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Editorial

It took a long time for summer to arrive in Amsterdam, with the cold hanging on with great determination. But now that sunshine has arrived, it has done so with an exceptional quality and intensity. Apart from the weather, there are many new initiatives around the world that warm our hearts. You will be reading about some of them in this bulletin.

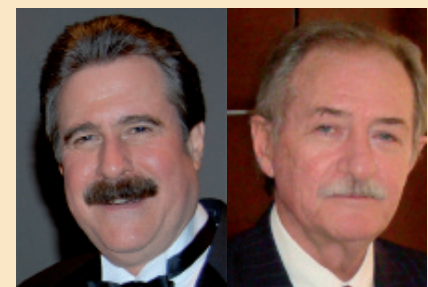
Our Spring was packed with events and new developments. The AGM weekend was exceptionally well-attended, with many new faces. Dr Diamond, a Canadian professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience, delighted us with an inspiring lecture on "Why Executive Functions are Important and How We Can Aid their Development." Her lab examines fundamental questions about the development and neural bases of our brain. The participants could just not stop asking questions. If she hadn't had to catch her flight, the questions could easily have kept coming until midnight. We will be publishing her lecture in a forthcoming issue of Communications. Something to look forward to! Although her name is particularly associated with "Tools of the Mind", she has taken a great interest in Montessori and invited me to speak at the Vancouver Conference her lab organized on July 16-20, on the theme "Brain Development and Learning, Making Sense of the Science." I spoke on Montessori math. (<http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/bdl.html>)

Sunday was Open Forum Day, and the room was filled to maximum capacity, it was overflowing—a reflection of the entertaining, informative and enlightening presentations given by Judi Orion, Eduardo Cuevas, Peter Davidson, Dinny Rebild, Mary Caroline Parker, and Chacha Vidales. The link between the various presentations was how to assist and reach out to parents. Judi, with her 0-3 expertise, described how young parents find themselves in a life changing situation and how they can be assisted in this new phase of adulthood. Eduardo zoomed in on how parent talks can be a great help in involving parents in the school and garnering a greater understanding of Montessori. Peter explained how he "teaches" parents to gain insight into how certain learning processes work, and how Montessori beautifully follows natural development.

He had devised a language memorization activity to demonstrate the excellence of the Montessori reading approach.



Thank you Silvia, Salma, Monte & Christian !



Mary Caroline and Chacha expanded on the East Dallas bilingual initiative that reaches out to parents with a Hispanic background. The combination of early intervention and extended day programmes is proving to be very beneficial for families.

Dinny recounted how gaining the trust of and connecting with parents of children in refugee camps is absolutely essential. Her specific contribution zoomed in on a project in Denmark where, together with the Red Cross, a Montessori programme is being offered.

At the AGM we said goodbye to board members Monte Kenison, Christian Schjetnan, Salma Imtiaz, and Silvia Dubovoy. We thank them dearly for their many years of commitment to furthering our mission, in the knowledge that their work on behalf of Montessori will remain undiminished. We are fortunate that our work is supported by the dedication and energy of so many.

Executive Director

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

WELCOME TO PHILIP, GUADALUPE AND RANDI

In April, our Annual General Meeting confirmed the Board Nominations of Philip O'Brien, Guadalupe Borbolla and Randi Yoder.

We thank them for taking on an AMI Board position and their interest in furthering our goals.

We look forward to their contributions to our Montessori mission in all its facets, ambitions and aspirations. We have every confidence that their expertise and enthusiasm will strengthen our work.

Philip O'Brien

Philip O'Brien (Ireland) is AMI's new Board member with special focus on partnerships. We will be able to draw on his extensive experience gained with UNICEF. He currently is Director of



Private Fundraising and Partnerships, the division that ensures that children's rights are a priority for the private sector in industrialized and developing countries.

In this position he manages a staff of more than 200 as they cultivate networks, raise money and advocate for children with

individuals, businesses, and foundations.

Philip joined UNICEF in May 1988 as Chief, Health and Nutrition in the Bangladesh Country office.

Philip has a Master's degree in Economic Science (Social Planning) from the University of Wales, Swansea, U.K.

Photo credit © UNICEF HQ03-0266



Guadalupe Borbolla

Guadalupe Borbolla (Mexico) brings a vast Montessori experience to the Board. She has all three AMI diplomas: 0-3, 3-6 and 6-12.

In addition, she has participated in the Adolescent Orientation Studies offered by NAMTA. With an MEd from Loyola University and degrees in political science and special education she is well equipped to take a broad view of all the current developments in which AMI is presently engaging.

At the moment Guadalupe is one of the participants in the Training of Trainers Programme, and is hoping to be a fully fledged AMI trainer later this year.

On the Board she will be particularly involved in AMI's Outreach and Development initiatives.



Randi Yoder

Randi Yoder (USA) has joined the AMI Board in April, and her special task will be to advise on funds development, in the broadest sense.

This will fit her like a glove, for her expertise in that field has been honed by many years in fundraising consultancy projects.

Randi currently works for United Way in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she oversees Donor Relations and is responsible for all development including fundraising, including workplace, individual, corporate and foundation giving and special initiatives.

Previously, Randi was president of Yoder Henley Development Resources, providing professional counsel to nonprofit organizations.

She has an MBA from the American Graduate School of International Management in Glendale, Arizona.

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING GROUP

The Training Group is delighted to be able to congratulate:
On reaching the status of AMI Primary Trainer

Irene Fafalios (Greece)
Gretchen Hall (USA)
Salma Imtiaz (Pakistan)
Louise Livingston (UK)
Uma Ramani (USA)
Jennifer Shields (USA)

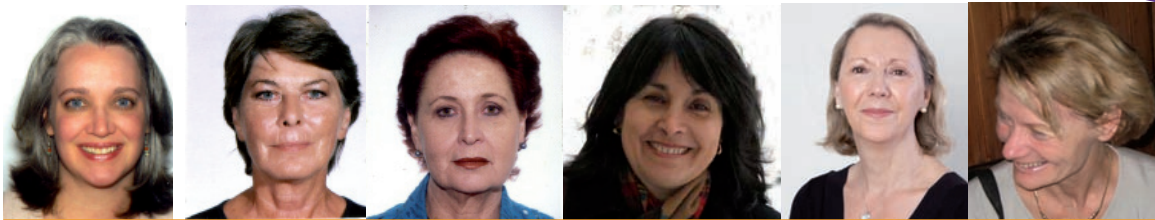


Irene Fafalios Gretchen Hall Salma Imtiaz Louise Livingston Uma Ramani Jennifer Shields

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And there are many more congratulations in order. The following trainees in the Trainers of Training Programme have now reached Auxiliary Trainer status.: Sarah Andres (USA), Jayne Arellano (Mexico), Reyna Babani (Mexico), Gilda Bonnet (Canada), Guadalupe Borbolla (Mexico), Elisabeth Coquoz (Switzerland), Cecilia Elguero (Mexico), Claudia Guerrero (Mexico), Elizabeth Gutierrez (Mexico), Gabriela Ortega (Mexico), Larry Quade (USA), Phillipa Romig (Switzerland), Polli Soholt (USA), Madlena Ulrich (Norway), Lynn Woodward (Canada).

Many more “new faces” are expected at Auxiliary or full Trainer level very soon. Keep a look out for them in one of the next bulletins. We wish all of our new Trainers and Auxiliary Trainers continued fulfilment in their work.



Sarah Andrews Jayne Arellano Reyna Babani Gilda Bonnet Guadalupe Borbolla Elisabeth Coquoz



Cecilia Elguero Claudia Guerrero Elizabeth Gutierrez Gabriela Ortega Larry Quade



Phillippa Romig Polli Soholt Madlena Ulrich Lynn Woodward



JOHN ERHART RECEIVES AWARD

And another congratulatory item: We are proud and honoured to be able to congratulate John Erhart. John chairs our AMI Special Education Committee. His work focuses on children that are challenged, especially by Asperger's Syndrome. Together with Monica Sullivan Smith he developed the Montessori Intervention Programme in this regard.

He received a very special honour and award on Children's Mental Health Awareness Day: the "Got Dreams Award 2010."

The honour was in recognition of his work with the Arc of Monroe and with BOCES. Comments on his award read, 'His passion for our students and respect for staff (is) so evident ... This is the Dr Erhart we know on a daily basis. We are privileged for his many contributions.' It was also noted through Dr Erhart's work, 'Students feel heard and encouraged to learn in ways they have never experienced before, achieving academic success and acquiring friends. The outcome of Dr Erhart's altruistic work provides them a higher quality of life.'

In the nomination, it was also noted that, 'Dr Erhart consistently surpasses the expected. He has made trips to homes of parents who could not find a way to his office. He does not confine his practice to what is convenient and/or comfortable for him. Dr Erhart's sense of humor, exceptional leadership and teaching skills shared with youths, professionals in Psychiatry and Medicine, administrators, faculty, staff, and families have promoted respect of others, stronger family systems, accountable independence, informed problem-solving, healthy decision-making, mindful self-respect, responsible self-care, ethical choices, and trustworthy behaviors.'

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING CENTRES



50 x Congratulations to Bergamo !

Not only has the Montessori philosophy been around for a long time, more and more of our training centres are starting to reach a certain age of "maturity". The Fondazione Centro Internazionale Studi Montessoriani of Bergamo is a fine example of an AMI centre that is firmly rooted in its community. Established by Mario Montessori in 1961, it was the first permanent centre that prepares students to work with the Elementary children (6-12). During the early years, Mario Montessori lectured extensively for the Bergamo course and the knowledge and experience developed over the years constituted a basis for the future of the AMI Elementary courses. The name Camillo Grazzini will also be forever linked to the Bergamo course: he worked very closely with Mario, and continued to build a strong training centre, which has always drawn students from around the world. Now under the direction of Baiba Krumins Grazzini, the Bergamo course will start its 50th training course in September. Our heartiest congratulations to staff and students on their "half century".

In October, AMI will be publishing a special booklet commemorating the centre, its history and its driving forces, in acknowledgement of Camillo Grazzini's great contribution to our work.

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETIES

Australia, MAF

In the past few years AMI has been drawing up a selection of official documents in a bid to modernize the relationship with the affiliated societies and to better cover such aspects as collaboration and intellectual copyright.

The Montessori Australia Foundation (MAF) was the first to sign! On April 10, Christine Harrison, president of the Montessori Australia Foundation, shook hands with AMI's president André Roberfroid on signing the new agreement. Congratulations.

We look forward to other societies following in their footsteps. We know quite a few are impatiently waiting in the wings.



India, IMF

The Indian Montessori Foundation is organizing the First National Montessori Conference in Mumbai.

Following on from the energy generated in India through the 26th International Montessori Congress in early 2009, the Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) was launched to serve the Montessori community in the country, and to promote AMI activity. To this end, IMF, in collaboration with the Mumbai-based AMI-affiliated training centre RTI Montessori Course, is organizing the First National Montessori Conference in Mumbai over November 26 and 27, 2010. The Conference will be held at the prestigious Nehru Centre in Worli, Mumbai.

