

**emagazine of professional practice
for early childhood educators
in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Kia Ora Koutou



We are always eager to receive your stories for future issues, please send them through to lisa.terreni@vuw.ac.nz.

It is always exciting when we can profile stories about the fabulous arts learning experiences happening in different ECE settings. The fact that teachers want to celebrate and share what they are doing in this curriculum area with *ecARTnz* highlights the dissemination role that this humble e magazine has come to play over the past few years. Student teachers in my arts class at Waikato University eagerly read these stories, reference them in their assignments, and marvel at the possibilities that exist when teachers are passionate, pro-active and committed to arts education. We hope the courage of contributors from Kids Domain in Auckland and Sophia Pre School in Taranaki inspires our readers up and down the country to share their teaching and learning stories (see editorial board on the last page for contacts).

Also advertised in this issue is the New Zealand Picture Book Collection. Nicola Daly, at the University of Waikato, developed the collection as part of a research project with a group of children's book specialists. 22 well-known picture books that reflect diversity in New Zealand society are profiled on their website, and there are web links to these in the article. I hope these titles feature in your centre's library!

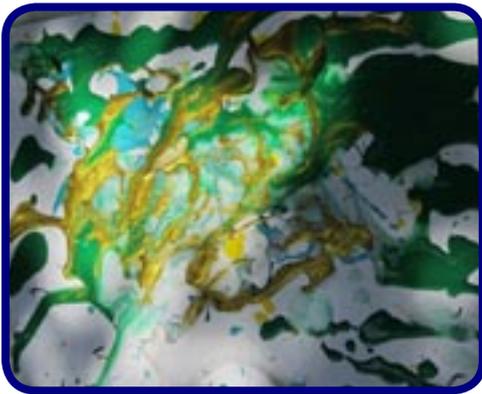
Now that winter is upon us, new and different possibilities emerge for arts education indoors. We hope this issue will motivate and inform your own arts education practices.

STOP PRESS! The 6th International Art in Early Childhood Conference is being held in Hong Kong at the Institute of Education from 11-15 June 2015. Diary these dates now! Lisa and I are committed to going. Think about joining us!

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Stories



Summer art in the garden - The beginnings of an outdoor atelier* at Sophia Preschool



Looking closely at nature - Through the art of printmaking



The language of dance - When words become three dimensional



Summer art in the garden -

The beginnings of an outdoor atelier* at Sophia Preschool

Adrienne Wilkins teaches at Sophia Preschool in Oakura (just out of New Plymouth). Eight years ago Adrienne and her partner, Ian Lyall, took the bold step of resigning from their jobs (as a Kindergarten teacher and a Primary teacher) to establish the first full-day centre for 2 to 5 year olds in Oakura. Sophia Preschool was founded on the belief that there is a 'better' way for children, their teachers, and their parents who live their days within an Early Childhood setting. This 'better' way is based on the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia interwoven with the culture and context of Aotearoa. An arts based curriculum is what inspires and guides everyday at the preschool.



If you were a bird flying over a corner of the garden right now at Sophia Preschool, in the coastal village of Oakura in Taranaki, you would spy through the treetops children below in a kind of 'outdoor room' with bare feet on a dirt floor and hands engaged in art. Paintings pegged to a line hung between ponga posts flap a little in the welcome breeze. After completing a painting children run to the trapeze swing hung in the trees. At a low wooden bench a small group fashion creations from clay. All this is accompanied by the loud and unmistakable sound of summer, the song of the cicada. Cool shade and dappled light is a gift from the established trees in this February heat wave. And further praise of trees from Penny Brownlee: "By some kind of arboreal magic, the shade provided by trees has a coolness that sails cannot match. And there are all the other benefits of trees as a bonus, including a tangible barometer of the march of the seasons".

Is this same 'arboreal magic' affecting the children's art as they paint in the open air? Does it feel to them that the 'ceiling is hung with vines and the walls are the world all around' them? Meanwhile tiny spiders on invisible threads drop down onto the children's work and leaves fall into wet paint, resulting in cries of delight from the surprised children. From Claude Monet to Georgia O'Keefe nature has inspired great works of art. Will the children also be influenced and draw inspiration from an outdoor atelier set in the trees?

