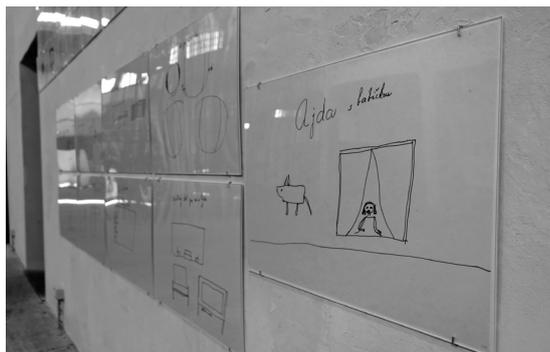


Radial thinking

A school class is visiting the Manifesta 7 exhibition in Bolzano with an Art Mediator. The pupils are each choosing an everyday object and then placing them in the exhibition as they see fit. Three children have associated a drawing block with the artwork of Kateřina Šedá. The piece consists of a wall covered with pencil drawings made by Jana, Kateřina's grandmother.

"How did you get the idea to put the block here?" is how the Art Mediator opens the dialogue. "Because there are so many drawings with things on them," replies a boy, "but there are still things missing." "Right, like a screwdriver," affirms a girl. "These things tell a story," adds another girl.



Kateřina Šedá, *It doesn't matter*, drawings, 2005-2007. Manifesta 7, *The Rest of Now* Ex-Alumix, Bolzano/Bozen, Italy, 2008. Photo Wolfgang Träger.

SO NOW WHAT?

Now the art mediator has the children's observations, the artwork itself, and his or her background knowledge of the artwork. He or she builds connections between these different realities. Linear thinking is not sufficient to do this. The mediator has to open up their way of thinking like a fan, like the drawers of an archive, like a treetop, to activate all circuits. Their awareness has to access all fields, areas and levels.

For example a mediator could ask, where did the children see that the drawings tell a story? He or she could tell how Kateřina convinced her grandmother to draw all those objects. Or could talk about different ways of telling a story through art, maybe in comparison with other pieces in the exhibition. The mediator could refer to the social situation in the Czech Republic or to what happens when people retire.

The mediator could hand out the sheets of the drawing block and let the children draw other things that they still miss. He or she might sketch the history of pencil drawing, talk about composition or tell them about when everyday objects first became eligible to be represented in art. The mediator could question the concept of original art, since in our case, the artist is showing the drawings of somebody else as their own artwork.

There are many more possibilities, yet they are not arbitrary, because this process of radial thinking has a centre: the work of art.

Nobody can predict which artworks the pupils will choose and which associations they will make.

Those who want to work in such an open way need to acquire a broad background knowledge, and then trust their intuition.

On the following pages you will find a tool to practice this kind of radial thinking. It takes the form of a fan with different questions to consider when preparing your work in the exhibition.

HOW TO USE THE FAN

Imagine the artwork being in the centre of the fan and all the questions on the fan surround it. The questions help you to gather different kinds of information associated to the work of art. The more art mediators participate and contribute, the more knowledge and associations you will gather. These are your resources for mediation work with the public in the exhibition.

Cut out the cards below and pin them together as shown in the photo.

A special thanks to Emanuela De Cecco, who created “The Show-Me-Around Kit” in 2002 for the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Torino/Turin, which was an inspiration for the radial thinking fan.



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WHAT DO I PERCEIVE FIRST, WHEN I SEE THIS ARTWORK?

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WHAT KIND OF ASSOCIATIONS COME TO MY MIND: PICTURES, WORDS, FEELINGS, MEMORIES?

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WHAT ARE THE ICONOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS I SEE?

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● **IN THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE ARTIST, WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW AS FAR AS THIS ARTWORK IS CONCERNED?**

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● **WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT THE CREATION OF THE WORK OF ART, ABOUT ITS RECEPTION, ABOUT TRIVIA AND STORIES ON PRODUCTION AND TRANSPORT ...**

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● **WHAT IS THE THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ARTWORK?**

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● **WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT THE MATERIAL AND THE TECHNIQUE USED AND ITS CULTURAL HISTORY?**

✂

● **WHAT ART HISTORICAL INFORMATION IS THERE FOR THIS ARTWORK?**

✂

● **TO WHICH OTHER FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE DOES THE ARTWORK REFER? (FILM, PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIOLOGY, ETHNOLOGY, GEOLOGY ...)**

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HOW DOES THE ARTWORK RELATE TO THE LOCATION WHERE IT IS EXHIBITED?

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HOW DOES THE ARTWORK COMMUNICATE WITH THE SURROUNDING ARCHITECTURE, WITH THE EXHIBITION AND THE OTHER ARTWORKS?

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