As the first national gathering of the Montessori community in India since the Congress in January 2009, the Conference is being organized behind a theme of Prayas: Collective Endeavour, Common Purpose. Prayas is a Sanskrit word which indicates Effort, and the Conference is expected to bring together many different voices to discuss Early

Registration for the Conference is now open. For more details on the event, please write to enquiries@montessori-mumbai.org (RTI Montessori Course) or info@montessori-india.org (Indian Montessori Foundation).

Academic Editions Maria Montessori

At AMI's Annual General Meeting the first volume in the German academic series of Maria Montessori's work was officially presented to Alexander Henny, representing the Montessori heirs. Professor Harald Ludwig, the mainstay of this ambitious project, spoke briefly about the challenge to publish the projected 21 volumes in the series. Jochen Faehndrig, on behalf of the publishers Verlag Herder, added a few words on the history and future of the project. AMI is proud to be associated with this wonderful undertaking.

In the meantime, after the premiere of *Entdeckung des Kindes*, the second volume has been published *Praxis Handbuch der Montessori-Metodes* [Montessori's Own Handbook].

Orders can be placed through kundenservice@herdershop24.de
Internet: www.herdershop24.de



Harald Ludwig



Alexander Henny

at the book presentation in April



Maria Montessori – Gesammelte Werke

Corner of Hope in Kenya

is a pilot project to help vulnerable people build a community using the principles of the Montessori approach. The project is based on self-reliance, community, self-ownership and control, dignity and self-worth, all so important in overcoming the effects of trauma such as experienced by the inhabitants of camps for refugees or internally displaced persons.

The project includes plans to create a school for 520 children within the Transit Camp in New Canaan, near Nakuru, in Kenya and to train 40 teachers with sufficient knowledge to work in other schools.

We also plan to train four mentors with the ability to duplicate the project. As well as this, we hope to provide shelter for the school with a wider community purpose and focus on health and nutrition. We are hoping that the project will stimulate enterprise and impart knowledge in respect of the local manufacture of children's toys and puzzles inspired by the Montessori principles as well as other skills.

As part of the project the families will all be encouraged to contribute to their children's education in whatever way they can. They are overjoyed to be able to do this.

The project will build for the future and aims to create skills that are transferable, benefiting both adults and children for many years to come.

The project has received a significant grant from the Youth Hope Foundation, which will cover the majority of costs over the next three years.

As the project progresses and we work closely with the camp council, we come across more things that need to be done and are therefore working to raise additional funds to dig a borehole, purchase a compressed brick machine to build walls for the classrooms and to pay salaries for two carpenters and one seamstress for one year. In all, we need additional funds.

We are aiming for USD 20,000

Your donation will be greatly appreciated to ensure these additional needs are met.

Donations can be made online via SSL. Simply go to the AMI website < www.montessori-ami.org > and click on the Corner of Hope logo on our home page. Thank you.

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The roofs for the first phase of the various classrooms have now all been built. To see the carpenters, who are camp inhabitants and parents, at work, please follow this link <http://www.flipshare.com/view.aspx?nRecipient=&nFrame=YmMoNTZIMDctZDZhZiooYTcoLWFjMjMtNDk3MDEzZDUxNWNi&nMedia=MDQ4OTEwYTIhOGZjOCooM2VhLWJiM2YtNGVmM2RhMmVhMmZi&nT=2023742027817096>

The images have been made by project manager Tim Carr of TSC Global, who have provided the expertise to teach the workforce how to create these roofs using local materials. When he started, Tim wrote, 'we got the fabric, wire mesh and weaving done on half a roof today. The fabric and wire mesh are ready to go on the other side first thing in the morning. The excitement in the camp is really building up now that the fabric is on the frame and the roofs are taking shape. Now young and old are coming to take a closer look.'

Tour d'Afrique

“On your bike” :

How to raise money for Montessori in Tanzania

Sunil Shah

A love of both travelling and cycling led me to almost immediately sign up when I first heard about the Tour D’Afrique in October 2008. The Tour D’Afrique is an annual organized bicycle tour and race of Africa, covering almost 12,000 kilometres from Egypt to South Africa over a period of four months. The group has steadily grown in size since its inception in 2002 and this year over sixty riders embarked on the entire tour in January.

While the logistics of the tour were made significantly easier by the provision of support trucks (which carried our camping gear, clothes and meagre collection of personal possessions in a locker) and staff (a mechanic, two nurses, a cook, and those in charge of running the Tour), a significant amount was left to each rider. Each rider was responsible for their own equipment in advance—providing their own tent, bicycle and spare parts, and not to forget riding their bike for most of the day.

Every day we left camp soon after breakfast and just as the sun was rising. The distance varied daily, but averaged around 120



kilometres per day. We had shorter days when the terrain was rougher, perhaps just 80 or 90 kilometres but it would still take as long or longer to reach camp in the evening. The longest day of the tour was 207 kilometres.

With a challenge of such magnitude, many riders raised money for charitable causes. In the past decade, the Tour has raised over \$1 million for a variety of causes. Personally, having attended a Montessori school and being the son of a Montessori directress, I took affinity in the efforts of AMI in Tanzania and have raised a small amount to hopefully assist.

If you would like more information about the trip, please see either www.geekonabicycle.co.uk (my personal blog) or www.tourdafrique.com (the website of the organising company).

Save the date
4 - 22 July, 2011

EDUCATEURS SANS FRONTIERES

The next Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières will be held from 4 - 22 July, 2011

A special issue of the AMI Bulletin on Educateurs sans Frontières, and the 2011 Assembly, will be sent to the membership in October. In the meantime, AMI graduates wishing to receive information on the 2011 Assembly are invited to contact <educateurs@montessori-ami.org>.

Those people who asked to have their names on the mailing list will be contacted directly.

Please go to www.montessori-ami.org for more background on Educateurs sans Frontières.

Student Corner

Jessica Gorski

Jessica is one of 21 students on the AMI Primary Summer Course in Miami that has just started. She is part of an international group, and thoroughly enjoys connecting with fellow students from such diverse backgrounds. She reflects on the first week of her course, and looks back with mild surprise and delight on those first days, starting to notice the first signs of a certain transformation.



The student group of the Primary Miami Summer Course 2010

After one week of intense “exposure” to the work of Maria Montessori and her philosophy I have changed as a person. I feel that what I came with to this course not only validates what I am doing each and every day with children in a Montessori classroom, but that I am also better able to understand what is at the root of children’s behaviour and how their mind works.

I never thought that I would experience such feelings of revelation and fulfilment so quickly. I feel that I have already changed as a human being and am starting to see the world in a new light. I can now better see people for who they are and who they are trying to become, since we are evolving each and every day as we strive for more knowledge. I see how sensitive a child’s mind is the minute he is born and how quickly, at birth, a child starts out on the road to independence the moment he is separated from his mother. This is a remarkable phenomenon.

I see the world completely new now just from observation. Observing a living plant and animals made me realize the tiny details of the world in which I live. I never really took the time to closely observe my surroundings and the environment I live in. I see even more clearly now that observation of a child is vital. As educators, we need to observe, wait, then act appropriately for what the child needs. Observing an individual child as if it is the first time you are seeing them each day allows you to see the child’s needs as he grows and develops in his environment. What

a child may need one day may change the next day. From this course, the concept of sensitive periods has taken on an added meaning: we as adults also need to be “sensitive” to a child’s needs. We need to be aware of what that child needs so that his mind and body can develop. As adults we need to accommodate and prepare the environment so that the child can act in the way he needs to without stunting this growth.

I’ve come to realize this week that sometimes we feel that we are free—but freedom can and does sometimes get out of control. We have to discipline ourselves from within to change that. If rules and limits are not clear, things can become chaotic. Children then don’t know who or what to follow, who or what to regard as the ideal model/standard. As teachers and parents we have to follow the rules we expect children to follow. In the Montessori classroom we have boundaries, choices are important.

I have also made many connections with my peers this week and it is refreshing to know that others feel and have similar experiences. I already feel part of a community and have created a bond with people from all over the world. Though we may be from different parts of the world, we all want the same things in life: love and respect. We are so different, yet so alike in the way of our thoughts and feelings. We just need to take the time to get to know others who are part of our environment.

ENCOURAGEMENT

THE MIDDLE PATH: NEITHER COERCION NOR ABANDONMENT

Donna Bryant Goertz



He cried till his small body
shuddered and shook, nose and eyes
vying to surpass each other in
volume of salty fluids spent.

Early every morning during his first
several weeks of school, his mother
sat with him, calmly soothing his
fears and waiting for his panic to
subside so that he could enter our
classroom again that day.

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Once he entered, we saw the happy, sociable, hard-working side of his nature. Any change in the environment or schedule, however, no matter how insignificant it may have seemed to us, sent him reeling back into helpless anxiety.

The lights went out one time, never mind it was a bright sunshiny day and our room was enclosed more by windows than by walls; Benito's panic was real. Another time we left our work out in the middle of the morning, a rare event, and joined another class in the library to hear a quartet. He was afraid to come with us and afraid to remain. It was no consolation to him that the library was directly off our classroom kitchen and we all walked through it daily to get to the bathroom. Sobs wracked Benito's frail frame. The morning after the first parent meeting of the year when, as usual, we had left out all the materials we had demonstrated so we could get home to bed, knowing the children would enjoy helping us put them away the next morning, Benito froze as he walked through the door.

Regardless of the number of excited children who were busy replacing things, in spite of the happy and purposeful hum in the air, Benito stood stuck to the spot. Overwhelmed and disoriented, he sobbed in despair. Benito had a wonderful time in school as long as nothing unexpected or out of the ordinary happened. He liked his friends and was much liked by them in return. He enjoyed his work and did well at it. He was bright and reasonable, sweet and funny. We knew his neurological system would become better integrated over time, and we just wanted to be sure to take the middle path of encouragement and avoid the extreme paths on either side, which were abandonment and coercion.

One of the mothers came to spend the morning cooking with us. It was a much-anticipated event, one that Benito handled well until we set up for lunch. Suddenly we saw him shaking and gasping as he sat before his placemat and napkin. 'Benito doesn't want



to eat that Thai curry,' one of his friends announced. 'Don't worry, he doesn't have to eat it,' said our assistant, rushing to offer reassurance. 'Benito, you just eat the lunch from your lunchbox and ignore that Thai curry,' she soothed.

It would have been easy and seemingly kind to just leave it at that, but to me that would have been abandoning him in his prison. I feel compelled to join a child where he is, show solidarity with him, and then invite and encourage him to find a way out that is likely to succeed and that he is willing to try. 'Benito,' I said, 'you have so many, many choices and it's all up to you. You can even decide and then change your mind back.'

