

POINT - ELENEIO

Art education for the local community:

A pilot programme



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PART I
Introduction

Introduction to the Point - Eleneio Programme (2014-2015)

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Project Co-ordinator

Point-Eleneio (Promoting Anti-Discrimination through Arts Education for the Local Community, 2014-2015) was a six-month EEA-funded programme that aimed to establish a link between Point Centre for Contemporary Art and its neighbouring Eleneio Primary Municipal School. At the same time the programme was intended as a pilot that might guide other art centres and schools in forging similar bridges and seeking to engage with their localities.

The programme was designed on the central premise that imagination and creativity encouraged beyond the narrow confines of the "art lesson," are extremely valuable tools that can help children articulate and deal with their realities and sense of difference, so that they may imagine and take part in a future of social justice, equality, and multicultural understanding. Indeed the broad educational and social benefits of arts-education and education through art are often taken for granted and at face value. Even so, the holistic integration of arts-related educational methods in school curricula is far from the norm, and even when a degree of integration does occur, this is hardly ever harnessed to its full potential.

In response to this, the Point-Eleneio programme was built on the premise that—in the case of vulnerable on the premise with awareness and marginal groups especially—efforts to provide meaningful support towards social integration need to engage with the community beyond the mere application of standardised models.

This effort was centred around the design and execution of an arts-educational programme tailored specifically for the Eleneio School by Point Centre. A number of educational workshops took place at the school, at Point Centre, as well as during the Eleneio optional All-Day School. These were offset by a number of pre- and post-visit activities designed according to the students' response to specific themes, and their own expressed wishes and interests.

The educational core of the programme was accompanied by a series of public events that isolated specific activities and parts of the programme to be presented to the wider public, and at the same time aimed to engage the community of the school, its staff and educators, the students, their families, and its alumni, in various ways: not only as a way to give visibility to the school and the programme's core themes around anti-discrimination, but also in order to involve and respond to the needs of its community.

As discussed in Part II in this Informational Package, the programme approached art education as a social process, and worked to create a socially engaged art-educational model (in a way that is both critical and at the same time responsive to such discourse as promoted by international funding programmes) using contemporary developments in research related to arts education and education through art.

The programme's point of departure was critical contemporary discourse around the way the arts can engage with communities (see, Bishop 2012; Finkelpearl 2013; Rooke 2014) and specifically how they may address diversity, integration, social inclusion, and multicultural or inter-cultural education. These concerns became increasingly urgent during the course of the project in the light of developments around educational reforms in Cyprus, and with regard to the potential downgrading of arts-education in state schools. Indeed, central to the project's mission has been to advocate for inclusive learning environments within the current reality of multicultural schooling: environments that need to accommodate not only "others" (as these are defined ethnically or legally), but also accommodate other kinds of learning, other kinds of expression, and other ways of understanding and relating to the world and to each other.

This informational package presents the development of the programme, its structure, methodology, content, and brings forward some reflection on the project's findings, in as much as it is possible to do so concurrently. Its purpose is to propose particular methods (educational, creative, and institutional) that may be adapted by other art centers, school teachers, and art educators. The package is divided in four parts. Part I presents the story, the aims, and the structure for the project. Part II provides an overview of the theoretical context that shaped its development. Part III presents the educational materials developed during the course of the project, which may be adapted for use elsewhere. Part IV presents an assessment of the project, collecting bits of feedback and findings, combined with visual material that illustrates most of the activities described in the previous chapter. Part V puts forward the ways in which the programme and its outcomes were presented to the community, the general public, and interested experts: through events, workshops and an international conference. Finally, Part VI provides not a conclusion, but rather more humbly, some reflections on the journey of which this is only a beginning.

The Story of the Project

Working with the local community: blurring the lines between “experts” and “target audiences”

The Eleneo Primary Municipal School in Nicosia, Cyprus, is a small school with a long and illustrious history for the rising urban middle classes during the 20th century that finds its area undergoing a cycle of economic decline and rapid gentrification, as well as fluctuations in student enrolment numbers.¹ In 2013, members of the Parents' Association of the Eleneo requested the help of its neighboring Point Centre for Contemporary Art in order to promote the school with the aim of increasing enrolments. This invitation was motivated by fears for the school's potential closure in the face of a dwindling student population.

Point Centre responded to this call by beginning to work closely with the School Director, Lia Kitromilidou and by bringing in experts to develop workshops specifically for the children of Eleneo. Point Centre's plan for a closer collaboration with the School and a more ambitious and thorough art-educational agenda that would actively and critically engage with the social issues at hand, succeeded in gaining the financial support of EEA Grants for a six-month period in 2014-2015.

The programme involved the design of three rounds of workshops for the whole school, each responding to a different periodic exhibition at Point Centre, which means that each student visited three Point exhibitions and took part in three different workshops, created specifically for their age group. But although contact with the children was the focus, a big part of the programme involved securing permissions and creating the necessary institutional conditions.

Institutional bridges

In the first instance the Point-Eleneo Team worked with the children of the Eleneo School as a pilot that—aside from its educational aspects—also produced a model of institutional collaboration that, it is hoped, will find application more broadly. The programme engaged with educators, with the school administration, the teachers, and the infrastructure of the local educational system in a broader sense by involving the Ministry of Education and Culture, as well as teachers and art-educators locally and internationally, through its events.

The bureaucratic process of securing the necessary permissions in order to run the educational programme, from the side of the Ministry, tends to be time-consuming. Despite the personal good will on the side of the Ministry and the School, it is safe to say that there is little precedent or established processes that can vet, accommodate or encourage meaningful, non-fragmentary NGO involvement.

Indeed, arguably, it is the role of programmes such as this one to work towards the creation of these conditions.

The Point-Eleneo programme, therefore, despite the unwavering support of the School Director from the very beginning, as well as that of the School Inspector on the side of the Ministry, began its work on the provision that it would do nothing to intervene or create distractions from the usual running of the school, would not place any additional responsibilities on the staff, and would have no expectations beyond the children's physical participation in the workshops on the pre-set dates. Although this may sound limited and precluding most forms of meaningful engagement, it was already a success. After a process of trust-building, the programme was able to expand its activities in closer collaboration with the teachers.

Feedback meeting with teachers at the school (April 6, 2015).



February 2015 meeting with alumni committee to help with the organisation of a fund-raising event, for June 2015.

First meeting with members of the Parents Association in November 2014 at Point Centre.



¹ For the school year 2014-15 the school had a total of 67 students, with combined classrooms for years three and four, and years five and six.

The content of the programme

Photos taken by students for an optional activity for which they were given photographic and audio-recording equipment and invited to take photos and sound-recordings of important landmarks, which weren't on the usual maps (March 2015, in collaboration with teachers Pieros Kezou and Andri Moustaka).



The programme's mission was to engage in the promotion of democratic values and human rights, specifically focusing on freedom of thought, freedom of religion and belief, non-discrimination, and freedom of expression. It was designed to encourage participation and the expression of needs and values towards developing appreciation for cultural diversity.

It is important to note that the programme did not focus on multiculturalism as a theme, but rather treated it as a constant and beautiful reality, making use of the expressive qualities of art to promote a positive understanding of culture and its diversity in the students' everyday lives. It encouraged students to develop their own unique cultural and creative sensibilities and gain new practical creative skills and expressive tools, to come to terms and appreciate their own and others' difference, and to share their views and experiences. It also treated them and attempted to empower them as experts: experts in their community, in the school and its area, on their countries of origin and their culture, as well as experts in the things that they enjoy and that help them learn. The educational activities developed during this stage of the project are presented in Part III in what follows, in the form of scripts to be critically considered and potentially adapted for future use.

The projection of the programme as something extraneous and potentially burdensome to the normal operations of the school began to change as its goals and benefits started to become evident in practice. Teachers gradually became more interested and involved, and willing to allow for more time and advance co-ordination in the understanding that the programme was able to reinforce the school's existing educational goals by complementing the curriculum and by helping to motivate the students in new ways.

The students' pleasure in participating and their anticipation of future workshops was a key factor for this change, as well as the building of personal relationships of trust between the Point-Eleneio team and the teachers. Another key factor was the programme's open invitation to the teachers to participate creatively, if they wished, and in any way they liked. It provided a way for them to experiment with new pedagogic practices and methodologies that they may not have the chance or the support to try out in their everyday classrooms, and to bring forward their own interests and educational priorities.

And so after an initial process of trust-building, and with the teachers' collaboration, the programme began to be understood more like an available tool providing material and practical help that could further the teachers' existing educational goals. There developed a deeper relationship of collaboration with the school and the teachers and the Point-Eleneio team started to participate in the afternoon sessions of Eleneo's All Day School. In a number of ways this was one of the project's more interesting aspects.

These sessions, designed and executed in close collaboration with All-Day-School teacher and researcher in inter-cultural education Panayiotis Panteli, allowed the Point-Eleneio team to use critical pedagogic approaches in a more focused manner and a looser time-frame, to bring out and respond to the students' own interests and suggestions, working more closely with the combined classes of years five and six.¹

Images from voluntary activities developed with students of the Eleneo All Day School in close collaboration with teacher Panayiotis Panteli (years five and six). The sessions took a critical, experimental, pedagogic approach, with the students also entering the process as collaborators and bringing in their own concerns and creative interests.



¹ The students of years five and six proved the most challenging to engage during the project's previous stage of isolated workshops based on Point's exhibition programme. Understandably, these ages were less compliant within the context they were invited to be creative or expressive. They were more prone to claim "lack of understanding" rather than engage with Point's exhibitions, and less trusting of the Point-Eleneio team's suggestions that they were free to express themselves openly. On the whole the challenge was to bring them to consider their own immediate responses and personal interests as legitimately creative or as potentially fruitful or enjoyable starting-places for educational activities.

Community engagement

Simultaneously, a big part of the programme aimed at engaging the community of the school in conversations and actions concerning the needs of the school as perceived by the different stakeholders, and as part of broader debates.



An art-educational activity working with sound, movement and colour, initially developed for Yiannis Christofides's exhibition, was then developed into an interactive installation for the general public. It was presented at a community event / public space intervention in the near-by area, and the parents of the children were invited to take part (Urban Gorilla's Fouskopolis, April 2015).

Throughout the year a series of public events were organised around the programme's creative outcomes and findings, culminating in an Exhibition of the children's work at Point Centre.

The programme involved the local community by doing its best to address the students' parents and families through small events, by connecting with the school alumni in meetings, and by finding opportunities to address the general public that passes through the Nicosia city-centre.² Through these interactions, both the context of the programme and one of its recurrent underlying themes was the rapid transformation and gentrification of the area in connection to issues of poverty and social inequality. Issues that lie at a largely neglected intersection of educational policy and urban planning.

The programme began to draw connections between these issues, in the first instance by challenging the dominant distinction between schools of "good reputation" and "multicultural schools." The latter, an illusory label given the multicultural reality across the educational system, may nevertheless deter enrolments in local schools and, to social exclusion, and cultivate xenophobia and discrimination. The Point-Eleneio team worked to bring these discussions to the foreground, cultivate awareness, and create routes of communication—and at the same time to promote and emphasise the great value of socially diverse and multi-ethnic educational environments. The programme also engaged the school's alumni network initially to assist the Eleneio Parents' Association with fundraising, but also as a core group for the promotion of debate around intercultural education and learning through art.

Additionally, the programme circumstantially connected with other schools in the area. This introduced considerations beyond the case of the Eleneio, and although these issues cannot be appropriately handled here, the team also came to take into account questions around inner-city development and gentrification, and connected with other local projects and schools³ to think about social segregation in connection to educational policy.

The programme's academic aspects

It became evident through the programme that in the absence of local debate around its central themes, it had to create its own opportunities for the assessment and legitimisation to off its findings. It had to find a way to contribute in a lasting way to local and international debate on art learning and education, education through art, and the values of inter-cultural education in a broader sense, as well as to the potential educational role of art institutions.

Aside from holding a series of workshops addressed to local teachers and museum professionals, the Point-Eleneio team went on to organise an academic conference under the heading "Contemporary Museum and Gallery Education practices: Local Communities meet Global Narratives" (May 22-23, 2015, presented in Part V). The conference brought together local and international experts to share research and reflection on best practices.⁴ It was organised in collaboration with the Fine Arts Programme, University of Nicosia, and also gained the support of the Visual Sociology and Museum Studies Lab of the Cyprus University of Technology. The Point-Eleneio programme thus created a bridge not only between these two institutions, and with Point Centre, but also connected them in a network with a number of local and international organisations, representatives of which came to participate in the Conference and compare their work and findings.⁵

² With regard to Point's engagement with the parents, it is important to note that Point's educational involvement with the school came in response to an invitation by parents in the first place. This makes this an exceptional case but at the same time it reveals Point's pre-existing relationship with the school, in employing members of the local community for its operations. This coincidence connected the art-centre with the local labour market and due to the art-centre's small size, allowed for the development of a natural rapport around local news and problems. It is important to emphasise, therefore, the value of recruiting from the local community and the importance of this as a matter of policy.

³ For more information see Evanthia Tselika's forthcoming article in *Engage* journal entitled "Exploring the notion of resilience in museum and gallery education environments within divided city contexts: a case from Nicosia, Cyprus" (2015).

⁴ The first conference on Museum Education and Art Education to take place in Cyprus.

⁵ The conference's first keynote speaker was Dr Viv Golding, President of ICME, and Programme Director of Learning & Visitor Studies, Senior Lecturer in Communication & Education, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, who gave a keynote under the title "Museum Education with Communities: Using feminist-hermeneutics to challenge prejudice and stereotype". The second keynote was Jessica Gogan of Instituto MESA, Rio de Janeiro, whose presentation was entitled "Poetic spaces = Ethical Languages. Laboratories of Art & Social Practice in Brazil". Presentations were also made by Julie Carmean, Dr. Niki Sioki, Stefania Savva, Ioanna Danai Giampili, Dr. Reni Giannimara, Prof. Antonis Hourdakos and Dr. Sofia Trouli, Dr. Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert, Dr. René Carraz, Anna Merry, Veronika Antoniou, Yiorgos Hadjichristou, Marina Tsekou Athena Exarchou, Dr. Assimina Kaniari, Dr. Niki Nikonanou, Dr. Vera Boneva, Katerina Stephanides, Sophia Diamantopoulou, Despo Pasia, Chrystalla Antoniou, Dr. Andri Savva, Sofia Rossidou, Eli Trimis, Ljudmila Djukic, Nassia Chourmouziadi, Eirini Delidaki, Dr. Dimitra Christidou and Dr. Sara Grut, Dr. Esther Sayers, Özgül Ezgin, Argyro Tournazou, and Zehra Sonya.

