura and a watch, (that features in the 1997 book The 100 languages of children: Narrative of the possible) was also on display, and this reminded me of the first time I heard Carlina Rinaldi speak in New Zealand and how significant this was for my understanding of Reggio pedagogy.

Reggio is internationally renowned in the education sector for inspiring teachers to think about the competencies that children bring to their learning, and it has also been a catalyst for thinking, research and advocacy in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood educational settings. Reggio’s principles and values, which acknowledge children as capable and competent, fit well with Te Whāriki, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum. I left the exhibition inspired but mindful of our own rich culture, thinking that one day we may have our own unique exhibition touring the world.
Flowers and the language of Art

Rod Eales

Rod Eales is a teacher at Early Childhood on Stafford, in Dunedin. She is an experienced teacher and an artist. She describes one of the centre’s long-running arts projects in this article.

The children at Early Childhood on Stafford are used to participation in long-term art projects. One project, Flowers, spanned a four month period. The children freely came together to form small groups where they worked collaboratively, supported by both peers and teachers, in rich and dynamic learning situations where they were exposed to a range of knowledge, media and techniques.

This project presented opportunities for acquiring a greater repertoire of mark-making skills, and familiarity with the creative problem-solving process. Importantly, it also provided access to, and understandings of, the ‘language of art’. In the Flowers project, arts language focused on the elements of art which are the tools of the trade - line, colour, shape, pattern, texture and composition. These elements provide a foundation for visual art knowledge, which can be built upon in the future. They can be utilised and manipulated in any combination to communicate or express an idea, a feeling, or a story.

Flowers began with a staff member introducing some images of flowers from a calendar. The children were initially interested in painting flowers, and later drawing them. At the same time, the children and teachers noticed that spring had arrived and that flowers had begun to blossom in the Centre garden. Further interest was generated through children bringing flowers from home. As we drew the flowers, we discussed and explored possibilities for the future. We had not planned on ‘talking flowers’ for months, but that is how it turned out. The journey proved to be long, exciting, and full of challenges.

The range of opportunities and experiences during this time included:

- Observing flowers growing at home, at the centre and in the neighbourhood, and taking a drawing trip to the Botanical Gardens with our clip boards.
- Observing flowers painted and drawn by artists throughout history and finding prints and actual paintings of flowers as well as images of flowers in books and calendars.
- Observing the flower used as a decorative motif in design on fabrics and furnishings, clothes, cups and plates, t-shirts, on building facades, carpets...everywhere!

We also visited Spotlight store and bought some floral fabric to laminate and be inspired by. We made a collection of photographs of our floral dress designs and laminated these to work from; some were incorporated into collages.
Art and science worked side by side as we researched the flower from a botanical perspective making detailed observations of the parts that make up a flower. We dissected a rose, a passionflower and a daisy, observing, extracting and identifying the stamen, petal, stem, ovary, seed, pistil, pollen grains, egg, style and stigma.

We decorated a macrocarpa tree with fresh flowers from our garden and turned a green tree into something colourful and Xmas-like. We had some of our designs transferred onto t-shirts and modeled them in a fashion parade, complete with lighting, music and catwalk. We used templates of cups, plates and t-shirts onto which we drew our own designs. Elisha chose to create her own ‘flower book’, drawing her own flower collection and inviting her friends to contribute.

The value of having enough time cannot be underestimated in a project like *Flowers*. Lots of time meant that children with no artistic confidence had the opportunity to grow into it and experience a sense of mastery over materials, techniques, fine motor skills, artistic vocabulary and appreciation. Having generous amounts of time with the usual small group of interested children also meant that close relationships formed throughout the process. Children had opportunities to share and exchange ideas, gaining confidence from the familiar and regular contact with their peers. It allowed children to be exposed to a variety of materials and techniques and many opportunities to practice these, giving children opportunities to absorb information several times and from different angles, and allowed space to reflect, question, discuss and listen. Having enough time helped children to understand their own preferences for materials and styles of expression.

