



## Family Learning



### **Emily Pringle**

Families and Creative  
Learning in Art Galleries

### **Marianna Adams, Jessica Luke, Jeanine Ancelet**

Family Learning in Art  
Museum Interactive Spaces

### **Joumana al Jabri**

Febrik, Play, and the Urban Context

### **Alexandra Bennett**

HEART: Engaging Young  
Parents in Family Learning

### **Andrea Hubin, Karin Schneider**

Doing Research with  
Anthropologists, Designers,  
Mediators and a Museum

### **Anna Harding**

Transforming Empty Shops  
into Creative Places

### **Kaija Kaitavuori & Minna Raitmaa**

The Backwards Day: When  
Children Take the Lead

### **Simon Taylor**

Intergenerational Learning and  
the Challenges of Outreach

### **Joanne Kenworthy**

Children's Voices in the  
Context of Regeneration

### **Penny Hay & Mary Fawcett**

Family Learning in 5x5x5=creativity

### **Reviews**

*documenta 12 Education*

# engage 25

**Spring 2010**

**Editor**

Karen Raney

**Editorial Advisory Board**

Anna Harding / Howard Hollands / Pam Meecham /

Catherine Orbach / Veronica Sekules / Jane Sillis /

Yasmin Canvin / Kaija Kaitavuori

**International Advisory Board**

Claude Faurteau / Gavin Jantjes /

Declan McGonagle / Ken Robinson

**Proofreading and assistance from**

Laura Cherry

**Inviting contributions**

Contributions are invited on the subject of gallery education in the context of the marketing, branding and development of art institutions.

**Write to the editor at:**

engage, Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road,  
London E1 6LA

T: +44 (0) 20 7729 5858 F: +44 (0) 20 7739 3688

E: [editor@engage.org](mailto:editor@engage.org) or [kraney@onetel.com](mailto:kraney@onetel.com)

**Cover images:**

Above: *Theatre of Making*, junk sculpture workshop participant, at *Alive and Kicking Festival*, Gosport, 2008.

Below: Febrik. Burj el Barajne camp: example of altered use of spaces and architectural elements

**Image on facing page:**

Febrik. Burj el Barajne camp: Play Space – children's work

# Contents

## Family Learning

### Editorial

#### Emily Pringle

Families and Creative Learning in Art Galleries:  
Setting the Scene

#### Marianna Adams, Jessica Luke, Jeanine Ancelet

Family Learning in Art Museum Interactive Spaces:  
A Literature Review

#### Andrea Hubin, Karin Schneider

Doing Research with Anthropologists, Designers,  
Mediators and a Museum: a Project on, for and  
with Families in Vienna

#### Anna Harding

Slack Space: Transforming Empty Shops into  
Creative Places

#### Joumana al Jabri

Febrik, Play, and the Urban Context

#### Simon Taylor

Intergenerational Learning and the Challenges  
of Outreach

#### Kaija Kaitavuori & Minna Raitmaa

The Backwards Day: When Children Take the Lead

#### Alexandra Bennett

HEART: Engaging Young Parents in Family Learning

#### Penny Hay & Mary Fawcett

Family Learning in 5x5x5=creativity

#### Joanne Kenworthy

Listening to Learn: Children's Voices in the  
Context of Regeneration

### Review

*documenta 12: Education 1 and 2*

### Contributors' details

# Review

## documenta 12: Education 1 and 2

**documenta 12 Education 1:  
Engaging Audiences, Opening Institutions  
Methods and Strategies in Gallery Education  
at documenta 12**

**Edited by Wanda Wieczorek, Claudia  
Hummel, Ulrich Schötter,  
Ayşe Güleç, and Sonja Parzefall**

2009, diaphanes  
ISBN 978-3-03734-081-3  
£16.69

**documenta 12 Education 2:  
Between Critical Practice and Visitor  
Services  
Results of a Research Project**

**Edited by Carmen Mörsch and the research  
team of the documenta 12 education**

2009, diaphanes  
ISBN 978-3-03734-082-0  
£20.88

The exhibition labels at documenta 12 provided only the name of the artist and the title of the work. No mention was made of the artist's country of birth, nor of the date when the artwork was produced. This was a curatorial decision that aimed to create an open 'conceptual space' in which the artworks, the visitors and the institution alike were drawn into an equal, 'co-constructing dialogue'. These two volumes provide a descriptive and reflective record of that educational endeavour.

