Lifelong and Trans-Generational Education through Arts

Gabriella Aleandri

Abstract: In this article, art is regarded as a pedagogical strategy from a triple point of view: as education to arts, education for arts and education through arts. Education through arts has also been considered as an effective and efficient tool/strategy aimed at spreading lifelong learning and education. It can be achieved through projects based on a theoretical approach which moves from the concept of parent training, as a stimulator of interest and participation under an educational trans-generational prospect. After showing the theoretical frameworks, supported by different authors, especially those that are considered the most famous philosophers, pedagogists, sociologists and anthropologists, it will be illustrating a project of literacy and education in arts, realised in nurseries and kindergartens, with the aim to involve the children’s families too, applied through activities/stimulations, with the help and support of educators-teachers, to join, all together, the “Culture days with family”. The chosen methodology has been based primarily on qualitative data: those from the Heuristic-Hermeneutic data, to the Grounded Theory (adapted and modified in order to meet the aims of the research) and Critic-Argument theory.

Riassunto: In quest’articolo l’arte viene considerata come una strategia pedagogica da un triplice punto di vista: educazione all’arte, educazione per l’arte e educazione attraverso l’arte. L’educazione attraverso l’arte viene ritenuta anche un efficace e efficiente strumento/strategia finalizzata alla diffusione del lifelong learning e education, attraverso progetti che si basano su un approccio teorico che muove le mosse dal concetto di parent training, quale stimolatore di interesse e di partecipazione in una prospettiva di educazione trans-generazionale. Dopo aver presentato un quadro teorico supportato anche da autori – soprattutto alcuni tra i più celebri filosofi, pedagogisti, sociologi e antropologi –, viene presentato un progetto di alfabetizzazione e educazione artistica realizzato al nido e alla scuola dell’infanzia, con l’obiettivo di coinvolgere anche le famiglie, attraverso alcune attività/stimolo predisposte con la collaborazione di educatori e insegnanti, a partecipare, tutti insieme, ai “Culture days with family”. La metodologia utilizzata è stata soprattutto di tipo qualitativo: da quella euristico-ermeneutica, alla Grounded Theory (adattata e modificata in maniera originale per gli obiettivi della ricerca) a quella critico-argomentativa.

Keywords: Education, Lifelong and lifewide learning, Trans-generational education, Art, Aesthetic experience.
1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to consider arts, in this case especially pictorial or visual arts, as an efficient pedagogical strategy for lifelong and lifewide education and as an effective trans-generational educational mediator and mean.

We specify that we consider art as all forms and expressions, from the arts “noble” to those so-called minor, or popular and any realisation form producing “art”, conveying or communicating something in those who benefit it or, even better, the kind of art that stimulates participation through experience, primarily the ethical-aesthetic one.

The piece of art has to be considered as a cultural heritage because of its value of testimony, representative and communicative, that has value of civilization.

In our research project we have narrowed the field. However we also decided to use art forms such as pictorial works, as they better suited the research objectives of the project.

The research project starts from the consideration that the aesthetic education is suitable to the achievement of multiple educational objectives, and simultaneously activates multiple communication, experiential and spiritual channels and knowledge. It also stimulates curiosity, interest, motivation and creativity.

The aesthetic representation allows us to “tell”, illustrate, and communicate visions of the world and, therefore, it is an important aspect that education cannot face lightly, but must also be addressed seriously and systematically. Herbart observed that «not everyone sees everything the same way. Seeing is an art and the learner has to pass through a fair number of exercises in this as in other arts» (Herbart, 1804, 155), in order to educate oneself in understanding what surrounds us, what happened in the past and what will come from the present and the future, from others and from oneself. This will be realised through the activation of the maximum potential of all our senses, perceptions, feelings, emotions, knowledge (previous and present), reflections, poietic capacity, spirituality, dialogue, sharing, and discussion.

Therefore, aesthetic education becomes one of the major focus of the person’s growth process during his spans of life, which is recognised as sensitivity education and it allows us to enter into relationship with the world through synesthetic experience, meant as aesthetics, in a dialectic
relationship between feeling, perceiving, thinking and acting (the latter understood as in the broadest conception, from the act of communication to the productive-realisation, etc.).