'Choice number one,' I said in a funny voice. 'You could ignore that food. You could stick your nose way up in the air and say, 'Food, what food? Has someone been cooking around here?' Then you could eat your own lunch.' Benito was amused. He was smiling through his tears.

'Choice number two,' I continued. 'You could stick up your nose even higher in the air and sniff like a bloodhound. You could say, 'What's that terrible smell. I refuse to track it down.' Then you could eat your own lunch.' Someone had brought Benito a tissue. He blew his nose and laughed.

'Choice number three,' I whispered. 'You could slide secretly out of your chair and slip slyly over to spy into the pot. Then you could say 'To their taste perhaps but not to mine! Dearie me, oh dearie me, it doesn't even look tempting.' Then you could walk away and eat your own lunch.' This time I had taken Benito by the hand and sneaked over to the pot and looked in while I spoke. He was laughing hard.

'Choice number four,' I said as we stood before the pot. 'You could even, just this once, have the audacious bad manners to touch your finger to the serving spoon and then put it on your tongue.' I did so and, as I tasted it, I said in a phony falsetto, 'This is not to my liking. I prefer my own lunch.' Benito imitated me! He tasted and then he repeated my words, adding afterwards, 'Mmm, not bad.' We all laughed.

'Choice number five,' I said, reminding myself that this had nothing to do with Benito's trying a new food. It had to do with his gaining a sense of control and security. 'You could serve yourself a quarter-size taste of the Thai curry, saying, "I'll try anything once, or "I'll eat anything that doesn't eat me first.'" Benito raised his eyebrows dubiously, served himself, and then said, 'I don't have to eat it if I don't like it.' 'You certainly don't!' I said. And he didn't.

But what he did do was practise breaking down barriers and escaping from prison. Benito accepted encouragement and went much further than he thought he could. I set the situation up to encourage Benito by pressing him as far as he could go, without risking, at this critical point in time, the failure that coercion could have brought. I didn't just abandon Benito in resignation and despair to his condition by merely comforting and consoling him and reassuring him that he didn't have to eat that food. I went to him where he was, I joined him in his misery, and together we found a way out.

It's complicated for any of us to strike the balance with our children between abandonment & coercion. And in attempting to reach and maintain that balance, we all face the daunting challenge of how to do so with the further balance of cheerfulness & firmness. Now that we have become enlightened, we are faced with breaking old habits & making new ones, never an easy challenge for human beings, but even more so for us today with our frenetic life style.

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Donna Bryant Goertz is the founder and director of Austin Montessori School

➤ For another story on Peace, see page 11.

Boys and Gun Play

John R. Snyder

Elementary children need to experience themselves as increasingly powerful agents in the world. As their personal power increases with age and maturity, they begin to encounter all the classical questions about power with which humanity has struggled and continues to struggle. At the root of these questions is the fact that power and its uses define relationships.

There is that in the male psyche, in particular, that is fascinated with the projection of personal power at a distance. The emperor sits in his throne room ruling his far-flung empire. The generals gather in the war room to talk about ‘force projection.’ CEO’s earn their bonuses by expanding the ‘global reach’ of their corporations. The eminent professor sits in his study writing books and papers calculated to demolish the theories of his colleagues on the other side of the world and change the direction of his academic discipline for all time.

Boys, on the other hand, just like to throw things. Rocks, snowballs, mud balls, dirt clods, sticks, spears, frisbees, boomerangs, baseballs, footballs, basketballs—all involve the projection of power at a distance—and if accuracy is involved, so much the better. Standing right here, I can have an effect way over there. I can get that woolly mammoth, bear or dog before it gets me. I can get you before you get me. And I can do it even if I’m not as big, strong, fast, ferocious, agile, or smart as you.

Boy throwing rocks



Guns are technology’s answer to this fascination with the projection of power at a distance. This attraction, this fascination is, in itself, neither good nor bad. It just is. Yet it is clear that in the context of a life and a culture, how a boy learns to relate to his capacity to project personal power can lead to good or bad habits of mind and good or bad outcomes for the boy, his family and his society.

As with all of the raw-but-wonderful psychic energies of childhood, the key is not to squelch the energy but to channel it in positive directions. To my mind, guns are far too ambivalent a force in our world to be offered as toys to children experimenting with personal power. During my son’s childhood, there were no toy guns in our house, but there was always a clear message (‘In our family we don’t pretend to shoot people’) and many choices of what Sandy Blackard has called a ‘Can Do’ (‘Maybe you could set up this bunch of tin cans in the back yard and see how far away you can stand to hit them with these tennis balls.’ ‘Maybe we could all go to the lake to skip rocks.’ ‘Maybe you could play catch.’ ‘Let’s go shoot some hoops. I could use some practice with my free throws.’) If the child rejects all the Can-Do’s, the bottom line is ‘There must be something you could do that’s exciting and fun. Pretending to shoot people is not an option.’

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John R. Snyder, Austin Montessori School, Austin, Texas, USA

Art and Our Children

Our Montessori environments are more than just that: they are a duty to beauty. Their attractiveness, organization and beautiful materials exude an invitation to all users, whether child or adult to care for them and handle them with both a sense of responsibility and delight.



Maria Montessori wished the children to have the most beautiful of pictures to look at in their environment, and in "The Method" she describes La Madonna della Seglia [The Madonna of the Chair], 'in this beautiful conception Raphael has shown us not only the Madonna as a Divine Mother holding in her arms the babe who is greater than she [...].' 'In addition to this wonderful symbolism, the picture has a value as being one of the greatest works of Italy's greatest artist.' 'And if the day shall come when the "Children's Houses" shall be established throughout the world, it is our wish that this picture of Raphael shall have its place in each of the schools.' This plea for beauty is one traditionally heeded in our environments.

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Communications 2009/2 included a persuasive article by Phyllis Pottish Lewis on art, where she took the sense of beauty beyond the sense of pleasure. She argued that to help comprehend our world, our minds benefit also from a visual, perceptual language, such as the pictorial arts. The verbal and the visual, working together, can enhance the way we interpret and appreciate our world. Therefore, both are deserving of our keen attention; if not, we allow a deficit or an imbalance between the two realms. And whether a Pablo Picasso in the making, or not at all, we all benefit from sharpening our observation skills, so necessary in practising and appreciating art, and our knowledge of the world.

When we invited you to write on appreciation of art in our last bulletin, we did not anticipate you would be covering so many aspects, but are grateful that you did. In this Arts section you will find articles on poetry, dancing, music, crafts and painting, and much more into the bargain, such as art on Maria Montessori's birthday. And we cover all ages, up to the adolescent.

It also gave us, quite organically, the theme for our next issue: Music. So please get inspired again so beautifully. We welcome contributions from all of you, whether you send them in English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian or Dutch.

The deadline for the next issue is November 1.

Time to Create

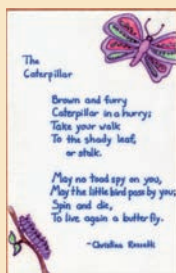
Susan Mayclin Stephenson

In 1989 Hilla Patell gave a presentation on Observation at the Summer Institute of AMI/ USA. Through examples of the concentration graphs in Vol. 2 of The Advanced Montessori Method she explained the value of giving the child time free of assignments or requirements. Since that time I have given this same presentation in many places around the world, and I am always asked this question, 'If we allow this uninterrupted time, when will we sing and dance and . . . (do all the other things that are done in groups or by assignments in traditional schools)?' And 'Will children really work hard if we don't make them?'

My response is 'Yes!' Everything can be done without group lessons, and children love to work and learn. It is in their nature.

To give an example of dancing as an individually-inspired dance experience, I share a memory of an observation of a class in St. Johns Wood, London, during my training in 1970-1971. A young child selected a music tape from a box and showed it to the teacher, then together they made floor space by moving a table and chair. Spontaneously joined by two other children, they took off their inside shoes and put them under a chair. The child put the tape in the player, the music began and the teacher and three children danced, moving to match rhythm and energy of the music. The rest of the class worked on undisturbed, used to this. When they were finished, they put everything back as it was and returned to other work.

For daily poetry, finger plays, and nursery rhymes, songs, and stories I advise teachers to make cards, for example with a poem handwritten in the same beautiful handwriting we want to model for the children and a picture at the top of the card, so a child who cannot yet read can select the desired card. This way a child can at any time pick out a card and take it to another child or bring it to the teacher to be read, or read it, or use it for handwriting practice. In my class I colour-coded the cards that were half page in size, made on cardstock and laminated. One colour was for poetry, one for fingerplays, etc. For the story selection there were tales of great artists, musicians, scientists, explorers, and things that had happened to me at home. (poetry card made by Narda Sherman during her 3-6 training at MMI in London)



With this material one will hear poetry, finger plays, nursery rhythms, and songs being celebrated throughout the day. And it is common to hear other children sing or

recite along, from across the room as they continue with their other work. I also make a point when the teacher initiates these activities, she should be sure to do it at a different time each day, so the 3-hour work period will not be interrupted by expectations of a group lesson. Since writing and then reading music occurs parallel with writing and reading words, I would often see one child compose music on the bells and then write it down and hand it to a friend to play on the piano.



The boy is reading the music, and playing it on the piano; it was composed and written on the bells by a friend. You can see the Bell music-reading cards, and the composer cards on the piano.

Clay, sewing, printmaking, crayons, painting, and plain paper, and lessons on the use of each and connecting the artwork to other studies such as biology and geography, is all a child needs in art. If there are no pictures-to-be-coloured-in in the classroom, confidence in drawing will grow. I kept the best examples of each kind of work for each child to send home at the end of the semester rather than sending work home daily. Parents need to be told that it is the process, not the product, the child's creation of himself, that is the work in the Montessori class. A great artistic talent will not develop from quickly rushed drawings made at the end of the day to please a parent.

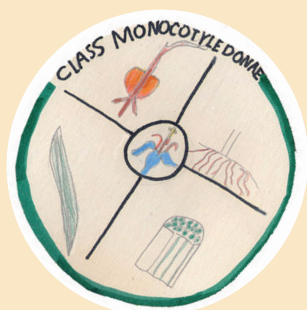


Giraffe drawings (a 3-6 child's own creation of the external parts of mammals)



At the elementary level, the uninterrupted work period can be days instead of hours long. Since the only requirements are those imposed by the state or country, there are many hours each week when the children can follow their passion, and the arts are one of the most satisfying ways in which children creatively express what they are learning in all areas.

Children must learn to create their own delicate balance between contemplation and work, between relaxation and alertness. This happens when they are exposed to the creativity of others, older and younger, and are free from schedules and assignments that interrupt their “flow,” such as watching the clock and writing down everything they are doing all day. In our discussions on this subject, my friend Adele Diamond, Professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at The University of British Columbia, and keynote speaker at this year’s Annual General Meeting of AMI in Amsterdam, agrees that in order to create, one must be in the moment and be allowed to stay there, ‘Once the child is observing himself being in the moment, he is no longer in the moment.’