Under the scorching February sun these are the questions we ponder as we begin another year and realise a long term idea of bringing art into the garden. Why have an atelier outside when there is already one inside? We are aware of the provocation to put more nature into our teaching. Elsewhere in the world with the influence of Forest Schools there is a growing movement towards the development of art in the wilds and the woods. Do we need to have a dedicated art area in a nature play space? Will we take away from the children's ability to create with found objects? (There is an abundance of natural materials in a living garden that changes with the seasons, for example children are currently finding cicada nymph shells on the tree trunks.)

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The beginnings of an outdoor atelier* at Sophia Preschool

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The sensory garden area was chosen because of the deep shade it afforded. We initially had no idea how perfect this area would be for art. This was previously an underutilised area. A trapeze swing hanging in a tree has always attracted children, however mostly it had become a place to run through the well-worn dirt pathways circumnavigating the trees; a place on your way to somewhere else.

Seasonal change is observed and studied at Sophia Preschool. The children's ideas regarding summer colours are explored; a collaboration of words results from the 4 year olds, derived from the question, "What colour do you see and love this summer?" Notice how these children have incorporated their understanding of summer; sometimes drawing from experience outside of preschool, such as going to the beach and Surf Club, as well as the recent digging up of compost for a new preschool garden, and an investigation into the life cycle of the cicada.

The Colours of Summer Haiku

Tree trunks are brown

They hold the trees

You find bugs that are black and green

Black like the compost

Corn, its yellow, I love it and my Dad grows it

At the Surf Club I see yellow from the hot sun

Dark blue crabs and (a pause here) sometimes red

Beautiful beaches, blue sea and white seagulls

Blue, because it's a blue sky, a lighter blue

Orange, there's an orange bus stop outside ballet.



The elements of our outdoor atelier include: an easel, a table, a macrocapa slab acting as a bench for clay, a tarpaulin for large artworks, and lastly trees side by side acting as a large scale sewing frame. There is a sense of impermanence to the atelier; we know that once the weather changes the possibilities of the atelier will change. We ponder how we can still provide the space to paint when rain is dripping from the trees and cold wind blowing the paper at the easel.

Will the children utilise the leaves falling from the sub-tropical Albizia tree (also known as the tree of happiness) above them to imprint a leaf or perhaps a flower into their chunk of clay. I would rather wait and see if this kind of association between the clay and the tree comes about by natural happenstance.

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When one child discovers how the fallen leaf can leave its soft feathery image in the clay, the idea will most likely spread like wild fire amongst the others. Interestingly, this seems far more appropriate in a nature atelier; to not hurry the learning and to allow the unfolding of discoveries in 'nature time'. Usually we would have all the materials set up prior to the children coming to the inside studio, with leaf prints in clay as the focus that had been planned and all of the necessary materials made ready by the teacher.



Hessian stretched between two trees has afforded such child-led discovery with Charlotte and Will realising they could sew more efficiently by passing the threaded needle between them as each child positioned themselves on opposite sides of the hessian. Meanwhile Libby decided that blue wool needed to go right across the top of this growing collaborative group tapestry. Libby was determined to sew the length of the hessian by herself creating the sky just as children do when they draw. The children's unspoken but very clear plan for this tapestry seems to be earth and leaves below and sky above. As this group sew they notice the karaka seeds under foot and resolve this problem by balancing on driftwood logs to steady themselves as they work. At one point Libby looks directly up into the tree and cries out "Look, look there is a bird's nest".



Scarlet Rose has exemplified how the children are being influenced by the sense of freedom this nature space offers. Before working on a canvas Scarlet Rose first seemed to physically 'feel' out the space where she was about to paint with her whole body. Scarlet Rose ran down the adjacent sloping ramp and dived onto the tarpaulin, lying on it making swimming motions with her arms and legs. This incident is part of a growing number of observations where we are seeing much more physicality in the children's approach to their art and the use of the materials in an outdoor setting. This sense of freedom extended to her art as I gave her near empty bottles of paint to drip or shake the paint from instead of the usual brushes and paint containers.

