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Art: a tool for social inclusion

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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Tämä teos toteutettiin yhdessä toiminnallisesti monimuotoisten nuorten ryhmän kanssa, käyttäen taiteellista ilmaisua välineenä ja pohjaten Palveluoppimis-opetusmenetelmään. Kyseinen opetusmenetelmä on mahdollistanut yliopisto-opiskelun aikana tehdyn yhdyskuntapalvelun parissa saavutettujen tietojen ja taitojen käytäntöön soveltamisen.</p> <p>Teoksen tavoitteena on taiteellisesta näkökulmasta käsitellä yhtä ongelmaa nykypäivän yhteiskunnassa, sosiaalista osallisuutta. Tätä varten toteutettiin sarja taidetyöpajoja valitun nuorten ryhmän kanssa. Työpajoissa oli mahdollisuus nähdä kuinka taide toimii ilmaisuvälineenä nuorten elinympäristössä, sekä terapiana kehittäen sosiaalisia- ja kommunikaatio taitoja, tunteiden ilmaisua jne. Lopuksi, työpajojen jälkeen toteutettiin taideteos yhdessä nuorten kanssa, jotta sosiaalinen osallisuus saatiin näkyväksi ja todeksi.</p> <p>Työstä pystytään näkemään projektin kehitys sosiaalisen osallisuuden tutkimuksesta toiminnallisesti monimuotoisen ihmisen näkökulmasta ja keinoista käsitellä tätä ongelmaa, toteutetuksi kokonaisuudeksi seitsemän erityisoppimis tarpeen omaavan nuoren taiteen kautta.</p>		
<p><u>Asiasanat</u></p> <p>Taide, taiteellinen välitys, palvelu-oppiminen, taideterapia, toiminnallinen monimuotoisuus, sosiaalinen osallisuus.</p>		

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<p>Summary</p> <p>In the present work, an artistic mediation project has been carried out with a group of adolescents with functional diversity, using the Service-Learning methodology as a basis. Through this methodology, it has been possible to put into practice the knowledge and skills acquired during a university career in community service.</p> <p>This work aims to address social inclusion, one of the contemporary problems of our society, from an artistic perspective. For this, a series of artistic workshops have been carried out with the chosen group, in which it has been possible to see how art has acted as therapy for adolescents, developing their social and communication skills, the expression of their feelings and emotions, etc., and, as a mediator in the environment in which they live. Finally, after the workshops, artistic work was performed in collaboration with the students to make social inclusion more visible and real.</p> <p>Throughout this work, we will be able to see the development of the project, from an investigation of the social inclusion of people with functional diversity and the means to deal with this problem, to the implementation of an inclusive project, through the art of seven adolescents with special educational needs.</p>		
<p><u>Key words</u> Art, artistic mediation, Service-Learning, art therapy, functional diversity, social inclusion.</p>		

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1. INTRODUCTION

Diversity is one of the problems that exist today and with which we are still struggling in our society. This topic covers many aspects of humanity, but it is intended to highlight one that becomes the project's basis: the social inclusion of adolescents with functional diversity. This will be done through the intervention of art therapy and artistic mediation, based on Service-Learning methodology.

The motivation and origin of this work are related to a Service-Learning practice carried out in the second year of the degree with a class group, on the subject of Drawing, at the Casa Caridad Center in Benicalap, Valencia. In it, different activities related to the Fine Arts degree were carried out with another type of group: people who were sheltered in that center. The unique and unforgettable experience made me look for many more experiences with this group or another disadvantaged or marginalized in society.

“Art: a tool for social inclusion” is a project based on Service-Learning, where the aim is to put into practice the knowledge and skills acquired during the degree, in a daily environment, with adolescents at risk of social marginalization. This project is intended to deal with the problem, previously mentioned, of the "inclusion in society" of adolescents with functional diversity.

The novelty of this work is to indicate the importance of social inclusion in the modern era since it is a project carried out in collaboration with adolescents with special educational needs and will be exposed in a public space, giving them a voice in society. It can also be said that it is an advance since it tries to change the way of thinking of society (although this is an aspect that is perhaps difficult to achieve) about disabled people and this group about it so that they are valued and have self-esteem.

2. OBJECTIVES

The project's main objective is to deal with the problem of diversity in our society. This matter will be carried out through social mediation, that is, artistic activity in collaboration with adolescents with functional diversity. In addition, it is also intended to generate self-esteem in the subjects and raise awareness about the prejudices that this group has, trying to change the way of perceiving and judging the reality of this group.

2.1 General objectives

The first objective of this project is to carry out a pictorial work of artistic mediation in collaboration with adolescents with functional diversity. The second one is to take the practical and theoretical contents of the university to the social field in service to the community.