To achieve these goals, we can start by educating “taste”, within the meaning of Bertin, which is “the ability to perceive (and produce) values that have [...] foundations in the organic structure of a “form”, which draws, from the free play of sensibility, imagination and intelligence itself, its own autonomous structure and a proper and specific meaning» (Bertin 1968, 249).

In such theoretical and pedagogical frameworks, aesthetic education may achieve the aims of educating into arts (meant as to better understand them), for arts (to create art) and through arts (for wider and further educational goals), in order to form/educate perfect and complete human beings as Schiller advocated in the late XVIII century, as opposed to the concept of man described negatively by Nietzsche as “current”, such as “current coin” printed by a State Mint. The aim of this formation/education is to overcome a conception of human beings considered only as productive and included in a competitive market economy and to develop and accept a renewed idea of man considered as a whole, complex, multi-faceted, multi-dimensional (not one-dimensional man as Marcuse critically argued in 1964) and unfragmented human being.

Another interesting perspective is that art is a form of spiritual life, is historical knowledge, and best expresses the “ordinary life” based on intuition. The spirit furthermore can intuit by doing, creating and expressing (Croce, 1902). Vico (1725) (indicated by Croce as the first discoverer of aesthetics science) and Hegel (1835-1838) both considered the imagination as the first form of the mind, of the culture and, therefore, of human history.

2. Theoretical, Pedagogical and context background

Nowadays, at a time when the shortage or lack of time due to outside work commitments afflict us significantly, the iconic education, through images, can achieve its goals in a shorter time. It is a universal language (although important knowledge about the culture of the author and the time of realisation are needed), it is a language which allows meeting, re-
lecting, putting together and binding different generations, sensivities, experiences, nationalities, etc.

Moreover, several recent scientific studies agree that the first great invention of humanity, at the time of *homo sapiens* but probably even at times of Neanderthal man, it was not that of the wheel or fire, but it was just that of the depiction and symbolic expression, that is the first form of art.

Returning to the present, today we live in a society defined, among many others, as ‘the image society’, because visibility is fundamental (for example the immediate and globalised trend of selfies) for which we are trained to see a succession of images that are a form of communication that can be decoded almost immediately and efficiently. This decoding often strikes us in our feelings, so it is highly effective from the educational point of view, though, as the flip side, often the little time available allows us only a superficial reading, giving us just an impression.

We do not have the opportunity to stop and reflect and to deeply understand meanings and wider boundaries, or to interpret more deliberately and thoughtfully, to understand many elements of complexity that surround and characterise us, the environment, culture and society, etc.

Another aspect of our contemporary era, postmodern, it is represented by living into a globalised context, increasingly influenced, depended and affected by technology and economies of profit (even though we are living in a long period of economic and financial crisis of the capitalist model), where it seems that art has lost the cultural charm, interest, utility and value, especially but not only for young people, because, apparently, it does not produce immediate benefits or earnings (no accountable value).

We must instead try to recover meanings and the role of the cultural heritage in the lifestyle of each person, because the importance of cultural heritage is not strictly either immediately of an economic nature.

It is interesting, important and useful, then, to stop and spend some time to discuss with others the subjective readings and interpretations, always with a view to an exchange, dialogue, and expansion of opinions, perspectives, knowledge, sensitivity and relationships.

By consequence, the master piece, in this case meant as visual, it is a valuable instrument to stimulate active participation of its users. It is also a tool to motivate the relationships among reality, mind and imagination to overtake standard and rigid mind-sets. Last, but not least, it can also be considered an instrument of inclusion. As in every educational process, therefore, the educational act comes through relationships, especially
the communicative ones, between those who observe the master piece of art and the master piece of art itself (and its creator), as well as those who, together with others, watch it to discuss and share opinions, feelings, comments and thoughts.

Taking into consideration some thoughts expressed by Frabboni (1985), we recognise the importance of art towards the construction of a proper and efficient “network of educational systems”, in which everything within the environment assumes a fundamental role to promote and realise a lifelong and lifewide education. We cannot also forget to mention the point of view of the reinforcement of the individual and social identity towards the society, towards someone’s own identity and towards the development of the participation of someone to the community social life. This can be realised also through the enhancing of the educational relationships, the communication and the emotional bonds within the family that are stimulated through a shared enjoyment of the piece of art meant as cultural heritage or asset.

The expression “cultural heritage” has been introduced in 1954 during Hague (Netherland) Convention and it even goes beyond the concept of “historical and artistic heritage” protected and promoted by the Italian Constitution (Art. 9).