Shouldn't the materials in an outdoor atelier mirror the environment? We made brushes from sticks and leaves and a palette of the colours of summer with egg cartons. All of these materials can go into the compost when finished with. Sam was excited to use a brush made with a miniature native grass he found. "I like the grass brush best 'cos I found it." Sam describes

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his painting as being about The Lorax, "when all the trees got chopped down by the Once-lar". Sam's stunning use of colour and his explanation of his painting answers the question - Is nature and place inspiring great works of art from the children? Yes we definitely think so...

*Editor's Note: An atelier is an art studio, a place for experimentation. Equipped with a range of materials, ateliers are used by children in short- and long-term projects, with the purpose of expressing their 'hundred languages'. For further research you might read:

Gandini, L., Hill, L.T., Boyd Cadwell, L., & Schwall, C. (Eds.), (2005). *In the spirit of the studio: Learning from the atelier of Reggio Emilia*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Veechi, V. (2010). *Art and creativity in Reggio Emilia: Exploring the role and potential of the ateliers in early childhood education*. New York: Routledge.

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Looking closely at nature - Through the art of printmaking

Angela Heape has been working in early childhood for four years and has a background in the visual and expressive arts fields. She is passionate about how the arts are important for meaningful, rich learning experiences that can encompass all aspects of the curriculum



Kids' Domain Early Learning Centre provides full day care and education for the children of staff working at Auckland City Hospital. Kids' Domain places great value on building authentic, meaningful relationships with others and our natural environment; the Auckland Domain. Last year the older children and teachers set out to take another, more detailed look, at what was becoming familiar to them in the Domain. The teachers' intention was to notice what was capturing the children's interest and then to explore ways that this could be 're-presented' back at the centre through visual and expressive art experiences. We hoped that opportunities to 're-visit' and 're-view' things in different ways would deepen the children's understanding and connection with nature.



With our frequent explorative excursions the children are always bringing back natural treasures that they have found and we started the year inviting the children to create ephemeral works of art with the sticks, leaves, acorns etc that they had gathered. The children enjoyed this and we thought it would be great to extend this into making more permanent art works. I thought that print-making would be an ideal medium that could transpose the patterns they had been creating on to paper.

After some trial and error where we had limited success, it became obvious that the children were interested in looking closely at the shape and qualities of leaves and were observing the process of transformation that was happening to them.

We started collecting them again, but taking our time and encouraging the children to examine the leaves, touching them with their hands and on their faces, to smell them and watch what movements the leaves made when thrown in the air. Original ideas were expressed by the children and they seemed to be combining their past knowledge with their keen observations. They compared the leaves with unusual things. A spotty leaf was "a chickenpox leaf", one was "jaggy like a saw" another "wet and ticklish like a froggy"

Once again I thought print making would be a great medium for the children to create works of art out of their chosen leaves.

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Print making allows the children to master a new creative process that dramatically shows cause and effect in action, more so than painting and drawing. However I thought that this could be the beginning of a visual arts journey where several arts mediums could be employed. I realized that initially I would have to be a more “intentional” teacher, than I usually felt comfortable with, however I came to see myself as what Vygotsky calls the ‘competent other’ merely arming the children with more tools or languages in order to express themselves more freely.

The children loved seeing a perfect rendition of their leaves appear on paper and they quickly became competent with the process. Using proper printing ink and equipment ensured good results also.



The next step was to now try some free hand drawing of the leaves. The light box was utilized to throw the leaves into stark relief. All of the children looked closely and carefully at the leaves as they drew the detail with mind blowing precision. As they worked, they often talked. Thinking about and answering questions, forming working theories about the leaves and consequently nature as a whole. When asked what they thought the lines inside the leaves were for, one child said “Because the lines have blood inside them” Another added “ If they don’t have it they don’t stay alive” Another theory was touched upon, “the leaf has the lines so it won’t get broken” The use of different “languages” was helping them deepen their thinking.



The obvious last stage to our art investigation was to create printing plates from the children’s interpretive drawings, pressing the lines on to a polystyrene board. From printing directly from the leaves and creating a positive print we had now come full circle and were creating highly unique prints from their original drawings. The children were delighted and proud of the stunning results.