⁵ The Alumni Committee was made up of Rena Fotsiou, head of the Parents' Association, Lia Kitromilidou the School Director, Anna Charalambous on behalf of the School Authority, Demetra Messiou the School Inspector on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and Eleneio alumni Andreas Agrotis, Nancy Stylianou, Kate Oikonomidou, and Eleni Konteati.

The Point-Eleneio Team

Building a team

The programme's development (that of its art-educational methods, its academic positioning as well as its means of creating connections between different kinds of educational and institutional practice) is reflected in its development as a collaborative structure. This section, therefore, also contains our acknowledgments and our gratitude for everyone involved.

The core of the Point-Eleneio Team was made up of the programme co-ordinator, Chrystalleni Loizidou (PhD), and Evanthia Tselika (PhD) the programme's lead educational consultant. Museum educator Ioanna Maki joined the core team for the final stages of the programme, lending her expertise in order to assess and process its documentation and findings for the Point-Eleneio Exhibition at Point Centre, and for the Informational Package write-up, as well as to provide support for the Conference.

The core team worked with the Parent's Association and especially its current president Rena Fotsiou, as well as Costas Georgiou the Association's previous president, the person who had initially suggested Point's collaboration with the Eleneio School. Out of this process, which initially aimed at the development of community events for the School, an Alumni Committee was called together to work towards fund-raising to cover the school's needs, a committee that went on to take a life of its own and the activities of which now reach well beyond the scope of this project.

The initial set of workshops, presented in Part III in what follows, were developed in close collaboration with composer and sound-artist Yiannis Christofides, whose work was exhibited at Point Centre at the time and served as the subject matter for the initial round of workshops. Contact with the artist was also an element in the third round of workshops, where artist Christodoulos Panayiotou, came in to be interviewed by the children, an activity developed especially, at the request of the teachers.

Volunteers

In the first instance, on the delivery and documentation of the workshops at Point Centre the core team worked with Marina Andreou and Natalia Antoniou, both of whom volunteered as part of their Fine Art and Design training with the University of Nicosia, and Anastasia Magniti who volunteered as part of her internship with Point Centre.

School and Ministry collaborators

The shape of the programme was developed in collaboration with the Director of the Eleneio School, Lia Kitromilidou, and it ran in close collaboration with the Eleneio School Secretary Efi Magniti, under the supervision of the Primary Education Inspector at the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus, Dr. Demetra Messiou, and with the support of the Minister, Costas Kadis.

The school's music teacher, Pieros Kezou collaborated on the design and execution of a series of follow-up activities, as did Andri Moustaka (the vice-principal of Eleneio and head-teacher for the 5th & 6th year), Maria Pantzara (3rd and 4th year teacher), also contributed significantly, while all educators at the school contributed with valuable comments and feedback.

Half way through the project, Panayiotis Panteli, teacher for the Eleneio Optional All-day School, and inter-cultural education researcher joined the team to co-develop a series of experimental afternoon activities for the 5th and 6th grade students attending the All-Day School.

We are grateful to all the above for their contributions and creative input. We would also like to thank Annie Damianou who came in to work on the graphic design and dissemination aspects of the project. We are grateful to Alkis Hadjiandreou for being there to reflect ideas with throughout the process, and especially for his help with the second round of workshops. We would also like to thank Thalia Panayiotou for her invaluable support as the EEA Programme Operator. We also owe thanks to all the conference participants for helping us enrich and broaden the community of people and ideas around the project. And finally, most significantly, we would like to thank the students of the Eleneio.





PART II

*Contextual
narratives:
An outline of the
theoretical context
for the project*

Considering theories and criticisms around social engagement

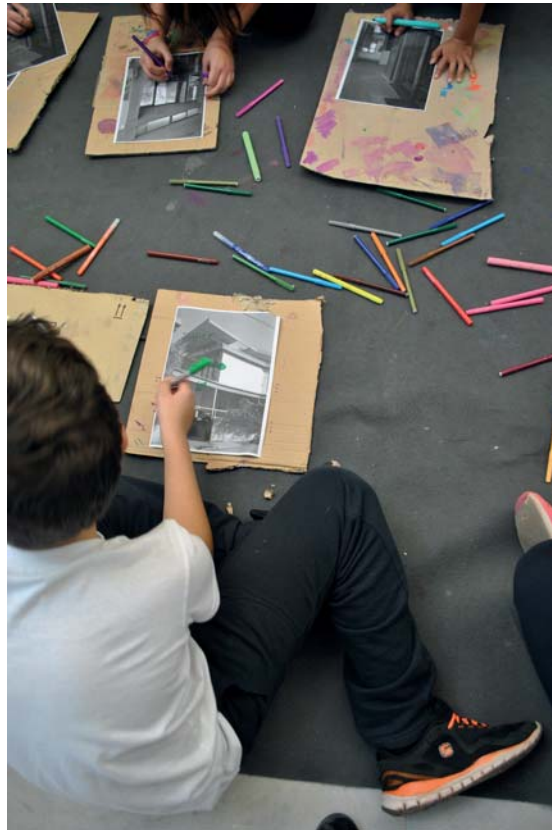
Evanthia Tselika

Project Educational Consultant

Point Centre for Contemporary Art has already provided opportunities for both students and their parents that would otherwise be out of their reach... the centre with the school's staff cooperation has acted as a link, connecting the school with its surroundings
(Part IV, Sharing Thoughts)

Panayiotis Panteli

Educator and Researcher,
Eleneio Optional All-Day School



*On Photography and Architecture,
Part III*

The collaboration of contemporary art centres with schools, as part of a wider programme of engagement with their local communities raises questions such as what does it mean to 'engage' and how are socially engaged art practices being interpreted and applied within institutional European environments? Research into socially engaged art practices reveals a pedagogical aspect that is often associated with a wider social turn in contemporary art practices. Claire Bishop points to the cancellation of 'Manifesta 6' in Nicosia, Cyprus (attributed to the ethno-national segregation and political division of the island) as the moment when the turn towards the educational structure of art accelerated (Bishop 2012, p.241). Artist Dave Beech points out that in order to "understand the turn to pedagogy" it is necessary to "locate it within this discursive field of relational, antagonistic and dialogical practice" and to comprehend it through broader changes that can be defined as "a new social ontology of art" (Beech 2010, p.51). Tom Finkelpearl, the previous director of Queens Museum in New York City, writing about socially engaged practices in the context of museum education departments argues that museum education departments in the 1990s were more socially experimental than their curatorial counterparts, as they were influenced by their commitment to community outreach (Finkelpearl 2013, p.90). This observation concurs with increasing debates in recent years about the "educational turn" and the pedagogic models that have been prevalent in contemporary art and cultural practices (see for example discussion by Rogoff 2008).

The words citizen power, citizen control, partnership, tokenism, participation and involvement are often encountered within cultural and civic programmes of citizen involvement and social engagement. The shared spaces and engagement zones proposed and enacted cannot but generate a process of reflection as to how engagement and participation are thus interpreted and applied (Onciul, 2013).¹ Alison Rooke (Centre for Urban and Community Research at Goldsmiths, London) in the report *Curating Community? The Relational and Agonistic Value of Participatory Arts in Superdiverse Localities*, which was part of the AHRC-funded *Cultural Value* project, reflects on a workshop which directly addressed community engagement and participation through the arts. Rooke writes, in dialogue with contemporary literature on the subject, that as public and private bodies realise the potential of participatory and socially engaged art, the professionalization of this methodology of social practice is observed (2014, p.3). The report highlights how social art practices are related to earlier efforts of independent social justice and change movements and the way that participation through art is used within current urban regeneration processes, this leading to questions, such as to what the purpose of participation is and how that relates to the agenda of social policy and corporate interests. Within this schema the social practitioner is interpreted as a facilitator who brings together different partners into a process of collaboration and who mediates the process of social engagement with the targeted social group.

¹ The breakdown provided by Sherry R Arnstein in *A ladder of Participation* (1969) demonstrates different gradation levels of participation and it can allow for a process of reflection in relation to the patterns of engagement facilitated by contemporary art programmes that aim for new citizen integration. Arnstein's ladder starts from the bottom rungs of the ladder – (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy – where the objective is to "enable powerholders to 'educate' or 'cure' the participants" (Arnstein 1969, p.2). (3) Informing and (4) Consultation relate to varying notions of "tokenism" that allow the have-nots to hear and have a voice" (ibid), whilst (5) Placation "is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the power holders the continued right to decide" (ibid). (6) Partnership allows citizens to enter into a position of negotiation and engagement with the power holders, whilst at the top of the ladder (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control "citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power" (ibid, p.3).

Social Engagement in Museum and Gallery Education

In the current context of continuous change within educational systems and paradigms, multiple concerns are being addressed and examined: the effects and developments of globalisation and technology advancements, ideological educational reforms according to different government agendas, private education in comparison to state education and the development of inter-cultural learning environments amongst others. Such debates are taking place across national boundaries and are characteristic of different government systems (Woods & Woods 2009). Diversity, cultural difference and wide ranging voices are issues faced across the European educational context (see, e.g., Student Voices Europe 2015). As different national and ethnic communities become citizens within European states, school environments are asked to respond to notions of multiple identities and senses of cultural belonging. This phenomenon can be read through Homi K. Bhabha's analysis of a "transnational dimension of cultural formation" which exists in the "migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation" and the way that culture is translated in this "naturalized, unifying discourse of 'nation'", the particularities of which cannot be "readily referenced" and where one becomes "increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention of tradition" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 172).

At the same time, current developments such as mass global tourism and migratory processes, technological advancements and instant communication patterns affect the dissemination of information and access to information. These social changes reshape the way different nations, and social groups interact, and the way museums and galleries, as spaces of learning and entertainment are negotiated in the present multi-ethnic and multi-cultural context of most European cities. This multi-ethnic reality has resulted to multiple museum programmes that focus on inter-cultural dialogue across Europe. By integrating the importance of co-existence and inter-cultural dialogue in their programming museum and gallery spaces could potentially reinforce a wider policy project that contributes to fostering social and cultural respect (Bodo, Gibbs & Sani 2009).

Contemporary Practices in Museum Learning with regard to Multiculturalism and Integration



On Contemporary art, Part III

The increased interest in the field of museum education, experienced increasingly internationally for the last thirty years, has been assisted by a turn to experiential learning, which emphasises the role of the actual experience within the learning process. A quest for meaning is attempted through the intellectual and emotional involvement of the learner/participant, aiming for a conceptual process to be generated. The opening up of the museum to the local community and the transition to an audience focused approach, related to the participatory shift of cultural practices, has meant that the integration of diverse social groups has concerned the international museum community for some time. Already from the 1980s, museums and international culture foundations in Europe and the USA began to re-assess their purpose and function, placing the visitor in the centre of their interests (exhibitions, educational programmes, mobile museum programmes etc.) and in their operational structures- extended hours, an emphasis on accessibility etc. (Hooper-Greenhill 1997; Hein 1998; Hooper-Greenhill 1999; Moffat & Woollart 2000). The social role of the museum and gallery institutions can be read within a wider 'social turn' that has and is being increasingly addressed and discussed (Bishop 2012; Golding 2013; Finkelpaerl 2013). However even though museums in the states of Northern Europe have encouraged the participation of migrant communities since the nineteen nineties, museums in Southern Europe have only begun working with migrant social groups in recent years (Hooper-Greenhill 1997; Iervolino 2013).

In the last few years there is a noted increase in the educational and community programmes that have been created for the attraction and involvement of migrant groups by European museums. New ways of approaching and re-interpreting the museum and gallery spaces are presented, and an emphasis placed on active involvement and participatory models of engagement. The European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research, carried out a study on behalf of the European Commission entitled *Sharing Diversity: National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe*. The main objectives were to "promote intercultural dialogue as an instrument to assist European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, to acquire the knowledge and abilities to deal with a more open and more complex environment and to raise their awareness of the importance of developing an active European citizenship that is open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values" (ERICarts 2008, p.7).

The above study addressed how inter-cultural dialogue and integration policies are developed in European museums and described different policy models, such as those that are based on "Knowledge centred multi-culturalism which focuses on an educational strategy to inform the indigenous locals, in relation to 'other' cultures that are traditionally under represented or invisible within the museum context". Or alternatively, of efforts towards "Integrating 'new citizens' within the dominant culture patterns, assisting in teaching migrant groups more about the history of the country, the language and its heritage" (ERICarts 2008). Even though the Point-Eleneio project is related to these overarching European integration policies, it distinguishes itself from such models by maintaining a critical stance first to notions of a homogeneous, dominant, indigenous culture, history, language, and heritage, as well as to top-bottom approaches to integration and to issues of participation. Even though the project was facilitated by the educational team of the art centre, the focus was to cultivate an environment of joint decision making with the different stake holders of the programme, specifically the teachers and the students of Eleneio school.