The piece of art, or cultural heritage, furthermore, allows oneself to learn and educate, and to self-learn and self-educate, also by doing, in non-formal educational contexts, in enjoyable ways in those, but often short, moments of leisure, in which everyone, together with every member of the family or friends, decides to go to attend a cultural event or to visit an art museum. Furthermore, this kind of education, or self-education, it is highly democratic because venues and museums do not make any kind of discrimination regarding the social class or the cultural level among the users/visitors. In fact they are open to the general public and, therefore, everybody can enjoy it. It is up to us to take the chance to do so.

This kind of democratic education, according to Dewey, it is also made of aesthetic experience (Dewey, 1951). In this way, the importance is placed onto the necessary activities that must come from all the protagonists involved (the artist, the users, etc...) starting from the consideration that language itself is action, which comes from the interaction of the dialecting expression with the comprehension of this experience.

Ricoeur, regarding the theory of action, states: »I want to make more concrete our characterisation of the person as a self by connecting the no-
tion of *speaking* subject to that of *acting* subject. In a sense, this characterisation occurs at the crossing-point between semantics and pragmatics to the extent that an important feature of human action as rule-governed behaviour is ruled by language and, more specifically, by most speech-acts. In other words, the human action is a spoken action» (Ricoeur, 1989, 95).

Ricoeur recognises the importance of the ordinary language philosophy (Wittgenstein, 1953) to the reflections about the meaning of the action, to the language action and to the related semantics, connecting the meaning of a word to its use or, simpler, to the exercise of the language use (Alici, 1984, 25).

On the other hand, however, we cannot fail to quote the results of a lot of research, especially the ones conducted by the Neo-Marxist Philosopher, Sociologist, and Anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu regarding the modes of fruition of the piece of arts and of the modes of appreciation (or “taste”) that he divides into legitimate taste, medium taste and popular taste. These categories come from the differences in socio-cultural family origins rather than related to the academic or scholastic level of achievement (Bourdieu, 1979). This means that the school provides the needed competences to access the use/enjoyment of the piece of art, but not the access to the piece of art itself.

These outcomes led him to conclude that the school educates reproducing the distinctions, contradictions and injustices that exist outside of the school itself, implied in the society and in the related economic system (Bourdieu refers to the capitalistic system of industrial production).

Certainly, as Edgar Morin observes (Morin, 2000), art meets the needs of the cognitive education: the most complex master pieces or pieces of art (but this does not mean that they are precluded to some) and the pictorial arts belong to this category. This means they need literacy activities, education, and acquisition of competences to understand and interpret the meanings and the symbols of the pieces of art or to find new and deeper ones, in order to give everybody a chance, even to the lowest social classes, to enjoy them.

As Snyders (a famous French pedagogist) stated: «I dream of a real democratic culture of the masterpieces, of masterpieces for everyone» (Snyders, 2001, 15).

Furthermore, to the cognitive education proposed by Morin through art, I would suggest to add also the perceptive and sensory education framework, of course meant as the stimulation of the active participation
of the user/student of the piece of art in order to go beyond what is already known.

Moreover, art, through its realisations, meant as pieces of art, in this case pictorial, it contributes to the achievement of fundamental objectives of the education process: among them, knowledge that can be learnt generation after generation in a looped circle asset, and the sharing of the social and cultural heritage, its interpretative codes without rigid or predetermined schemes. In this way, we could be able to highly stimulate the critic skills of everyone to go beyond the limits of knowledge and of past reflections of previous generations.

In fact, the limit here, according to Kant’s reflections, it is not an external border but a function made to/not to validate the inner outcomes of a method of research or of a theory.

According to Giovanni Maria Bertin, the aesthetic principle puts the centre of the existential experience «the individuality of the person or of the community, during an historical moment, or in a culture, conceived as the wholeness of its own shape and in the fullness of its own development, in a coherent and full expression similar to those embedded in a piece of art» (Bertin, 1995, 15). This principle, furthermore, takes into consideration the element of subjectivity, or the personal experience, and it enhances it. However, to this consideration, I would also add all those elements that come out from the dialogue and from the relations established by the artist (included all his meanings and intentions), his/her realisation (the piece of art) and the users that are connected into an ongoing dimension of confrontation and findings between subjectivity and objectivity (represented by the object, meant as the piece of art), and in the attribution of deeper and wider meanings and findings.