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The language of dance - When words become three dimensional

Bridgette Towle is Curriculum Leader at Kids' Domain and is passionate about expressive arts in early education and how they can be woven into children's lives and learning to offer insight into ways of knowing oneself, others and the natural environment.



During one of our walks in the Domain to collect leaves for printing the children began to notice the beginnings of the autumn leaf fall. Scarlet picked up a large leaf and danced around with it, as if she were joyfully flying free like a leaf swirling through the air. This intrigued me and I wondered if we could use the languages of movement and dance to explore the life of leaves more closely.

I wondered if we used words to describe the movement of leaves we could create a 'vocabulary' of movement; a shared understanding of the way leaves 'dance' to the ground.

We returned to the Domain and read the poem 'Leaves' to provoke our imaginations. Then sitting together peacefully we watched closely as the leaves fell from the trees.

"Leaves can float down." Tongirau

"They go round and round in circles, fluttering to the ground."

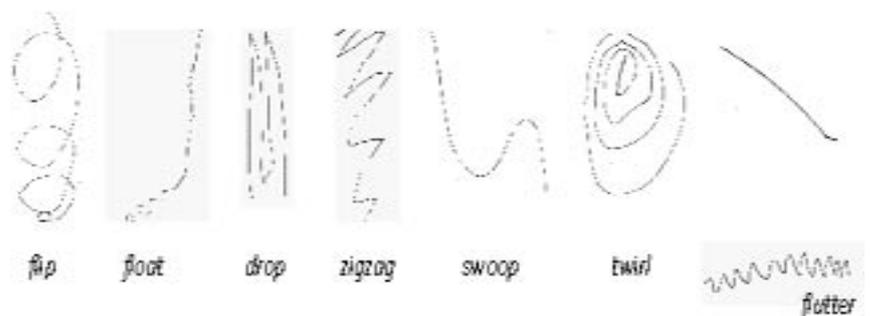
Torquil

"Goes in a zigzag." Scarlet

Together we examined each word the children used to describe the leaf movement. We thought about how that movement might look graphically by recreating the movement using our fingers or hand.

The children then drew a graphic representation of their movement on paper. Eager to try the movements using their whole bodies the children stood to create an interpretation of their drawing

After a few visits to the Domain we had created our shared graphic 'vocabulary' of leaf movements. We were now ready to 'write' a dance using these symbols.



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Scarlet was the first to draw her dance. She closed her eyes and imagined that she were a leaf about to be lifted by the wind from her tree. What would her dance to the ground look like? Scarlet thought hard and began to draw. Her graphic representation was clear and precise. Now that she had choreographed a dance she was ready to perform it.

With her dance 'map' on the wall to read and guide her movements, she danced around the room, floating, sliding and twirling.



The following weeks saw many children using their imagination to draw and perform the dance of their leaf from the tree to the ground. Some became prolific choreographers drawing dance after dance as they explored new sequences of movement.

During a pause for reflection I recalled when several children had inferred an emotional attachment between leaves and trees. I wondered if introducing emotions into the children's dance might foster stronger ecological connections and provoke more expressive interpretations of movement.

To test this hypothesis I introduced books about basic emotions such as feeling happy, sad, angry, lonely and scared. Then I invited the children to play with expression, and make body shapes and actions for each emotion. Small groups were invited into the studio where we closed our eyes and imagined we were a leaf on a tree about to fall off the tree and dance to the ground. How might we feel?

Trinity said she would be sad *"because you'll be old and you'll feel like you'll die."*

Scarlet said she would feel happy *"because I would see the world, the land."*

Isabelle said she would feel lonely *"no other leaves will come down with me."*

With faces full of emotion the children drew their dance. A new level of intensity emerged; angry and sad dances were drawn slowly and appeared constricted and tight; happy dances seemed looser and larger. Following my provocation, the children had naturally and spontaneously introduced dynamics into their dance. These were translated into rich, expressive movements that passionately communicated their emotions.

"Dance helps us understand and articulate the world around us."
Michael Parmenter



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When words become three dimensional

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When I watched the children's dancing I felt as if something was missing – It was the aesthetic dimension of music so I offered a small range of classical music pieces. This added element seemed to draw the children in and provoke more elaborate exploration of movement. It seemed as if the emotional quality of the music was creating a connection between the children's inner self and their outer worlds.

