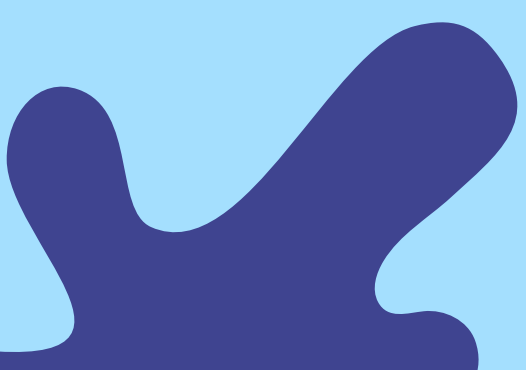


THE PLASTIC EXPRESSIONS AS INSTRUMENTS OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: THE EXPERIENCES OF “MAIL ART” AND SENSORY NATURE



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THE POWER OF NATURE IN THE MAIL ART CREATION

The word "art" comes from the Latin word "ars" meaning skill, cunning and craft. Over the years, various philosophers have struggled to define what art is. Art is one of the great questions in the field of Aesthetics, a philosophical branch where it studies beauty, the nature and fundamentals of art. Plato was one of the philosophers who most studied art and developed the concept of art as mimesis (imitation). For Plato, art is the representation of nature. For a long time, the value of a work of art was based on the relationship of fidelity to what it represented.

Artistic creation is directly linked to inspiration. The absorption of what surrounds us stimulates our imagination and results in the motivation to create. Inspiration is essential to create both the more traditional forms of art such as painting, sculpture or literature and also contributes to dance, photography or cinema. When an artist looks for inspiration around them, it is often in nature that they find it.

Nature and its living beings, landscapes, the environment itself, with its shapes and colours, contribute to the creative process. The contact with nature allows an escape from the daily routine and there is a connection with the concept of natural beauty, of elements that have not been manipulated by humans. Several renowned artists have used nature as their inspiration. Works like Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* or *Field of Wheat with Crows*, Edvard Munch's *Smoke from the Train* depicts the relationship of nature (landscape) and the products of human intervention (train), Monet's *Water Lilies* and *Sunrise* showed a clear inspiration in the nature that surrounded him, where through impressionism he portrayed the reflection of light and the impact of this on the colours of the elements of nature.

Over the years and the evolution of society, nature has always played an important role in artistic creation, being one of the main sources of inspiration for artists. The colours, textures, shapes and even the sounds of nature allow a journey from the outside in for the artist. Even for Kant, in "Critique of Judgement", nature itself is to be appreciated and admired as if it were art.

The mail Art and nature, leads its creators to create from elements of nature.

All the natural surroundings will create a symbiosis of creation that will be responsible for the elaborated works and the messages transmitted through this expressive technique.



Advantages

Contemporary artistic practices favour the development of new cognitive skills, new learning, the acquisition of “soft skills”, namely the development of creativity, interpersonal relationships, “team spirit” and group work. These learnings are tools for personal enhancement and are powerful competitive advantages that promote social inclusion. “Mail Art” as a creative and pedagogical communication tool, makes it possible to raise awareness of the interpretation of natural and cultural heritage.

Objectives

1. Understand the concepts of “Mail Art”
2. Distinguish the different specificities of contemporary artistic practices
3. Experiment with various techniques of plastic expression
4. Exploring various materials from nature as a work support
5. Understand the existing natural heritage in the territory and recognize the natural diversity
6. Promoting social inclusion through the sharing of intergenerational experiences
7. Develop a creative workshop and exhibition of the works carried out
8. The impact of elements of nature on artistic creations

Participants

1. The development of orientation visits, walking trails through nature and the experimentation of plastic expression techniques, Mail Art sessions, is suitable for a number of 20 participants.
2. The target is, preferably, seniors, users of community centers and young people from disadvantaged social strata, with a view to enabling knowledge sharing and intergenerational, promoting social inclusion.
3. The project also includes the participation of teachers who can benefit from specific training in mail art, acquiring new skills in the areas of social inclusion through art.