2.2 Specific objectives

The present work, in addition to the general objectives, also presents a series of specific objectives. In the first place, it tries to use Art as a therapy for adolescents with functional diversity. Secondly, it wants to strengthen the skills and abilities of this group, be they teamwork, artistic skills, communication skills, or flexibility, and get the best out of them. Thirdly, it is intended to raise awareness in society of the problem of diversity regarding the social inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalized people. In addition to this, an attempt is made to generate a space for reflection-action in the spectators. Finally, it wants to conduct an artistic mediation project based on Service-Learning and art therapy.

3. WORK METHODOLOGY

For the development of this work, a theoretical and practical methodology will be used. On the one hand, there is the study of the concepts related to the problems and specific needs that the social group has chosen to work with entails. For this, a documentary analysis has been carried out by consulting books and web pages. And on the other hand, the practical part consists of the realization of a pictorial project based on the knowledge and skills acquired during the years of the degree.

3.1 Theoretical framework

In this section, some concepts that are key to understanding the work are exposed, such as diversity and social inclusion, disability, Service-Learning, artistic mediation, art therapy, and the background of this project.

3.1.1 Diversity- Social inclusion

This concept “is a notion that refers to the difference, variety, abundance of different things or dissimilarity”¹. (definition.de). Diversity encompasses various fields, such as economic, cultural, ethnic, functional, and social inclusion, among others. Thus, in our study, we intend to make an analysis of the concept of 'social inclusion' in order to deal with this problem from an artistic point of view.

Social inclusion is a process of integration into society of those people who suffer due to an exclusive factor. The objective of this integration is that these people can have the same life opportunities and personal well-being as others. This integration entails a series of human rights, such as access to information, education, work, health, etc., which are essential for the development and function of a person in society. (Equipo del Observatorio del Tercer Sector de Bizkaia, 2012, p.18). However, social integration is not only a process of transition from a worse situation to a better one, but it is

¹ Own translation. Original quote: “es una noción que hace referencia a la diferencia, la variedad, la abundancia de cosas distintas o la semejanza”.

also the opportunity to create a space where the individual can freely express himself in society without any type of limitation. (Equipo del Observatorio del Tercer Sector de Bizkaia, 2012, p.6).

Social inclusion is a process that begins because there is an exclusion in a certain area. The latter occurs due to many factors, such as a stereotyped society, economic situation, different social status, origin from one culture or another, etc. All of this leads to marginalization, discrimination, the creation of social barriers (both subjectively and objectively), prejudices, among others, and “...in addition to a deterioration in self-esteem and health”² (González, 2017, position 151) of those people who have been labeled by their situation.

That is why social inclusion is used to build a society characterized by tolerance of diversity, a key component for the development and advancement of said society. According to Mendía, the inclusion:

“...it must be considered as an endless search for more adequate ways of responding to diversity. It is about learning to live with the difference and learning to learn from the difference. In this way, the difference is a more positive factor and a stimulus for the learning of minors and adults”.³ (Mendía, 2012, p.78).

Thus, diversity has a positive connotation because difference becomes a normal element for society, which in turn seeks a better life for its members.

3.1.2 Disability

As observed in the previous section, social inclusion means the integration of disadvantaged and marginalized people in society for some exclusive reason, such as disability.

² Own translation. Original quote: “...además de un deterioro de la autoestima y de la salud”.

³ Own translation. Original quote: “...debe ser considerada como una búsqueda interminable de formas más adecuadas de responder a la diversidad. Se trata de aprender a convivir con la diferencia y de aprender a aprender de la diferencia. De este modo la diferencia es un factor más positivo y un estímulo para el aprendizaje de menores y adultos”.

Disability is a term that is very present today in our society and is used more often, be it in the educational, cultural, or social fields, among others. A disabled person is understood to have a physical, mental, cognitive, or sensory deficiency that prevents him/her from functioning and normal development in society due to his/her limitations imposed on him/her by the people around him/her. (Gil, 2007, p.9).

The life of this group of people is made difficult by the deficiencies they have and by being unable to overcome obstacles such as negative attitudes, stereotypes, prejudices, rejection, and deprivation of human and social rights, among others. One of the factors that influence people today, in general, but more than those with disabilities, are the media and social networks. These play an important role in society since the more beauty stereotypes and canons are promoted and advertised, the greater the difference between reality and the idealization disseminated by multimedia. (Ramírez, 2013, p.94).

All this and their conditions make this group live in a discriminatory and marginalized environment that produces in them a set of experiences and feelings of low self-esteem, inferiority and that makes it difficult for them to interact in the family or social groups (Bahamón & Amaya, 2017, p.36) and, therefore, their integration into society.

However, it is known that disability has several facets, such as cognitive, physical, mental, sensory, etc., suffered by people of different ages: children, youth, and adults. However, if you start working on disability from an early age, the discrepancies that exist between normal people and disabled people are reduced.

In this sense, this thesis focuses on cognitive disability, specifically, in adolescents and how art can positively influence the development of this discriminated group. This cognitive deficiency is observed when a person “shows serious limitations or delays in their intellectual abilities and in the execution of adaptive behaviours to the surrounding environment”.⁴ (UNIR, 2020).