Thinking about social engagement and museum education in the case of Nicosia, Cyprus



On Contemporary art, Part III

Museum education programmes in Cyprus, understood largely as organised object-oriented and display-based educational workshops designed for young people and particularly primary school groups, seem to have emerged in the late 1980s. There were, however, earlier pedagogical uses of archaeological sites, artefact collections and museum/heritage spaces, as sites of learning. The first museum education programme in Cyprus created for primary school students appears to be an educational programme developed by the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia in 1989 (Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia). The department of Museum Education within the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus did not begin to run educational programmes for school groups for the state museums until 1996 (Cyprus Museum Education 2015). At present, with gallery and museum spaces not only increasing in number, but also becoming aware—in line with the international trends discussed in the previous section—of a need for the development of a broader range of activities and types of audience engagement, there is an increased interest in how the museum or gallery space can be used by educators in the learning process and how cultural institutions can engage with the different communities that live in Cyprus. The latter is a relatively new phenomenon as there have been relatively few efforts which focus on the country's long-standing and growing cultural diversity and which aim to foster inter-cultural dialogue through artistic practices within museum and gallery contexts.²

The need for a transnational dimension to the educational approach of the state school system also becomes evident in this case as the focus of the project is Eleneio, where the majority of the students claim diverse national identities. This need to address diversity and multi-culturalism within the Cypriot educational system is demonstrated by the set-up of the Committee of “Inter-cultural learning and education” in 2008, which belongs to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Cyprus Intercultural Education 2015); and addressed in a publication by local educators in 2014 (Hadjisoteriou & Xenofontos 2014). In response to this state of affairs, the Point-Eleneio programme was developed to reflect on the multi-cultural reality of contemporary Cypriot schools, particularly those that are found within the Nicosia city centre. As a project which is based on a long term collaboration between the two institutions it assists in creating a framework for examining the processes of exchange between cultural foundations and school environments over an extended period of time (See Part IV). Related to contemporary debates about the use of public programming and the agendas of museum educational department efforts to engage different audiences in the world of the museum or gallery space, this programme was developed to create a framework of exchange between Cypriot formal education structures and contemporary artistic institutional practices.

As such the Point-Eleneio collaboration fulfils some of the central axes of the *New Analytical Programme of Visual Arts* issued by the Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, demonstrating how it could potentially be practiced. In line with the *New Programme*, for example, Point-Eleneio works towards exploring materials and techniques, brings students in contact with contemporary art and its practices, provides experiences which relate to visual art expressions and concepts, approaches visual art production as a social and cultural phenomenon, and promotes respect to one's self and others while accepting difference and cultivating awareness and critical thinking in relation to society and culture (New Analytical Programme, 2012, 2.1). At the same time this relationship between the art centre and the school is directly related to address section 2.2.2.A. of the *New Analytical Programme of Visual Arts* with regard to “the development of relationships with the municipality and the local community, such as cultural centres and visual artists” (New Analytical Programme, 2012, section 2.2).

² As of 2009 the Republic of Cyprus contains significant migrant populations, numbering to around 140,000 people (MacKay, 2009). It is also estimated that there are around 30,000 undocumented migrants. This means that approximately one-fifth of the people in the Republic of Cyprus are not of Greek Cypriot origin (information from fieldwork carried out at the Migration and Registry Department in April 2009 by the head of the migrant rights NGO, KISA Action for Equality, Support, Anti-racism, Doros Polycarpou, see MacKay 2009). Beyond Cyprus's traditional ethnic communities, Armenian, Greek, Latin, Maronite and Turkish, the country is now home to quite different ethnic and racial groups, e.g. Asian, African, Eastern European and European. One of the first waves of immigrants to arrive were citizens of former Soviet Union countries who were of Greek descent; this group held Greek passports and recognized the relaxed immigration laws between Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. Occurring at almost the same time was the migration of domestic workers from Southeast Asia and from Eastern Europe (Demetriou 2008). A 2004 UNOPS (United Nations Operation for Project Services) report on the city of Nicosia within the walls (Eleneio is located just outside the old city walls) determined that only about 50% of the residents were Greek Cypriot. The remaining were a mixture of different racial groups (Pontiac (16 %), nationals of India (7 %), the Philippines (5 %), Pakistan (4 %), Russia (3 %), Greece (3 %), Sri Lanka (3 %) and China (2 %), with a sizeable percentage from elsewhere (12 %) (UNOPS Report 2004). Even though large number of migrants have left the island—since the default and restructuring of the banking system (March 2013) and the subsequent bailout plan negotiated with the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank—because of the economic downturn and the lack of work opportunities, statistics still demonstrate that in relation to the population Cyprus has one of the highest migrant rates in Europe (Eurostat Migration 2014). Therefore it is not surprising that at the present moment the Ministry of Education and Culture considers all schools to be multi-cultural environments. This is demonstrated by the statistics provided for state primary school education which indicate that 16.4% of students are of non-Cypriot origin (Cyprus Inter-cultural Education 2015).

The students of the school engaged with a series of contemporary art exhibitions and the project navigated this engagement so as to address the multi-cultural reality of the school environment.

The facilitation process of the project (a collaboration between a school and an art centre) can be considered through the framework of critical pedagogy thereby allowing us to re-consider how we go about creating an environment of shared learning. In this, the project follows the work of critical pedagogist Paulo Freire, who questioned the traditional model of education in which teachers transfer information to students, and proposed instead the model of the teacher as a co-producer of knowledge (1970). Another central tenet of Point-Eleneio follows Freire's views around the development of critical consciousness through educative systems that blur the position of teacher and student, by exploring the use of dialogue within the learning process. The blurring of the boundaries between teacher and student relates to the figure of the facilitator, which is central to the position of the museum and gallery educator, who is asked to work in cooperation with the community and who learns together with that community. The restrictions of time within the day time primary school structure (07:45-13:05) and the process of getting to know this specific school environment cultivated a strong collaboration with Panayiotis Panteli, a teacher in the Eleneio "optional all day school" and a researcher of the phenomenon of multi-lingualism within the school environment (See Part IV). This specific collaboration aimed to work together with the students of the age group eleven to twelve, who attend the optional all day school on a weekly basis over a period of three months. The direction of these workshops was shaped together with the students and this methodological approach drew from current educational practices, such as the *Student Voices Europe* (2015). *Student Voices Europe* was developed to support teachers in developing inclusive classroom practices by engaging with the views of students, and explores ways of addressing "personal and social circumstances – and links three main elements – responding to diversity, the use of 'lesson study', and listening to students' voices" (ibid.).

Creating educational programmes that relate to issues of multi-culturalism, diversity and integration necessitates a process of reflection as to what inter-cultural dialogue, participation and engagement means, particularly for the case of Nicosia, which has been an ethno-nationally divided city for the last fifty years (Tselika 2015). The process of engaging in a programme that relates to such issues, started in this case from a pre-supposition that indigenous and migrant social groups enter in a process of interaction in which all parties are treated as equal. It is an open process that relates to the new communities and to the specific locality, where contact, shared spaces and relationship building are central, as well as skill building, dialogical engagement and critical thinking in relation to understanding how multiple identities and belonging are experienced through the involvement of different cultural, national and religious perspectives presented by the students of the school. The fact that museums and cultural institutions are increasingly being funded and supported to implement a process of social engagement, means that they are also reconsidering how visitors gain access to their activities. In the case of Cyprus the phenomenon of museums and galleries actively developing programmes that facilitate the cultural participation of new migrant communities and their families is still at a nascent stage. The Point-Eleneio programme because of its long term engagement with a particular school meant that the students visited the contemporary art centre three times in the space of six months, thereby creating a relationship with the space. As this was the main axis of the realisation of this programme, the re-reading of the different sensory and creative experiences that the students engaged in was enabled through the diverse activities that were developed in response to three contemporary art exhibitions (See Parts III and IV).



Connecting Senses, Part III



One could observe that the students were attracted to the exhibits that integrated movement, sound and sensory experiences thereby rendering the experience as more fun. Eleven year old Eleneo student Georgia said “it was fun, miss, we fooled around”. This highlights that the memorable aspect of the visit, was also having fun within the space (See Part IV for students' comments). The programme focused on the active involvement and co-operation of the participants (Point-Eleneio) and it has set a strong basis for the continuation of the collaboration. Using the context of contemporary artistic practices and the production of art, the voices of the students and their own stories, became highlighted in the development, documentation and display process of the project. This allowed for a reflection process to be triggered as to how the needs and expectations of different communities that live in Nicosia can be mapped and highlighted in the public sphere. The importance of carrying this out on a long term basis in relation to the re-interpretation of other museum and gallery collections became evident through the process of developing this project (ERICarts 2008).

Considering the framing of the programme within a local debate about inner city (Nicosia) primary schools and their diverse communities an inter-disciplinary approach was developed in the way the activities the students were involved in were shaped (See Part III). This inter-disciplinary approach responded to the way contemporary art exhibits could be utilized in relation to the wider school curriculum (thus exploring the aspect of a longer term collaboration between the art centre and the school) and this was addressed in discussion with the teachers of Eleneo. For example Christofides's sound installation could be related to both music and science classes; the approach to the Binet educational programme for Geography and English lessons; and Panagiotou's exhibition to Cypriot history and Greek language use (See Parts III & IV). All the teachers were asked to contribute to the programme by developing an activity in response to Christodoulos Panagiotou exhibition; only one did so during the visits, but other teachers followed up with post visit activities. The students participated in three rounds of workshops and gallery visits, which lasted for approximately ninety minutes per class, because of time restrictions due to the programming of the classes and execution of subject curricula. The workshops included different methods of engagement such as developing the notion of experiencing the artworks, dialogical interpretations, getting to know the work of the artist, and a range of activities that responded to the thematic and conceptual axis of the exhibition(s) and to the notions of identity, difference and engagement. The activities differed for each exhibition in terms of approach, visual art media and techniques exploration and thematic structures. The overall programme, however, was shaped so as to highlight the diverse voices of the students, and as it was developed specifically for this school, the workshops evolved in response to the needs and abilities of the different age groups and students, as will be demonstrated in the following section. The learning objectives of each workshop series reflected the learning objectives of the overall programme, as well as specific directions inspired by the artists' work and concepts/contexts explored by each exhibition.



PART III

Scripts for the Educational Workshops

Note: The following learning activities, presented here in the form of scripts for reflection and adaptation, were developed specifically for the students of Eleneio, through a deepening relationship with the specific students, while getting to know them, their interests, and anticipating their responses. The workshops also responded to limitations imposed by the school schedule, and were planned in a way that was open for the teachers to join in and contribute at different stages. Depending on the mood and dynamic of each group, they relied on improvisation on behalf of the facilitators. The scripts are presented here without visual aids. For photographic documentation corresponding to specific activities please turn to Part IV.

Workshop series 1

Connecting senses

Introduction

Yiannis Christofides' sound installation 'The Blind Ear' constitutes the first exhibition to be included in Point Centre's educational programme formed in partnership with Eleneio Primary School. The workshop designed by the Point-Eleneio core team was carried out on the 20th and 28th of November 2014 with the participation of all school years.

Contemporary art practices often move beyond the confines of our traditional notion of what a work of art should be or look like. Yiannis Christofides's work brought attention to the "interdependencies and interactions" taking place "between different sensory faculties" (Yiannis Christofides's exhibition description, Point Centre, 2014), using a completely dark room with black-painted walls, along with high quality sound equipment to produce a voluptuous, abstract, sound-scape made up of processed field recordings. The educational workshop designed specifically for this exhibition invited students to engage with the notion of sound synaesthetically; intermingling objects, colours, feelings, and sounds to trigger old memories and create new ones, and also to unveil a "multitude of subjective interpretations" and differences.

It is important to note that the workshop was designed and delivered in partnership with the artist himself. It responded to his interest in graphic scores, as well as the conditions and meditative aspects of active listening as a technique closely connected to learning. The below descriptions of activities follow learning objectives which respond to the specific exhibition, but simultaneously remain in line with the general objectives of the educational programme.

Exhibition Information

Yiannis Christofides,
The Blind Ear
 Point Centre for
 Contemporary Art
 31.10.2014 – 29.11.2014

Point Centre for Contemporary Art presented a sound installation by the composer, sound artist and sound designer Yiannis Christofides; a multichannel sonic environment that explored a sense of place through listening, ritual and the condition of darkness.

Yiannis Christofides (b. 1985, Nicosia) is a composer, sound artist and sound designer. Much of his work investigates our experience of place through the use of field recordings as principal material. His particular interest in field recording is in relation to the contextual aspects of sound and the intersensory experience that it affords. Thus it often extends beyond the auditory in order to take into consideration the interdependencies and interactions between different sensory faculties, the multitude of subjective interpretations, memories and personal narratives associated with a particular soundfield and its social and political context. Among others, his work has been presented at many occasions and institutions in Europe and the US (the Internationales Klangkunstfest Berlin 2014 (DE), the wulf., Los Angeles (US), Circuit Bridges | Gallery MC, New York (US), Metamatic: The Art Foundation, Athens (GR), The Ethnological Museum, Nicosia (CY) etc.).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The workshop encourages students to:

- » use their senses and body to respond to the artwork.
- » think about their listening skills and begin to practice “active listening”.
- » use their imagination and freely interpret the work of art.
- » be self-mobilised and develop their confidence and creative identity.
- » advance their personal skills while at the same time respect the opinion and creativity of others.
- » work collectively and sustain team spirit.
- » comprehend that contemporary art has multiple forms.
- » become aware and sensitive to the environment in which they live by recording and listening to its soundscapes.
- » identify differences and multiplicities as characteristics of “wholes” by combining objects, colours, feelings, and sounds to create their own artworks.
- » improvise independently and collectively.
- » meet and work with the artist Yiannis Christofides.
- » play

RESOURCES

Timeframe: 90 minutes

Materials

- » Small coloured battery-powered tea lights, one or two for each student.
- » Tempera Paints
- » Brushes/sponges
- » Coloured markers
- » Large rolls of blank paper for tempera colouring
- » Objects to make sounds – spoons, branches, leaves, boxes, stones, and so forth
- » Found images for collage – newspapers/magazines
- » Printed maps of the city
- » A whiteboard, or a large sheet of paper for taking notes on
- » Soundscape (Yiannis Christofides’s “The Blind Ear”)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1 (all years)

Introduction:

Sound and the city: a sound walk

Note: The first activity is initiated at the school's premises, is carried out during the students' transfer to the art centre and is completed upon arrival at the art centre. The artist Yiannis Christofides also participates as an art-educator.

We begin by meeting the students at the school's premises and by asking everyone to stand in a circle. This includes the educational team as well as the teachers. The educational team introduces themselves. To get to know each other and break the ice we go around the circle in turn, asking everyone to imagine and articulate a sound that they feel represents them.

E.g. *"If you were a sound, which one do you think you would be?"*

"Is there a sound that could describe you or your personality?"

