

Chapter #36

LEARNING ABOUT HERITAGE AND IDENTITY THROUGH ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

Artistic mediation workshops for students in TOMÉ, Chile

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ABSTRACT

This work shares an innovative project, carried out with students from early childhood to secondary education in the commune of Tomé, Chile. It is an artistic mediation project materialised in an exhibition as a pedagogical proposal. It seeks to highlight the value of the territory through the observation of works of art in order to approach the creation of images that show the local identity. The plastic language mainly used are simple techniques linked to engraving and printing as the main strategy of knowledge. Through the Artistic Teaching Methodologies, creative exercises were proposed based on the work of 6 local artists with the aim of understanding what was observed in the works of art, relating to it from personal experience and, finally, creating something from it. In this way, art is taught through art. The dynamics and visual results of the students' work were analysed through Arts Based Methodologies, using visual tools.

Keywords: art education, mediation, artistic teaching methodologies, engraving, printmaking.

1. INTRODUCTION

The experience "Identity-based activities carried out through engraving and printing. Artistic mediation workshops based on regional engravers and aimed for students of the commune of Tomé" was an exhibition that had as a common thread the inquiry about territory, as well as individual and local identity. The strategy to deepen the aforementioned concepts was achieved through mediation between the works of art and the spectator via the art of engraving. The goal was to generate spaces for individual and collective creation around the work of 6 local artists. In this way, students of different ages abandoned the role as a passive spectator to adopt an active and creative role within the experience.

The proposal was based on the use of Artistic Teaching Methodologies (Mena, 2020; Rubio Fernández, 2021; Caeiro, Callejón & Chacón 2021), in which the main strategy is the use of experiential, creative processes and works of art as the central point to provide a learning experience.

For the analysis of results, the Arts-Based Methodologies (Roldán & Marín-Viadel, 2012), which use images as the most important data and findings, are employed.

2. PREVIOUS AND RELEVANT BACKGROUND IN THE DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

A fundamental antecedent in the design of our proposal and which must be mentioned beforehand is the exhibition "Arte para aprender" (2023), a Teaching Innovation project of the Department of Didactics of Musical, Plastic and Corporal Expression of the University

of Granada created in 2013 in collaboration with the CajaGranada Cultural Centre and whose main idea is to connect the school population and the people of Granada with contemporary art by highlighting the museum's collection.

According to its creators, the purpose of this project is to develop innovative strategies for education in museums, with the following objectives: Create artistic works that function as a teaching-learning tool; Promote forms of mediation in museums through processes of artistic creation; Favour the access of the participating public to a collection of contemporary art and cultural artistic heritage of the area; Develop new teaching-learning technologies; Generate an exhibition proposal centred on learning experiences and the creation of visitor images as creative experiences; To turn the learning process into the main dynamising element of the exhibition discourse and the forms of relationship between museum and visitor; To develop a methodological innovation on arts and education that can be used in museum and academic institutions; and finally, To interpret and interrelate the collections of ancient, modern and contemporary art in the city of Granada.

The above objectives represent a clear roadmap about the conditions that must be fulfilled within an experience of these characteristics, evidenced as a referential methodological proposal that crystallises under the guidelines of the Artistic Methodologies of Teaching.

3. KNOWLEDGE OF HERITAGE AND IDENTITY THROUGH ART EDUCATION

The most widespread ideas about heritage understand it as a set of goods of different nature that a society inherits from its ancestors and that gathers elements of different kinds (historical-archaeological, artistic, ethnic and even natural). These elements belong to a material range and are an instrument of both cultural identity and social connection. For this reason, their conservation and dissemination are generally ensured. This set of material components also include those that are immaterial or intangible (Calbó, Juanola & Vallés, 2011).

Memory and recollection are heritage elements which are intangible. Stored inside of each individual, they are essential in shaping the identity of a community as well as each individual's identity. Therefore, identity is born from both inner perception and outer vision: how we see ourselves (voluntary ascription), and how we are perceived (identification). Consequently, identity is based on a real construction and also on an ideological, political and cultural one, that hierarchizes symbols that allegedly belong to each person. This channels cyclically collective energies and feelings (Arévalo, 2004). From this point of view, it would be expected to think that heritage, as a cultural construction, takes a part in the construction of identity of each person that conforms the social fabric.

Articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (approved in 1989 and passed into law in 1990) directly refer to respect every child's identity, as each child has a name and a nationality that must be respected by both parents and the State, as well as preserved, and restored in the event of deprivation of some of its elements (O.N.U., 1989). With this declaration, identity is granted as an indispensable attribute of each individual, which must be recovered if lost. The question, then, arises: how does education deal with this indispensable attribute?

Art today is demanded in the creative experience of every human being, acting as the device that makes it possible for the most personal and meaningful relationships to be born. Art also includes all kinds of aesthetic practices, which, in themselves, are constitutive of

patrimonial identity (Calaf, 2003). Art Education, as the discipline responsible for promoting productive and appreciative artistic processes, can and should contribute to the understanding of heritage (and, consequently, of the identities that make it up), as well as the relationships that are established between people and objects (Fontal, 2013; Fontal 2022) encouraging its communication and including as an important addition to the artistic curriculum of different education stages (Gutiérrez-Pérez, 2012).

4. PRINTMAKING AS A VEHICLE TO SHAPE THESE EXPERIENCES

One of the main interests within the current practice of printmaking is focused on investigating the different possibilities that this medium provides to creation in general. This refers to looking through how we can use printmaking in art education in order to know which are the contributions it leaves in relation to other areas in education, identify the benefits related, and defend its relevance within the teaching-learning processes.

The different factors of this technique are well known for their influence and involvement in the teaching-learning process. It contributes to stimulate the development of rational thinking, it also provides rules for creation that can be connected to play, and it sets certain conditions that are ideal for collective work in the development of transversal values (Castillo-Inostroza, Palau-Pellicer & Marín-Viadel, 2020).

The art of engraving leaves an implicit print behind, creating a connection with the print that already lives inside the memory. This print comes to the surface when there is the motivation to review what has been experienced in everyday life and what has become part of a human's personal construction. Thus, engraving -as an accurate, concrete, and playful technique at the same time- embodies the metaphor of what a print is, becoming the main vehicle for creation.

Related to the above, although in a different direction, it is important to mention that traditional printmaking uses products that can have varying degrees of toxicity, some of which are particularly harmful to health and the environment. This means that it is often not easy to adapt traditional processes to a conventional classroom (Garrido, 2019). Knowing that these historical limitations have complexified and limited school printmaking and assuming the need to generate a practice that is friendly to the environment and to the health of those who practice this technique, the exercises related to engraving and printing that are proposed in these days of artistic mediation involve simple procedures and do not use toxic materials or dangerous tools. Without a doubt, this is not a minor commitment, as it contributes to giving a twist to the practice of the technique in the classroom by proposing ways of making engraving without traditional engraving, but through the use of materials and tools that are not invasive, toxic or dangerous, and which also allow the creation of matrices and prints.

5. ARTISTIC TEACHING METHODOLOGIES AS A STRATEGY FOR THE CREATION OF EXPERIENCES.

It is no longer believed in the existence of a creation that originates from nothing, maintained by the talent from which it comes in an artistic way, without taking into account in the aesthetic elaboration the performance of the personal background of each person, their experience and the environment in which they develop. (Morales, 2001, p. 80)

Among the research practices that arise from qualitative interpretation are the Arts-based Methodologies (Roldán & Marín-Viadel, 2012). As a consequence of different methods related to this line of research, other methods related to teaching have appeared, such as the Artistic Teaching Methodologies, which emphasize the appreciative dimension.

The Artistic Teaching Methodologies were created as a strategy that allows the establishment of horizontal models to approach the works of art that are considered a novelty (Mena, 2020), being located in a place close to artistic activity. Based on this premise, these methodologies are based on the creative experience and creation strategies of artists, putting into action different teaching and learning methods (Caeiro et al., 2021). Thus, we can understand them as those methods based on the ways in which art uses ideas, processes and matter, grounded in the aesthetic as a producer of knowledge and thought.

The Artistic Teaching Methodologies do not refer only to teaching art, but to teaching art through art itself, joining language, art media and cognition processes. Teaching under this methodology should provoke situations in which aesthetics is the structural basis of the experience. For that, it is necessary to consider art education from a contemporary approach aspiring to teach art to learn art and adjusting pedagogical processes to artistic processes to open that medium to the educational experience (Rubio, 2018; 2021).