⁴ Own translation. Original quote: “muestra serias limitaciones o retraso en sus capacidades intelectuales y en la ejecución de conductas adaptativas al entorno que le rodea”.

From an objective point of view, it is known that the situation of this excluded group cannot be solved by itself if there is no unconditional support offered by institutions and philanthropic organizations, which in one way or another try to provide tools and opportunities to overcome these limitations.

One of these institutions is the school that is currently from its position, trying to eliminate the term “disability” since it is characterized as an offensive and pejorative word about or for the person who has this condition. For this, another alternative has been sought with which this group of people can be called, appealing in this way to the inclusive language method, and this is *functional diversity*⁵.

The school currently has an important social responsibility in the development and transmission of human, social, ethical, and moral values since, from an early age, attempts are made to address the issue of social inclusion through the normalization of diversity, and as Miret says: “educating from inclusion will allow us to grow in humanity and respect for those who are different. What is different is not the opposite, but the complementary one”.⁶ (Miret, 2014, p.35). One of the means used by the educational institution to deal with current problems is art, which plays an important role in the development of communication skills, social skills, and adaptive behaviours. Through art, people with functional diversity have the possibility to freely express their feelings, opinions, and experiences, giving voice to their inner self (Bahamón & Amaya, 2017, p.91) and, in this way, facilitating their social integration.

⁵ This term was presented in 2005 at the *Foro de Vida Independiente* by Javier Romañach Cabrero. Romañach, J., & Lobato, M. (2005). Diversidad funcional, nuevo término para la lucha por la dignidad en la diversidad del ser humano. Foro de vida independiente, 5, p.1-8.<http://centrodocumentacion-down.com/uploads/documentos/1dcb1a899435d2b2806acdf5dbcf17aa941abd8d.pdf>

⁶ Own translation. Original quote: “educar desde la inclusión permitirá crecer en humanidad y respeto hacia los que son diferentes. El que es diferente no es el contrario, sino el complementario”.

3.1.3 Work Methodology for social inclusion

The methodology by which the social inclusion of adolescents with functional diversity is worked is: Service-Learning, artistic mediation, and art therapy.

3.1.3.1 Service-Learning

Service-Learning is an educational methodology that, over the years, has also been implemented in universities with the purpose that the theoretical content of the class is put into practice at the service of the community, “in a single project well articulated in which the participants learn while working on the real needs of the environment in order to improve it”.⁷ (Guillem, 2018, p.9). Currently, from the point of view of Service-Learning, the university as an educational institution tries to be a model that creates, shapes, and transmits values to be implemented in real life to provide solutions to social problems through a professional.

This pedagogical philosophy was born at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century due to the so-called university movement, “*university extension*”, whose purpose was to achieve social ends starting from higher education. (Martínez, 2008, p.39).

Service Learning pursues the common good of society, that is, also looking for the benefits and interests of others, with “the creation of social capital that goes beyond the «I» to situate itself in the «we»”.⁸ (Martínez, 2008, p.89).

This pedagogy has two fundamental objectives. On the one hand, the student is learning theoretical content, civic values, development of personal and social skills, reflective thinking, and acquisition of professional skills that contribute to the formation of a citizen capable of facing and solving real problems such as climate change, social exclusion, gender violence, poverty, armed conflicts, etc. On the other hand, there is

⁷ Own translation. Original quote: “en un único proyecto bien articulado en el que los y las participantes aprenden a la vez que trabajan en necesidades reales del entorno con la finalidad de mejorarlo”.

⁸ Own translation. Original quote: “la creación de capital social que supera el «yo» para situarse en el «nosotros»”.

the service provided to the community to provide a better life, giving rise to social inclusion. (Puerta, 2021, p.27). However, the services provided to the community are not voluntary, but rather, as Martínez affirms:

“...they must have relevance and recognition in academic terms –they must imply academic learning in the students– and they must contribute to improving the quality of life and the level of social inclusion in the population”.⁹ (Martínez, 2008, p.17).

Regarding the work methodology used in this type of project, these are based on the training of students so that they, while learning and acquiring knowledge and values, can: reflect on the context that surrounds them, find and study the problem that exists, create a solution project, collaborate with an organization that needs a professional service- and act in order to improve the situation or reduce the existing problem. (Puerta, 2021, p.24).

It can be affirmed that Service Learning is an innovation in higher education because the class contents are focused not only on the professional training of the student body but also on the formation of the latter as an active citizen and decisive component of the problems in your environment. That is why students have the responsibility and duty to return to society what it has invested in them. (Puerta, 2021, p.14).

Finally, as experience in Service-Learning proposals and background to this work, I participated in two projects: Service Learning at the Casa Caridad and at the La Patacona school. My first contact with this type of service-learning project was during college with five classmates. The workshop was held at the Casa Caridad Benicalap social-charity centre in Valencia, Spain. This institution was founded in 1906 and is open every day of the year, offering various charity services to homeless or unemployed people, trying to deal with social exclusion and homelessness of those disadvantaged and vulnerable people to offer them a better life and integration in society.