The artist encourages students to participate in a game that requires them to carefully listen and remember as many sounds as possible during the walk from the school to the art centre.

E.g. *"We are part of the city, but we never listen to what it has to say to us. Wouldn't it be nice if today we let it talk to us? Let's play a game – we will start by listening to the sounds close to us, we will try and remember them, and then we will attempt to hear the ones that are further away. Let's see how many each of us can remember!"*

During the route from the school to the art centre the students can discuss between them any sound that catches their attention, but we also encourage them to reflect on their own.

Upon arrival at the art centre, we ask students to respond to a set of questions regarding the set of sounds each managed to pick up.

E.g. *"What kind of sounds did we listen to on our way here?"*

"What type of differences did these sounds have?"

"Which sounds were strong and which ones appeared more subtle?"

"Which sounds did you prefer?"

"What kind of feelings do they trigger?"

The activity is completed with an explanation of what a "soundscape" is (i.e. a given set of sounds and comes from or forms an environment) and what a "sound walk" is (i.e. the activity of walking with the primary purpose of listening to the environment).

ACTIVITY 2 (all years)

Active listening

We ask students to enter the central exhibition space in which the artist's sound installation is being played in darkness (this is discussed with the teachers before-hand). Once the students have taken their time to feel comfortable within the space and have listened to the sounds being played, we invite them to sit down in a circle. Some of the lights of the space can now be turned on.

We encourage students to discuss what they hear and what they feel and ask them to express their emotions via the movement of the body. The activity is being carried out using a ball of yarn that is thrown to each student at a time and signifies that his or her turn is up to respond to one of the questions posed.

E.g. *"How do we feel right now about being in this dark room and listening to these sounds?"*

"What kind of sounds can we hear?", "Do they point to a specific landscape or a place? Where could that be?"

"How do you think these sounds were amassed or created and how did they end up being played in this space?"

"What would be the opposite of that which you are currently feeling?"

"With which sounds could you connect it?"

"Do you think that there is a difference between listening to sounds in the dark and listening to sounds in the light? How does it differ?"

"What sort of images come up in our mind while listening to these sounds?"

ACTIVITY 3 (all years)

Moving lights and colours

We invite students to consider the ways in which our bodies could respond to the sounds being played.

E.g. *“If we were to represent or translate any of these sounds with movement how do you think it would look like? What sort of body movements would you choose and why?”*

While the space's lights are being turned off, each student is provided with one or two small battery-powered coloured tea-lights (different colours). While standing, either one by one or in small groups, the students are invited to move their bodies according to the sound they hear. The movement of coloured lights in the darkness creates an interesting visual effect. This can be recorded through a camera and fed back to a television or projection.

We repeat the process until all pairs have performed and we complete the activity by carrying out one last performance with everyone together.

ACTIVITY 4 (years 1, 2, 3, & 4)

Drawing sound: Producing a graphic score

We turn on the lights and invite the students to try and translate the sounds they have heard in a drawing.

E.g. *“What would happen if we now attempted to draw the sounds we have heard? How would they look in colour, on paper?”*

Using sponges and paints the students are encouraged to reproduce the sounds they listened to on a long sheet of paper that we have rolled out on the floor. They are subtly encouraged to work in an abstract rather than representational manner, and they are offered basic instruction about brush-work and colour mixing.

While the activity is being carried out we discuss the connections that can be made between colour, sound, emotions, and our other senses. We also ask them to consider the ways in which distant, close or loud sounds can be pictured.

E.g. *“What colour do you think this or that sound could be?”*

“Could you find a feeling that could match those?”

“If we were to depict a sound that we can hear loudly and one that is far away from us how would these differ on paper?”

ACTIVITY 5 (years 1, 2, 3, & 4)

Giving sound to our drawing: Performing our graphic score

Once the students have completed their drawings in reference to the artist's sound installation (pl. refer to Activity 4), we ask them to examine and choose one or a set of the sound-producing everyday objects we have laid out (spoons, branches, leaves, boxes, wooden and metal bowls, stones, and so forth).

We ask students to stand around the colour painting they produced during the previous activity and consider the sound that their object could make in order to match their drawing.

E.g. *“Should your spoon be heard loudly or should it be heard subtly?”*

“How could it imitate the sound of the car you have drawn?”

“How should the blue colour be heard?”

“Could the line sound differently than the circle?”

Perceiving the long sheet of paper as a music score, the artist encourages the students to take up the roles of an orchestra's musicians and play the instruments (i.e. the objects) they hold while he is transformed to the team's maestro / conductor. Using his hands he instructs each student when to stop making sound, when to 'play' his or her 'instrument' louder, etc.

Once the brief concert of sounds is completed, students are asked to reflect on the musicality of a soundscape and the connections sounds can make in reference to colours and feelings.

ACTIVITY 6 (years 5 & 6)

Creating a 24-hour soundscape of Nicosia

Note: The activity was inspired by Yiannis Christofides's soundscape entitled 'Postcards: Nicosia'

DEPICTING SOUNDS

We refer back to the sounds the students managed to pick up during their sound-walk between the school and the art centre and re-introduce the notion of the soundscape.

We hand out to students printed maps of the area (the Nicosia city centre, which includes their school as well as Point Centre) and encourage them to draw or collage found images depicting city sounds

E.g. *"Based on the sounds we have heard during our walk, what type of images you would choose?"*

"What can we hear now while sitting indoors?"

"Which sounds would you keep for your map and which would you throw away?"

(Although the focus is on actual city sounds but those who prefer to take a fictional, non-realist approach are not discouraged from doing so.)

Once the students have completed the task we ask them to place their "soundmaps" against the wall.

CATEGORISING OUR DEPICTED SOUNDS

We ask about the sounds the students chose to depict, circle some of them on the sound-maps and note some of them on our Whiteboard. We also separate our chosen sounds in categories, i.e. natural sounds, mechanical sounds, human sounds, etc. We encourage them to consider the human sounds in relation to the different languages being spoken and heard within the city centre. We can also ask students to find and circle on their maps a sound falling under each category.

Once the categories have been formed, the students are separated in groups and asked to pick a category to work with. A discussion takes place as to how each category's sound could be played using the everyday objects laid out on the floor, our voices, and our bodies.

PLAYING OUR DEPICTED SOUNDS

The students are asked to choose one or two everyday objects that could best relate to their group's sound category. We discuss the ways in which their sound can be connected to the chosen objects (e.g. natural sounds = leaves or branches, bottles of water, mechanical sounds = metallic objects, human sounds = voices, etc.).

Once the relationships between the sound and the objects have been discussed, we move on to experiment with the ways in which the objects could be 'played' as reproduce the desired sets of sounds.

We ask students to play with their objects the circled sounds according to their order of appearance (e.g. from left to right). We discuss a re-arrangement of the sounds on the Whiteboard, so that they correspond to the different hours of a day and we fill in our score with new sounds.

E.g. *"Would you say that some sounds are heard throughout the day or not?"*

"Which sounds do you think belong to daytime and which to nighttime?"

"If we were to match each sound with a specific hour of the day, what would the new re-arrangement sound like?"

The students perform a 24-hour soundscape of Nicosia, based on the whiteboard sounds but also encouraged to improvise, while following Yiannis's gestures as a conductor: increasing the volume, moving in a gentler or more intense direction, while listening to each other and producing something collectively.

ADDITIONAL / OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 7 (all years)

Singing in different languages

Students are asked to choose a song from their country of origin and sing its chorus. The performance can be recorded or not. We can use this as a starting place for to discuss multilingualism and what this means.

ACTIVITY 8 (years 5 & 6)

Mapping image and sound

“How is the urban environment structured and navigated, and then interpreted and perceived? How do we recognise and agree on the city’s landmarks? What does Nicosia really look like and sound like?”

Students are encouraged to find and collect photographs, images and sounds-recordings by identifying alternative landmarks, less visible social pockets, and overlooked corners in the city.

The process of collection and selection could be a two-month project which culminates in the creation of a city map and a set of soundscapes describing Nicosia through the senses and feelings of the students.

Workshop Series 2

On photography and architecture:

Capturing and developing our own Architectures

Introduction

The 'Maria and Neoptolemos Michaelides Residence by Neoptolemos Michaelides' exhibition which features photographs by Hélène Binet constitutes the second exhibition to be included in the Point-Eleneio programme. The workshops were carried out on the 16th and 23rd of January 2015.

The exhibition presents black and white photographs of Maria and Neoptolemos Michaelides's residence (a notable structure that compounds the history, the development, and the influences making up Cypriot modernist architecture) taken by Hélène Binet (an artist internationally renowned for her architectural photography), alongside artefacts and video works that bring forward parallel readings of Michaelides's work by architecture researcher Petros Phokaides's and the artist collective pick nick. The photographs as well as the other exhibited works and artefacts, including original architectural plans, invite the viewer to think about the architect's continuous effort in carefully marrying international modernist elements with local architectural characteristics.

The workshops developed for this exhibition drew upon the ideas of the local and the international, the specific and the general, the small and the grand, thought of as relationships of interdependence rather than of conflict. From the house out to the city and from the city reaching out to the whole world, in this workshop the students are invited to envision and construct a city of their own.

Exhibition Information

**Maria and
Neoptolemos
Michaelides Residence
by Neoptolemos
Michaelides
Photographed by Hélène
Binet with parallel
readings by Petros
Phokaides and pick nick
05.12.2014 – 31.01.2015**

Point Centre for Contemporary Art presented an exhibition featuring photos of Maria and Neoptolemos Michaelides's residence by the architectural photographer Hélène Binet. Point commissioned Binet to come to Cyprus and photograph the house which was designed by Michaelides and constructed in the mid-sixties. The exhibition placed the focus upon the outstanding work of Neoptolemos Michaelides, one of the key figures of architectural modernism in Cyprus, and simultaneously opens the discourse around it at an international level. Through the lens of Binet the interior and exterior of the house that the architect and his artist wife resided, was reduced to the qualities and core values that characterised Michaelides's working idiosyncrasy. Before setting up her heavy analogue cameras and beginning to structure her images, Binet spent time in and around the house, engaging in an intimate experience of the building following a ritual-like procedure. Her frames emphasise the strong concept behind the residential building and highlight the qualities represented on its structural elements. Binet (re)introduced us to the world of the architect with images that trigger thinking processes and dreams and invites us to reflect on the essence of things, a process that defined Michaelides's working and living philosophy. Binet has developed a unique way of looking at buildings, penetrating to their core, capturing the values and truths that they encapsulate and exposing them in her photographs. The underlying theme in her work is the interplay of light, shadow and texture of materials and architectural elements. By choosing to focus on certain details, elements or lines and to position them together in her frames, she initiates a dialogue between them. Thus, her work goes beyond documentation and is best described as a compositional process that brings forward essential connections and associations.

Parallel readings by Petros Phokaides and pick nick

Petros Phokaides highlights architectural discourses imprinted in magazines and books found in Neoptolemos Michaelides's abandoned architectural office at 39 Perikleous Street, in Nicosia; and initiates exchanges with historians and theorists of architecture in order to formulate critical perspectives crossing Michaelides's work and the post-war architectural culture.

pick nick became intrigued with the prospect of meeting and talking with Maro Yiakoumi, a former architectural designer working with Neoptolemos Michaelides. Crucial in the realisation of the architect's oeuvre, pick nick was fascinated by the idea of 'following' in short time the narrative as retold by this woman, decades after her lifetime experience.

Hélène Binet (1959) was born in Switzerland and she currently lives and works in London. She studied photography at the Instituto Europeo di Design in Rome, where she grew up, and soon developed an interest in architectural photography. Over a period of twenty-five years Hélène Binet has photographed both contemporary and historical architecture. Her list of clients includes architects Zaha Hadid, Daniel Libeskind, Studio Mumbai, Peter Zumthor and many others. While following the work of contemporary architects – often from construction through completion – Hélène Binet has also photographed the works of past architects as Alvar Aalto, Le Corbusier, Sverre Fehn, Sigurd Lewerentz, Andrea Palladio and Dimitris Pikionis. More recently, Hélène Binet has started to direct her attention to landscape photography, wherein she transposes key concerns of her architectural photography. Binet's work has been published in a wide range of books, and is shown in both national and international exhibitions. She is an advocate of analogue photography and therefore she exclusively works with film. Hélène Binet was selected to receive the Julius Shulman Institute Excellence in Photography Award for 2015. www.helenebinet.com

Neoptolemos Michaelides (1920 -1992) was born in Nicosia Cyprus and he is celebrated as one of the most important representatives of modern architecture in Cyprus. He began his studies in Milan, in 1940, under great architects like Gio Ponti and Bruno Zevi but when WWII broke out he returned to his homeland. After the war ended he went back to Milan and completed his studies. In 1952 he came to live in Cyprus. Michaelides developed a strong personal style through his work. He was a meticulous researcher and enthusiast for local traditional architecture but at the same time an advocate of the modern movement. He had a unique ability to combine, in a very sophisticated and balanced way, traditional and modern elements and materials like light, water, wood, stone, iron, glass and concrete. His work is characterised by use of simple and pure forms, absence of historical reference or decorative elements, architectural coherence and bioclimatic design. He was the founder (1979) and first president of the Pancyprian Organization of Architectural Heritage and a pioneer for the preservation of many urban and rural examples of traditional architecture in Cyprus.