Context and methodology

1. The choice of context in which the actions are carried out takes into account the visibility of mail art practices and the contact with the local community. For this reason, preference is given to open-air public spaces and cultural spaces located in historic centers, close to gardens of heritage interest.
2. The context of the participants' insertion in the community where they belong is important, with a view to meeting the project's objectives, the enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage and social inclusion.
3. The selection of plastic expression techniques used in the "Mail Art" sessions should take into account the different specificities and skills of the participants, with a view to enhancing positive results in learning and social development.
4. The initiative should value the diversity of natural heritage resources and the influences of contemporary regional artists who focus on themes of nature, the interpretation of the territory and "Mail Art".
5. Active Method using group dynamics for the development of plastic expression activities

Time

The schedule of plastic expression (artistics activities) sessions and activities may be carefully evaluated, depending on the needs of the group. Two moments of continuous practice are suggested, mediated by a self-evaluating pause in the learning process and sharing of group dynamics. Each module will last 3 hours, with theoretical and practical sessions (experimenting with different techniques).



Safety issues to be considered

1. Provide a favourable organisational environment, motivating and conducive to learning.
2. Do not use techniques of plastic expression, which can be tiring or very uncomfortable for the elderly or people with special needs, as they may not favour learning or the development of the spirit of belonging to the group.
3. Use materials, supports and means suitable for different age groups. Do not use hazardous or flammable materials.