To support those outcomes, Laneve observes that «given a piece of art and given a certain pre-understanding of the subject, the user is able to provide a preliminary meaning: the following step (hermeneutic) consists in the elaboration/confrontation/validation of this first project that is checked repeatedly according to the new elements that will emerge from further interpretations, deeper than the previous ones, of the piece of art itself.

And so on […] Every interpretation begins with pre-concepts, which are replaced by new and more adequate findings. Every revision of the initial projects brings the possibility to plan a new project. Those who try to understand are exposed to mistakes derived from suppositions that have no validation in the object» (Laneve, Agrati, 2010, 178-179).
Furthermore «the piece of art is meant as the fulfilment of that symbolic representation of life to which every Erlebnis (experience), according to its nature, tends to» (Gadamer, 1990, 437). According to Husserl, the experience of the use of the piece of art affects and modifies those who make the action and it is proposed as intentional lived-experience (aka experienced). This reveals, at the same time, all its stimuli for planning.

The piece of art generates questions, through the dialogue, the communication (the language), and the comprehension within an educational looped circle process.

3. The research project

The idea is to sensibilise and involve a wide and trans-generational audience: stimulation through an aesthetic-artistic literacy process that can involve every member of the family (parents, siblings, cousins, grandparents...), that can start from the nursery period. This should be applied in a pedagogic perspective that experiments and gives value to the concept and the practice of parent training, within a lifelong and lifewide learning and education strategy. This pedagogic strategy can be also recognised within the education for the sustainable development (ESD), promoted by UNESCO last decade (2005-2014).

«Although there should be space for multiple interpretations and meanings of ESD, there is a common understanding that education and learning in the context of sustainable development cannot ignore the interconnections between the environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects of sustainable development» (UNESCO, 2009, 71).

Within Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning [Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006] for 21st century, also EU policies recognize the role of arts education, including «cultural awareness and expression, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts)» among eight key competencies to be acquired by both young and adult people. «The acquisition of key competences fits in with the principles of equality and access for all. This reference framework also applies in particular to disadvantaged groups whose educational potential requires support. Examples of such
groups include people with low basic skills, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, migrants, etc.

«Cultural activities can provide knowledge of diverse cultural expressions and so contribute to tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. Cultural creativity offers significant potential for enhancing the respect for others. The arts are also a playground for contradiction and symbolic confrontation, allowing individual expression, critical self-reflection and mediation. As such, they naturally cross borders, connect and speak directly to people’s emotions. Creative citizens, engaged in cultural activity, produce new spaces and potential for dialogue» (European Council, 2008, 33).

A new “Creative Europe” Programme has been approved for the years 2014–2020, including fundings, Heritage Days, Capitals of Culture.

According to such current international conceptual and operational framework, a research project had been planned and developed, named “Culture day with family”, with the following features.

Aims: to literate and educate people to use and enjoy art, with the purpose to enhance their skills of interpretation, knowledge, dialogue, communication, relationships, parent training, education, lifelong and lifewide learning.

Sample of the research: children from nurseries and kindergartens and their parents and family members that live in Macerata and surrounding areas.

Methodology: it will be used above a qualitative analysis, from the heuristic-hermeneutic method and the Grounded Theory (originally adapted and modified according to the aims of this piece of research) to the Critical Argumentation theory.

Tools: famous paintings, pieces of papers to draw or to colour, observation format, proposals for the “Culture day with family” and related format, visits to museums/events and final questionnaire.

First step: in nurseries and kindergartens classes will be shown big pictures of famous paintings, chosen for their clear drawings that can be easily recognised and remembered by the children, and that will be explained in a deep way by the educators/teachers who will stimulate the children to intervene with their thoughts.

Second step: the following day, in a school environment that will be adapted for the purpose of the research, and organised in order to stimulate dialogue, contact and sharing, with music that will activate concentra-
tion, feelings, emotions and sensations, and with a giant pictures of the paintings, the children will be asked to reproduce and colour the painting shown. The music will be chosen from different classic composers such as Chopin, Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Debussy, Liszt, Schumann, Vivaldi.

Third step: the day after the second step experiment, children will be given a coloured copy in scale of the painting shown in the class, together with a description that will be read by educators/teachers with the request to show it to their parents and then have a discussion about before/during/after dinner time when all the family is together. It is hopeful they will have discussion all together, with brothers and sisters, grandparents or other members of the family too.