Petros Phokaides is an architect and a researcher at Mesarch Lab, University of Cyprus, and he is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) in Greece. He has performed extensive archival research in Cyprus, Greece and United Kingdom on the history of inter- and post-war modern architecture. He has co-curated the installation *Treasured Microcosms* (Treasure Island exhibition, Nicosia, 2014) and the event *Critical Archaeologies* (Suspended Spaces research program, Nicosia, 2011). His historical and theoretical investigations on modern and contemporary architecture have been published in *Docomomo Journal*, *Journal of Architecture*, *MIT Thresholds*, *MONU Magazine* and *A10*.

pick nick is an independent art and research collective, based in Cyprus and initiated by Maria Petrides (independent writer & editor), Panayiotis Michael (visual artist), and Alkis Hadjiandreou (visual artist & architect). pick nick draws from everyday routines, sites and infrastructures in an effort to zoom into moments noticing vulnerabilities, paused potentials, hidden details, and intimate silences in order to work with and around these conditions. www.picknickworks.org

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The proposed workshop encourages students to:

- » develop and enhance their knowledge and vocabulary around the exhibition's main themes (photography and architecture).
- » consider the notions of home and the city, personally, locally, and more broadly.
- » consider the notion of urban life and the similarities and differences between different cities around the world.
- » comprehend the use of public spaces and develop an understanding of the multicultural aspects of the urban environment.
- » become young urban planners and use recyclable materials to create 3D objects.
- » use their senses and observation skills to engage with the photographs and objects on display.
- » use their imagination and respond freely and creatively to the exhibits.
- » demonstrate initiative and development in their creative thinking.
- » advance their personal skills (conceptual and practical) while at the same time respecting the opinion and creativity of others.
- » work collectively and sustain team spirit.
- » create interventions

RESOURCES

Timeframe: 90 minutes

Materials

- » 1 personal photo album
- » 1 negative photographic film
- » Cardboard boxes of various sizes (1 per 2 students)
- » Materials for collage, either magazines from different countries or printed photographs found online depicting city landscapes (iconic ones, everyday ones, unexpected ones) for cities around the world, especially cities of students' origin.
- » Sound clips of each city's/country's folklore music (45 seconds for each city/country)
- » 1 world map
- » PowerPoint presentation with images of cardboard cities (art projects interspersed with creative use of cardboards for temporary housing by homeless people)
- » PowerPoint presentation with images from the different cities
- » Sets of coloured markers

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1 (all years)

Introduction:

Upon arrival at the exhibition space we ask students if during their route between the school and the arts centre they observed a building that struck their attention.

E.g. *“On your way here, were you impressed by any of the buildings you saw?”*

“Why did it catch your attention?”

“What did it feature that separated it from the other buildings?”

Having discussed some of the students' answers, we invite them to explore the exhibition and we lay out the rules of good behaviour and respect towards the works of art and the exhibition space.

E.g. *“Unfortunately, touching is not permitted and we should also avoid running around. It is absolutely fine to talk to one another, but we must remember not to shout.”*

Once their exploration has been completed, we encourage students to respond to a set of questions in reference to the content of the exhibition.

E.g. *“How is this exhibition different from the previous one? What do we see in the space this time round?”*

“Is this art?”

“Who do you think created/designed this building? Do you think it was a man or a woman?”

“Who do you think took these photographs? Do you think it is a man or a woman?”

Prior to moving on to the next activity it is advisable to speak to students about the architect and the photographer presented at this exhibition and it is good to refer to certain aspects of their work. The vocabulary used should consider the students' age and be adjusted accordingly.

E.g. *“Neoptolemos Michaelides (1920-1993) is considered to be one of the most important Cypriot architects as he designed a number of ‘modernist’ buildings.”*

“What do we mean by that? What do you believe an architect does? What is his/her job?”

Or drawing from the exhibition description: *“Hélène Binet is a photographer who lives in London. Before setting up her analogue cameras and beginning to structure her images, Binet spent time in and around the house, engaging in an intimate experience of the building following a ritual-like procedure. Her frames emphasise the strong concept behind the residential building and highlight the qualities represented on its structural elements. Binet's intention is to introduce us to the world of the architect with images that trigger thoughts and dreams. She invites us to reflect on the essence of things, a process that defined Michaelides's working and living philosophy. “What do you think the job of a photographer is?”*

ACTIVITY 2 (all years)

Discovering photography / Thinking about the house / Interpreting the images

We ask students a number of questions in reference to the meaning and use of photography as well as the technology employed.

The technology behind photography: *“What is photography? What is a photograph?”, “How do we take pictures?”, “Do we take pictures in the same way as, let’s say, 15 years ago?”, “If we were to tell you that Hélène, the photographer of this exhibition, took analogue pictures, what would you understand by that?”, “Which do you think is the difference between an analogue and a digital picture?”* At this point we show students a set of old photographs or a photograph album we might own as well as a negative photographic film so as to assist them in visually grasping the process of producing an analogue picture.

The role of photography: *“Why do we take pictures?”, “Are there different kinds of pictures?”, “Do you ever take pictures?”, “Do we take pictures at home?”, “Do we have pictures at home? If yes, where do we find them?”*

Photography at the exhibition: *“What do you think of these pictures?”, “What colours and shapes can you identify?”, “What do you think took place at this part of the house?”, “Do you think that somebody lives there?” “What kind of pictures are we looking at? What is architectural photography? Why would we take photographs of an empty house? What can we say about the style of the photographs? What is composition?”*

Interpreting the images: We invite the students to use their bodies and interpret the photographs, either by imitating the different shapes they observe in each picture, or by representing movement or flow in the photographs each in their different way.

Thinking about the house

We explain that the house depicted on the photographs belongs to the architect Neoptolemos Michaelides and that the house was specifically designed by him as a residence to him and his wife. We ask students a number of questions in reference to the meaning and use of a house as well as that of a city.

The house and the city: *“What does the word ‘house’ mean to you?”, “Are all houses the same?”, “How can houses be different? Would you say that we have different kinds of houses? If yes, which are those?”, “Are all houses the same in all cities or do they differ? How do they differ?”, “If a house is where people live in, then what does a school house? What does a post office house? What does the museum house?”, “Which part of the house do you use the most and why?”, “Which part of the city do you use the most and why?”, “Which parts of the city do you like the most?”*

For Years 1 and 2 this conversation took place in front of the photographs, whereas Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 were invited to respond to these questions around Neoptolemos Michaelides’s architectural plans of the residence. The students were encouraged to consider the role and use of an architectural plan in relation to the creation and construction of a building. **Additional questions that can be used:** *“Have you ever seen any architectural plans?”, “What is their use?”, “What do you observe in this one? What does it show?”*

ACTIVITY 3 (all years)

Collaborating on a city / box

We invite students to think about the city in specific and abstract terms, about the city they live in and other cities they may feel connected to, as well as the human conditions that characterise them as inhabited places.

“What kinds of buildings do we find in a city?”, “Do all cities look alike or do they differ?”, “How do people live in a city?”, “Is this different from living elsewhere?”, “What would we like our city to be like?”

We show students a set of images and photographs of landscapes and landmarks taken from cities around the world. We comment on the content of each picture and discuss the cities presented. (We discussed Nicosia, Beijing, Beirut, Rio de Janeiro, London, Manila, Moscow, Tbilisi, Kiev, Sofia, Yerevan, Athens – note that some of the cities were selected according to the students' country of origin.)

We encourage students to work in groups of two and to choose a city to represent using collage (either travel magazines, or printouts of images and photographs) along with tempera and colour markers. It was important, in our case, that the students were encouraged to work collaboratively and have more than one surface to experiment with. We used the surfaces of cardboard boxes, so that each cardboard box was used to represent a different city.

Each group shows their box / city and explain to the rest of the class what it represents and why they made the specific choices. This can be done in connection with the following activity.

ACTIVITY 4 (years 1&2)

Show, Imagine, and Tell:

Dancing in the cities of the world

As each group shows their box / city, we discuss the kind of dance that they would encounter should they visit these cities. *“How do you think people dance in this city?”, “If you were in this city, how would you dance?”*

The questions are posed separately for each city / box. The students are asked to raise their cardboard boxes up in the air, name the city they worked on and show it on the world map.

Accompanying each description we play music coming from each city and allow discussion to develop around the music we selected, whether it is characteristic or not, whether the students like it or not, and how it may be danced.

Those who wish are encouraged to dance along, either by demonstrating a dance they are familiar with, or by improvising.

Note: We used the following pre-selected links, but also followed recommendations from the students

London	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbt8oH5Lxto
Moscow	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmCnQDUSO4I https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10O75jebAWg
Rio	http://youtu.be/-OPVI6kiN8I?t=30s
Beirut	http://youtu.be/aY6hBS5YNRo?t=1m4s
Manila	http://youtu.be/yIjAtIUMw44?t=54s
Nicosia	http://youtu.be/hkRGWhMqNMI?t=20s
Beijing	http://youtu.be/LaNdGfQC5I4?t=15s

ACTIVITY 5 (years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Collaborative intervention piece

We encouraged the students to respond to Point Centre's exhibition of Hélène Binet's photographs of Neoptolemos Michaelides's architectural work. We asked them to do so performatively, kinaesthetically, and to think about ideas of the house, the home and their structures. We invited them to intervene on printouts of Binet's images.

We ask the students to choose a copy of an image they wouldn't mind putting up in their bedroom and to respond to a series of questions whilst circulating the copy of the image amongst them. This way they are each intervening on each other's interventions.

We put to them the following questions:

- » Give five words that relate to the image (free association).
- » What is your favourite room in the house and why?
- » What would you tell Nicosia if he/she was a person?
- » In which cities or countries you feel at home and why?

ACTIVITY 6 (years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Building a city

This is an elaborated version of Activity 3 described above, but for an older age group.

We go through steps 1-3 of Activity 3, discussing the images of the different cities.

Note: During our discussion about these different cities we use key words to contextualise the activity more broadly, such as citizen, homeless, architecture, social housing, election, architect, civil engineer, contractor, politics, city council, mayor, municipal worker, and so on.

We ask students to think about the kinds of buildings that make up a city

E.g. "What kinds of buildings does a city have? What else do we find in a city?" [Schools, houses, skyscrapers, streets, parks, trees, museums, shops, restaurants, coffee shops, offices, churches, etc.]

"If, for example, we have a number of different nationalities and religions in a city, what kinds of buildings should there exist to take all of this in consideration?"

"What would you like to add to the city?"

Students are invited to choose from the recycled material lying around (different kinds and shapes of cardboard, and paper, as well as tempera, and collage materials), to create a cardboard city (we have images of cardboard cities running in the projector in the background for inspiration). The students are free to work individually or collaboratively, although collaboration and distribution of labour is encouraged. Once the process has been completed, students are invited to place their constructions on the large flat surface provided and paint on it the streets and roads of their city.

ADDITIONAL / OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 7 (all ages, pre- or post-visit)

The story of a building

We invite students to pick a building from their area/ from their school's neighbourhood and photograph it or find and print an already existent image of it. We ask them to write about the building, its functions, the people who use it, and the reasons they have chosen it.

Once they have gathered the abovementioned information, students are encouraged to write or draw a story about the building itself.

ACTIVITY 8 (years 5 & 6, optional)

Audio-visual mapping

An optional after-school activity executed with the help of teachers Pieros Kezou and Andri Moustaka.

How is our (urban) environment structured and navigated and then interpreted and perceived? How do we recognize and agree on a city's landmarks? How do we decide what's notable or significant? Which of its layers do we notice and which do we ignore? What would Nicosia look like and sound like to us if we could encounter it afresh, removed from pre-existing associations and memories?

We gave a camera and a sound-recorder to students and let them circulate it amongst themselves. We invited those who were so inclined to put together visual and acoustic documentation of their experience of the city outside the school day.

Through our workshops we had previously encouraged the students to think about urban pockets, unnoticed architectures and soundscapes, social corners, hidden stories, and overlooked places. Within all this, we also encouraged them to think of ways to present their own voices and perspectives.



This Postcard Map, presents fragments of an exercise developed after Yiannis Christofides workshops, based on the idea of creating a sound-map. It presents aspects of maps, images and sound clips of inner-city Nicosia, gathered by the 5th and 6th year students outside school hours (See artedupractices.org). It relates to visual and acoustic documentations of the students' experience of the city outside the school day, allowing questions to be raised about how we interpret and perceive the urban environment.

Workshop Series 3

On Contemporary Art:

Objects and their secrets

Introduction

Christodoulos Panayiotou's solo exhibition 'Stories from the lives of my friends' constitutes the third and last exhibition to be included in Point Centre's educational programme formed in partnership with Eleneio Primary School. The educational workshop designed by the organisation's learning team was carried out on the 20th and 27th of March 2015 with the participation of all school years.

The artist's body of work is primarily interpreted within the confines of Conceptual Art, which encourages an in-depth reading of the ideas and contexts embedded in the objects and works of art presented. The educational workshop 'Objects and their Secrets' was conceived as an attempt to introduce students and bring them in contact with the ideas of hidden meaning, of aura and history traced in objects and works of art and assist them in freeing their thoughts and expression and using their observational skills and imagination to interpret the world around them.

The proposed learning activities were designed according to the needs and learning objectives of the specific workshop, but simultaneously remain in line with the general objectives of the educational programme.

Exhibition Information

Christodoulos Panayiotou, *Stories from the lives of my friends* 07.03.2015 – 08.05.2015

Point presented the first solo exhibition of Christodoulos Panayiotou in Cyprus. The exhibition brought together existing and newly commissioned work under the title Stories from the lives of my friends.

In 1889, the celebrated Russian dramaturge Anton Chekhov wrote in a letter to his intimate friend Aleksey Suvorin: “Guess what, I’m writing a novel!!! And what an intricate plot! I’ve called it Stories from the lives of my friends”. This would be a novel that Chekhov never completed. By borrowing the allusive title of this unfulfilled project, Panayiotou did not attempt a retrospective speculation on this lost literary impulse; on the contrary, he proposed the title as a radical interpretation of Chekhov’s dramaturgy and relevant notion of subtext. As Stanislavski wrote “Chekhov often expressed his thought not in speeches, but in pauses or between the lines or in replies consisting of a single word [...] the characters often feel and think things not expressed in the lines they speak”. The concept of subtext, especially after its elevation to a method in the United States and its global propagation, remains an important link between modern and contemporary theatre.

Theatrical legacies, aspects and notions such as “subtext”, “estrangement effect” and “disillusionment”, are pivotal elements found in the core of Panayiotou’s practice. For his exhibition at Point he put together a series of works which develop beyond what is enounced, as do the writer’s characters. Associations and intimate dialogues are implied rather than exposed and elaborate dialectics are staged, facilitating thus - almost provocatively – the emergence of new discourses. Panayiotou’s choice of materials puts the idea of a dominant truth into question and challenges the ways we perceive and interpret our collective and individual narrations.