The workshop was carried out with fourteen adults (although not all were always present at the sessions): some immigrants, person in a wheelchair, blind person, and others

⁹ Own translation. Original quote: ...deben tener relevancia y reconocimiento en términos académicos –deben suponer aprendizaje académico en los estudiantes– y deben contribuir a la mejora de la calidad de vida y del nivel de inclusión social en la población”.

with some functional diversity. The sessions lasted two months since there was one workshop per week. It was a very rewarding experience, both for them and for us.



Picture 1. Service-Learning workshop in the center Casa Caridad

On the one hand, the service (to the community) that was attempted through the project was to work on social skills through a playful and fun environment, but at the same time, constructive and essential for each of them. On the other hand, we learned and developed personal and social professional skills from this workshop since this project required professionalism.



Picture 2. Service-Learning workshop in the center Casa Caridad

The second Service-Learning experience was also carried out during the university period with three classmates at the La Patacona school in Valencia, Spain. The workshop lasted only one day, and primary school students from different classes participated. Through this project, the aim was to make the participants aware of the importance of recycling materials. For this, each student brought recycled materials from home, and from these, very interesting works of art were made that were exhibited in the school.



Picture 3. Service-Learning workshop in La Patacona school

As in the previous workshop, this was also a positive and constructive experience (for them and us) since the proposed objective on the importance of caring for our planet was achieved through direct awareness among children by using recycled materials brought by themselves.



Picture 4. Service-Learning workshop in La Patacona school

3.1.3.2 Artistic mediation

Art is and has become a powerful and fundamental tool for developing and evolving toward a better society that is tolerant of diversity. This is how art acts as a social mediator element in different contexts and deals with current problems from a transforming perspective.

Artistic mediation, as its name indicates, is a mediator between two or more opponents through art. Through collective or individual artistic workshops, attempts are made to make socio-educational interventions to improve people's quality of life and social well-being.

Through these interventions, art allows participants to recover their self-esteem, develop expression and communication skills, overcome barriers, develop resilience, build new dreams, etc., and, therefore, their social insertion. All of this occurs because art becomes a way that "...helps the person to connect with himself, [...] to connect with capacities that he did not know he possessed and to develop towards a better coexistence with oneself and the environment".¹⁰ (González, 2017, position 722).

The objective of these workshops is not, mainly, to teach art and have an artistic work, but instead, they care about the person and their process of transformation and inclusion through art. (González, 2017, position 871). Given the positive and evident results of these artistic mediation projects, today, many organizations and entities design artistic workshops of social intervention to promote a more humane and inclusive society.

¹⁰ Own translation. Original quote: "...ayuda a la persona a conectarse con ella misma, [...] a conectar con capacidades que no sabía que poseía y desarrollarse hacia una mejor convivencia con uno mismo y el entorno".

3.1.3.3 Art therapy

As observed, art has mediated, transforming, and inclusive potential. Nevertheless, while it intervenes from these three perspectives, it also acts as a therapy. Art has been part of the life of the human being since its beginnings. In the same way, it progresses in thought and individual and general needs, transforming, at the end of the 19th century, into a therapeutic method and developing since the Second World War. (Bahamón & Amaya, 2017, p.28).

Art therapy combines two words: art (creative activity through which man expresses himself) and therapy (treatment used to cure diseases, overcome traumas, and alleviate problems...). It is thus understood that this discipline is a therapy based on the resources of art to carry out a treatment process at the psychological level of the person for their emotional well-being, development and personal and social growth.

Art therapy influences the behaviour of the human being for better conduct; that is, it can develop new experiences, emotions, and feelings that lead to easy inclusion in their environment. Through art therapy, the “inner self” of the person is worked on; it is a therapy that delves deeply into it and from the knowledge of the individual, helps him to express himself, works on self-esteem, self-assessment, empathy, emotions, overcoming of traumas, fears, insecurities, discriminatory attitudes...

Art therapy is a true motor that plays an important role in inclusion and social change. (Castro, 2018, p.269). Art therapy pursues personal and collective well-being. It is a tool that can be applied in different areas of the population with the purpose of transforming it, thus creating an egalitarian society. This works -in individual and collective sessions- with a very varied public of different ages: homeless people, discriminated against, prisoners, with addiction problems, people with functional diversity, victims of gender violence, etc. The artistic workshops adapt the work methodology and procedures to the needs of the user or group of people it addresses.

In the field of social inclusion of children or adults with functional diversity, art therapy develops motor and cognitive skills, communication and expression, and different

emotions are worked on to improve their self-esteem. However, art not only helps people with certain specific needs or social problems, but also society in general "...to eradicate prejudices, promote equality between people, and enhance group cohesion".¹¹ (Castro, 2018, p.275).

This art therapy, as previously stated, began to be used at the end of the Second World War and is currently considered a professional field that has recently been introduced into society (Divulgación Dinámica, 2017) as a valuable tool that benefits the latter for its ability to deal with problems in a creative and fun way.

