

Lorenzo:

And so, um, Malaguzzi had this idea during the 80's that a children's arts should be intended as an escape from a rhetoric and stereotypes. So, um, very often, uh, in many schools that I have been to um, in-internationally, ah, and even in Italy, um, and sometimes also ah in, Reggio, um, teachers tend, we as teachers, [inaudible, disrupted internet connection] we tend ah, to propose to children some, uh, stereotypical art products and ask children to ah, basically recreate them or reinterpret them. Uh, instead, uh, the role of the atelier originally, was exactly the contrary. So, was not to propose a normal, uh, arts with children or themes or art pieces, instead was to, uh, escape from stereotypes. This was a very relevant aspect of the 70's Italian culture, the idea that art had escaped from rhetoric and from stereotypes. And I think it's still today, uh, an important aspect in particular when it comes, uh, to digital technologies and the stereotypical way we tend to, uh, uh [disrupted internet connection] when we introduce aspect ah, later.

Lorenzo:

So, um, another relevant aspect regarding art and the way we propose art to children is that, um, Malaguzzi, as most of the phenomenological exponents back then ah, thought, uh, as art as something that refused, uh, essentialist definitions. This means that there isn't a unique way to define art. Instead, it's more about a, a process-oriented view on art. This means that, um, the interest was more about how art used to operate. So it's not very much, um, about, uh, what is art? Instead, the question mostly relevant, was about how does art happen? What are our feelings? What are our relationship with the materials when ah, something artistic is happening? So, this is the idea of a poetic, um, the poetic of art, the phenomenological poetic of art this means that, uh, it's most, uh, process-oriented than product-oriented.

Lorenzo:

What sometimes it's proposed as um, uniquely a pedagogical perspective on the relevance of the process instead of the relevance of the product is indeed, uh, an artistic point of view. And, uh, actually an aesthetical, um, and philosophical ah, point of view that had more interest in the process and also the social process that defines what art is and what isn't art. Um, and so in this sense, in the, um, uh, atelier sometimes, um, now there are many different types of, of atelier starting to be like, uh, these, this is very common in Italy. Like, uh, the atelier for viewing experience, or for a touching experience, you know, like, different kinds of, of, uh, like an atelier for each sense. Uh, instead the initial idea was mostly the contrary. Uh, so to have, uh, an atelier as a place where these different languages could, uh, basically merge, and.

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stereotypes could be, uh, basically, um, yeah, escape. We could escape from uh stereotypes. So I, it's not, wasn't very much about the action that creates, but ah, it was much more about what is, um, creative and um, in this sense, uh, when we deal with, um, digital technologies, um, we have, I think in some way, uh, the same, uh, problem cause ah sometimes, ah it's hard to propose digital technologies to children. Uh, and to achieve an aesthetic experience. Uh, this means a meaningful experience and not a stereotype experience with digital uh, technologies. And so in order to, um, make it to, uh, spend time in a good way, so time well spent with digital technologies, uh, the general idea is to create as many connections as possible with other um, materials and also to redefine digital technologies by uh, intertwining them with other kinds of materials. But we'll, uh, maybe discuss it, uh a bit later.

Lorenzo:

And, um, in this sense though, what is important is that, um, in terminol-, in the phenomenological perspective, actions are visibly intertwined with thoughts. And this was like a perspective that's in particular a Unchesty proposed he was an Italian philosopher, very relevant for Neo avant garde, this movement. And when we say that actions are very visibly intertwined with thoughts, uh, this reminds us of a Malaguzzi's idea where the thoughts are related with the hands. And in this sense it's very important I think when we deal with digital technologies to also allow children to, um, not only to create things but, uh, also to express their thoughts, uh, about what is happening because very often when we experience something digitally, um, it's uh, a different feeling under an aesthetical point of view because, uh, as you (poor connection) from etymology aesthetic means like, the um, a study of how we perceive the perception of the work so then our sensitivity towards, uh, the work.

Lorenzo:

And, and so, um, in this sense when, uh, for some research projects we've proposed to, uh, children, uh, digital, um, environments or to like, uh, augmented reality. And these are all experiences where, uh, children can actually, um, in so to say develop a-a very deep, a meta-cognitive process, uh, since, um, experiencing something digitally is very different than experiencing it in, um, uh, a non-digital manner. And in this sense, a meta-cognitive process about what is happening and why it is different and what are the differences? How can we experience them or minimize them? uh, is I think in the conversations we had with the children was very interesting to see their points of view under this aspect. And, this is all about the idea that I think it's very relevant to, um, give children the possibility to develop a critical, um, point of view on digital technologies, uh, as it is to provide them with a critical point of view on any kind of experience.

Lorenzo:

But, um, this is a very great like debate that now early childhood education's different perspectives are having because many refuse to propose digital technologies, uh, in early childhood context. Um, so the idea is though, at least my perspective is that ah since most of the children are now having, uh, in their families ex- or in their daily life experiences with, uh, this kind of materials and technologies, it's very relevant to ah, give them the chance to develop a critical a point of view on them. And, and, and being mostly active when using them instead of passively, uh, undergo the experience of using these technologies because it's very probably problematic. And so in this sense I think that it's the um duty of, um, us as teachers, as pedagogists, as professors to uh, try to develop new, uh, ways to uh, propose, uh, these technologies in, um, the most connected ways and also the most crit-, possibly critical, and active, uh, way.

Lorenzo:

And so, um, this is both a phenomenological perspective, but uh, as well, um, as an aesthetical, uh, and perspective since, um, aesthetical philosophy as being, um, interrogating very much how the digital, uh, experience works. And in this sense I think it's relevant when we, um, design the experiences in our schools and in the ateliers to um, ask ourselves how will be these experienced for children? So how basically to develop the experience that children are going to have in ateliers and also in other ah, places of the school. And in this sense, what is very relevant and maybe sometimes not very much communicated in, uh, my experience as pedagogist um, and researcher of research question that we as adults as teacher prepare for a precise context or for a precise futures, research as space since what usually happens in Reggio Emilia's ateliers and schools is that before, um, uh, actually having the

children, um, doing experience, uh, we as adult we always try to, uh, find what the possible research questions for them might be.

Lorenzo:

So we tend to propose context with research questions related to that specific context. And um, with this I'd like to underline the relevance of ah, discussing together, uh, how to design ah the research ah space. I mean, just the educational space ah, in this sense. So, um, the way we propose digital technologies, even just like under a spacial point of view, I mean, where we actually, uh, put the digital devices and in connection with work is very relevant because this is about the affordances that children can actually feel when they enter in a room. What do we mean by affordances? When we talk about affordances, we uh mostly uh, refer to the possibilities, uh, that a certain space provides. So like, um, when we enter a specific space, that space gives us some suggestions about how we might use this, and this uh, is also that valid for, uh, objects. So the way we found, uh, objects disposed

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suggest us, the possibility to use them in a certain manner. And, when talking about digital technologies it is very important to ah try to create connections that are visible as soon as one enters into a specific space. So not to, uh, for example, create spaces where there are just and only digital technologies and where that becomes the, uh, technology hour, or the technology space, or the technology atelier, but of digital atelier. But I think it will be important, um, to provide spaces where the connections are visible as soon as one enters. This ah means spending time discussing and trying different ways ah-