Christodoulos Panayiotou, born in 1978 in Limassol, Cyprus is an internationally acclaimed artist whose wide-ranging research focuses on the identification and uncovering of hidden narratives in the visual records of history and time. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at Spring Workshop, Hong Kong, China / Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden / Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg / CCA Kitakyushu, Japan / Centre d’Art Contemporain de Brétigny, France / Museum of Contemporary Art, St. Louis, USA / Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig, Germany / Kunsthalle Zürich, Switzerland and Cubitt, London, UK. He has participated in major international survey exhibitions, including the 8th Berlin Biennale / 7th Liverpool Biennial / Documenta 13, Kassel / 6th Taipei Biennale and Busan Biennale 2008. His work was also shown in a number of museum exhibitions including: Museion, Bolzano, Italy / Migros Museum, Zürich, Switzerland / CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, USA / Joan Miro Foundation, Barcelona, Spain / Witte de With, Rotterdam, The Netherlands / Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden / Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA / Ashkal Alwan Center for Contemporary Arts, Beirut, Lebanon / Artist Space, New York, USA, MoCA Miami, USA. He was the recipient of The Future of Europe Prize in 2010 and the DESTE Prize in 2005 and in 2008 he was awarded a residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien by UNDO foundation. Christodoulos Panayiotou was selected to represent Cyprus at the 2015 Venice Biennale.

The proposed workshop encourages students to:

- » Engage with contemporary art practices.
- » Consider and discuss ideas around Cypriot history and archaeology.
- » Investigate ideas characterising and emerging from the exhibition.
- » Discuss objects and works of art in reference to their materiality.
- » Use their imagination to freely and creatively interpret their findings.
- » Cultivate visual literacy and expressive skills using the Visual Thinking Strategies method.
- » Use their senses and observation skills, supporting their opinion by presenting facts.
- » Enjoy the objects and works of art and impulsively express their impressions.
- » Be self-mobilised and develop their confidence and creative identity.
- » Engage with each other to interpret, understand, and solve mysteries together
- » Advance their personal skills while at the same time respect the opinion and creativity of others.
- » Work collectively and sustain team spirit.

Timeframe: 90 minutes

» Activity sheets with keywords related to the artworks



- » Pencils
- » Pieces of carpet to paint on
- » Tempera paints
- » Paint brushes and sponges
- » Plastic plates for paint palettes and cups for water to rinse out paint brushes
- » World map
- » Filming equipment
- » Pre-selected image for Visual Thinking Strategies activity (either printed in high resolution or projected / displayed on a screen)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1 (all years)

Introduction:

We explain the plan for the visit so that the students understand its structure and goals

E.g. *“Today we will explore the exhibition, we will create our own a magic carpet, we will investigate an image and discover its hidden meanings and if we are lucky we may get to meet the artist”*

We discuss and lay out some rules of behaviour towards the works of art and the exhibition space.

E.g. *“touching contemporary artworks is not permitted (why?) and we should avoid running around (why?). It is absolutely fine to talk to one another, but we must remember not to shout.”*

We say a few words about the artist and highlight certain aspects of his work. The vocabulary used should consider the students' age and be adjusted accordingly.

E.g. *“Christodoulos was born in Limassol and currently lives in London and Paris. He studied anthropology and choreography. As an artist he tends to travel around the world and exhibit his art in museums and contemporary art centres. The works of art we will see at this exhibition are the results of his investigation of different ideas – for example, of how the feeling of community is created, of how different social groups emerge, of how different power structures prevail as well as contemporary ‘pop’ and ‘mass culture’. At the same time, in Christodoulos’ work one can trace references to the history of Cyprus. He is interested in how Cyprus’ image is created and presented. His work is exploratory. This is what we will attempt to do as well; we will investigate the objects and works of art by letting our imagination free”.*

ACTIVITY 2 (all years)

Discovering ideas hiding in the art-works

We hand out the activity sheets with keywords covering material as well as conceptual aspects of the artworks exhibited. We encourage students to walk around the exhibition freely on their own or in groups, and to circle the ideas they encounter on their activity sheet. The co-ordinators are asked not to give definitive answers to questions posed, but help the children to free their imagination and react to works of art that attract their interest. We allow students to converse freely, to see each other's activity sheets, sharing and building on each other's opinions.

Questions to get started: *“What sort of ideas and thoughts could be hidden in these objects?”, “Which works of art do you like the most and why?”, “What kind of stories would you make up in relation to these works?”, “What would you ask the artist if he was here?”*

We invite students to share and discuss their findings in front of everyone, building on each other's interpretations. The co-ordinators encourage group discussion by mentioning a number of interesting points raised or noted down by the children.

Once we complete the group discussion, we now open the floor to questions and give truthful answers about the works and the exhibition (something that was previously avoided so that the students would be encouraged to come up with their own answers).

ACTIVITY 3 (all years)

Magic carpet

This activity and the resulting art-work responds to Christodoulos Panayiotou's piece “Operation Serenade” made up of a rolled-up red carpet from Hollywood award ceremonies. We took strips of black carpet from Yiannis Christofides' installation (which accidentally got stained with tempera while we produced our colour-sound scores during our sound-themed workshops) and used them to hide objects and ideas. The results of the painting activity are meant to be secret and our carpet paintings are meant to be exhibited rolled up with only a hint of the painted side open to view. Our intention was to creatively re-use material that may have previously seemed “ruined”, to introduce the notion of a work's aura, and engage the children in a process of instilling, or ritually imbuing an object with ideas and properties.

ACTIVITY 4 (all years)

Visual Thinking Strategies

Note: We used the Visual Thinking Strategies method. No special art training is required for the employment of this method. VTS's aim is not to teach the history of a work of art, but rather to encourage students to use their observational skills, carefully listen and build on each other's opinions, and support their findings with evidence.



We present students with an image and provide them with as little contextual information as possible (we provided no information about the image, although we could have mentioned that the image had been found by the artist and used as part of another artwork for a previous exhibition).

We invite children to look at the image carefully and silently for 2 minutes.

The co-ordinator is asked to use three open-ended questions:

- » What's going on in this picture?
- » What do you see that makes you say that?
- » What more can we find?

The co-ordinator is advised to use three Facilitation Techniques:

- » Paraphrase comments neutrally
- » Point at the area being discussed
- » Linking and framing student comments

Students who raise their hands and must be called on in order to speak, are asked to:

- » Look carefully at works of art
- » Talk about what they observe
- » Back up their ideas with evidence
- » Listen to and consider the views of others
- » Discuss multiple possible interpretations

from www.vtshome.org

ACTIVITY 5 (years 1 & 2)

6. The story of my shoes

We invite students to think about the origin of their shoes.

E.g. “Having seen and discussed about the artist’s shoes found in this exhibition, can you think where your shoes came from?”, “What do you think may have been their journey?”

Following students’ responses, we discuss the movement of goods that we consume as well as the movement of people and the labour force.

E.g. *“On how many journeys could our objects have been?”*

“Why do objects travel?”

“What makes people travel and move around?”

“Can everything travel freely or do they have to follow a certain route?”, “Are there any rules guiding these journeys?”

A world map can be available to look up the routes mentioned if it seems appropriate

The students are asked to think and write an imaginary story about the life of their shoes, either in class or at home. They are invited to share their stories with the rest of the class.

The students can use a video camera to record their shoes walking, this can be used as visual material for their story in an animation or a short video.

ACTIVITY 6 (years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

6a. Interviewing the artist

We invite the students to interview the artist and to ask any questions they may have about the exhibition, about specific works, about the artist’s career and creative process or anything that may spring to mind. Although it is important that the students are prepared so that they can make the best of the encounter, it is also important to ensure that they feel comfortable to respond impulsively and spontaneously, rather than come with prepared questions.

6b. Taking up the artist’s role

If the artist is unavailable, we may encourage students to take up the artist’s role as play-acting, and imaginatively answer questions about the exhibition, the works, the creative process, and so on.

ACTIVITY 5 (all ages, optional)

Little stories from the lives of my friends

We separate the students in groups of 5. The co-ordinators encourage the members of each team to share among them a short imaginary or real story from the life of one of their friends. Once storytelling is completed, each member of the team is asked to choose and take up the role of one of the characters presented. The co-ordinators ask children to imagine a meeting of those characters combining elements from the stories shared. During the creative discussion held by the students, the co-ordinators are responsible for noting down the emerging dialogue and take up the narrator’s role. The team members must collectively decide on the story’s theme and backdrop. Some of the suggested themes that could describe their stories are taken from elements and objects of the exhibition. E.g. carpets, fountains, archives, mafia, water, etc. During this creative process, the co-ordinators are asked to encourage students in using in their stories surrealistic and comic elements. Following the completion of their new story, the members of each team rehearse their words while continuing to improvise. It is important to mention that students do not need to learn their words/quotes by heart. The teams are finally gathered together to present their sketches and share the stories created.

Afternoon Sessions

Eleneio All-Day School, years five and six

It is notable that the most interesting and educationally powerful part of the project wasn't scripted, and didn't leave much of a trace. This was made up of a series of brief dialogic and improvisational activities developed in collaboration with Panayiotis Panteli, a teacher at Eleneio and a researcher specialising in multi-lingualism and inter-cultural education. The workshops took a critical pedagogical perspective and attempted to engage with the students democratically, on a horizontal, dialogic, and collaborative basis, and to design creative and learning activities that took off from their own interests, their own choice of subjects, and engaging with their particular group dynamic.

We worked in a circle to discuss and make decisions, and were open to the possibility of the teamsplitting into smaller groups with differing priorities. For most of the sessions the team chose to split in two groups, one of which chose to work with the theme of a magic door, while the other chose to work around the theme of football. This gave a chance to test and apply some of the methods discussed in Part 2 of this Informational Package for which there was no room during the morning school hours.

*Afternoon Sessions
interactive display at
the Point-Eleneio
Exhibition at Point
Centre: We used the
sheet we wrote and
drew on during the
first Afternoon
Session. This was
created while we
were sitting in a circle
discussing the
direction our sessions
would take in the
following months.*



The team decided against video-documentation for our sessions.

Exhibition



The fragmentary results of this process were set-up as part of the Point-Eleneio Exhibition at Point Centre as an interactive, site-specific installation with tempera on cardboard, magic marker on whiteboard wallpaper, and an evolving display of discarded sculptures of magical creatures and football players.



PART IV

Sharing Thoughts

This section is dedicated to all of the voices that have been part of this journey...

'Sharing Thoughts' is perceived as a collage of experiences and uttered thoughts as these have been expressed throughout the implementation of the programme. It is but a small attempt to capture some of the project's essence as seen through the eyes of the volunteers, the researchers, the teachers and most importantly those of the students.

The following quotes from students, translated here from Greek, were gathered during the programme's self-assessment exercise which was performed by museum educator Ioanna Maki in April 2015, as well as during post-visit activities executed in collaboration with Andri Moustaka (teacher for years five and six). The latter activities asked the students, half way through the Point-Eleneio programme, to answer to a set of questions: "what is art", "what is the city", and "what is different".

Connecting senses

Sound and the city: a sound walk



Drawing sound: producing a graphic score



I remember / I liked...

“The thing with the copper... The water... I liked it a lot... It was very nice and I liked that there was nothing digital in it... I liked the fact that everything was natural...”

“When we made a few things out of cardboard boxes... We did anything we wanted... Some built a stadium; others made buildings, churches... I made a big church...”

“When we saw drawings... And some things that made music...”

“- I liked that room that showed images of mafia in Italy throwing fireworks!
- I liked the shoes... It was a mystery...
- I liked mixing two colours together and creating a new one... For example, orange... I didn't know how it was created and now I know...”

“- When we drew and listened to music and then were asked to find and write each country... We wrote Nicosia...
- I wrote Bulgaria...
- We wrote Georgia...”

Difference is...

“Different can be a human, a different way of living, it can be a personality. Just because all of these are different, it doesn't mean that we have to judge them. So, if someone calls you different, then it means that you are special for him. Being different or doing something different is not something bad, it is just unique.”

“Difference is very important because it would not be nice to be all the same – the world would not be interesting then. For example, if there were only white people instead of white and black people, the world would be the same, it would be boring.”

“All things are different”

Connecting senses

Moving lights and colours



Giving sound to colour: performing our graphic score



Creating a 24-hour soundscape of Nicosia



Volunteers' Feedback

Marina Andreou

BA Fine Art,
University of Nicosia

I believe that this programme has been very good for the children. Thanks to the programme and its activities, the students were provided with the opportunity to learn about a number of things; they learned about the importance of working collectively, of cooperating, of respecting one another, of listening to one another and simultaneously they enhanced their knowledge about art and were encouraged to think critically and act creatively. Although the project required substantial programming prior to the delivery of each workshop and took careful consideration of the time provided for each visit, the students were continuously provided with the space and room to freely respond to any of the activities—even if that meant that they did not want to take part—and to choose or express their thoughts around any proposed theme. My participation in this programme offered me the opportunity to observe the children's interest in art and in the programme, and how it grew and developed.

My participation in the programme offered me a constructive experience. I was able to practice my interest in teaching children in a playful and creative way. It was interesting for me to see how each lesson was structured based on the exhibition and age group. There was diversity in workshops and each age group was taught in the most appropriate way. Overall it was a joyful participation and it pleased me to see that the children were offered an experience like this.

Natalie Antoniou

MA Digital Art and Design,
University of Nicosia

Anastasia Magniti

BA Media and Communications,
Cyprus University of Technology

I am thankful for the opportunity to be part of this educational programme and act as its photographer/videographer. The programme and its collaboration with Eleineon Primary School and its students could definitely be characterised as interesting, different and above all else creative. The activities prepared and implemented during each visit at Point Centre were successfully directed so as to engage students with the artists and the works of art on display. Throughout the time of their visit, I could observe children learning, critically posing questions and demanding responses, and expressing their interest for the works of art they were encountering or the activity they were asked to carry out. I believe that following each visit of the Eleineon students at Point Centre an important amount of data and knowledge was amassed that definitely serves the educational programme's aims and objectives. Due to the fact that this programme was a new and extremely interesting experience for me, I am looking forward to reading about it and seeing its results.

On photography and architecture

Discovering photography/ Thinking about the house



Collaborating on a city/box



My home, my city is...

“My city is my second home...”