First three steps, changing the paintings, will be repeated for four weeks.

At the end of every week the children will give their parents suggestions regarding information of museums, events/venues available in the surrounding areas that can be visited with their family during the weekends. The activity is called “culture day with family”. These suggestions, it will specified, will not be mandatory and it will be left them the choice of location. After the visit, once back at home, the parents will be asked to write a short comment/report about what they have visited, their feelings, sensations and findings from the opinions shared with the whole family that have participated. The children will be asked to draw the piece of art that impressed them the most.

The pieces of art, chosen as stimuli means, are: “Canestra di frutta” by Caravaggio; “Weilheim Marienplatz” by Kandinskij, “Palme a Bordighera” by Monet and “Portrait of Doctor Gachet” by Van Gogh.
1. “Canestra di frutta” (1597-1601) by Caravaggio. In this painting, Caravaggio shows a deep attention to reproduce the reality, including its imperfections as they are in nature. The basket of fruit ideally occupies a semi-circle. Currently the piece of art is kept at “Pinacoteca Ambrosiana” in Milan.
2. “Weilheim Marienplatz” (1909) by Kandinskij. The painting reproduces the square of the Weilheim village, Baviera (Germany), now famous for this piece of art. The Colours used are clear and concern the tones of yellow, green, red and blue. Kandinskij in fact deeply studied the meaning and the effects of the colours developing some theories about. For example he divided the colours according to their physical effects, based on the temporary first impressions, and to their mind effects, produced by the spiritual reflections stimulated by the use of that kind of colour which is associated to certain characteristics, emotions and to certain music instruments too.
3. “Palme a Bordighera” (1884) by Monet. Nature here is made as the principal source of inspiration for the French painter by which this painting represents an example of cared and detailed studio, sometimes exaggerated, about the relation between colours and shapes, through brush strokes that could stimulate and enhance the emotions inspired by the subject, with the result of an immediate mind imprinting realised through the eyes.
4. “Portrait of Doctor Gachet” (1890) by Van Gogh. This second version of the painting represents his doctor and friend, and an art lover too, named Gachet. The subject is represented in a sad and melancholic posture, which Van Gogh named to be the face of what was the “disillusioned expression of our time”. Here we can notice a strong use of colours that are very dense regarding their contrast.

To facilitate the comprehension of the subjects by the children, every painting but the last has been supported by real photos of the subjects.

At the end of four weeks steps, the families will be sent to school for a meeting to share impressions, experiences, entertainment, within a space what will show the drawings of the children and the gigantic picture of the chosen paintings as hence explained. At the end, parents, grandparents and every adult member of the family will be given a questionnaire to be filled.
4. Some data analysis

The sample is composed of 51 children, 21 who attend the nursery and 30 who attend the kindergarten. 35% of children enrolled in the nursery are male and 65% are female. 40% of children enrolled in the kindergarten are male and 60% are female.

A total of 120 questionnaires were completed by adults (parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.), of which 48 were completed by family members of children at the nursery and 72 were completed by family members of children at the kindergarten. Of the 48 adults who are family members of children at the nursery, 70% are female and 30% are male; 80% are parents, 20% are grandparents or other adult family members.

Of the 72 adults who are family members of children at the nursery, 65% are female and 35% are male; 75% are parents and 25% are grandparents or other adult family members.

All families participated in the project activities, both those that had been started in the classroom with the children by educators/teachers and to the visits to museums/events/venues at the “Culture days with family” during the weekend although there were some defections.

8 families from the sample (about 15%) didn’t participate in the “Culture days with family” due to reasons such as the lack of time due to unavoidable work or family commitments. 5 families among those 8, however, decided to make up for those missed visits to museums by consulting some websites of online museums or exhibits. 3 remaining families, instead, said they didn’t attend any visit to museums/exhibit due to lack of time.

Through observation formats used by educators/teachers before, during and after the implementation of the project in order to let children achieve in arts literacy and other educational and inter-relational goals, all children showed increased interest, aesthetic, graphic, practical and expressive skills and wider and better interactions among peer class-groups and between them and adults.