Entirely contrary to the spirit of the two books, I shall start by offering a little geographical and historical context. The first documenta exhibition opened in Kassell, (West) Germany, in 1955. As a large-scale contemporary art exhibition it hoped to act as a counterpoise to the 'Degenerate Art' [Entartete Kunst] exhibition, organised by the Nazis in 1937, which aimed, with its coarse sophistry, to discredit and degrade the work of modernist artists. documenta 1 functioned also

as an assertion of Germany's integration within European culture. That first exhibition chose not to have any labels at all accompanying the artworks, primarily as a means to counter a didacticism that would either legitimise or indeed interrogate the works that were displayed. Despite this, the exhibition's avowed intent was to educate the public, particularly the young, about the art that had been produced outside Germany between 1933 and 1945. The show necessarily had to shy away from any hint of state indoctrination, aiming always to address the visitors as individuals rather than as a collective body.

Since then, every five years has seen the exhibition evolve, expand and re-emerge. Retrospectively, as Andrea Hubin suggests in volume 2, it could be argued that the initial imperative to focus on the individual in some sense predisposed the exhibition to involve itself in the galloping progress of neoliberalism over the last thirty years. In this way the visitor became characterised as a consumer, and gallery education became perceived as a 'service' valued by the institution as a self-funding adjunct. These developments might also, to a degree, account for the widening gap that began to stretch between the exhibition and the surrounding communities of Kassel, a gap that this most recent iteration consciously attempted to address.

Housed in five separate buildings, documenta 12 opened in the summer of 2007. It involved 122

artists and over 500 works. The artistic director, Roger M. Buergel, and the curator, Ruth Noack, proposed three questions as a means of framing the development of the exhibition:

Is modernity our antiquity?

What is bare life?

Education/formation: what is to be done?

This last question explicitly positioned education as a constituent part of documenta 12. Time and resources were dedicated to educational projects for the first time in the history of the exhibition.

*Volume 1: Engaging Audiences, Opening Institutions* collects together accounts of documenta 12's 'very different approaches to fostering engagement with art'. These are grouped into five constructed communities:

1. A network initiated by local representatives of Kassel, set up 18 months before the exhibition opened. It worked to investigate the 'relevance of the exhibition for the local context'.
2. A project that worked with teenagers from Kassel for the eight months running up to the exhibition, to develop their roles as gallery guides for groups of adults over the summer.
3. The gallery education division, comprised of 86 educationalists, 60 of whom led tours for over 100,000 visitors to the exhibition.
4. A gallery education programme for young visitors that set up its own space within the

exhibition complex, and named itself 'Hatching Ideas'.

5. The documenta 12 Halle, a space inside the exhibition dedicated to promoting 'debate and exchange' among the four communities outlined above, other groups involved with materials published internationally in the run-up to the exhibition, and also the visiting public.

The accounts in volume 1 are ordered according to their duration, those projects which ran for a longer time coming first in the book. Each section starts with a general introduction, then continues with a selection of reports from those involved in the projects. A DVD supports the accounts by providing additional texts, images and short films [in German].

*Volume 2: Between Critical Practice and Visitor Services* is an expanded account of parallel research that was carried out during the exhibition by Carmen Mörsch and the documenta 12 Research Team. It also included contributions from four 'guest authors': Andrea Hubin, Ruth Noack, María do Mar Castro Varela and Nikita Dhawan. Indeed, it gathers a total of 26 different perspectives, including personal, reflective accounts of the experiments undertaken by individual guides in the exhibition and extended reflection on the methodologies and theories that underpinned the educationalists' practices.