“Home is love, family, friendship, memories”

“My city is a historical town”

“I grew up in the city I live. And I do not know if I can bear the thought of leaving it”

“Home for me is my family...The roof under I live in is my family”

“Home for me is an embrace that keeps me in good company”

When I draw...

“When I am drawing I hear nothing else. It's just me and my drawing waiting to be finished...I feel that I am free, calm...”

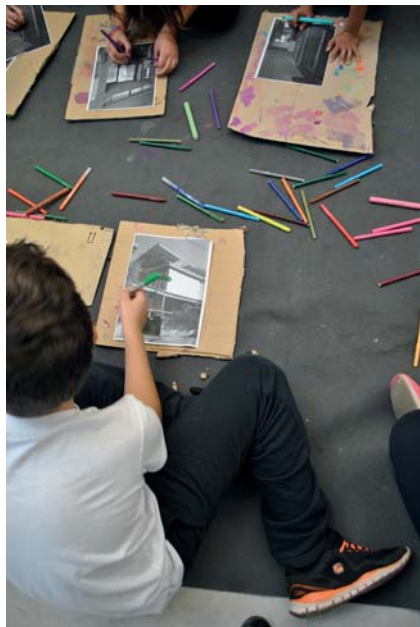
“I like drawing because I can create whatever I want...”

“I feel happy!”

On photography and architecture



Collaborative intervention piece



Building a city



Panayiotis Panteli

Educator and Researcher,
Optional All-Day Eleneio School

The island of Cyprus is – and has been for centuries now, despite popular belief – a multicultural society. Alongside the two main communities of Greek and Turkish origin, smaller minority groups, namely Maronites, Latins and Armenians have been living on this island for a very long time. Interaction between these communities, however, has been minimal or superficial at best, with separate education systems that led to people until this day not being aware of the cultural wealth of Cyprus. And this is the main difference between a multicultural society – that is, cultural groups living together without substantial contact – and an intercultural society that develops understanding and respect of all people through the interaction of cultural groups. Nowadays, Cyprus' cultural wealth has been – or should be – enriched by immigrant flow mainly from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The key component for turning a fragmented multicultural island into a truly intercultural society is education.

Until recently, the education system in Cyprus has been named ethnocentric, even culturally monolithic, with one of the aims being the assimilation of immigrant students. This model of education however has not been successful, neither in Cyprus nor the rest of the world; children from minority groups are constantly overrepresented in intervention programs for students with learning difficulties. Some scarce efforts have been made for improvement towards intercultural education, but we cannot rely solely on the Ministry of Education to implement change. This is where organizations such as Art Centres can play a significant part.

'Eleneion' primary school, being one of the historical schools of Nicosia and at a strategic geographic place, now has a new challenge ahead: to build upon the rich cultural capital of its students in order to become an intercultural point of reference for the whole education system. This feat cannot be achieved without help from agents outside the school's boundaries.

The Point Centre for Contemporary Art has already provided opportunities for both students and their parents that would otherwise be out of their reach. Namely, they participated in activities such as workshops and museum exhibitions, creating art without the strict limitations of expression and imagination that traditional schools may have. Thus, Point Centre with the school's staff cooperation has acted as a link, connecting the school with its surroundings. In addition, combining 'Eleneion' teachers' knowledge and skills with the artistic minds of professionals from the Centre was also beneficial for all parties involved.

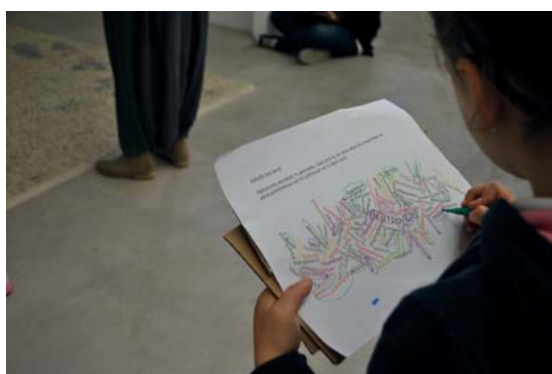
This is only one small step, but an important one, towards the right direction. There are still challenges ahead; multicultural schools always have to face with issues like bullying and racism. The continuation of this cooperation between 'Eleneion' and The Point Centre can help empower students even more, cultivating the true sense of respect and empathy.

Objects and their Secrets

Discovering ideas hiding in the artworks



Visual Thinking Strategies



Art is...

“Perfect!”

“Inspiration!”

“Art is an imagination filled with colours”

“It is something that all people can do around the world”

“With art you can express emotions like love, anger, sadness”

“When I hear the word ‘art’ it reminds me of myself”

“Art is a lesson
Art is a drawing
Art is joy
Art is studying
Art is a school”

Magic carpet



Interviewing the artist



Teachers' Feedback

On students' response to the programme

“They were very excited! I mean, whatever they did - especially the little ones - were excited and when they returned to school they discussed it. They would remember things and they would discuss them. But even when we were there [at Point Centre], I observed that they participated in all of the activities and they expressed their happiness and joy. Even with watercolours... They could act more freely – as you know, we are slightly stricter around here... They really enjoyed it”

“Children truly enjoyed it. And there was also this notion of progress that I have previously discussed with you... The worries accompanying the first visit – not knowing where you are going, what you are going to see and do – were exchanged with feelings of anticipation and longing. «Children, we are going to Point Centre next Friday and we are going to do this and that!»... They really liked it and they enjoyed the activities”

“I believe that they enjoyed the activities in which they could act in relation to art. I mean, I found that they enjoyed it more when they were asked to draw rather than observe. When the time arrived to act, they were more excited and were participating more actively”

“Children felt confident in that they felt special... We were the only ones participating in a programme such as this one...”

On interdisciplinary learning: using art to enhance other subjects' knowledge...

“Yes, you could use this kind of programme to reinforce interdisciplinary learning. Just as long as you are clear about the subject, the objectives and the learning outcomes you wish to achieve – teachers have to work with students in advance to ensure that they will respond in the best possible way”

“-Or it could be done vice-versa. I mean, you [the Point-Eleneio team] could take a look at the themes or sections we have to cover in different subjects, like Geography or History, and you could choose one...
-And you could present it to us in an interdisciplinary manner...
-And connect it to art...
-Or in partnership with us...
-We could choose themes or sections and hand them out to you and we could visit Point Centre and deliver the lesson there... But you must have a set goal...”

Looking out to the future: how programmes like Point-Eleneio might play an important role in a school's curriculum

“-Have you ever heard about the “culture of a school?” This is how I can interpret it. There exists an invisible thing... It is a culture in a school that is just there. Whatever you do, whichever programme you choose, the culture is always there. I know it sounds slightly pessimistic but... Whichever programme you carry out you might see a progression – whether it is positive or negative – but the culture does not alter...
-You need many years. For the culture of a school to change, you need a head teacher that will remain in the school for at least 6 years, you need to have permanent staff, and you need to have a vision for the school. The head teacher has to have clear objectives on how to alter the school's culture...”



PART V

Events

Exhibition / Conference

Exhibition

The Point- Eleneio Exhibition: art and learning for the local community

One of the project's outcomes, and the central community event organised as part of the programme, was the Point-Eleneio Exhibition, presented at Point Centre between 22.05.2015 - 28.06.2015.

The Exhibition addressed the community as well as the general public to present the children's work and the creative results of specific activities. It documented how this project has worked to create a socially engaged art-educational model using contemporary developments in arts education and education through art, how it has experimented with art educational methods and collaborative - participatory practices, and how it has investigated the possibilities of building relationships between cultural institutions and schools. Central to this mission has been to advocate for inclusive learning environments within the current reality of multicultural schooling. The exhibition also documented how the programme gradually shifted from being seen as something extracurricular, to demonstrating experientially the value of the integration of the arts more broadly in the curriculum: as something helpful towards the pedagogic priorities of the teachers as well as something able to address the students' personal interests and different ways of learning.



**Contemporary Museum
and Gallery Education
practices:
Local Communities meet
Global Narratives
May 22-23, 2015**

*Point Centre for Contemporary Art
in collaboration with
the University of Nicosia, Fine Arts
Programme¹*

*with the support of the Department of
Multimedia and Graphic Arts, Cyprus
University of Technology²*

The Conference succeeded in bringing together local and international experts, and in this way it provided the strongest possible scientific support for the programme's core ideas. But it performed a community experiment at the same time. The Conference was not an insulated event. In the first instance, it was integrated with the opening of the Point-Eleneio Exhibition at Point Centre. This Exhibition, inviting the local art-community, as well as the school community, the alumni, and parents, offered a broad contextualisation of the project historically and methodologically, by being presented in parallel to a second exhibition that studied art-education practices in Cyprus more broadly under the title "Fragments: Thoughts and expressions of art education processes - A research installation". This connection brought together the conference participants and the school community, along with local practitioners, art-educators, artists, and art-students. At the same time the Conference was hosted a few doors down from Point Centre³, at the heart of the city of Nicosia, a stone's throw away from the Eleneio School, the Cyprus Museum⁴, and the Leventis Art Gallery⁵. At the same time, the Conference was organised in collaboration with the Fine Arts Programme at the University of Nicosia⁶, and with the support of the CUT Visual Sociology and Museum Studies Lab⁷. This was an unprecedented coming together of local institutions across the board to think about and compare practices around art education and the community.

For the Conference Book of Abstracts go to
<https://mgedup.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/abstract-booklet.pdf>



¹ This facet of the project was developed in collaboration with the Fine Arts Programme of the University of Nicosia which has been in development since 2010, and which as launched as a Cypriot university programme in September 2013. The programme belongs to the Department of Design and Multimedia, of which it was an initiative. In its years of development and action, the programme, beyond its formal fine art courses learning, has been hosting open studio exhibitions, museum and gallery interventions, other student exhibitions, talks, dialogues and workshops. Collaborating with the Point-Eleneio project and Point Centre for Contemporary Art demonstrates the practice-based research aspect of the programme.

² The conference was organised with the support of the Visual Sociology and Museum Studies Lab, of the Cyprus University of Technology, <http://vsmslab.com/>

³ In next-door premises kindly granted for use by the School Authority (Σχολική Εφορία) the landlord of Megaro Hadjisavva where Point Centre is housed.

⁴ Which hosted one of the conference's workshops.

⁵ Which kindly offered complementary tickets to the conference participants

⁶ The co-organiser for the Conference.

⁷ The VSMS Lab belongs to the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts, at the Cyprus University of Technology, which kindly supported and participated in the conference.

Pre-Conference Workshop (Greek Language):

Collective re-considerations in local museum education | Chrystalleni Loizidou, Despo Pasia, Evanthia Tselika.

Conference Workshops

Julie Carmean, Museum Educator and Coordinator of Professional Development, National Gallery of Art, Washington Workshop | Thinking Through Art with Local Audiences.

Chrystalleni Loizidou, Despo Pasia & Evanthia Tselika (a Re Aphrodite project) Gender in the Cyprus Museum: Towards an Open Educational Package- Conference Workshop.

Keynotes

Jessica Gogan [Keynote lecture] Director of Instituto MESA, Rio de Janeiro. Ph.D. candidate in Art History at the University of Pittsburgh | Poetic spaces = Ethical Languages. Laboratories of Art & Social Practice in Brazil.

Dr. Viv Golding [Keynote lecture] President of ICME, Programme Director of Learning & Visitor Studies, Senior Lecturer in Communication and Education, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester | Museum Education with Communities: Using feminist-hermeneutics to challenge prejudice and stereotype.

Papers/Presentations

Dr. Vera Boneva, Professor in History and Museology at the State University of Library Studies and Information technologies in Sofia | To learn and create among the treasures: Innovative educational practices of Bulgarian Museums.

Dr. René Carraz, Research fellow at BETA, Strasbourg University; Anna Merry, PhD Candidate De Montfort University Leicester; Veronika Antoniou, Co-founder, Urban Gorillas NGO, PhD Candidate, De Montfort University Leicester; Yiorgos Hadjichristou, Professor- Architecture Department of the University of Nicosia | Life inside-out an inflatable space: how artistic experiences can be diffused in a city through design and playfulness.

Dr. Dimitra Christidou & Dr. Sara Grut, Researchers and Project Managers at the Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity | Intercultural Dialogue in and across Swedish museums: the case of Swedish for immigrants (SFI).

Sophia Diamantopoulou, PhD Candidate, Institute of Education, University College London | Social responsibility and museum education: Renegotiating the place of learning in new museum narratives.

Ljudmila Djukic, Teacher and Head Teacher in Belgrade, Serbia | Building Classroom Bridges in Museums.

Athena Exarchou, PhD candidate in Art History in Education at the Athens School of Fine Arts | Contemporary museum and gallery education practices from the point of view of the secondary school teacher: the museum visit as a didactic tool for art history.

Ioanna Danai Giampili, PhD Candidate, University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education | On Circuits and cake: Engaging local young people through museum education. A case study of the Circuit project.

Dr. Reni Giannimara, Theory and History of Fine Arts Department, Athens School of Fine Arts | Exploring the Potential of Gettygames Online Educational Game for Art – Education: The sixth grade of Greek primary school review.

Dr. Assimina Kaniari, Lecturer in Art History, Athens School of Fine Arts | Citizenship in Contemporaneity: Culture, Ideology and Identity formation in the Museum of Modern art.

Dr. Niki Nikonanou, Assistant Professor of Art History and Museum-Education at the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Thessaly & Foteini Venieri, PhD Candidate at the University of Thessaly, Greece. | Museum theatre and social issues: A Greek case study.

Despo Pasia, Educator, Museologist and Museum Educator & Chrystalla Antoniou, PhD Candidate, Primary School Teacher, Museum Educator | Working Glocally: observations and ways forward for museum education in Cyprus.

Dr. Esther Sayers, Lecturer in Arts in Education, Centre for Arts and Learning, Goldsmiths College | The imagined 'other': constructing the learning subject.

Dr. Andri Savva, Teaching Fellow in the Department of Education, University of Cyprus, Sofia Rossidou (Ministry Of Education), & Eli Trimis, Visual Artist, Visiting Professor, Art Education, European University | Young children's art learning in museum environments: Reflections and Directions.