Tree of Life drawing.
The child made the branches for the tree of life and many of the circles, to keep “forever.”

An elementary child, loving the “March of the Dwarfs” by Grieg that I often played on the piano in the classroom, decided to copy it out on ledger paper for himself. I struggled with the idea of telling him he could photocopy my music but knowing that this was his way of owning and creating the piece of music for himself, I let him work on. It was a work of some days. An 11-year-old, inspired by the excitement of the 6-7 year-olds as they began the exploration of the geometry materials, decided that she wanted to make a complete set of geometry booklets, with hand-drawn illustrations and definitions, before she graduated from the class. She worked on this for weeks. Another wanted to make his own circles and branches of the Tree of Life to “keep forever.” Where else can children be allowed to create in this way but in our classes?

And I will never forget the musical play created by elementary pupils in the class of a friend that presented the process of photosynthesis—all inspired by the impressionistic chart on the subject. What I loved about teaching Montessori primary and elementary was that I had no idea at the beginning of the year what the children

would create in the next 9 months, and I lived in awe of their ideas.

For myself, as a musician and artist, I could neither creatively focus or create if someone were telling me when to start and where to begin and what to paint and practise. I must experiment with time management and discipline myself; it cannot come from outside. On days when something is scheduled, and I do not have quiet hours to think, I cannot reach a source of profound inspiration that is necessary for some of my work; I must know at the beginning of the day that I will not be interrupted. We should offer no less to children.

I believe that in order to help children achieve their potential of creative work in any area we must trust them, trust that they want to work and create. Then provide the widest range, in age and accomplishment, of others creating in the same environment. And most importantly, we must protect them from requirements and scheduled activities. This is so very important today when children outside of school are scheduled from the time they leave the school until they go to bed, and on weekends.

Our youngest child home schooled himself through the elementary, middle, and high school years, while my husband and I worked full time. He had as his social circle people from 1 to 85 years of age, freedom from academic requirements, and unlimited time to study, think, and create. At age 15 he tested out of high school and became the youngest certified Suzuki piano teacher at the Calgary Conservatory in Canada. Today he balances work as both a lawyer and a musician.

In Montessori we have a wonderful opportunity to give children time to create. Excellent teacher training, daily observation and record-keeping are vital, but we must keep in mind that it is the creation of the fullest potential of the human that is our goal, and this means to provide an environment that protects the experience of the artist’s delight in the fertility of invention.



Susan's oil painting of the son of a Montessori A to I teacher in Kathmandu, Nepal. The baby is dressed in the traditional costume of the first meal celebration. www.susanart.net

Montessori and Poetry

Annette Haines

Introduction

Early Childhood

Language, from a Montessori perspective, is not a way of teaching children to read and write; it is a means of communication by which the mind is stimulated. First, children are given the keys to unlock the doors to the mystery of language: the alphabet, syntax, and grammar. These keys are not your typical school subjects but fun games, sensorial manipulatives, and other age-appropriate activities.

Our experiment, begun in Rome in 1907 with children between 3 and 6 years of age was, I believe, the first and only example of an attempt to teach writing by directly connecting the graphic signs of the alphabet with the spoken language without the use of books. The marvellous and unexpected result was that writing came “as an explosion” and began at once with whole words which flowed incessantly from the mind of the child. By means of their little hands they covered black-boards, floors and walls with written words in an indefatigable and exalting creative activity.¹

Children work spontaneously and creatively with their language, the workbooks and readers of traditional education not being part of a Montessori programme. The development of the whole child is thought to be more important than reading and writing—but reading and writing are part of that development. Little paper slips are written on and cut up and mixed about to create new patterns, eliciting and delightful surprises. Tie a bow can be cut and reconstructed into a bow tie. The balloon can be wet or cold or slippery. There are no right and wrong answers in the Montessori child’s guided exploration of words. Spontaneous activity, combined with sensorial experiences and games, combine to create the possibility of a mind that is ready and willing to play with words:

Outside

I see the sky, the trees, a butterfly
I smell the grass
I hear the neighbor’s lawnmower, the wind in the trees
I feel the wind in my hair
I taste the air in my mouth
I kiss a cloud

Anonymous (5) - following an afternoon of cloud watching.²

The School-Age Years

Language underlies the elementary-age child’s exploration of the universe—its history, geometry, geography, music, art, mathematics, biology and so forth. At the same time, the child gets the solid classical education in grammar, language rules, and sentence structure so necessary for clear and thoughtful self-expression. In *Education for a New World* Montessori writes, ‘Human teachers can only help the great work that is being done as servants help the master—doing so they will be witnesses to the unfolding of the human soul and to the rising of a new man, who will not be the victim of events but will have the clarity of vision to direct and shape the future of human society.’³

Clarity of vision requires clarity of thought, and clarity of thought must be expressed through language. The elementary child explores the nuances of words—the subtle or not so subtle difference between “toss” and “hurl,” for example, and learns to think about how to best express what she wants to say:

In the Night

In the night, life takes its changes
And all are no longer doomed.
In the night, all vision becomes clear.
In the night, I seek fresh air.
In the night, the spirits awake us,
Watching out for you.
In the night I hear their voices
Whispering in my ear.

The night was God’s greatest creation,
To show us who we really are
And what is near.
Sunrise comes, no more voices that I can hear.

Phoenix Cartwright, (10) Border Star Montessori, Kansas City, MO

Adolescence

As the child grows, his needs change. ‘Adolescence is characterized by a state of expectation, by a preference for works of creation, (and) by a need to fortify self-confidence.’⁴

Laurie Ewert-Krocker, of the Hershey Farm School, a Montessori Erdkinder in Northeastern Ohio, believes that poetry is a means for the individual to give expression to the personality in the act of forming itself. (A poem) is a momentary record of the interior life of the individual coming to understand himself and his place in the world. Writing a poem requires grappling with the most powerful, yet least definable, internal experiences of making meaning out of life.⁵

¹ Maria Montessori. (1991). *The Formation of Man*, Kalashetra: Madras, India. 117.

² Submitted by Maren Schmidt, Portland, OR.

³ Montessori, Maria. (1989). *Education for a New World*. Clio: London, p. 2.

⁴ Montessori, Maria. (1973). *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Schocken, p. 101.

⁵ E-mail correspondence.



Again, the Montessori adolescent lives in an environment prepared for this stage—an agrarian setting replete with fresh air, sunshine, opportunity for solitude, and real work on the land. This environment and plenty of open-ended time offers the possibility for the contemplation, word play and creative expression so natural to this age.

Spring

If I could tell you one thing about spring
I would tell you that it is not beautiful
It's coarse and angry and apologetic.
That's spring standing over there,
Iced with disbelief
That it will ever be warm and thoughtful,
And that someone will write a poem.
Spring's a late bloomer,
A frightened bird.
Spring is starvation,
Anorexic, spring just wanted to be loved.
Spring is tired of being re-born
Winter still in its body,
Spring is leaving the weak behind.
A new life, cleansing, culling.
Spring is throwing out all that is unfit to be beautiful.
Spring wants to be beautiful, wants to be warm again.

Hannah Webster (15) Hershey Farm School, Burton, OH

Conclusion

Not all Montessori children grow up to be poets. Some become architects, physicians, entrepreneurs, chefs, musicians, footballers or just plain people. All hopefully have a poetic frame of mind—a mind not rigid and set—but able to take the world in and reconstruct it in new ways. These are the “new” men and women Montessori spoke about, individuals who will not be the victim of events but will have the clarity of vision to direct and shape the future of human society.

Annette Haines, PhD is the Director of Training at the Montessori Training Center of St. Louis.

Art on Montessori's Birthday

Besant Montessori School

Some time ago we received a “surprise” envelope with a letter from Mrs Dolly Wadia of the Besant Montessori School, Mumbai. It contained a selection of photographs of a special Montessori Exhibition they arranged last year on the occasion of Maria Montessori's birthday. The exhibition was put together by Arundhati Choudhdury, helped by Kavita Roda and other members of staff.

Zarin Malva, Director of Training at the RTI Montessori Training Course in Mumbai, performed the opening ceremony. The photo shows Zarin admiring part of the photo collage, with Kariata Road and Zenobia Khodayh, a trustee.



Messages, Cakes and Flowers... Elonera School

Many more schools organize special events, parties or activities to pay tribute to Maria Montessori on her birthday: August 31.

Heeding the subject of this section, children and expressions of art, we thought it nice to show you a small selection of drawings made in Australia at the Elonera School. Michelle Olsen, a directress at the school sent them to us. Perhaps you'd also like to share a Maria Montessori birthday story or photo. Write to us at publications@montessori-ami.org.



Art and its Role in Building the Child

Govind Venkatesan

As part of its efforts to reach out to parents and teachers, the Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) organizes monthly talks in the cities of Chennai and Mumbai on different topics related to Montessori and child development. These sessions are intended to look at children and their needs from multiple perspectives, which may in turn help us, as adults, to understand and serve them better. The session held in Chennai on November 26, 2009, dealt with 'Art and its Role in Building the Child', and was anchored by Ms. Leela Samson, Director of the Kalakshetra Foundation, who shared with us her experiences on the subject. She also serves on the board of IMF.

Photographs with this article, Sukant Misra.



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Every institution has its thought processes. In the case of Kalakshetra, these were put in place by thinkers and educationists par excellence who had a deep appreciation of art and of the value of tradition. This strong foundation has resulted in the development of a methodology that has stood the test of time.

Learning in children (be it in the domain of art, or anything else, for that matter) often begins as a process of mimicking. They start off by imitating those in their vicinity: parents, teachers, friends, family elders, etc. But when they begin to learn any art form, they become a part of the multilayered processes of thought and philosophy which are represented by the tradition of learning. This way, the learning of art transcends the acquisition of a skill, and enters into a gradually unfolding realm of theory, philosophy and spirituality.

Over time, this learning brings about a certain centering in the individual; a deep inner knowing of who they are. This aspect is of great practical relevance in life. It also raises an important question which we all need to answer at a personal level for ourselves: Do we hold on to that centre, that axis, around which all our priorities and values are steadily defined and held together, or do we choose to align this axis to suit various situations as they arise, and reevaluate our priorities at every stage? In this day and age, the honest answer is that either is possible. But the thought process behind making a choice between one or the other, or maybe even a

combination of both, is critical. The learning of art can be of crucial importance in helping a young person grapple with questions such as this.

Systematic learning of any art form (in this case, we shall carry forth using the example of dance), has an overall pattern. For 5-7 years, the student absorbs all that is made available not unlike a sponge. During these years, there is a focused study of texts, techniques and performance. With a progressively deeper understanding of the role of the body and the mind, newer challenges emerge. Most importantly, what is the role of the Ego, an element which colours everything that we do? Not only is this question important to understand as a performer, but it is also a question of vital importance to anyone involved in any activity – especially teaching. The importance of setting aside the Ego to deliver a soulful performance, or to impart any teaching in the spirit of the philosophy, cannot be over-emphasised.