For me, as the teacher, being generous with time has illuminated aspects of the children’s personalities, dispositions and artistic repertoires. For example, Millie D and Sarah repeatedly chose to make accurate representational drawings of flowers through observation of form and structure, whereas Wairaamia demonstrated a preference for the abstract representation of the flower, reducing the sky to a simple horizontal line and the rain to upright lines underneath the sky. Stella showed a preference for exploring the textural quality of paint, expressing herself in a very impressionistic style. Elisha repeatedly emphasised bold colour, pattern and expressive line whilst Millie W emphasised a fine, delicate line, and was attentive to form and colour.

The diversity of work produced by the children is testimony to the freedom, encouragement and challenges offered over time. These children have risen to the challenge of finding ways to communicate in visually creative ways. Some children produced collections of several hundred or more drawings and paintings during this project and this project has been well documented to celebrate the passion behind *Flowers*.

For more information you can contact Rod Eales at reales@clear.net.nz and visit the Centre’s website http://www.earlychildhoodonstafford.co.nz/
I am a Samoan girl
Margie Meleisea

Margie Meleisea is a teacher at Nayland Kindergarten in Nelson. In this article Margie describes one of the arts projects undertaken as part of Nayland Kindergarten’s action research with the Early Childhood Education Information and Communication Technology Professional Learning Programme, which began in 2007.

At the beginning of our research, the teaching team identified that whilst children were engaging in the arts, there was little depth and complexity in their learning and there was little involvement and provocation from teachers. Throughout this journey we have all looked at our pedagogy on teaching and learning, creativity, and engagement. However, I saw the arts as a vehicle for incorporating culture in a stronger way; there was a place for cultural techniques to be taught, traditional lessons and stories to be told and cultural history to be discovered. This action research journey provided a vehicle for me to further explore my own Samoan culture. It was a significant journey as I did it alongside children. One key person who shared this learning journey with me was Stella Rose.

Stella Rose is a New Zealand born Samoan and from the very beginning of her time at kindergarten she immersed herself in the visual arts. The new art research, however, provided a unique opportunity for Stella Rose to establish her identity and mana within the centre through her art and exploration of Samoan culture, and by sharing this with others. When she came to morning kindergarten with her Nana, they made a connection with my Samoan pea (pronounced like the word pear in English). Stella Rose had got one from her aunty in Samoa. On visiting the sewing room Stella Rose asked if she could make a pea. Stella Rose created the design and made her pea using the sewing machine. On completion she asked if she could paint her pea as she has seen other children do this with their dresses. We searched the computer for Samoan images such as flowers and plants. Stella Rose studied each image and transposed her interpretation of the images onto her pea using the colours she selected for herself. This is an example of what Anderson et al. (2006) describe when they suggest “the arts are powerful agents for the development of knowledge and understanding, for the nurturing of sensitivity and imagination, and a rubric for socio-cultural representations of meaning and ceremony”.

During our work we shared what we both knew about Samoa and I was intrigued to know where her aiga (family) lived. We printed off a map of Samoa and I marked where my father’s aiga were from. Stella Rose returned the next day with her map marked and, to my surprise, our aiga came from the same village district. I was so excited to have this knowledge and connection to Stella Rose and her family. This exchange began another as Stella Rose and I wrote English words in a book for her nana to translate them into Samoan so we could learn them. From a simple visual arts project we had managed to build strong links of culture, family and language. This led to other experiences such as cooking and sharing recipes and food.
Another cultural art process introduced was the making of tapa designs. I used tapa material, books and artifacts made of tapa as provocations and for the children to gain ideas. Stella Rose worked on an individual design alongside a number of children and, throughout the process, we continued our discussions about being Samoan and practised our Samoan words. I then decided to move the focus from an individual work to a community work where we could create a kindergarten tapa.