Two things make this second volume by far the more accessible: the book's structure and the

introductory essay by Carmen Mörsch. In her opening article, she outlines a model of 'four discourses' of gallery education: the Affirmative, the Reproductive, the Deconstructive and the Transformative.

1. The Affirmative is the default practice of gallery education, 'devised by institutionally authorised speakers who address a correspondingly specialised and self-motivated, already interested public sphere'.

2. The Reproductive seeks out sectors of the public who are perceived as having been excluded, and then 'allows' them access to important cultural heritage, initiating them in the rites of museums and galleries.

3. The Deconstructive chooses to 'critically examine, together with the public, the museum and art, as well as educational and canonising processes' that take place within those contexts.

4. The Transformative is an activist discourse. It works to expand the 'exhibiting institution and to politically constitute it as an agent of societal change'. That is, not only does it work to reflect on institutional mechanisms, but it also seeks to change them.

It is the actualisation of these last two discourses, the Deconstructive and the Transformative, that documenta 12 is committed to exploring and evaluating, always knowing that neither approach necessarily excludes the sporadic surfacing of

elements from the Affirmative and the Reproductive.

As a later article by Teresa Distelberger and Nora Landkammer discusses, no activist manifesto as such was drawn up by the research team. What volume 2 provides, in its stead, is a diverse collection of individuals' experiences of engaging in the 'experimental' gallery tours, tours that the media had widely promoted before the exhibition opened. Many of these accounts deal with the paying public's assumptions and expectations, and their reactions when these were thwarted or fulfilled. The included contributions are by no means homogeneous, allowing the reader ample distance to reflect on the successes and frailties of the various approaches.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Volume 2 is its structure. The editors have evidently put careful thought into the sequencing of the initial accounts. The second article, 'The Aspect of Dance in Gallery Education' by Deniz Sözen, analyses the codes of gesture made by a gallery educator as they move through the exhibition, and in so doing constructs a visual account of one path through part of documenta 12. This establishes a mental itinerary which helps the reader envisage and engage with the subsequent articles.

Cross-references are printed in the margins of the book, leading the reader to related passages in other articles, to a glossary, to descriptions of

selected artworks, as well as to files on the DVD that accompanies volume 1. From the start, this counteracts the reader's impulse to forge through the text sequentially, a good thing in a book that runs to over 350 pages in small, sans-serif type. The effect is to slow the reader down, providing glimpses of text and images to which they can later return with a sense of familiarity and recognition. Most importantly, it gives the reader time and space to articulate and question important and reiterated terms and phrases such as: aesthetic experience, the exhibition as medium, migration, performativity, queerness, whiteness, or the post-colonial.

This cross-referencing, in the absence of a stated manifesto, marks points of collective concern for those involved, points which include speech and language, play, failure, the feminisation of gallery education, racism, the physical toll of performative practice, fiscal strictures, openness, change and confrontation. The authors most frequently cited by contributors when addressing these issues are Austin, Derrida, Said and Spivak.

Judging from their own self-appraisals, both volumes are highly valued by those involved in their production. They serve, in the first instance, as an enduring record of the educational practices that took place in and around the exhibition. Further, they represent the realisation of a commitment established at the inception of documenta 12 that there would be a published

outcome to the research and investigations carried out under its auspices.

On a first reading, for those not involved in documenta 12, volume 1 is the less accessible book. Its chronological structure focuses very much on the communities involved in the projects, but the brevity of the contributions does not always allow for full contextual explanation. Despite their emphasis on the local, the accounts can feel diffuse, and that localism can also make them hard to follow. The uniformity of type size for titles, chapter headings and sub-headings (perhaps purposefully) conceals boundaries between sections, and the translations of the articles, although competent, are not always sympathetic. It is possible that these techniques, to some extent, serve to recreate for the reader some of the obstacles encountered by visitors.

Volume 2, on the other hand, is a refreshingly successful attempt to work against the sequential structure of the text, and in doing so leaves the reader with a stronger sense of documenta 12 as an unfolding, productive, event. The tighter focus of the articles allows for an engaging precision that the first volume, with its wider remit, sometimes lacks.