With regard to parent training and education, adult education, lifelong and lifewide education, through the final questionnaire administered during the meetings held both in nursery and kindergarten, once all the steps of the project had been completed, we are able to recognize that 85% of adult members (parents, grandparents, aunt and uncle, etc.) wrote they had been delighted and very satisfied about both the given possibilities of acquisition or increasing of artistic and aesthetic skills and the develop-
ment and increase of opportunities for deeper and enjoyable relationships, dialogue and discussion within the family. Issues about and through arts explained during the several steps of the research and educational project were said to be efficient stimuli to promote curiosities, motivation and active participation, as well as to get participants ready, interested and motivated to attend further educational/self-educational/relational activities through arts and with other members of the family in a trans-generational sharing of experiences, knowledge and thoughts.

100% of adult participants stated that after completing the project they observed and experienced improvement in educational family relationships.

80% of adult participants of the sample, therefore, said they will go on autonomously in experiencing further “Culture days with family” because they consider it as a very interesting, exciting and challenging educational occasion. They appreciate “Culture day with family” because it lets all members of the family to meet together to experience environment, culture, history heritage and all their characteristics, and at the same time to learn, communicate and to strengthen relationships among all members of the family and so they better enjoy the family itself. 

The previous data are only a small part of all data collected from the many steps which the project had been planned on. Further analysis will be disseminated in other forthcoming papers or books.

5. Final considerations and pedagogical prospects

It was interesting to discover that the “surprise” category, within the adult sample, that typically distinguishes and characterises in a very strong way the first phases of the children’s development, and that decreases in the growing process, caused by the addiction/habitudes/forecast of the events and of the lived experiences until it almost totally disappeared once adult, through the art and the emotions this will be re-activated, giving again that feeling of being amazed that was thought to be lost. This feeling, therefore, will become the reason of unification and sharing of feelings, perceptions, emotions and experiences within a trans-generation dimension. The wonder and then the admiration (step that occurs when these emotions remain impressed within ourselves as stated by Laneve) will be added to the surprise towards the art, and this mix will be the force that will lead to an
interest to start a never ending lifelong and lifewide process of education that will take into consideration both individuals and the community.

At the same time, the aesthetic experience related to a real and deep use of the piece of art, will bring us to experience the Kantian feeling of the “beauty” that he distinguishes from the sublime. According to Kant, the sublime is represented and symbolised by the night when, on the other hand, the beauty is symbolised by the day. The sublime touches the heart, the beauty enchants; intelligence is sublime, the spirit is beauty.

«The esteem wakes our feelings for the sublime up and love does the same for the beauty» (Kant, 1764, 17)

Furthermore, according to Kant, the knowledge has to be meant in an integrated way, which is made possible by the activities of both sensitivity and intellect, connected and interrelated even though with different functions. Kant, however, assigns an essential reflexive concept of the art, that he also defines as “the production through freedom, that is through an arbiter that puts the reason as fundament of its actions”, in which we can track the Aristotelian distinction between techne and the fine arts, meant as Etica Nicomachea, respectively as production by the reason and as art of the language, figurative arts, game art of visual and hearing sensations, based on the concept of expression.

The experience of beauty, which is realised through the use and the enjoyment of the piece of art, is pleasure, it inspires and stimulates interest and curiosity, increases motivation, enhances the emotional, perceptual, cognitive, reflective, communicative and relational skills. The interconnections between art and relation have been also highlighted by Bertolini (1958). According to Husserl as he wrote in his Ideen I, the art object, moreover, becomes an aesthetic object when the subject experiences it through the aesthetic pleasure.

Schiller, then, in his Lettere, prospects a reconciling hypothesis between intellect and sensitivity that Kant, on the contrary, in his Critiche had left divided. Schiller argued that intellect and sensitivity could be unified just through the aesthetic education, considered as an education to the beauty which reveals itself as a means to lead again the man to unitarity (Ganz Mensch).

We agree with Schiller’s reflections when he also considers aesthetic education as civil and social education too, because the aesthetically educated man is the man who learns to understand what is around him, the environment, the context, the culture, the society, by experiencing them,
that is actively participating and being in communication and relation with them.

Furthermore, Schiller states that the concept of beauty is “freedom in perceivable”, differently from the sublime which is “freedom from perceivable”. The beauty, then, belongs not only to the art but also to the ethic-politic and moral dimension. So the beauty goes beyond and characterises the relationships (*Kreis des schönen Umgangs*), taking into account the freedom of others and their own and connotes the communication too (*schöne Mitteilung*).