Our project enters into the spirit of the M.A.E. by using the work of 6 artists as the main activators of the experience. Each work (its composition, formal and semantic elements, materialities and techniques) is transformed into a teaching proposal that becomes, at the same time, individual and collective work. In this way, the creative processes that artists go through, as well as the characteristics and formal and symbolic elements of the works of art, can be integrated as a living strategy that requires thinking as an artist does. This strategic capacity will be present in the design of the interactive exhibition for the understanding of 6 works whose theme is linked to the valuation of everyday heritage.

6. MEDIATION DAYS: PROPOSAL AND UNFOLDING

To perceive, a contemplator must create his or her own experience. And this creation must involve relationships comparable to those experienced by the creator. (Dewey, 2008, p. 62)

The Mediation Workshops were held at the Cultural Centre of Tomé, an important nerve centre of the city and a non-formal educational space. The invitation to the different schools, as well as the scheduling of the visit of each of the groups, was made through the Municipal Directorate of Schools, which allowed for direct communication with each school.

The workshops involved activities aimed at generating dialogues around our local images, knowledge, places, customs, histories, belief systems and other elements. These emerge from the analysis of works that lead to questions about those areas. Thus, the deployment of the conference included an exhibition organized in 6 modules in charge of mediators. Each mediator receives a small group of no more than 5 students -from kindergarten to high school including older public- inviting them to visit the exhibition.

Each module presents a graphic work that invites visitors to observe it, understand its meaning and create from it in an exercise linked to printing, which overthrows the position of inactive spectator in front of an artistic piece. The learning (contained in the visual result of the students), is arranged indistinctly around each work to generate an installation space in which each image is added to the other to develop a collective and gradual work during the period of the exhibition.

The following table shows the exercises developed by the students:

Table 1.
Summary of proposed actions for each module.

Artist	Action
Freddy Agurto. local identity	The reference work deals with characters, places and objects of the town of Tomé. Based on their observation, the students are invited to create a print depicting characters or places of personal importance. Eva rubber is used as a matrix, and a biro is used to make the grooves. Using black and orange colours, the students print the matrix directly onto a large white panel attached to the work. The prints are composed freely and without any preconceived organisation around the work, and can be superimposed one on top of the other if the visitor so wishes.
María Pavés. Urban identity	The work in question shows an urban landscape and a wasteland composed mainly of lampposts. The colours are ochre and brown. Based on this image, the artist invites the creation of a new landscape composed of several planes. Thus, different matrices of different sizes are offered with lampposts as the central figure to emphasise the closeness and remoteness of the elements. The prints are made on different acetate supports, which act as different planes of depth.
Américo Caamaño. Local traditions	This work tells the story of the traditional process of drying fish, an activity that is very characteristic of the town. For this reason, its central image narrates a string of fish drying in the sun by the beach. From the observation of the work, each student receives a cloth fish, which he or she textures by printing waste materials with ink. Each textured fish is hung on a string attached to the work, similar to the original process. This forms a small installation made up of fabric fish.
José Pedreros. Personal identity	A work that portrays an imposing human figure. Based on the observation of its shapes and colours, each student is invited to create a self-portrait with similar characteristics. To do this, a collage support is first created, on which the matrix is printed, which has the figure present in the reference work. Although the same form is used, the result is a personal and different portrait which, added to others, generates a collective portrait.
Lucía Hernández. Daily flora	The work shows details of natural forms. These are born from the augmented and scientific observation of their shapes. From this, the students are invited to directly observe natural shapes with a beholder to discover how they are made: their colours, shapes, textures, and other important elements. From that observation, each student creates a matrix in eva rubber, which he or she draws with a biro and prints on a semi-transparent paper. The resulting print is placed on a light table at the side of the work.
Tatiana Binimelis. Local landscapes	The work presents a natural landscape, without differentiation of planes, made up of different textures, as if it were a black and white puzzle. Based on the observation of these characteristics, the students are invited to freely extend the landscape to the sides, using inks and waste material. In this way, each student creates different textures of different shades, which he or she freely composes on the side of the work, enlarging it and making it grow.

7. INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

This experience uses Arts-Based Methodologies as the main method to interpret the learning dynamics occurred and the visual results. "Arts-Based Research proposes an approach and openness from scientific research to artistic creation to use its forms, knowledge and wisdom" (Marín-Viadel & Roldán, 2019, p. 885), consequently, its deployment implies the systematic use of artistic processes of creation in current artistic expressions (and in all the different forms of the arts) as the first way of understanding and analyzing the experience, both by the researcher and by the people involved in the studies.