Having said that, however, the insights provoked by volume 2 encourage a re-reading of parts of volume 1, providing a renewed sense of the value of its wider purview. Two articles in particular amply reward a second visit. The first, 'Taking

Over Space' by Antje Neumann, describes a group of children who, by mimicking and playing with the behaviours of adults they observe in the exhibition, appropriate and distort the spaces around artworks and doorways. The second, more controversial article, 'On the Verge of the Admissable' by Ulrich Schötter, describes a response to complaints by parents that the placement of a number of sexually explicit works in the exhibition did not allow them to anticipate or mediate them for their children. The education division devised a children-only tour, which involved the making and wearing of masks and body sculpture, envisaged as a way to allow the children a means of retreat, if needed, from the explicitness of some of the images they were to encounter. In the event, the masks and dress were valued by the children not so much as they confronted the artworks, but rather more as a means of 'protecting' themselves from the gaze of adult visitors whom they encountered on their tour.

Taking literally Swift's ironic maxim that 'those to whom every Body allows the second Place, have an undoubted Title to the First', I would recommend reading the second volume before embarking on the first.<sup>1</sup> Like some of the successful tours recounted in volume 2, this order of things allows for a more nuanced and sympathetic approach to the experiments outlined in volume 1, encouraging the reader to pursue and engage with genuinely thoughtful

contributions that might otherwise appear frustratingly opaque.

**Hannah Fussner**

SEN Educator and freelance writer

Notes

---

1 Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, ed Kathleen Williams, Dent: London, 1982, p.14.

engage journal is also available by subscription. Individual Subscriptions cost £19.00 (UK), £22.00 (Europe), £24.00 (Elsewhere). Institutional Subscriptions cost £48.00 (UK), £54.00 (Europe), £56.00 (Elsewhere). All rates are for two issues and include post and packing. Please indicate initial issue requested. For more information visit **www.engage.org/publications** or email **laura.cherry@engage.org**

engage is an international membership organisation, including artists, curators, educators in the UK and abroad, which exists to promote greater understanding and enjoyment of the visual arts. As well as engage journal, engage's programme includes innovative projects, conferences and seminars, training and networking programmes, and advocacy to governments and funding bodies.

For details about membership please visit **www.engage.org/join**

engage is supported by Arts Council England, Scottish Arts Council and the Arts Council of Wales, and by charitable foundations.

Donating to engage enables us to continue bringing the visual arts to new audiences. For more information or to make a donation visit **www.engage.org/donate.aspx**

The Editor and engage are grateful for the kind support of the contributors and of the Editorial Advisory Board. The views expressed in engage journal are not necessarily endorsed by the Editorial Advisory Board or by engage.

All contents © engage unless stated otherwise.

engage journal is published twice yearly by engage, National Association for Gallery Education (Charity Registration Number 1087471, OSCR no. SC039719).

Please address all correspondence to the Editor at:

engage, Rich Mix,  
35-47 Bethnal Green Road,  
London E1 6LA  
T: +44 (0) 20 7729 5858  
F: +44 (0) 20 7739 3688  
E: editor@engage.org or  
kraney@onetel.com  
W: www.engage.org

**Wholesale Distribution by:**  
Cornerhouse Publications  
T: +44 (0)161 200 1503  
F: +44 (0)161 200 1504  
E: publications@cornerhouse.org

**Design**  
SteersMcGillan Design Ltd

engage is committed to maximising access throughout its programmes. This journal is available in a range of formats. For more information, contact **info@engage.org**



OTENRY CŵLADODIAFOD  
CYNGOR CRYFYDDYDAU CYMRU  
THE ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES  
SUPPORTING CREATIVITY



Cefnogydd gan  
**Y Loteri Genedlaethol**  
trwy Gyngor Celfyddydau Cymru



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**  
through the Scottish Arts Council



**engage**  
in the  
visual arts



ISSN 1365-9383