3.2 Practical framework

In this section, on the one hand, the development of the art workshop carried out for the subsequent realization of the work is presented, that is, what it consists of, how, with whom, and in what way the work has been carried out. On the other hand, the realization of the work is presented. In addition, the concepts discussed in the previous section are briefly explained, how they have been present in practice, that is, what type of group I have worked with, how the role of art therapy has been seen in practice with the group that I have carried out the project; In what ways has Service-Learning been reflected in this project? And finally, how the social inclusion of these people in the community of which they are a part is made possible.

3.2.1 Artistic workshop

For the development of this work, first, a five-day artistic workshop¹² was performed, and each session lasted around 2 hours and a bit. The workshop was carried out with seven adolescents with functional diversity from the Kangasmetsä school in Kankaanpää. For the development of this workshop, PowerPoint material has been used. The

¹¹ Own translation. Original quote: "...para erradicar prejuicios, promover la igualdad entre las personas y potenciar la cohesión grupal".

¹² See Annex: Artistic workshop.

workshop consisted of carrying out different artistic activities with the purpose of expanding the knowledge of adolescents in art through different artistic movements (neoplasticism, cubism) and artists (Mondrian, Picasso, Pollock...) presented. The objectives of this workshop have been developing the creativity of adolescents, learning to express feelings, sensations, and senses through art, and using art as therapy for adolescents. In addition, through the workshop, it has been tried to eliminate emotional prejudices about themselves, motivate them and identify their strengths.

The workshop was performed in the art class of their school. During the activities carried out with the adolescents in the classroom, the teacher has also been present for any help they need.

3.2.2 Realization of the work

After the workshop, I began planning my work. The work is made up of two places from the school of which they are a part (the art class, where the workshop has been done and one of the corridors) and seven works made by the adolescents; I chose for the composition drawings of different activities that were carried out in class. For this, I have used acrylic paint on canvas of 156 x 182 cm. Once the background of my work was made (picture 5), I took the painting to their school to finish it¹³. This has been a continuation of previous art workshop, which was done over three days. The students on these days each made a work inspired by the ones they had done during the workshop sessions¹⁴.

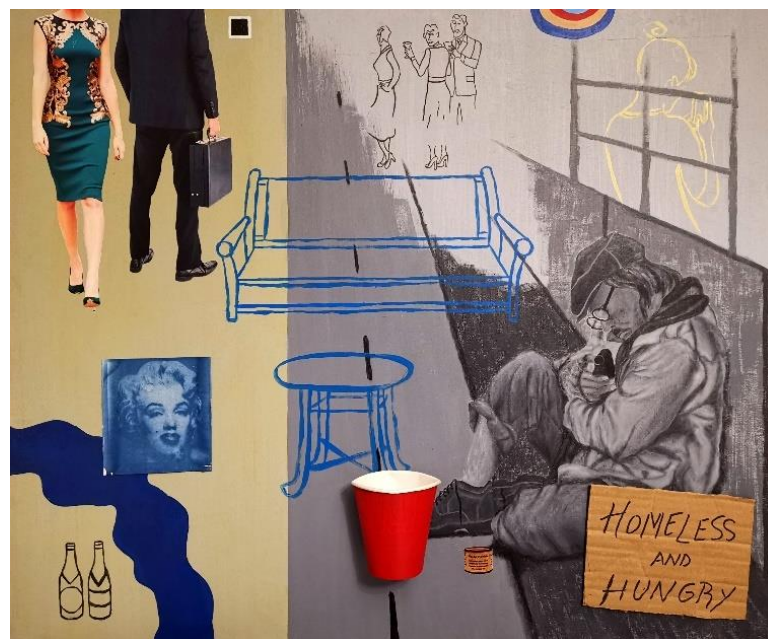
¹³ See Annex: Intervention of adolescents in the painting.

¹⁴ See Annex: Works they did in the first workshop sessions as a source of inspiration.



Picture 5. Finished painting background

Regarding the composition and combination of colors with the grisaille, my own work inspires my painting, *Dos mundos diferentes*, (picture 6) made during the degree. Both this work and my final project have as a reference the works of the American David Salle, an artist belonging to the postmodernist current, among others. Of his works, I am mainly interested in the superimposition and juxtaposition of images that are disorganized and incoherently, where he combines grisaille with a very colorful composition, characteristic resources of postmodernism. (Nina.az., 2021).



Picture 6. Dos mundos diferentes. (Camelia Stefanescu, 2019)

Another interesting resource characteristic of this artistic movement, which Salle uses in his composition, is spatial fragmentation; that is, space is no longer homogeneous, unitary, and two-dimensional but becomes heterogeneous, fragmentary, and multi-dimensional. Therefore, it becomes a 'multiscreen', a representation of projected floating images (Busó, 2019, p. 20-23). Finally, through the participation of the students in the painting, stylistic fragmentation arises, by which it is understood that different styles coexist in the same work, and there is no longer a single, homogeneous style.