According to Hegel, furthermore, the aesthetic has not to be considered as a “science of feeling” by Baumgarten’s theory, but as “philosophy of art” that has as its object “the artistic beauty”, which overcomes in spirituality the beauty in nature (the sublime). The essence of the beauty lies in the art as a product of the spirit: «the piece of art is that only as, originated from the spirit, it belongs to field of the spirit, it received the spiritual baptism and it shows only what is formed according to the resonance of the spirit».

And since art is thought of, and is a manifestation of the spirit, the aesthetics is philosophy and, as such, it is science (Hegel, 1835-1838). The piece of art, then, as it has a sensitive nature, it is not semblance but a display and phenomenon of truth and the meeting place between sensitive and spiritual.

Schelling, in turn, pointed to the artistic intuition as the highest form of intuition of the absolute. The art is objectification of subjective, it is the top of the life of the spirit, and it allows expressing the infinity in finite forms (Schelling, 1800).

Cambi, about reflections by Croce and Gentile about the experience of beauty, argued that «in the beauty the lived experiences (aka experienced) become shape and enhance and will recreate themselves in a model to be used, always and anyway. So however the beauty (that is the experience of the beauty) educates, develops the spirituality of the object, it rises it up towards the idealisation. And it is just the beauty as a form that does make this transition. And it is formative in an eminent way» (Cambi, 2010, 200).

Still according to the vision of idealism, art allows a dialogue between empirical subject and spiritual subject; it allows entering the kingdom of *Geist*.

Furthermore, «emotion is the moving and cementing force. It selects what is congruous and dyes what is selected with its colour, thereby giving
Lifelong and Trans-Generational Education through Arts

All these aspects are clearly of specific interest of pedagogy. Therefore, the link between art and pedagogy can be considered as firm and the use of the art to achieve pedagogical and educational objectives has been proved to be effective. So we consider as useful and appropriate that education through art will be implemented and more widespread.

The educational experiences pursued through art, above all when they are realised in an *ad hoc* structured environment and context, may be considered as within the constructivist model, which allows the co-building of knowledge, and in contexts of cooperative learning or flipped teaching and education. The art, therefore, represents an effective tool and a pedagogical strategy in order to simulate the active participation, the critical approach and thought, reflexivity, spirituality and creativity.

At this point we cannot overlook, however, the role that technology plays in our lives even daily. Sometimes we are really affected and even addicted. In this case, we are going to analyse the positive support that technology too may offers to the aims of this project.

The relationship between art and technology, though at a first glance they could seem to be antithetical, it is instead very stimulating, as, for example, technology offers many effective and efficient opportunities of information, learning and education, both in face-to-face and distance environments.

In this way, many other communicative, expressive, sensorial and perceptive codes and channels can be activated and enhanced, through the net, through the World Wide Web or the planning and collecting of artistic documents, pictures or tutorial programmes that can be attended online.

In this perspective, we propose, in line with many other contemporary scholars, a change and renewing, the first of all in the structure and design of museums or other places of artistic and cultural appreciation, use and enjoyment open to the public, to overcome an only *élitarian* access and to expand it to its full potential, that is to all persons.

This would represent an experience and example of good educational practices, but also an example of commitment by politics, both interna-
tional and national, that from some time is beginning to become sensitised on such issues.

We suggest, therefore, to wider promote, develop and disseminate opportunities such as the free museum/exhibit/venue/archeological sites days, to improve arts collection, multimedia archives, simulation, reconstructions, videos, movies etc. and to increase the active participation of all aged people through ever more interactive websites. So they would be able to become places and opportunities to live, in an open and universal way, and so to be creative, poietic, spiritual and dialogical experiences.

Art expresses itself through universal languages that exceed barriers and differences, and it can bring all those who “attend”, live, enjoy and benefit from it all together “under one sky” made of communication, relationships and experiences.

Author’s Presentation:
Gabriella Aleandri is Associate Professor of General and Social Pedagogy at Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, University of Macerata, Italy. Her main fields of interest and research are: lifelong and lifewide learning and education, adult education, educational policies, social education and autobiographical writings.

References


Kant, I. (1764), *Sul sentimento del sublime e del bello*, Trad. it. ed. 1826, Università della Valle D’Aosta.