Eventually we felt it was time to revisit the Domain and take the dance back to where it began, as one child's spontaneous response to the environment.



Initially we thought the children would improvise their dances using physical vocabulary. However, they wanted to draw their dance first as they had been doing in the centre. The group decided on the emotion they would be feeling as leaves and selected a piece of music before they began to draw. Isabelle asked for her dance 'map' to be hung from a branch so she could refer to it as she moved. Their individual dances culminated in a group performance with each map dangling and blowing in the breeze.

Afterwards Isabelle said she wanted to "*think my dance*". What happened next was truly amazing. The experience and knowledge built over the last few months helped the group to improvise a dynamic and diverse dance filled with such **joy** and **freedom** it felt incredibly moving and beautiful to watch.

"If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it." David Sobel



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The New Zealand Picture Book Collection
He Kohinga Pukapuka Pikitia o Aotearoa



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The New Zealand Picture Book Collection - He Kohinga Pukapuka Pikitia o Aotearoa

Purpose

The purpose of the New Zealand Picture Book Collection, He Kohinga Pukapuka Pikitia o Aotearoa, is to provide a set of quality New Zealand English picture books reflecting diversity in New Zealand society which can be used in New Zealand classrooms with specially designed, curriculum-linked classroom activities. It is based on the concept of the [European Picture Book Collection](#), developed by Dr. Penni Cotton of the NCRCL, Roehampton University, London, UK.

History

The New Zealand Picture Book Collection was developed in 2010 in consultation with a group of six children's literature experts. It is expected that the collection will be updated every five years.

Process of selection

Six children's literature experts met with the researcher for five sessions of 90-120 minutes. In these sessions each person nominated a New Zealand picture book for inclusion in the collection. They read the book to the rest of the group and then discussed their reasons for nominating the title. Notes from discussions were taken by a field note taker, and were then analysed for themes. After the five sessions, the experts sent in a final list of books chosen from the full list of all nominations which they believed should be included in the collection. Books nominated by five of the six experts were included in the final collection of 22 titles.

Availability

The NZPBC books are not available as a unit, but most will be found in school libraries or through the [National Library of New Zealand, Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa](#). They can also be purchased through children's book shops or directly through the publisher.

The books included in the NZPBC are listed alphabetically by author below. A synopsis of each book is available by clicking on the book titles on the website

<http://www.picturebooks.co.nz/nzpbk-book-list/>

The New Zealand Curriculum-linked class activities could possibly be adapted by ECE teachers to fit with Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum.

Beck, J. (2005). [*Nobody's Dog*](#). Auckland: Scholastic. Illustrator: L. Fisher

Bishop, G. (2009). [*Counting the stars*](#). Auckland: Random House. Illustrator: G. Bishop.

Bishop, G. (1999). [*The house that Jack built*](#). Auckland: Scholastic. Illustrator: G. Bishop.

Brown, B. (2005). [*A booming in the night*](#). Auckland: Reed. Illustrator: H. Taylor.

Cowley, J. (2009). [*The terrible taniwha of Timberditch*](#). Auckland: Puffin. Illustrator: Rodney McRae. Previously published 1982.

Dodd, L. (1983) [*Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy*](#). Wellington: Mallinson Rendel.

Drewery, M. (2007). [*Dad's takeaways*](#). Wellington: Mallinson Rendel. Illustrator: Christopher White.

Drewery, M. (2007). [*Tahi, one lucky kiwi*](#). Auckland: Random. Illustrators: J. O'Reilly and A. Teo.