Once the painting was finished (picture 7), I asked the students to think of a title for the painting since it was a collaborative work. Each one of them proposed a different and creative title. Considering the suggestions given, I named the work with the following title: *Creative Art Classroom*.



Picture 7. Creative Art Classroom. Saskia Gallery, Tampere

3.2.3 Theoretical concepts taken or/and seen in the practical field.

During the practical part of my project, it has been possible to observe the different concepts developed in the theoretical framework. My project has consisted of the realization of a pictorial work, based on artistic mediation, with the purpose of achieving the social inclusion of adolescents with functional diversity in their school and social environment. For this, I have used the educational methodology of Service-Learning.

My artistic, personal, social, and professional knowledge and skills developed during my university career have allowed me and given me the opportunity to carry out a Service-Learning project at an institution in Kankaanpää, putting into practice everything I have learned during my academic career.

For this, I have followed the methodology of this pedagogy: I reflected on the environment in which I live in order to detect and study the social problems or situations of need that exist in the city of Kankaanpää, to carry out a social improvement from a professional profile. A situation that has caught my attention for a social intervention has been the inclusion of people with special educational needs, specifically adolescents, in their environment. Detected this need, I studied the case and designed a social inclusion project from a professional artistic point of view. The institution with which I decided to collaborate was a school in Kankaanpää, which accepted my proposal to carry out an artistic workshop with a group of adolescents with functional diversity.

This Service-Learning project has allowed me to work on a real reality of my context with the purpose of improving it, at the same time that I have developed new learning and experiences in a single well-structured and defined educational project. Through this, I have been able to develop an active role as a citizen, social responsibility, critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and ethical learning. In addition, I have learned to design and develop a project adapted to this group, to plan and manage time well, to know, reflect and analyze 21st- century problems.

The service provided to the community, through this proposal, on the one hand, is the awareness and sensitization of the population regarding social problems, eliminating prejudices about children with special educational needs, making possible their social

inclusion, using art as a mediator to make changes in educational and social entities and make his work visible by exposing it in a public space. On the other hand, it has developed and worked on adolescents' self-esteem, social skills, expression, communication, and teamwork.

As can be seen, art is the key element in the mediation between adolescents with special educational needs and their environment since, from professional artistic training, a mediation project has been carried out through artistic workshops.

Art has offered a space for equal opportunities for the adolescents participating in this project since it does not differentiate or discriminate between human beings and their abilities. Rather, it is concerned with the creation of a creative and playful environment of expression and personal growth. In addition, this, in the artistic workshops carried out, has acted as a therapy for the participants since it has helped them to:

- Develop social, personal, and communication skills.
- Express their feelings, emotions, and thoughts.
- Foment the grupal work.
- Increase self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence so as not to feel inferior to others.
- Develop artistic skills.
- Stimulate personal and collective development.
- Overcome fears, insecurities, and limitations.
- Create new dreams and illusions.

However, art has not only functioned as therapy or a bridge between this group and society but has also been a means of fun, inspiration, motivation, and knowledge about art for adolescents. The students, during the workshop sessions, have had a participatory and receptive attitude; they have also had fun¹⁵ during the sessions and have felt satisfied with their artistic creations.

¹⁵ See Annex: Evaluation of the adolescents of the art workshop.

4. CONCLUSION

Thanks to this project, we have been able to learn more deeply about one of the contemporary problems of our society, which is social inclusion. In addition, through a study and analysis of this problem, we have found some ways to deal with it: artistic medication, Service Learning, and art therapy. These three methods have worked from an artistic point of view.

Starting from an academic and professional position in Fine Arts, we have carried out a collaborative project of artistic mediation with a vulnerable group at risk of social exclusion. A series of artistic workshops have been used, with a therapeutic approach to mediate this matter.

The educational institutions involved in this project have developed an important role in the Service-Learning proposal. On the one hand, the university has equipped the student with a wealth of knowledge, learning, and experiences that make her/him capable of acting and managing in any real-life situation, thus exercising an active role as a citizen and offering quality and professional service the community. On the other hand, the school (an institution with which I have cooperated) has accepted the commitment to collaborate with its human and material resources to carry out this proposal.

For the preparation of this work, a lot of dedication, effort, responsibility, seriousness and especially professionalism have been required. This has turned out to be an enriching experience for everyone, and moreover, it has motivated and inspired me to look for new challenges where I can play a responsible role in society. That is why I encourage the entire educational community to participate in projects that lead to a better society.

One of the purposes of this project has been to generate a close collaboration between the artist and students with special educational needs. This participation is intended to give these students a voice in society. In addition, they can feel important and artists at the same time since their works will be exhibited in a public space (Gallery and in the school of which they are part).

In this way, we observe how art works as a bridge between this group and society, since, through this artistic collaboration, the social inclusion of these students is possible both in the place of which they are a part and in other places. Likewise, during the workshop sessions, we noticed how art has served as a therapy for adolescents: development of social skills, sensory stimulation, emotional growth, increased creative capacity, enhanced communication capacity, etc.