Stefania Savva, PhD Candidate, Museum Studies at the University of Leicester | Developing museum-based multiliteracies for inclusive museum educational programmes.

Dr. Niki Sioki, Assistant Professor at the University of Nicosia | Design narratives in Cypriot collections: an educational tool for design students.

Zehra Sonya, artist/educator, President of European Mediterranean Arts Association (EMAA) Özgül Ezgin, Director of EMAA & Argyro Toumazou, cultural producer | "Confrontation through Art" Project Assistant Coordinator Art used as a mechanism for addressing division, conflict and confrontation.

Katerina Stephanides, Education Officer at the A.G. Leventis Gallery Cyprus | Rites of Passage in Museum Education.

Dr. Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert, Dept. Multimedia and Graphic Arts, Visual Sociology and Museum Studies Lab, Cyprus University of Technology | Visitor Photography in Museums.

Marina Tsekou, Education Curator National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens | Interactions between Museum and Other Institution Aiming at Meaningful Engagement.

Local Communities meet Global Narratives conference review May 2015¹

Esther Sayers, artist, gallery educator and lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London.

The 2015 conference, Contemporary Museum and Gallery Education practices: Local Communities meet Global Narratives took place in Nicosia, Cyprus on May 22-23, 2015. When the call for papers came through the themes chosen by conference organisers Evanthia Tselika and Chrystalleni Loizidou sparked my attention because of their focus on the imperative for gallery and museums to meaningfully address the needs of communities. This presented an opportunity to discuss the importance of institutional practices in defining constructive citizenship models. The defining questions in the call for papers took a social and cultural approach to gallery education and had an edginess not usually seen in a UK context, this was interesting to me as an artist, gallery educator and lecturer. The conference also provided a great opportunity to visit Cyprus, to discuss local patterns of segregation and the role that pedagogy can play in such a divided country. I have been keen to visit Nicosia following the unrealised Manifesta 6 in Nicosia in 2006 and the discussions that emerged in Notes for an Art School (2010) about the conflict that exists within creative education between the individual and the social.

The venue for the conference was the Point Centre for Contemporary Art where we were generously hosted and kept refreshed with a cornucopia of drinks, fruits, homemade breads (cooked in the traditional Cypriot oven in the Centre's garden) and baklava. Point Centre is a non-profit organisation involved in the creative support and promotion of various fields of contemporary cultural production. The current exhibition of work produced through the Point-Eleneio programme explores contemporary critical dialogue around inter-cultural school environments and social engagement in the arts.

Our thinking was framed by a welcoming address by conference organisers Chrystalleni and Evanthia in which they situated the conference within the broader narrative of their work with diverse cultural groups in Nicosia and the limitations of inclusive pedagogies. The debates got off to a flying start with papers that addressed online education in museums through the study of Getty Games and museum based pedagogic tools through to a case study of the Circuit project. The questions and comments that followed quickly engaged with issues around gaming strategies, education versus entertainment and asked what was the point of engaging young people in the arts. Often conferences maintain a 'them and us' relation between audience and speakers, but this was not evident here as there were plenty of people wanting to engage in lively discussion from the start. The moderator's open attitude to the format of response by the audience meant that the presenters offered provocations and the audience created the discussion. With the usual hierarchies already disturbed, I knew we were off to a good start.

After a break, the second session explored social responsibility with a punchy critique of incentives for museum education and a fascinating study of visitor photography in museums. More thoughtful exchanges followed about the pros and cons of taking photographs of artworks. That ownership is capital and putting a picture on Instagram creates cultural, social and symbolic capital. This made me think about the impact of ownership on engaging with the arts and the ways in which a selfie taken on a smart-phone can provide a visitor with a meaningful take-away through which they can share an experience, knowledge and art work with their friends and add it to their memory bank to potentially recall and use again when encountering other cultural artefacts in the future.

A splendid lunch preceded a session in which the links between the classroom and the museum were explored from Greek, Serbian and Cypriot perspectives. For the fourth session delegates chose to either attend a gallery workshop about thinking through art with local audiences or to engage in speaker presentations reflecting on Cypriot projects that ranged from the education work of the A.G. Leventis gallery, an inflatable space for artistic experience in the city and a fascinating project, 'Confrontation Through Art' based in Nicosia, in which Art is used as a mechanism for addressing division, conflict and confrontation. Day one was drawn to a close with an interactive keynote address from Dr. Viv Golding in which feminist-hermeneutic strategies were explored as means to understand prejudice and stereotypes. The combination of practical strategies and images of carefully selected art works was both stimulating and rewarding after such a thought provoking day.

Day two began with a reflection on current practices in Sweden, Thessaloniki and Greece exploring theatre and cinema to work through social issues. Whilst alongside a workshop explored gender in the Cyprus Museum. A keynote presentation by Jessica Gogan, Instituto MESA, provided a glimpse into the Brazilian context for museum education from the Freirian viewpoint of exploring the world before the word. Positing an approach in which the context should be acknowledged and understood before the conversation happens.

The afternoon sessions included presentations that explored multiliteracies for inclusive museum education programmes, notions of contemporaneity and identity formation in international modern art and a survey of educational practices in Bulgarian museums. The final sessions explored the learning environments created by art museums and the pedagogic possibilities for equality aware practices.

Closing remarks and farewells demonstrated an atmosphere of kinship amongst peers in which a prevailing sense of forward action was required to acknowledge and repair the inadequacies of current political and institutional agendas that aim for inclusion and achieve nothing but greater income for the institution. It was agreed that more needs to be done as such agendas do not benefit local communities but ease the social guilt of wealthy nations, individuals and organisations. Many contacts were made and hopefully many worthwhile projects will follow.

Esther Sayers, 2015

¹ Digitally available at http://www.academia.edu/12623023/Conference_review_for_Contemporary_Museum_and_Gallery_Education_practices_Local_Communities_meet_Global_Narratives



PART VI

Afterthoughts

Evanthia Tselika

Yurting: creating ephemeral creative environments

After the intense six-months of the project and four days after the conference the following thoughts were recorded on 27 May 2015.

Hosting the conference in a space a few doors down from Point, incidentally with no internet access, seemed to assist in triggering further the conversations that occurred during the two days, and the dialogues following the presentations flowed within what felt as an environment shared with co-workers/peers. Choosing to follow this academic direction meant that other aspects of the project which could have assisted a stronger collaboration with the parents' association were not emphasized as strongly. This relates to the longevity of the project (six month period) and the trust and relationship building process that was necessary when Chrystalleni and I entered the school environment. Chrystalleni built a much more intense relationship with the school itself and its function as a space. I see it more like a lived environment that hosts these particular people, ourselves included for this specific time period. A bit like a yurt... a tent... an ephemeral structure that alludes to the activation process of constructed spatial environments¹. The narratives that arise out of these initiatives (a school and an art centre collaboration) is that the cultural practitioner gains access to a school space and also beyond his/her educator role acts as an ethnographer/ anthropologist. This in itself as an artistic practice is not unrelated to debates that are connected to the much cited description by Hal Foster of the "artist as ethnographer?" (1990), evoking as he notes in his first sentence of the text Walter Benjamin's "the author as producer". Following these intense months of work I find it is interestingly related to practice-based or practice-led research processes. An interpretation of practice-based research², could be the process of flow between the research shaping the practice and the then practice reflecting back in the research. The conference papers made this evident and allowed for a permeable internal and external reflection process, which assisted in developing a framework where stories from other practitioners and academics could be heard and conversed.

Presenting the documentation and development of the project through the exhibition format and allowing for this process of reflection that is activated by revisiting the material itself is an exercise on the part of the team facilitating this. Considering that the project was initiated by a contemporary art centre this comes as no surprise. Examples were presented in various instances within the context of the conference on how educational programmes are reinterpreted as exhibitions within the museum/gallery space (Gogan, Golding, Tsekou- Conference Papers). The usefulness of this exercise relates to Eleenio teacher comments in the Teacher's meetings, 2015, where they indicated that such collaborations are good for the public profile of the school. The school culture and ambiance was discussed with the teachers, amidst the presentation of the school as a "historic" local educational establishment. Reflecting on art education processes and their current practices amidst a restructuring of the Cypriot state educational lyceum (high-school) system can be interpreted as one such mechanism of acting towards the facilitation of a public dialogue about learning, schooling and art's role in this process. Thus the setting of the exhibition acts as a "yurt" space through which to discuss inter-cultural and creative efforts within the Cypriot school environment. Its temporality reinforces a problematic function of breaking relationships that have taken several months to build and how cultural workers are faced with intense 'project' like situations as part of their professional practices. There seems to be a very much present Cypriot concern on what the professionalisation of the museum educator and curator/cultural organizer role means. This was evident in the workshops of the conference at the Cyprus Museum (Conference Papers 2015). Being critical (or at least honest) of the agendas behind the funding mechanisms that enable such projects, as Sophia Diamantopoulou indicated in her presentation (Conference Papers 2015), remained a concern for the team throughout the project.

Keeping in line with the direction of the programme this effort explored how current European cultural practices can create dialogues with different ethnic groups that now live within urban and rural environments. An inter-cultural and inter-lingual focus was evident in both the school collaboration and in the conference. Discussing such projects/efforts one must keep in mind the current reality of Mediterranean Europe, where boat loads of refugees arrive on its shores. This is not something new or unique, as Cyprus has since antiquity been a node of inter-flows between the Middle Eastern shores and more Northern European empires. However an emphasis has been placed on addressing the current co-existence of religions, cultures, ethnic and other groups as they are at present manifested within the school environment of inner city Nicosia through the student workshops and peer-to-peer presentations and dialogues that focused on international contemporary practices. This triggers a series of reflection processes and questions on the funding mechanisms that enable such projects to occur, the sustainability element of these efforts and the agendas behind international cultural support networks. Inevitably issues concerning social power structures are revealed, highlighting the importance of remaining suspect of even one's own agenda and ethical responsibility in instances such as this one, which in its practicality means working together with large groups of primary school students and associated partners (funders, teachers, officers, museum, school, ministry).

¹ The use of the yurt as a space for learning- (Golding Conference Papers, 2015; Caravan Project Greece, <http://www.caravanproject.org/>). The tent as a space for learning is a lived reality for refugees spread around the world, due to natural and conflict related reasons, and activating such ephemeral structures in specific enclosed environments does present a direct involvement with the supposed "community/ies". With not much distance from the project yet it is hard to reflect on that. Given some time I have noticed that it is harder to reflect on the several methodological and interpretative concerns that became evident. Namely what is an educational space, communities vs community, how do we relate to the present space and time and our relationship with technology which facilitates this global interaction between local efforts. The connection that Cypriot peoples have to the image of the tent because of recent lived and constructed conflict narratives, and the tent/yurt as an imagined, temporal space could allow us to reflect on the reality of intense socially involving projects undertaken by cultural workers.

² Practice-led or practice-based research is a term used in current discussions to describe research in the visual arts, design, and to a lesser extent architecture in higher education.

Spect-actors and go-betweens

Questioning the role of ‘mediation’ that is attributed to museum educator/facilitators was indicated by Jessica Gogan in her keynote presentation of contemporary Brazilian socially engaged, learning and lived practices. The position of the facilitator in the context of museum-local community programmes, could borrow from Augusto Boal’s ‘spect-actor’ positions within forum theatre, and question not only the position of “mediating community” within the contemporary art world system, but also the performativity aspects of this position. The facilitator acts as a go-between between institutions, host environments and social groups, creating a temporal node amidst different networks for a limited time period (Tselika, 2015). By the very position of the facilitator acting as an in between, and in parallel with institutions, questions arise as to this mediatory position. Perhaps we could consider this through Augusto Boal’s Games for Actors and Non-Actors, through the position of a theatre actor who acts as a trigger for dialogue. Boal uses the joker character who keeps reappearing and acquires a position of enabling and facilitating a transformative context through the use of public theatre (2002). Whilst this facilitator “must maintain his or her neutrality and try not to impose his or her own ideas” (Boal 2006, p.104), this is a “responsible act and arises after having made a choice, after taking the side of the oppressed” (ibid). Considering the empowering position assumed by the joker over the public/audience, the figure of the “spect-actor” Boal proposed presents as with an active spectator who invades the stage, and, shows will in action, assuming a protagonist role. Chrystalleni and I tried to question our role as mediators/facilitators within this context. Addressing our own positions as this go-between figures dominated our conversations, and encouraged the weekly meetings that took place as part of the ‘Afternoon Team’ workshops over the space of three months. This collaboration experimented with a student directed development approach, which further demonstrated that to meaningfully engage with hands on artistic techniques an extended time frame is needed. The chorotopos (spaceplace) as Eli Trimi calls it, in response to her art education and museum education practices in Greece in the nineteen nineties, the notion of creolisation as Viv Golding allured to and the anthropofagy element of contemporary Brazilian mediating art practice as Jessica Gogan presented (Conference Papers 2015), assisted the Point-Eleneio project to create a dialogue between current academic and museum/gallery practices debates.

Afterthoughts II

Chrystalleni Loizidou

Writing in conclusion of a project like Point-Eleneio is not an easy task. It is especially difficult to do so after hosting an academic conference that gathered together international experts to discuss similar programmes and attempts to bridge art institutions with communities. Among other things, the conference provided exciting new paradigms that make us wish we had the opportunity to start over:

Six months seem hardly enough for a programme with this kind of mission. Indeed in a number of ways the programme has only just started, and there is so much more to be learned and so much more room for the relationship between art centre and school to flourish. Most significantly, the programme gave rise to meaningful personal connections and commitments that need to be honoured beyond the project’s limited scope. It also created institutional ties, created new precedent, and carved out pathways across bureaucracy that one hopes will remain open.

It is hoped this has opened a path for greater and braver efforts towards in-depth research, experimentation, and social engagement, bringing in new ideas and practices around learning. Efforts that will be initiated either from within the state educational system, or like in this case, in collaboration with other entities. It is also hoped that such efforts will learn from this one, from its humble successes and its shortcomings, and not least from its attempt to work with real, local communities, and also with abstract, broad, commonalities. Most importantly, with an open and inclusive approach to creativity that can only come out of respect and appreciation for difference.

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