Broadly, the approach to teaching can be one of two: a conscious endeavour to make the learning of art as an unfolding journey which uncovers progressively greater levels of detail, or as an attempt to analyse every single detail that constitutes the art form. The value of a clear methodology based on sound processes once again comes to the fore. By allowing the learning to become a process of self-discovery, and by refraining from dry over-analysis, we are able to see the blossoming of understanding in the student at many levels.

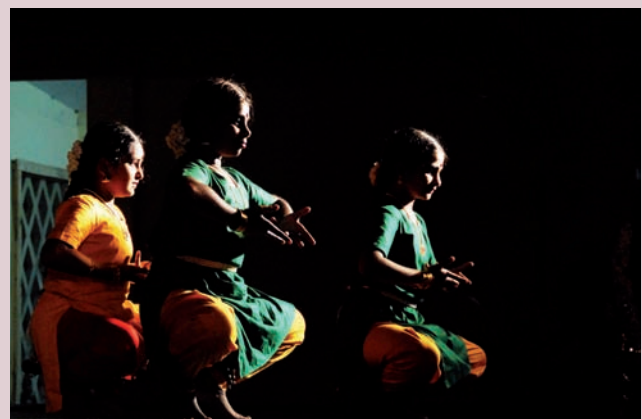
Let us consider this from the point of view of learning dance. Looked at from the point of shaping the multiple forms of intelligence, the learning process can truly be appreciated as spanning many different areas. The learning of intricate concepts such as balance, form, energy, movement, shapes, patterns, etc., works at the aspect of bodily intelligence which leads to spatial intelligence. This can be highlighted through the effort at learning first learning to work the feet, followed by the progressive usage of the hands and the arms, which is followed by the use of the lower half of the body in coordination with the upper half, and then the right side of the body working in unison with the left side. All of these movements further work in tandem with the embellishments of the dance form, which are nuances that work specific parts and muscle groups.

The aid in this entire process is mathematical sequences which work to establish the patterns and the drills. The use of numbers and mathematics precedes the use of music and lyric in the learning process. At every step, the teacher is involved in helping the child through this journey of discovery. Through the help of mythology, the teacher is also able to help the child explore other worlds intellectually, as well as being able to provide the child with the tools necessary to explore allegorical references to the spiritual realm. The notion of the spiritual is intrinsic to Indian art forms, and its exploration is necessary for a clear understanding of the overarching philosophical position.

The learning process also fosters the aspect of interpersonal intelligence through the process of group dancing and dancing in pairs. This is also achieved through the understanding of roles, shifting of roles across multiple players as well as an exploration of the interplay of characteristics from various roles.

As an expression of intrapersonal intelligence, we have the aspect of bhava, which was succinctly defined by Mrs Rukmini Devi Arundale, the founder of Kalakshetra, as the 'outward expression of an inner feeling.' For genuine portrayal of bhava, it is necessary for the student to go within, in order to explore the genesis of the feeling to be portrayed, in order to manifest it in the most appropriate manner. Every artiste has his/her own way of expressing bhava. The greatest performers of our time have the ability to bring out an ocean of sentiment just using their eyes!

To conclude, the aspects of bhakthi (devotion) and shraddha (faith) are vital in the performance of dance. When there is a blending of sincerity and focus, accompanied by the dissolution of the Ego, what emerges in front of our eyes is True Art.



Girls creating a traditional South Indian Kolam

The Serendipity of Art: Clara and Rhea Quien

When in India, Maria Montessori met Clara Quien, a famous British sculptor, who together with her architect husband Tontyn Hopman, had made her home in India from 1935-1952, and was commissioned to create sculptures of Nehru, Sardat Patel, Gandhi, Lord and Lady Mountbatten, and other dignitaries, such as Yehudi Menuhin. Maria Montessori also sat for Clara, and in a few sessions a genuine Montessori head was created: a kind face, with a slight smile. (<http://www.rq-art.com/ppt/img4.gif>)

The existence of this bust had dropped from collective Montessori memory, and we were therefore absolutely taken by surprise, and delight, to hear from Rhea Quien, the artist's daughter. Rhea had met in Cambridge local Montessori teacher Christine Clayton, and then decided that AMI would be the right place for Montessori's bust to come home to. We are thankful and thrilled by Rhea's wonderful gesture: it will certainly be a great addition to the treasures you will be able to find in our future Montessori Museum and Open Research Centre.

And to continue the serendipitous aspect of this story, Rhea Quien is an artist herself, and her focus is on creativity and education. As a Creative Expression Art focalizer she has held a practice in Cambridge for twelve years, running ongoing groups for adults and children. Rhea's particular intent is to impart the valuable and unique understanding of child development through Creative Expression Art, the English term for *Ausdrucksmalen*, a term coined by Arno Stern, who with the creation of *Closlieu* and his *Formulation* opened up a new area of looking at drawings.



© Rhea Quien

Closlieu and the Formulation — The Art of Discovery by Arno Stern

A prepared environment, especially for painting—that is something that cannot fail to appeal to people with a Montessori background or interest. And the creation of a very specific environment for painting is what “happened” to German/French Arno Stern. Fifty years ago, at the age of 22, Stern started work at an institution for war orphans in Paris. He got the children painting, and immediately understood the primordial role of the play inspired by this activity, for which he created an original environment.

He then established a studio—a place of 5 x 10 metres, without daylight. This prepared environment started to reveal stunning results. And by astute observation, Stern learnt that the results were replicable. No example, praise, criticism or analysis is used in this work. Acceptance is a key attitude enabling development. Creative Expression Art can open up new potential in participants .

The results showed Arno Stern how best to communicate with his students and gradually how drawings and paintings should be read. What is particularly insightful, and yet to Montessorians a message endorsing their own philosophy, is that he found that there is a universal drive within the child to draw, and that each, wherever they live will go through the same stages of development. They will start drawing circles, and stick men at the same time. They will change to animals and houses at yet another stage.

The environment he created is called “*Closlieu*” —closed off space—and the absence of daylight has proven to be a tool for students to stay “with themselves” and engage in a highly personal activity.

He found that the pictures we draw are the visible expression of our inner life, a process in which all senses, reason, feelings and intuitions take an equal part. It is an act of creativity that will help reveal significant insights into personal themes and can help heal old traumas. Our drawings are like a mirror that shows how you move in the world. The picture mirrors your values and convictions and will confront you also with all “avoidance” strategies deployed to cope with our more traumatic experiences.

When we contacted Arno Stern for the use of some photographs, he was keen to contribute a short article, which gives voice to his passion about how we should see the drawings of children. Not as art, but as the expression of natural development. His article can be found on the next page.



Arno Stern: Painting, Play and the Formulation

All around the world people speak of children's drawings, children's art. They could not be more wrong. This terminology has been borrowed from the world of art and goes on the assumption that the traces and lines on a page follow a goal, to show something. What is represented, what is shown, needs to be absorbed by the "beholder": it should call out to him and make a connection. The image serves as a medium of a particular message.

We generally considered the role of what is drawn as a means of communication, but nothing further. And that is why people always approached children's drawings from the same angle as adult art. They thought that, as with art generally, it is created for an onlooker, a recipient, creating some sort of reaction within him; that certain sets of values could be ascribed to a piece of art. Also people always thought that with age the development and mastery of the child would improve.

Reality is very different. How children express themselves does not belong to the world of art. The child, while he is drawn into this play with the *Trace*, lives through something very private, that does not involve anyone else. True play is characterized by living the experience, not merely by playing out.

Some people believe and will claim that the so-called children's drawing is the product of fantasy, of the power of imagination—and that some children just happen to be more gifted that way. Other people claim, however, that this giftedness wanes as the child's intellect grows and sharpens.

Children's *Trace* is rooted in a very different background: it belongs to a particular concept: *Formulation*, a code following a structure with its own components, whose courses are predetermined, exactly like developments in Botany.

The *Formulation* is a universal code that applies to everyone, whether they live in the jungle, in the desert or in a highly urbanized environment. The Figures traced by children are neither culturally determined, nor defined by a particular lifestyle influenced by the climate.

This utter similarity is connected to the origin of the *Formulation*, which is rooted in the storing of organic memory, corresponding to the genetic program of humanity.

It is essential to know the specifics and peculiarities of the *Formulation* and to come to the *Trace* with a new understanding. This new understanding will do away with all misconceptions, and turn around the idea that the child is a pupil in need of help, that is being taught by adults.

And this will lead to an entirely new behaviour: in other words a different relationship between adults and children. What joy for the people in our "know-it-all" culture, when a previously unknown area opens itself up.

The encounter with the reach of the *Formulation* will help heal childhood problems that are

difficult to overcome. 'I wasn't so clumsy and stupid after all. Whoever said so, they themselves were ignorant.'

Knowing about the *Formulation* is important to all parents, to all educators, to everyone who, unknowingly, out of sheer ignorance, is about to spoil the most meaningful play in the child's natural development, so that they can change their behaviour and from now on look afresh, supportingly, at the *Trace* of children.



This article has been translated from the German. Please contact publications@montessori-ami.org if you'd like to receive the German version.

The top photo shows children painting in the Closlieu, with its characteristic central colour palette. The bottom photo shows Arno Stern with children in Guatemala.

Photographs, copyright Arno Stern.
www.arnostern.com for more background and information.

Art and the Adolescent

Discovering the Origins of the Western World

Donald C. Goertz, Ph. D.

“Initiation to the Knowledge that
is the Pride of our Civilization”:
“Preparing the Human Personality...for the Unforeseen”
Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence



Three compelling factors made Austin Montessori School conclude the graduating year of their three-year adolescent programme (12-15 year-olds) with a semester of classical studies followed by a two-week study trip to Italy for on-site exploration: 1) The Curriculum of Rome as the source of Western Civilization; 2) The needs of the adolescent for the particular challenges, obstacles, and opportunities posed by exploring the remote past hidden in plain sight within the chaotic modern cities of Rome and Naples; 3) The presence of a former professor of classics on the staff to plan and lead such a course of study. Donald Goertz reports. This is part I of a two-part series.

CONCEPTION AND PURPOSE

Only Classical Rome can serve as the necessary orientation for a citizen of the earth living in a western culture, and do so in keeping with Montessori's dictum that 'Here is an essential principle of education. To teach details is to bring confusion; to establish the relationship between things is to bring knowledge.' (From *Childhood to Adolescence*, The aim (of study)' said Maria Montessori in discussing

The Clio Series, p.58) No other study affords the possibilities for the establishment of relationships on such a broad and comprehensive scale: between life past and present, ideas then and now, culture at its inception and at its contemporary continuance. Rome, indelibly and forever stamped by its conquest of Greece, is the source, the Magna Mater of Western civilization, and, as such, the whole from which the multiplicity of so many of the parts of our way of life emanated.