- Gossage, P. (2005). *Battle of the mountains*. Auckland: Reed Publishing. Illustrator: author
- Grace, P. (1984). *Watercress Tuna and the children of Champion Street*. Auckland: Puffin. Illustrator:
- Robyn Kahukiwa Grace, P. (1983). *The kuia and the spider*. Auckland: Puffin Illustrated by Robyn Kahukiwa
- Grace, P. (1993). *The trolley*. Auckland: Viking. Illustrator: K. Gemmill
- Ihimaera, W. (2005). *The whale rider*. Auckland: Reed. Illustrator: B. Potter.
- Kerr, B. (2000). *After the war*. Wellington: Mallinson Rendel. Illustrator: author
- Lightfoot, K. (2008). *Every second Friday*. London: Hodder. Illustrator: B. Galbraith
- Mahy, M. (1999). *A Summery Saturday Morning*. Auckland: Puffin Books. Illustrator: S Young.
- Mewburn, K. (2009). *Old Hu-hu*. Manukau: Scholastic. Illustrator: R. Driscoll.
- Nelisi, L. (1997). *Tane steals the show*. Auckland: Scholastic. Illustrator: G. Hunter.
- Smith, M. (1983). *Kimi and the watermelon*. Auckland: Puffin. Illustrator: David Armitage
- Strathdee, J. (1979). *The house that grew*. Wellington: Oxford University Press. Illustrator: J. Wallace.
- Tipene, T. (2006). *Haere: Farewell, Jack, farewell*. Wellington: Huia. Illustrator: Huhana Smith
- Tipene, T. (2005). *Taming the taniwha*. Wellington: Huia. Illustrator: Henry Campbell

Nicola Daly is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, at The University of Waikato. She is involved in teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in areas concerning additional language learning, and linguistic and cultural diversity. Nicola is also a civil celebrant and has written a book entitled 'Sasha's Legacy: A Guide to Funerals for Babies' (Steele Roberts, Wellington). www.steeleroberts.co.nz

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REANZ Seminars

Young Children's Right to Beauty

Dr Stefania Giamminuti



Early Years Settings as Places of Research -

Dancing with Reggio Emilia

Dr Stefania Giamminuti



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Reggio Emilia Aotearoa New Zealand

Provoking encounters – transforming thought



Early Years Settings as Places of Research: Dancing with Reggio Emilia

By international speaker Dr. Stefania Giamminuti

***‘Indeed, education without research or innovation
is education without interest’. Loris Malaguzzi***

The focus of this day is on thinking about contexts and values in early childhood settings, through the lens of the possibilities offered by the educational project of Reggio Emilia. Stefania uses rich images and video footage from her research internship in Reggio Emilia to illustrate the possibilities that pedagogical documentation offers to make values and voices visible in early childhood settings. Through the story of her own encounter with the learning communities of Arcobaleno infant-toddler centre and Neruda school, she will explore the image of early childhood settings as places of research, where children and adults are welcomed and valued as researchers in daily life. As part of this day, Stefania will share the Story of Momi – the experience of a group of children at Neruda building relationships with Momi, a child with Down’s Syndrome. Stefania’s stories will serve as provocations for group discussion. Examples from daily life – rich in the voices of children, teachers and families - are used to frame new understandings of quality in early childhood settings and an invitation is extended to teachers to see themselves as researchers in their everyday encounters with children.

Date: Saturday 4th October 2014

Time: 9am-3pm

**Venue: St Cuthbert’s College Hall, 122 Market
Road, Epsom**

Cost: \$145 (includes morning tea and lunch)



Register online at www.reanz.org



Reggio Emilia Aotearoa New Zealand

Provoking encounters – transforming thought



Young Children's Right to Beauty: Aesthetics and Pedagogical Documentation in Reggio Emilia

By international speaker Dr. Stefania Giamminuti

“Our schools speak” ~ Loris Malaguzzi

In this address, Stefania illustrates sensitivity to aesthetics of the environment in the schools of Reggio Emilia as a cultural choice and value. She shows how schools and communities can be empathetic environments, welcoming to children, educators, and families, places that ‘belong’ to children and speak of them. Stefania will inspire participants to imagine and create beautiful environments for children and with children and to consider aesthetics as a value.

This evening seminar will be offered in the following places:

Christchurch — 30th September

Wellington — 1st October

Auckland — 2nd October

Time: 6pm—9pm

Cost: \$85 (includes a light supper)

For more information and to

register go to: www.reanz.org



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Editorial Board information

ecARTnz, an emagazine 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 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 emagazine 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 sent as .jpegs are welcomed.

For further information please email Lisa Terreni at lisa.terreni@vuw.ac.nz

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