Another aspect that art develops through the direct participation of students in work is the creation of a space for reflection-action in the spectators. This means that the work generates in the viewer a moment of meditation (reflection) on children or adults with functional diversity, trying to raise awareness and change (action) the negative thought about this group. This is how art, in this sense, plays an important role, that is, as a tool for social transformation, and, currently, it has become a new way or method of solving various problems of human life.

In conclusion, to make my goal of reducing social exclusion a reality, I have decided to give the painting to the school where the students participating in my project belong, with the hope that the rest of the educational community will value adolescents and that they are aware of the value and capabilities they have.

The fact that the painting is currently exhibited at the school makes social inclusion a continuous process, lowering barriers and promoting equality. It is not a challenge once the exhibition in the gallery is over. In addition, it is a way to cultivate and promote in children a positive attitude, respect for others and learn to live with diversity, since tomorrow, they will be the future citizens who must continue transmitting human and social values, ethical, moral, etc.

It is a work that aims to encourage the entire educational and social community to reflect and design viable projects in the day-to-day struggle to deal with existing social problems.

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IMAGE INDEX

Picture 1. Service-Learning workshop in the center Casa Caridad.

Picture 2. Service-Learning workshop in the center Casa Caridad.

Picture 3. Service-Learning workshop in La Patacona school.

Picture 4. Service-Learning workshop in La Patacona school.

Picture 5. Finished painting background.

Picture 6. Dos mundos diferentes. (Camelia Stefanescu, 2019).

Picture 7. Creative Art Classroom. Saskia Gallery, Tampere.

ANNEX

1. Artistic workshop

Day 1 (4.11.2022) 11:40-13:10	
Students present	7
Theory and Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction about me and about them. - Brief explanation about the colors and the formation of the colors. - Activity 1. Playing with colors: This activity consists of making a free drawing with your favorite color or colors. To do this, on white cardboard, each student will put paint blobs and on these a plastic film, through which they will crush the paint with their hands. The plastic is then removed and allowed to dry. While the works are allowed to dry, the students will continue playing with the paint. To do this, they will put paint in the middle of a piece of paper, fold the paper and crush it with their hands; the result will be an abstract work with a mirror effect.
Process or/and observations	<p>Today one of the two activities that were planned was carried out. The teacher told me that each student has a different rhythm from another. But everything went very well; the teenagers liked the activity.</p> <p>For this activity, I showed you my own examples.</p>
Materials	Acrylic or tempera paint, brushes, containers to clean brushes, white cardboard, colored pencils, paper, masking tape, plastic cups, kitchen plastic, scissors, colored cardboard, ruler, and soft crayons.
Session objectives	Discover the basic colors.



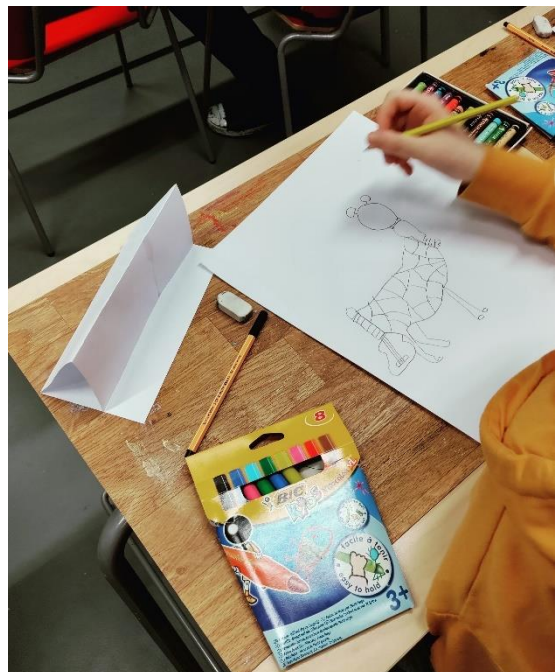
Day 2 (18.4.2022) 11:40-14:00	
Students present	4
Theory and Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief explanation about Neoplasticism and Piet Mondrian. - Activity 2. Making works inspired by the Neoplasticism movement. - Activity 3. A) Blind portrait – pair work. Each student will make a portrait of their partner, but without looking at the paper, just looking at the couple. The student will not be able to look at the paper until the drawing is finished. B) Cubism and Pablo Picasso. From the blind portrait you will pass toward Picasso. After showing Picasso, we will work a bit on cubism. <p>At the end of the session, I sent them a homework assignment, so they could do cubist work.</p>
Process or/and observations	Today I was able to carry out the activities prepared for that day and the one I was missing from the day before.