As expressed by Roman poet Horace, *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit* [Conquered Greece conquered her boorish conqueror.] The greater Greek, however, was not the only cultural tributary flowing into the Roman river; Judaic and Middle Eastern streams lent depth and colour and subtleties to its mighty waters. Out of this mélange of Middle Eastern polytheism, Roman tolerance, and newly evolved Judaic monotheism—grew the syncretized Christianity, which, along with the further developments of Roman engineering, architecture, writing and culture, was spread westward by Iberian conquerors to the new world, eastward by missionaries through the lands of the Slavs, and north to England and thence to North America, Australia and New Zealand, *inter alia*.

‘The aim (of study)’ said Maria Montessori in discussing the needs of the adolescent, ‘should be to widen education instead of restricting it.’ (ibid., p. 71). Heedful of her words, we go there, to Rome, as seekers in search of life-lessons and broad verities that we might piece together from the unwritten chronicles beneath the broken stones and behind the wavering walls. We go to wash our feet and bathe our intellect in the voluminous cultural waters of the Eternal City, whether life-giving and spiritually nourishing or polluting, poisoning, and disabling to the collective soul. In the depths of those waters, from which our cultural line flows, can be found the shards of our collective identity as a people. To swim in those waters is to experience ‘the privilege of initiation to the knowledge that is the pride of our civilization,’ as Montessori put it (ibid., p.62), for when a people discover their identity, it is then they are empowered to seek answer to the more profound, difficult, and consequential question: Now that we are discovering, are approaching an idea of who we are, who then shall we become and where shall we want to go?

‘An understanding of the society which he is about to enter to play his part as a man’ is a fundamental need of the adolescent, according to Montessori (ibid., p.60). The authentic understanding of the society arises not from the subjective experience and study of the fleeting present, but from the myriad parts of the past, and their inter-relationships, that compose the whole of the present. As Winston Churchill put it, ‘The further backward you look, the further forward you can see.’ (Cf., *Churchill by Himself* {2008}, Appendix I: Red Herrings, ed. Langworth, Public Affairs, p. 577)

ACHIEVING THE GOAL:

- 1) Intellectual and Practical Preparation
- 2) The Trip—Adaptability, Valorization, and Social Experience

It is as much through its preparation as during the trip itself that we are able to bring our purpose to realization. Both the Intellectual (with its four components: history, important sites, significant individuals, and culture) and the Practical preparation take place in the framework of ten to twelve seminars of two to three hours each over the months preceding the trip.

Intellectual Preparation: The History

We achieve comfort with the skeletal historical structure of ancient Rome: Etruscan Kings, Republic, and Empire; adding flesh of significant events, individuals, and cultural/social institutions, emphasizing in every instance the connectedness, the relationships—the whole picture. With the building of Rome’s highways, for example, we study not merely an infrastructure that made possible an empire—both its eventuation and its sustenance—but also its inspiration for Germany’s autobahns paving the way for Hitler’s conquest of Europe; and, later, Dwight Eisenhower’s passing legislation, following WW II, that created the United States’ interstate highway system. We see that the 244 years of Etruscan kingship through the overthrow of Tarquin the Proud created the emotional and cognitive construct for the assassination of Julius Caesar

465 years later. We seek to grasp the everlasting and profound impact one act of homicide has on the future, be it the assassination of Caesar of Rome, Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Bosnia, or John Kennedy in the U.S..

These are the ways in which we follow Maria Montessori’s prescriptive principle of education and ‘establish the relationship between things...to bring knowledge.’

Because Rome has a contemporary present as well as a classical past, and virtually every period in between, the city serves as the textbook for the inclusion in our studies of the art and architecture of the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque periods, with particular emphasis on the Renaissance (e.g., St. Peter’s Basilica; Michelangelo) and the Baroque (the architecture of present-day city; Bernini—the perhaps the greatest sculptor ever).



The Pantheon, Rome

Again, our concern is primarily with the general characteristics of each era and the way in which each successive period evolved from its predecessor and laid the foundation for its successor. We engage in an overview of art and art history in broad and general terms. The pictures we paint are rich and vibrant but more suggestive than detailed for our experience has taught us the validity of Dr Montessori’s observation regarding the adolescent’s diminished capacity for study and concentration at this age:

From the psychological viewpoint also this (adolescence) is a critical age. There are doubts and hesitations, violent emotions, discouragement and an unexpected decrease of intellectual capacity. The difficulty of studying with concentration is not due to a lack of willingness, but is really a psychological characteristic of the age. (ibid., p. 63)

Intellectual Preparation: The Sites

Our temporal framework securely in place, we move on to the sites, the tangible, physical reality of our study. The students do research, write, and present reports (first in class and again on site in Rome) on all the major classical sites, including the Colosseum, Roman Forum, Ara Pacis, Palatine Hill, Pantheon, Mausoleum of Hadrian (Castel San Angelo), etcetera. Some sites such as the Mausoleums of Augustus and Hadrian (Castel San Angelo) tell an important tale all on their

own: bland and barren and massive, their walls, dusty and crumbling, and their stones, worn and lifeless, are pregnant commentary on the true meaning of power and glory. Sites such as the Pantheon and the Colosseum provoke deeper discussion.

The world's best preserved buildings from Roman times, the Pantheon, for example, on an abstract level symbolizes Rome's tolerance of other religions and her inclination to embrace all of them and, on a concrete level, one of ancient Rome's most important architectural and engineering innovations, the curved arch, without which neither Pantheon nor Colosseum could have risen, nor the Basilica of Maxentius, which, with its massive domes—copies of the Pantheon's gravity-defying architectural marvel—served as the inspiration for the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, Brunelleschi's dome in Florence, St. Peter's in Rome, among others around the world. The 2,000 year-old Pantheon, still the world's largest unreinforced concrete dome, is just shy of 10,000,000 pounds.

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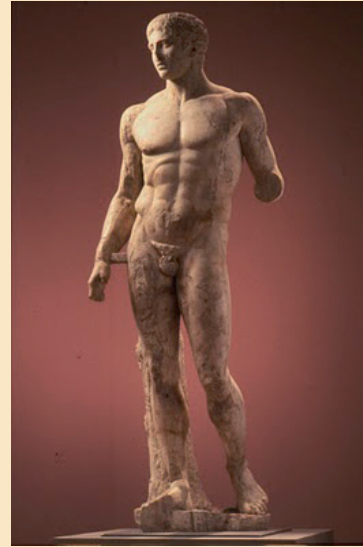
We visit lesser known and sometimes out-of-the-way sites such as the Museum of Roman Civilization to see the massive 1600-square-foot, scale model of the ancient city in the time of Constantine and to witness here in this museum Aeneas fleeing from the fires of Troy, his aged father on his back and his son, Ascanius, holding his hand, a statue telling in stone a story of the human condition, tragic and sad but at the same time profound in its dignity and hope for the future. We hear in our minds Maria Montessori saying, 'These studies (history) should consider that uplifting of the inner life of humanity towards tendencies that grow ever less in cruelty and violence and strive to form ever-wider groups of associated individuals' (ibid. p., 78). In what ways, we wonder, have our tendencies grown ever less in cruelty and violence, and in what other ways have they not? Are we different from the Romans, and if we are, how; or how are we the same? This will be the topic for one of our nightly, post-prandial discussions.

The day before we take the train to our second city, Naples, one last site on Rome's east side claims our interest. We go early one morning, on foot, to the District of San Lorenzo to the yellow, multi-story building at #58 Via dei Marsi. There in the courtyard we pay reverential homage at the space that was—and still is—the first ever Casa dei Bambini. Here on this spot Maria Montessori launched the single most important innovation in education since its hijacking in the year 1717 under Frederick Wilhem I, King of Prussia. Humbled Rome is the cradle of our civilization; this humble room in San Lorenzo is the cradle of our education. We, too, are humbled.

Secretly and unobtrusively, we peek in the windows. Except for the clothes the children are wearing, it might be 100 years ago. The same floors, much of the furniture, the clock, they are all still there. We sit atop the wall that separates the playground from the courtyard. This is the same earth that dirtied the feet of those first children

whose gift of their experience gave us our school. We take pictures. We give thanks. We move on.

Naples, in addition to being home to the National Museum of Archaeology, which contains among its many unique artefacts the Roman copy of the Doryphorus of Polykleitos and busts of the poetess Sappho, the stoic philosopher and playwright Seneca, and the novelist Petronius, is the jumping off point for three important sites: Pompeii, Herculaneum and Mt. Vesuvius.



Along the streets of Pompeii, we stop and wonder or we enter and explore, but as we walk past the many fast-food shops in Pompeii, we talk about the impact of individual kitchens on society.

Statue at the National Museum of Archeology, Naples.

Few Roman homes, except for those of the wealthy, had kitchens. For most Romans the late-afternoon/evening meal was take-out. More than a million people were living in the city of Rome at its peak. None were farmers. Their survival was dependent on roads for fast, safe and easy transport of grain and goods

Intellectual Preparation: Significant Individuals

In fulfilment of Maria Montessori's admonition that, 'Besides these general reviews of the subject a detailed study should be made of one period, event, or the life of some personage who has aroused special interest.' (ibid., p. 79), our preparatory seminars include the students choosing an individual of historical, literary or political significance to research and report to the group. The reports may be a traditional written essay, a dramatic presentation in period costume in the form of a monologue—or a dialogue with his contemporaries—or a power point presentation involving mixed media. In this group belongs Julius Caesar, his great-nephew Octavian, the emperor Marcus Aurelius who best represents Stoicism, the philosophy which radically influenced inchoate Christianity and whose impact is visible still today in much of Latin America, especially Mexico; here, too, belong, Caligula and Nero, whose lives authenticate the observation expressed in 1887 by Lord Acton in a

letter to Mandell Creighton, 'All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.'

Constantine, who, despite killing his brother and later his wife, the Empress Fausta, (at the behest of his mother, St. Helena), belongs here because he legalized Christianity, a religion which, despite its frequent misuse and misapplication by many of its followers throughout the ages, nonetheless, with its message of human dignity and individual worth and equality, brought many positive changes to the ancient world.

Intellectual Preparation: Culture

Montessori states that the next period should embrace that aspect of history 'which deals with the effect on humanity of the geographical environment, of contact between different peoples...and the assimilation of special cultures...These studies should consider that uplifting of the inner life of humanity toward tendencies that grow ever less in cruelty and violence and strive to form ever-wider groups of associated individuals.' (ibid., p. 78)

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We treat four revealing cultural aspects of Roman civilization—reflections of the harshness of everyday life: the love of parents for their children, education, women, and slavery. The students examine these topics through selected readings and follow-up discussions.

Particularly uplifting was the passionate love both mothers and fathers had for their children such that life without a child could never be happy. Many are the stories of a parent who upon the loss of a child retreated into life-long seclusion or even, on rare occasions, committed suicide. (Florence Dupont, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1989, p. 119f.)