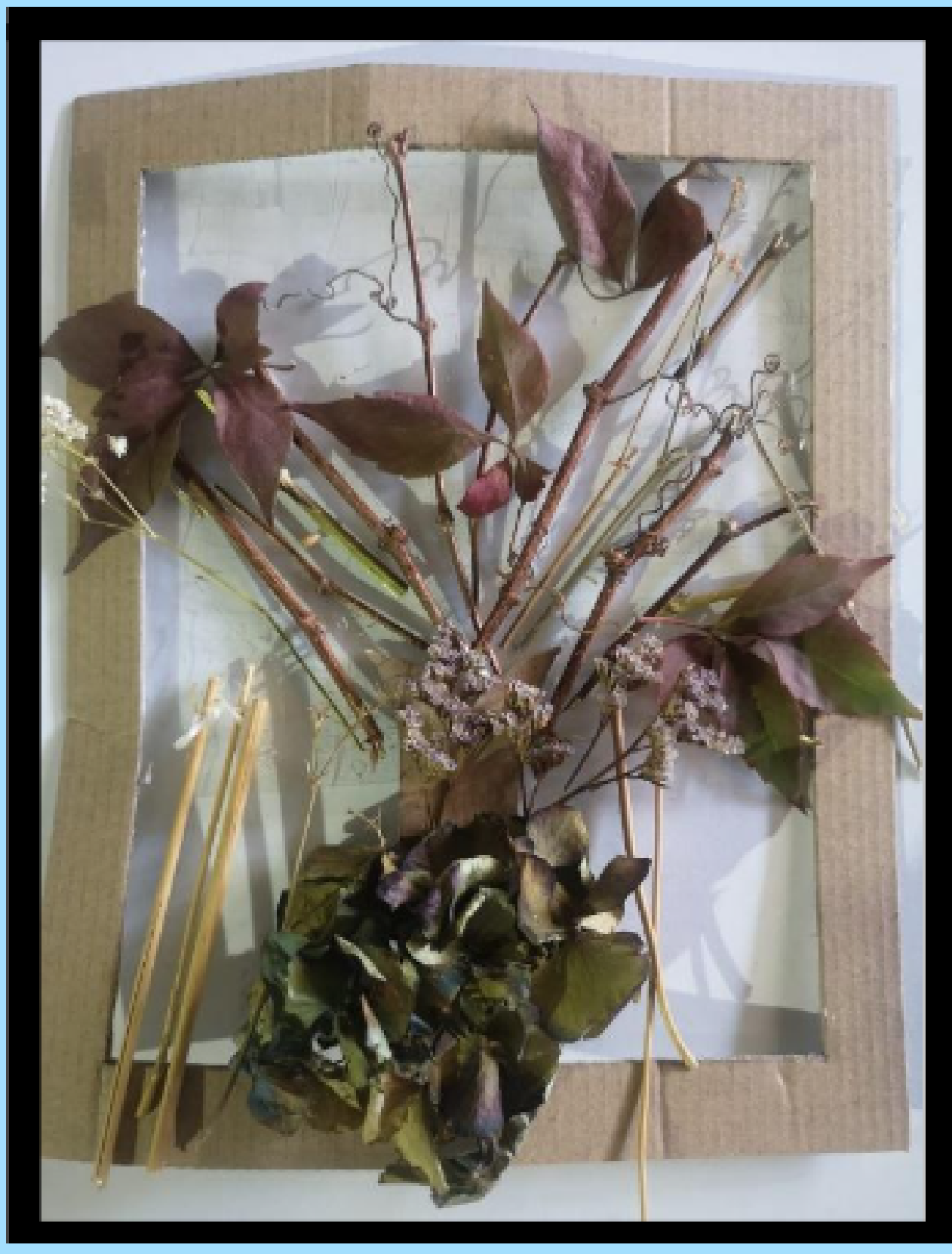
Concepts and exercises

Session 1	The power of Nature: Stimulating MailArt Creativity
Session 2	The colour of Nature and Mailart Creation
Session 3	Art, Nature and emotions

Some examples



Some examples





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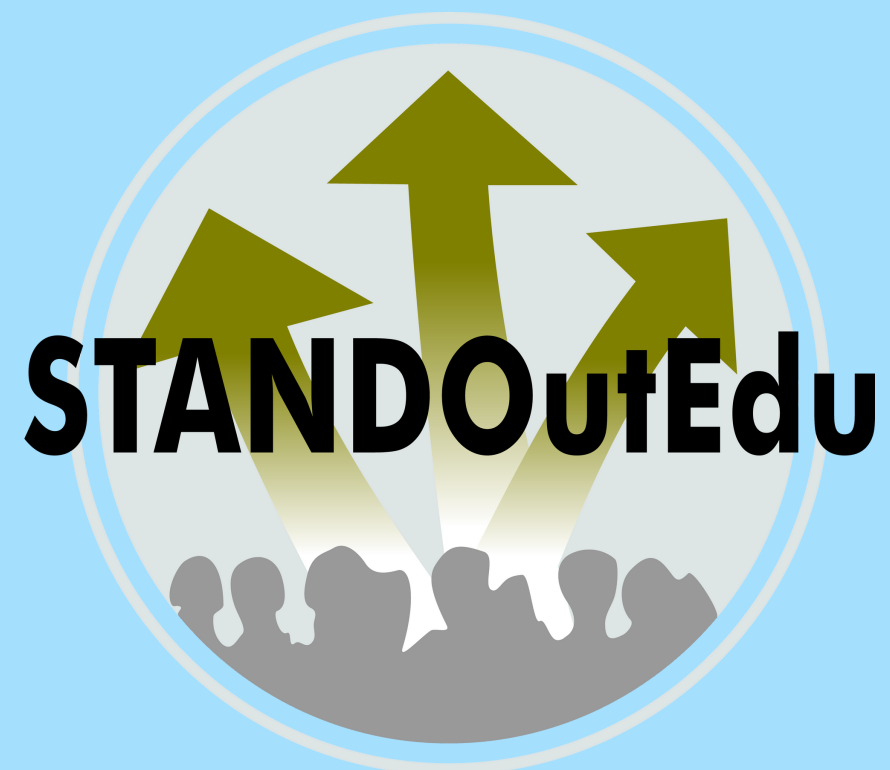
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MAIL ART
ACTIVITIES!!!**



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