Stella Rose took the lead with this project and became the teacher and guide gathering children to work alongside her, showing them the square they could fill and the patterns we had outlined as provocations. As she worked she talked about the patterns with the children and then she looked up and asked “I am a Samoan girl, aren’t I Margie?” “Yes, you are Stella Rose, you most certainly are” I replied. I was very moved by this. Through the visual arts focus and incorporating meaningful and authentic cultural experiences, Stella Rose had gained the mana, pride and self-belief to stand up and define herself as Samoan. I too felt comfortable and able to celebrate myself as Samoan in this community; for me the journey is continuous and cultural identity cannot be defined by a set of criteria. As Wright (1997) states “... children, teachers and families can take active roles in guiding the process of discovery, pursuit, self-awareness, personal communication, social interaction, perception, skill use, analysis and critique” (p.365). Te Whāriki states that children need to feel a sense of belonging through being affirmed as individuals, and their family and culture being welcomed and acknowledged. By deepening these connections for Stella Rose through the visual arts, the possibilities are endless for her to explore and share her culture further.

Our active engagement with children throughout the art journey - focusing on the environment, art processes, language, children’s creativity and thinking skills, and teachers’ values and beliefs - produced an amazing quality, depth and complex visual art. To celebrate this creative journey by children and teachers as artists we decided to hold an art exhibition. Stella Rose was invited to be a part of this and exhibit her artwork in the gallery. On the day of the event, she stood proudly next to her pea and the community tapa cloth. When asked about how it felt doing the Samoan tapa cloth art with other children, Stella Rose commented “we shared being Samoan...’cause makes it feel really good....makes it feel really good to me ‘cause it is really well done and sharing and caring. I like being a Samoan Kid”.

Making children visible as artists, then celebrating and sharing this with our community highlighted the significance of the journey and the shift in teaching, learning and engagement within the visual arts at Nayland Kindergarten...and Stella Rose - a Samoan girl and a Samoan artist!

For more information visit: http://www.naylandkindergarten.org.nz or http://naylandkindy.blogspot.com/.


Toddlers and sea creatures

Jody Sellwood

Jody Sellwood is a supervisor and teacher at Playspace, a parent cooperative early childhood centre in Newtown, Wellington. The centre is for children three years old and under. She reflects on the children’s exploration of sea creatures through the arts.

For years a large papier-maché shark has hung from the ceiling at Playspace, a relic from the past. Recently, many children have noticed the shark, pointing to it and talking about it. Based on this interest I suggested that we could make an ocean of sea creatures so the shark had some friends. So out came the glue, paper and paints. Over many months a sea creature mobile was created by all of the children at Playspace.

I had the initial idea of how we could make an octopus but made sure that the children were a part of the process all the way. They helped rip the newspaper, stuff the stockings for the arms, and make the wallpaper paste. Along the way they thoroughly enjoyed playing with the lumps of glue. We had slippery floors, slippery door handles; glue was everywhere by the end. Luckily I had just completed my First Aid Certificate!

The sea creatures were painted solely by the children. We left them as they were created; no patching up uncovered bits or guiding children to do it in certain ways. I have learnt over and over again that toddlers love to get messy. I haven't met a single infant or toddler at Playspace who doesn't, and this drives our philosophy of ‘get messy, get involved and have fun’.

Throughout the sea creatures mobile project we sang, Slippery fish, slippery fish, swimming in the water and we made all of the sea creatures that are mentioned in the song. The children love pointing to the shark, octopus and friends when singing the song and they have learnt all of the actions to accompany the song.

It has been a fantastic journey working this closely with infants and toddlers on an arts project. I have usually worked with older children on projects, feeling like I could do more in the arts with older children. However, by cultivating a bit of ‘non perfectionism’ in myself, working with toddlers has taken me on a whole new path and turned out to be loads of fun.
Books, CD’s and DVD’s that will inspire and provoke

*Visual arts inspirations: People, places, things*

An inspiring new DVD

*Visual arts inspirations: people, places and things* is a new visual art DVD that features five early childhood centres: St James Kindergarten, St Andrews Epsom Early Childhood Centre, Tots Corner, Pigeon Mountain Kindergarten, and Te Puna Kōhunāhunga. The video highlights how the children at these centres, through the visual arts, have developed important relationships with materials, with people in their community, and with places of cultural significance. Each context focuses on a different visual arts medium that has been used in response to children’s interests and investigations. Lesley Pohio, one of ecARTnz Editorial Board members, was the educational consultant on this project and we applaud this new offering. The resource will not only support pre-service teacher education courses, but also teachers in the field.