In this way, the production of images parallels theoretical development and shapes the visual data. This provides a perspective of interpretation of the self, shaping an investigation that gives more than just meaning to our experience.

What kind of images emerge when creation is elicited from an artistic work that invites us to reflect on different aspects of identity?

Each module involves the production of a set of images that act as data. The analysis of the iconographies contained in those images, as well as the students' creative dynamics, are summarized in the following table:

*Table 2.
Summary of main findings for each module.*

Artist/Identifying Feature	Findings
Freddy Agurto Local identity	In greater number, the images express elements related to the marine landscape of the commune and its related activities: fishing, beach, sun, sea, marine products and animals. Lesser numbers of important local urban elements appear, such as the textile factory, houses, roads or objects of family property. The natural landscape is represented in third place.
María Pavés Urban identity	The possibility of play offered by this module for the understanding of the composition in planes of a landscape gave rise to a dynamic result. In this way, to the poles of different sizes offered as the only element of composition, other patterns made by the students were spontaneously added: people, cars, lighting, roads and vegetation, elements that were added, enriched and changed the initially proposed landscape.
Américo Caamaño Local traditions	The experience was based on textural research for the creation of a fish. As a result, the variety of textures found by the visitors stands out, which implied the use of resources such as the overprinting of one or several textures to achieve a unique result. The use of waste material is positively valued for the different wefts it offers.
Jorge Pedreros Personal identity	The result is made up of different self-portraits of each visitor. Although the transversal resource for the creation is the figure present in the work of reference, the paper support that receives the print gives singularity to each image. Collage stands out as the most used strategy for the intervention of the paper support.
Lucía Hernández Daily flora	The experience manages to captivate visitors' observation. Lines and dots stand out as the most used strategies to interpret the observed shapes and their details.
Tatiana Binimelis Local landscapes	Although a limited spectrum of textures was proposed to be explored in the printing, a variety of tonal values emerged. The use of overprinting for the creation of new visual textures stands out. In this module, the students also proposed some figurative elements, beyond textures, to complement and continue the landscape, such as mountains, trees and rivers, present in the locality.

8. CONCLUSIONS

This proposal, being an unprecedented experience of artistic mediation in our territory, constituted an instance of methodological updating and of the discipline of engraving within art education. As main points of reflection, we mention the following:

Instances of this type should be conceived with aesthetic museum criteria and clear objectives. However, the fluidity, openness and divergence in decision making should not be forgotten, since these are dynamic actions that receive heterogeneous audiences. In this aspect, it is pertinent to adapt each experience according to the group, avoiding standardizing the action and respecting the initial criteria.

From the research point of view, we believe that it opens up the possibility of deepening the following points: first, in the work of training and theoretical deepening that is carried out with the mediators, which is presented as an instance that can influence and influence the education of their environments by contributing to improving their artistic practices. Secondly, the need to work on the adaptation of artistic actions for different audiences, such as groups in their initial stages, which implies finding new strategies to be able to carry them out.

On the other hand, the use of engraving was a highly motivating strategy, provoking great surprise in the visitors, who understood the basic processes involved in the creation of a print. In this aspect, it became clear that there is no need to resort to traditional and complex techniques to teach engraving.

As for the images obtained, these are derived from a clear knowledge of the local environment, which is identified and then transformed into iconography. In this aspect, we believe we have rescued aspects that run through the whole story, such as the marine imprint, its trades, products, places, family narratives and other properties. In this way, the exhibition does not present in its final composition a compendium of unconnected images, but a panorama of the individual and collective territory.

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Short biographical sketch: A visual artist specialising in printmaking, Professor of Visual Arts and Doctor in Arts and Education, her work combines both fields, directing them to the benefit of art education. She currently works as a teacher and researcher in higher education. Her work focuses on the creation in printmaking as well as the research, innovation and implementation of didactic strategies applicable to different educational sites through the use of Arts-Based Methodologies, a/r/tography and Artistic Teaching Methodologies. From these, she emphasises the study of identity as an iconographic repertoire and theoretical substratum, as well as lateral printmaking practices as a teaching-learning tool.