'Nothing was done to make the newborn babies lives easier—quite the reverse. Any demonstration of affection was avoided for fear that the baby might grow attached to it.' (Dupont, p. 221) For example, the baby was bathed each day but always only in cold water since it was believed warmth would have a softening effect. This treatment was not the result of a lack of love but was explicit acknowledgement that life was hard and only the hardened were likely to survive. Fewer than half of all children reached the age of puberty. (Dupont, p. 222)

Education, for the most part, took place within the family with the father in charge, for the sake of diversity. Reading and writing, in both Latin and Greek, law, physical training and morality. Only the most basic arithmetic was taught since only slaves, who had mastered the abacus and calculation without the zero, kept the accounting books. Aristocratic families also gave their children instruction in the fine arts.

The women of Rome enjoyed many rights and freedoms, some of which arrived only recently in modern western societies and most of which are still lacking in many parts of today's world. Women, like men, were under their father's control (the pater familias) until he either died or emancipated them, at which time they achieved sui juris status, which meant being your own person. Once she was sui juris, a Roman woman had full legal independence, comparable to her brothers. (*Roman Law in Context*, Davis

Johnston, pp. 33ff.)

Slavery was an intricately complex and highly evolved aspect of Roman culture. The aspiration for freedom offered to slaves—as well as their masters—a vastly more desirable outcome to their lot than despair—provoked rebellion. Varying combinations of high rates of infant and childhood mortality, relatively short life spans, wars, disease, famine and natural disaster oftentimes made it difficult in antiquity for societies to grow or even maintain their populations. The Roman system of enslavement and emancipation gave it a much-needed, ongoing supply of new citizens.

To be continued in the next issue:
Practical Application; The Trip: Adaptability,
Valorization, and Social Experience



mosaic

How We Appreciate Children's Art

Rita Bose



25

Beautiful! Very nice! Lovely! These are some of the words of appreciation which escape our lips as soon as a child brings his drawing to us. Even before the full picture has registered in our minds, we start uttering these words!

But is this what the child is waiting for? Maybe yes! Maybe no! But to be on the safer side, why not first confirm from the child what he has tried to depict (otherwise we might say 'what a lovely cow' when he might have tried to draw a dog).

Some children (few) maybe quite happy with your appreciation and may dance away joyfully. But most children may sit you down and point out where the colours have gone beyond the boundaries, where a circular sun has become more of a polygon, where the trees have become shorter than the fence and so on.

I know from experience that it is very difficult to control oneself from bursting into appreciation as soon as the child places his drawing in front of you! But do stop and take in the whole art work—maybe even question the child about what he has drawn. The child for all you know may come out with a whole story around the picture, which would have remained untold if you had first just uttered 'beautiful' and moved on.

But does that mean that we should never show our appreciation? Why not? Once the whole piece of work has been discussed and taken in, one can always utter words of appreciation and encouragement—if the child is still waiting!

Arts and Crafts

Quratulain Hussain

ARTS and craft, when named as such, may seem like busy work. Some educators place no academic value on these activities. However, with the push for differentiated instruction in the classroom and the need to accommodate all learning styles, arts and crafts activities are more important than ever. Spreading arts and crafts across the curriculum is very easy to do. It is the role of the teacher to think outside the box in order to develop a place for such activities in their lesson plans.

Arts and crafts have many benefits for the well being and development of a child. Such activities during the school day allow children to express themselves and may provide an outlet for the feelings of an individual child. Many times the physical act of an arts and crafts activity allows for the practice of hand-eye coordination and can aid in muscle tone development. The analytical process that may be involved with some creative activities combines two completely different learning styles and allows for development of both skills. If the activity can be done in a cooperative group, children experience the value of planning, compromising and cooperation. The feeling of pride and accomplishment the children have from a completed project will also foster positive self-esteem.

- Art enables children to use their imagination & express themselves
- Kids learn & use early academic skills
- Use open-ended projects focusing on process

Teaching your students about art is a good idea—here's why:

- It's been proven that early exposure to visual art, music, or drama promotes activity in the brain.
- Art helps children understand other subjects much more clearly—from math and science, to language arts and geography.
- Art nurtures inventiveness as it engages children in a process that aids in the development of self-esteem, self-discipline, cooperation, and self-motivation.
- Participating in art activities helps children to gain the tools necessary for understanding human experience, adapting to and respecting others' ways of working and thinking, developing creative problem-solving skills, and communicating thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways.

So, where do you begin? Start by remembering that teaching children about art is not just about showing them how to recognize a Picasso, it's about preparing young minds for a future of invaluable experiences—art related or otherwise.

Making Connections through Drawing

Drawing is one of the most important activities you and your students can do. Drawing not only provides the basis for other creative activities—like painting, sculpture and printmaking—but it also provides a direct link with reading, writing and especially mathematics. The connection between drawing and geometric shapes and measurements simply cannot be denied. And do you know what else? Drawing is the single most accessible form of art available. All you need is a pencil and a sheet of paper.

One of the most important lessons you can teach your students is that more often than not, a mistake is not a mistake—it's a happy accident. Illustrate this idea in an eraser-free art-making session during which students are encouraged change a "mistake" into something else. No erasing allowed! Turn a boat into a sunfish or change a lion into a raspberry bush. Before long, going with the flow will become second nature for your students.

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Basic Art Materials Supply List

Paper. Lots of paper: every size, every shape. You can use photocopy paper, newsprint, mural paper, and butcher paper. Even paper grocery bags cut up into squares will do just fine. So will old shirt and cereal boxes.

Pencils. If nothing else, you must have pencils. Nice big fat pencils for little hands and smaller pencils for your "grown up" students.

Crayons. The brighter your crayons are, the better.

Markers. Make sure they are washable for the little ones.

Modeling Material. Clay, or anything that can be formed.

Pastels. Try to have both chalk and oil pastels on hand. Chalk pastels should be reserved for your older students while the oil pastels can be introduced to the younger set.

Scissors. Provide safety scissors and adult assistance for the tiny ones.

Glue. Just a small container of glue is all you need.

Paint & Brushes. You will be most pleased with water-base paints (tempera or watercolor) and brushes from small (") to large (1"). Here's a tip: Make clean up easier by adding a few drops of dish soap to your paints.

Found Objects. You can use buttons, beads, stamps, thread, and so on in many an art project.



Drawings & masks made by students of Phyllis Potthis Lewis



‘Building Creativities for the Twenty First Century: Arts Education for All’

Victoria Barrès

UNESCO holds a special place within UN agencies promoting collaboration about cultural diversity and a culture of peace. UNESCO’s mandate includes education, science, culture and communication. and for several years, it’s become increasingly clear that the arts can and should play a more forceful role in strengthening a culture of peace. Within *Education for All* and the dialogue on cultural diversity, a movement to include the arts within basic education is gaining support.



Logo of the World Conference on Arts Education

The “First World Conference on Arts Education: Building Creative Capacities for the 21st Century” was organized by UNESCO in Lisbon, Portugal, 6-9 March 2006. Antonio Damasio, an eminent neuroscientist, now with the new Brain and Creativity Institute, USC, suggested that ‘Arts Education, by encouraging emotional development, can bring about a better balance between cognitive and emotional development and thereby contribute to supporting a culture of peace. Emotional processing, an integral part in the decision-making process, works as a vector for actions and ideas, establishing reflection and judgment. Sound moral behavior, which constitutes the solid grounding of the citizen, requires emotional participation.’

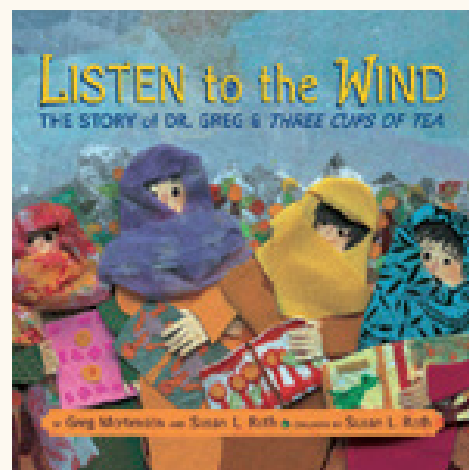
Since 2006, national efforts and regional meetings have advanced the “Road Map for Education in the Arts.” The “Second World Conference on Arts Education: Arts for Society, Education for Creativity” was held May 2010. In their keynote speech, “Arts at the Center,” Bob and Michelle Root-Bernstein presented research on many creative people working in a wide range of professions.¹ They found a common set of 13 thinking tools: observing, imaging, abstracting, pattern recognizing, pattern forming, analogizing, empathizing, body thinking, dimensional thinking, modeling, playing, transforming and synthesizing in those people’s imaginative and creative abilities. One intriguing hypothesis is that scientists invent new arts and artists discover new sciences and technologies.

They shared fascinating stories about scientists who have great experience in arts education. As a child, Alexis Carrell, the French Nobel laureate, learnt lace making from his mother. Later he drew from that experience to invent the stitching techniques now used in open-heart

surgery and transplants. The scientists mentioned by Root-Bernstein practise the arts to develop their observation skills and manual dexterity required in their scientific disciplines.

Some artists also use the arts to expand a “culture of peace.” Miguel Ange Estrella, the pianist and now Argentinean Ambassador to UNESCO and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace, was imprisoned and tortured in the 1970s because he played classical music in poor, remote villages. On September 11, 2002 his Orchestra for Peace became a reality. Young Arab and Israeli musicians from Middle Eastern countries interpreted pieces on stage at UNESCO. Estrella’s foundation supports an innovative educational programme with pluri-disciplinarian training in music, anthropology and sociology to foster economic and cultural development in rural Argentina.

Three books for young children include profound and beautifully illustrated, yet simple, stories that contribute to UNESCO’s recent initiative. They should also go into Montessori and family “treasure chests” to be shared across the generations.



Listen to the Wind: The Story of Dr. Greg and Three Cups of Tea, written by Greg Mortenson and with collages by Susan L. Roth is high on the list. Mortenson was saved by poor villagers in Pakistan. To thank them, he decided to build a school in Korphe, a decision that transformed his life. The artist, Susan L. Roth, was fascinated by the villagers’ use of scraps or whatever available: computer chips, half zippers to make things, like the traditional Balti hat. Felt is common there, and so Roth used it in her moving collages of children, adults, the school and village scenes. How many of us even knew about Baltistan in the Pakistani mountains until recently?



Necessity of Art in Times of War

Takako Fukatsu

I always thought that art is something we humans do in our leisure-time, at a peaceful moment until I encountered the two artists below. One is from the Thai-Cambodia border encampment and the other from the city of Bagdad, Iraq.

This first one is a drawing done in a refugee camp in



Thailand by a 10-year-old Cambodian girl after she escaped from the Pol Pot regime. She was given a piece of paper and held crayon for the first time in her life. She drew and drew until all the impressions of the atrocity were out on the paper. What came out of this tiny body was really

shocking: a main figure with a spoon burying dead family members and tears coming down from the eyes.