The DVD is available for purchase from Kohia Education Centre, 78 Epsom Avenue, Epsom, Auckland. Kohia@auckland.ac.nz, phone 09 623 8977.
In your ear
New music by fleaBITE

“If you like Fatcat & Fishface, you’ll love the new children’s CD from fleaBITE,” fleaBITE is the new musical outfit from the producer of the award-winning Fatcat & Fishface series, and continues the tradition of music for children that is funny, original and entertaining.

fleaBITE’s new album In your ear is full of fresh, fun and bittersweet songs. Meet the hairiest person in the world (Hair), join an exercise class for insects (Insectercise), take a ride on a tugboat (Tug), and hang out with famous people (We’re So Famous).

fleaBITE features some unexpected and top notch guests. Jazz sax virtuoso Jeff Henderson adds colour and vibrancy to the rain dance (Thunder Box), and the operatic vocals of Janet Roddick bring an otherworldly feel to the jellyfish ball (Medusa).

fleaBITE is guaranteed to get under your skin and have you itching for more. Check out the tunes via the website: www.fleabite.co.nz

Movement and dance in young children’s lives:
Crossing the divide
A new book by Adrienne Sansom

In the pedagogical landscape of early childhood, physical movement is central to the holistic development of young children. Yet, movement-related experiences and other bodily activities such as play and dance often present contradictions and conundrums for early childhood educators.

Movement and Dance in Young Children’s Lives (Peter Lang Publishing, http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?cid=165) looks at the place of movement in young children’s lives and addresses how movement as a form of expression can become dance, thus displacing a reliance on linguistic modes of expression and honouring the agency of the body. The book also discusses a variety of concerns and confusions that accompany dance in education, and interprets what this means to students and teachers in teacher education programmes and early childhood settings.
Rāhui
An exceptional new children’s picture book by Chris Szekely

“It blew me away then and it blows me away now. It is quite breath-taking to look at... I’m so impressed by this book, it is a celebration of our bi-cultural country...” John McIntyre, Wellington Children’s Bookshop.

Rāhui is the exceptional new children’s book by Huia Publishers told through the eyes of children. From a story by Chris Szekely and beautifully illustrated by Malcolm Ross, Rāhui takes the reader on a wonderful journey to a cousin’s holiday in a rural Māori community where they have adventures and fun together – playing in the bush, riding horses, fishing, eeling and swimming at the beach. However, “one day, when we were swimming, my cousin Thomas went missing. We thought he had gone home.” And so, during the holiday, a death leads to a rāhui being placed on the beach. The book is at once joyous and wistful, with the illustrations richly evoking the atmosphere of the setting and people.

The author, Chris Szekely, was appointed the Chief Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library in 2007 – the first Māori to have held the position. Chris was previously City Librarian at the Manukau City Council, where he headed one of the largest and fastest growing public library services in New Zealand. He was also instrumental in setting up Te Rōpū Whakahau, the professional association of Māori librarians.

The illustrator, Malcolm Ross (1948–2003), gained a Diploma in Fine Arts in painting and a Diploma in Fine Arts with Honours in sculpture, and he had wide-ranging interests in New Zealand history, art and culture.

The publishing company, HUIA, is an award-winning independent New Zealand book publisher that produces wonderful and provocative books with a uniquely Māori or Pacific perspective.

Published as a hardback in both Māori and English editions, Rāhui is available at all good bookstores and retails for $20.00.

Watch the youtube video [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42kXPuYTx10](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42kXPuYTx10)
In the abridged introduction from new book *Turning trash into treasure for young children* by Adam Buckingham he states: One man’s rubbish is another man’s treasure. Sustainability is an important issue within the community and the education sector. I enjoy encouraging others to find creative ways to reuse waste. Sharing my new knowledge can influence their teaching philosophy and their practice.

