

Groovy Art Workshops

Children's Art is in Disarray

Why? Because of Blue Peter. Children producing art has been relegated to the realm of sticky-back plastic and play dough. That's not to say they don't have their place in the fun and creativity stakes, but it is generating the wrong impression regarding the nature of the creative process and children's creative intelligence.

In the UK an average child gets £200.00 worth of toys a year. A staggering £2.15 billion of toys and games are sold per year in the education and entertainment of our children. So for all the vast amounts of money being spent to improve hand-eye co-ordination; literacy and numeracy; spatial awareness; colour recognition etc, why is the art of creativity by children viewed as (at best) the splatter of paint or worse "...uhmm that's nice/lovely dear?"

The message is clear, being creative serves no purpose other than to keep the little ones entertained so that they can leave the grown-ups to do grown-up things.

Yet throughout history the creative intelligence of humanity (in no chronological order) led us out of Africa; to harness the power of fire; domesticate animals and cultivate land; invent the wheel; design and build the pyramids of Egypt, the Great Wall of China, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; the invention of zero and decimals; right the way through to the World Web – is all through our human ability to play, imagine, explore, experiment...

Bottom line our creativity and ingenuity. The human capability to ask: "What if...?"

It is through this ability that we have managed to not only map our own planet, but now look to explore and map our universe. Yet we do not acknowledge that the seeds are often sown in childhood. We've formed this notion that being creative falls into two camps – that of high art and design, and everything else. Of which children's art is on the lower rungs of the 'everything else' hierarchy: A crying shame. A shame that despite all the billions spent in Britain on educational toys and our educational system, we truly do not acknowledge the importance of creativity within our children.

Thus those individuals past and present who in unleashing their artistic potential have allowed the rest of humanity to live in greater safety and improved health; developed systems of communication; increased our understanding of our world and universe, have ultimately enriched all our lives.

We adults can often learn a thing or two from children's art and acknowledge our own human predisposition to inventiveness has led us to compose music that makes us cry; build architectural structures that amaze; scientific equipment that allows us to see our world with new eyes; and what we learn through this process we ultimately share with others. Albert Einstein was spot on when he said

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in
creative expression and knowledge.

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