(© National Federation of Unesco Associations in Japan)

An Egg is Quiet by Dianna Aston, is a scientifically accurate, yet simple, story about eggs and birds with breathtakingly beautiful illustrations by Sylvia Long. Montessori always stressed using few words with children, but ones that were correct and precise. This book, and others by them, such as *A Seed in Sleep*, follow Montessori's suggestion to a tee. These books promote a child's understanding about "life" in nature and geography, based on real facts. Montessori felt this critical for the young child's healthy relation to the world. Then, with a firmer grasp on reality, the older child can use her imagination, expanding her understanding to encompass symbolism expressed in different cultures. The young child begins with the "identical" colour tablets in the first and second colour boxes and then moves to the third colour box, with tablets in ten shadings from light to dark, one for each hue. Children who have practised their own observations can achieve finer levels of nuanced understanding in colours, shapes (eggs, leaves, geometric forms) and geography, by age five and six. How many of us can observe the tiny differences in shades of colour and shapes of bird's eggs or seeds? Developing this mental agility in discerning shapes and colours is an indirect preparation in discerning symbols, thoughts, and ideas. Besides their links to cultural and economic development, informal and



non-formal arts education can also benefit millions of girls and women, who haven't had access to formal education even though they play key roles in their families and communities. Hopefully, Montessorians can contribute more fully with lively examples to the discussions promoting arts education within basic education and lifelong education.

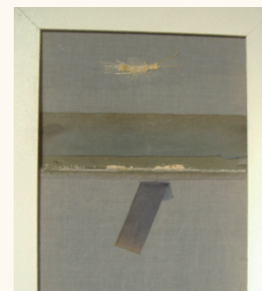
Montessori says, 'the secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inner most core.'²

References:

- 1 Root-Bernstein, M. & Second World Conference on Arts Education, Seoul, Korea, May 25 – 28, 2010, Keynote address, "Sparks of Genius, The 13 Thinking Tools of the World's Most Creative People."
- 2 Maria Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential*, Clio Books, 1983 (1948).

Victoria Barrès is AMI's representative to UNESCO.

© Qasim Sabti,
courtesy Café Slow



This collage was made by the Iraqi artist Qasim Sabti. If you look closely, you can see that it is made of torn paper and cloth-like texture.

In April 2005, after the bombing of Bagdad, Qasim walked into the Academy of Arts where he used to teach and found many library art books that he used to adore had also been destroyed. He picked up as many burnt books as possible, went home, started creating collages using these burnt covers and torn pages from the books.

At first, his works appear so tranquil and peaceful that you would never imagine that they were made at the moment of war. To me, it is his constant message saying 'Make Art, not War!'

More of his work can be seen at www.quasimsabti.com.

Artistic expressions are necessary, not only when we are well and happy, but also when we encounter deep sadness and anger. We constantly need to provide the art corner in our life as humans.

Parent Section

Parent Workshops

Did not Maria Montessori think that education starts with the adult? Without their help and understanding of childhood, the Montessori approach can never reach its fullest potential. Parent information talks can be an excellent tool, not only to involve the parents with your school, but also to offer them precious insights into the psychological development of their children. Many of you do this already, but here are some ideas you also might like to explore. AMI Trainer Zarin Malva offered a parent talk in Vancouver, where she first sketched the main philosophy, engaging in active dialogue during the second part of the evening.

First, the parents were separated into six groups. Each group consisted of parents of diverse backgrounds, varying the age of their child, the school that they attend, and their amount of experience with the Montessori philosophy. Each group received a sheet with the same three questions and a recorder to jot down notes. After thirty minutes, the groups came back together to discuss their thoughts and ideas.

Question 1—How may you as a parent support the child in the home?

- Organization at home encourages the sense of order. There should be a place for everything (bins, etc.) so that it is accessible to the child.
- The child should be able to help at home. This supports their role in the family. They can cook, clean, etc.
- Things should be their size, to make it **their** environment (shelves, broom, utensils, glassware, etc.).
- Allow them time to achieve something. It is too easy to take over and do it yourself. Have faith and trust that they will do it on their own.
- Listen and let him explore whatever interests him. Give him the opportunity and the tools to explore what grasps his attention.
- Try and be consistent: stick to the same expectations for life and work at home, and school.
- Present your child with alternatives and choices instead of saying “no”.

Question 2a What do you expect as a parent of the programme for the child from 3 to 6?

- o that they are given choices within freedom and freedom within boundaries.
- o that they are given a chance to share what they have learnt with others to become more nurturing and caring.
- o that they are given in the multi-age classroom a unique experience where you may look up to another when you are younger, whilst taking a leadership role when you are older. Children learn to value children of a different age, develop tolerance, and will be able to integrate socially.
- o that they may build strong foundations for learning for the rest of their life.
- o that they will learn how to write and acquire basic numeracy skills.

Question 2b—What do you expect as a parent of the programme for the child from 6 to 12?

- o that they learn to discover and enhance their talents.
- o that they develop a sense of community.
- o that they culminate everything they have previously learnt toward even bigger things.
- o that they become independent.

Question 3—How do you feel about your child going to school for an extra month in July and how may it help her?

This question centring on the so-called “11th-month programme” seemed to garner the most opposing viewpoints.

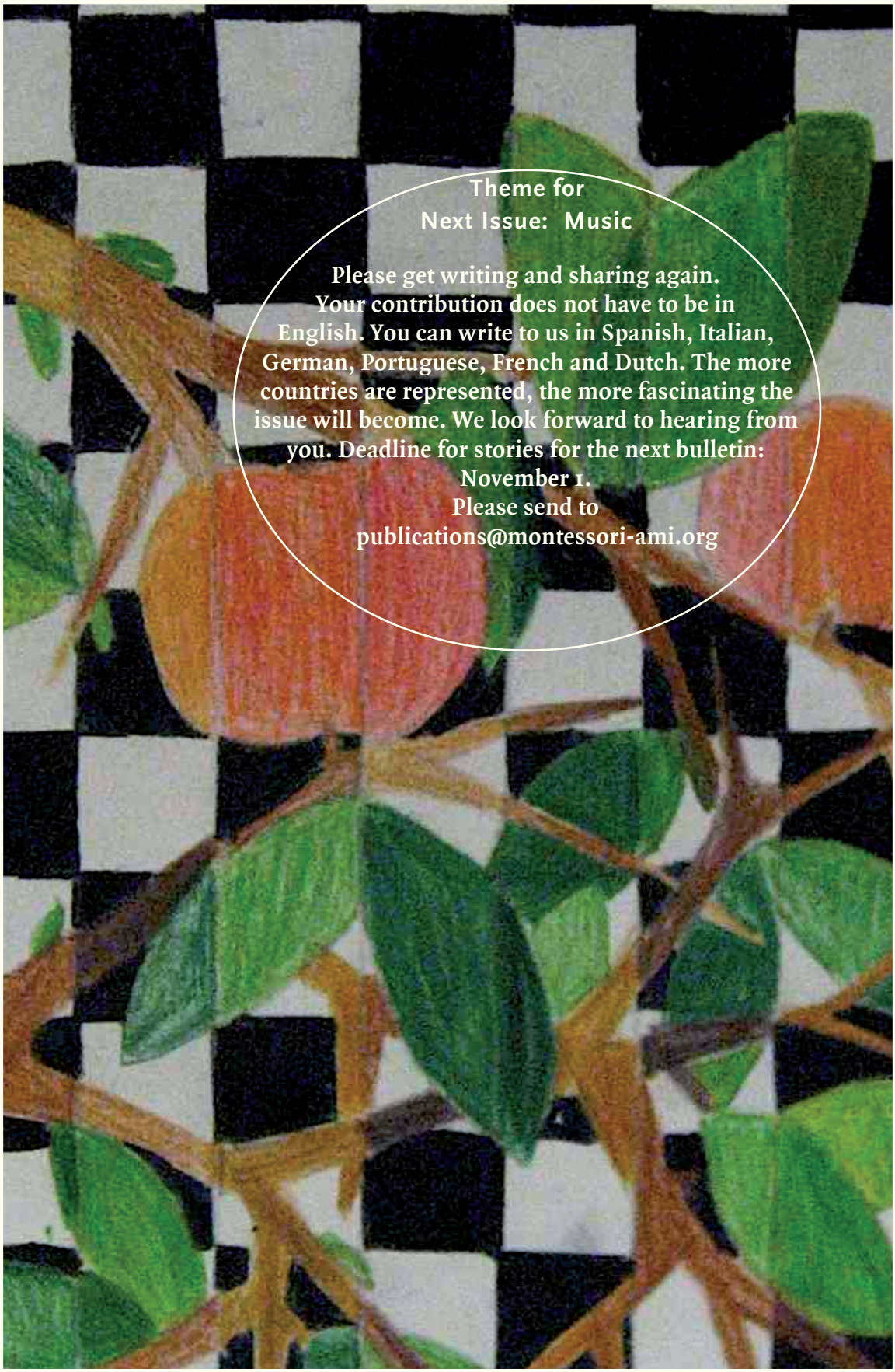
Arguments for the “11th month”

- o The child will not have to relearn in September what they have forgotten over two months of summer.
- o If the child enjoys school so much, they should be able to enjoy another month of it.
- o The children do not want to miss their friends, work and school.
- o A child needs consistency.

Arguments against the “11th month”:

- o It is important to take a break from things.
- o The children need to try new activities.
- o Two months enables a family to take longer vacations possibly needed to visit relatives. or use it for cultural experiences.
- o It was agreed that it should be a family’s individual choice whether or not they would opt for the 11th month.

With grateful thanks to Andrea Reid for preparing a summary of the parent evening discussions.



Theme for
Next Issue: Music

Please get writing and sharing again.
Your contribution does not have to be in
English. You can write to us in Spanish, Italian,
German, Portuguese, French and Dutch. The more
countries are represented, the more fascinating the
issue will become. We look forward to hearing from
you. Deadline for stories for the next bulletin:

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Events around the World

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Montessori Whole-School Management:

A Professional Development Course for Teachers and Administrators.

Further details from:

www.montessori-namta.org

August 23-27

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Montessori Summer Seminar:

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A week filled with lectures, workshops and travel in the Netherlands and Germany.

registration: internationaloffice@edith.nl

August 27-28

Finland, Espoo

2nd Nordic Montessori Conference

“Every Child is Special”

Conference language: English

In cooperation with the Nordic Montessori organizations in Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden

Coordinator: Marja-Leena Tyrväinen

October 7-10

Baltimore, MD, USA

“The Essential Montessori Science: Whole-School Implementation”

www.montessori-namta.org

October 1-3

Bad Honnef, Germany

Montessori Europe Congress

“From Childhood to Adolescence”

www.montessori-europe.com

November 5-7

Milwaukee, WI, USA

“Literacy and Communication: The Language of Montessori”

2010 Public School Forum

Featuring keynote speaker Dr Steven Hughes

www.amiusa.org

November 11-14

Atlanta, GA, USA

“Universality of the Three-Period Lesson: Accenting the Importance of the Learner”

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