The innovative equipment I have designed for young children is predominantly made from solid waste materials. It is about transforming someone else’s rubbish into learning experiences for young children. This meaningful project has linked people from the wider community to the early childhood environment, knowing that they are contributing their solid waste to be transformed into something useful. The equipment provides an opportunity for young children to manipulate and explore real world objects. Items are incorporated from the home environment and the wider world - to inspire and enrich young children’s learning. A spin-off from this work has been the involvement of parents.

Have fun sourcing the materials and getting people on board to help. Improvise with the materials, observe how children use them and then adapt your ideas. Display resources in an orderly manner and make it look inviting for children to explore - so keep it simple. Please remember to give children the time and freedom to explore, discover, manipulate and practise with real objects. Think about things such as the physical space, location, organisation, storage and maintenance of equipment. And use the correct names for all objects. Thanks: Adam, proud to be an early childhood teacher.

Cost per book is $NZ40 (includes postage within New Zealand) add $NZ10 postage for the rest of the world.

To order email: reusethetrash@gmail.com with your address and contact phone number.

Pay by internet banking: Account number 12-3033-0331969-53. Please use your name as the reference, or post a cheque made payable to A Buckingham with your address to: 8a Camilla Grove, Auckland, 0629. Credit card payment can be made via trade me - www.trademe.co.nz and search ““Turning Trash into Treasure for Young Children” (Note: an extra cost applies).
“The classroom environment is an essential component for maximizing learning experiences for young children. *Inspiring Spaces for Young Children* invites teachers to enhance children’s educational environments in a beautiful way by emphasizing aesthetic environmental qualities that are often overlooked in early childhood classrooms, such as nature, colour, furnishings, textures, displays, lighting, and focal points. Step-by-step instructions and lush photographs take educators through the process of transforming ordinary classrooms into creative, beautiful learning spaces, providing children with an environment where they can learn and grow. With easy-to-implement ideas that incorporate nature, children’s artwork, and everyday classroom materials, the photographs and ideas in this book promote creativity, learning, and simple beauty” ([http://www.amazon.com/Inspiring-Spaces-Children-Jessica-DeViney/dp/0876593171](http://www.amazon.com/Inspiring-Spaces-Children-Jessica-DeViney/dp/0876593171)).

The companion book *Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments (ROSIE)* by Jessica DeViney is another useful tool that teachers can use to guide changes to the environment.
Jannie Visser is a senior lecturer at Waiariki Institute of Technology, where she teaches on the Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood Education). Jannie’s interest in early childhood education started with her own children’s involvement in the New Zealand Playcentre Federation thirty seven years ago. Since then she has been involved in the education sector in a range of capacities: as a teacher of infants, toddlers and young children; as a supervisor in a mixed-aged group ECE setting; as a union delegate; as a professional development advisor; and, currently, a tertiary educator.

Jannie is passionate about visual arts and visual arts education, as well as infant/toddler care and education, often combining the two in her teaching and research activities. Her current research interests include: the visual language of toddlers; the impact the varied philosophical, theoretical and pedagogical perspectives in visual arts education have on teachers’ beliefs and practices; and the role visual culture plays in children’s early childhood art, meaning making and their developing sense of self.

ANZAAE Member profile


Editorial Board information

ecARTnz, an e magazine of professional practice for early childhood educators, is a quarterly publication developed to generate new interest in visual art education in Aotearoa New Zealand. The intention of the recently established editorial board is that ecARTnz will showcase examples of teaching and learning, literature, and conferences of interest to educators in early childhood education and beyond.

Members of the editorial board are: Lisa Terreni (VUW), Janette Kelly (UoW), Dr Beverley Clark (Unitech), Nicky de Latour and Janita Craw (AUT), and Lesley Pohio (UoA).

The board is responsible for promoting the magazine, writing, reviewing and editing contributions, and ensuring that the e magazine is of a consistently high standard. The views in this journal do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board members.

Contributions are invited for the next issue of ecARTnz. Submissions of 500-1000 words accompanied by up to 8 photographs are welcomed. For further information please email Lisa Terreni at lisa.terreni@vuw.ac.nz