



Would you be interested in making a thesis in the field of visual art by children and young people?

The foundation of Art Centre for Children and Young People based in Hyvinkää, Finland has formed a working group to study the significance of visual art produced by children and young people. The foundation's international archive of children's and young people's art is the object of the examination. The works are gathered from the international exhibitions of children's and young people's art in Hyvinkää, since 1971, and at the moment there are about 100 000 works in the archive. The exhibitions are organized in every third or fourth year and the upcoming exhibition in 2017 will be the 16th in order. The works, which come from over 130 different countries, are mainly drawings, paintings and prints on paper, but there are also some photographs and videos in the archive. The archive is being digitalized and over 80 000 works are saved and indexed in a digital archive, so far.

The aim of the working group is to study and analyse the tradition and form of these international exhibitions, and the significance and use of visual cultural heritage by children and young people also in a wider perspective. The subject is examined on research's viewpoint focusing on art education and childhood and youth research.

The students of art education and education theory who are especially interested in childhood and youth research are now called to make a thesis on the international archive of the Art Centre for Children and Young People or on a similar material. Articles based on the theses are written for research-based publication on the subject.

The viewpoints of the research of the pictures can be for example:

1. The context of the image:

a) As a sampling of children's and youngster's visual expression

- A change in aesthetics
- Comparison of the visual cultures of different times
- Studying things familiar and unfamiliar in the pictures
- Views on visual development
- Conceptions of art

b) As the source of culture historic knowledge and as the representatives of culture historic phenomena on the contents viewpoint

- Knowledge both on the cultural history and present time
- What kind of a childhood and which area of child's life do the pictures represent
- Everyday life and experiences of children
- Childhood produced with images
- Childhood in the different cultures and in the different parts of the world

c) As the representatives of the pedagogic and educational phenomena

- Comparison of the pedagogic practises in the different times and countries
- Comparison of the different curricula
- Conceptions and views of art, education, teaching, learning and children which are behind the curricula and pedagogic practises

d) Finding historic and culture historic background of the pictures

- Interviewing people whose works are in the archive, collecting their memories and asking what it meant them to participate in an exhibition and what it means that their work is a part of the archive

2. Children's and young people's discourse on the images

Studying children and youngsters while they are curating and building up the exhibitions and exploring the archive. What do they talk about? What does their speech tell and from where does it evolve?

3. A certain type genre of pictorial narration and representation of the art competitions and exhibitions of children and young people.

The theses and the publication will be a part of a wider project that is to be created to strengthen the co-operation between the institutes researching the subject. The aims of the future project will be networking, publishing and employing researchers and students. However, studying the visual culture heritage produced by children and young people is the centre of the project. This research also gives knowledge of children and youngsters themselves. Along the project new research methods and ways to utilize visual culture of children and young people in the different fields of studies are developed. Showing the possibilities of this imagery as a material for both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research is one of the aims of the future project. Different ways to increase the voice of children and youngsters in our society are studied and created in the project.

The working group:

Raisa Laurila-Hakulinen, Executive Director / Art Centre for Children and Young People
Päivi Venäläinen, Producer / Art Centre for Children and Young People
Anniina Koivurova, University Lecturer of Art Education / Lappei University, Faculty of Art and Design
Jaana Lähteenmaa, Docent of Youth Research / Tampere University, School of Social Sciences and Humanities
Tiina Pusa, Lecturer of Art Pedagogy / Aalto University, Dep. of Art
Pauliina Rautio, Postdoctoral Researcher / Oulu University, Faculty of Education
Sinikka Rusanen, Lecturer / Helsinki University, Department of Teacher Education
Fanny Vilmilä, Researcher / Finnish Youth Research Network
Susanne Ylönen, Postdoctoral Researcher / Jyväskylä University, Department of Art and Culture Studies

For more information, please contact:

Päivi Venäläinen
Art Centre for Children and Young People
paivi.venalainen@artcentre.fi
p. 050 3083625
www.artcentre.fi