	<p>While they were doing the activities, I played piano music in the background.</p> <p>In the cubism activity, a student or two had no inspiration at the time, so I let them do the free drawing.</p> <p>The blind portrait activity was quite fun, both for them and for the teacher. The teacher told me that this activity was very good because that way, they learned to look each other in the eye because some children found it, difficult or avoided doing it and it was a good activity to practice that.</p> <p>Once, a student looked to the side (at the wall behind his classmate, on her right side) instead of looking at his classmate in front to draw her portrait, so I got behind the girl but in the place where the student had looked at her and told him laughing that she was not there but here (in front of him)- and they both laughed, as did the classmates and the teacher.</p> <p>Some looked at the paper sometimes, but that was normal. From time to time, he told them, laughing, that you couldn't look at the paper, that the paper was still on the table and hadn't left.</p> <p>For the Mondrian activity, I showed you an example of mine. And in the Cubism activity, I made them a cubist drawing on the board.</p>
Materials	Pencils and papers, markers, colored soft crayons, colored pencils, pens, acrylic or tempera paint, plastic cups, containers to clean brushes, brushes, and rulers.
Session objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience the works of Mondrian. - To promote teamwork. - Learn to create Cubist works (Picasso).



Day 3 (25.11.22) 11:40-13:00	
Students present	6
Theory and Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return homework on cubism and talk together about the drawings. - Activity 4. What do you see in the image? In this activity, two images of Surrealism will be shown, and the students will be asked what they see and think, what memories or feelings it produces in them, and what inspires these photos.

	<p>- Brief explanation about Surrealism. Then, show them a series of works by surrealist artists and analyze them together.</p> <p>- Activity 5. Let's create something imaginary. From the examples seen, the students have to create something surreal and difficult to imagine, using at least three of the following elements (slide with several elements.). If they want, they can add elements that are not on the slide.</p>
Process or/and observations	<p>At the beginning of the class, we talked a bit about the homework they had on cubism and then moved on to the next activity on Surrealism.</p> <p>While they were drawing, I asked them if they wanted me to play music, and I accepted their preference (Christmas music).</p> <p>Today, the workshop has been shorter.</p> <p>For the surreal activity, I have shown you my own surreal work.</p>
Materials	<p>Pencils and papers, markers, colored soft crayons, colored pencils, pens, acrylic or tempera paint, plastic cups, and containers to clean brushes.</p>
Session objectives	<p>- Eliminate the fear of speaking in class.</p> <p>- Express their opinions, feelings, and sensations.</p>



Day 4 (2.12.2022) 11:40-14:00	
Students present	6
Theory and Activity	<p>- Activity 6. A) Graphic expression: Expressions of feelings, according to the music classical music (Antonio Vivaldi, Johann S. Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin) they listen to. To do this, we need charcoal and paper. The teenagers will have to close their eyes, listen, and draw what the music transmits to them; they will also be able to draw with their eyes open.</p> <p>B) Representation from what we hear: The students will be in pairs, one in front of the other, and the one behind has to describe to his partner what he sees in the drawing he has. And the one in front has to represent his partner's drawing based on what he hears. Later, with a thin stick (which can be the back of the brush), the partner behind will draw on the back of his/her partner who is in front of the image he/she has.</p> <p>- Brief explanation of Dripping. I have put a small video fragment of how Jackson Pollock painted.</p> <p>- Activity 7. The Dripping: For this activity, we will use a large piece of cardboard. This will be placed on the ground (covered with plastic so as not to get dirty), and in groups, it will go out to perform the Dripping technique with paint and brushes.</p>
Process or/and observations	<p>One aspect that the teacher told me that she had observed is that a student who in her regular classes was sad or did not smile much said that in the workshops, she always saw her smiling and laughing. I was happy to hear that, as I saw that art was worthwhile as a therapy.</p> <p>In the activities in pairs, the teacher said that the activities were exciting since the children had to communicate (and learn to speak louder) with their partner and try to describe what they saw in the photo so that the others could represent it.</p>

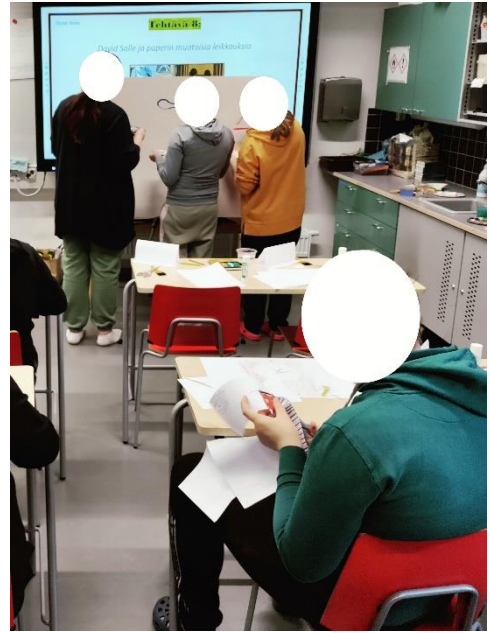
	I had improvised these two activities in pairs since they were not planned from the beginning when I carried out the workshop with all the planned activities. I had planned to do a monotype activity; however, I realized that partner activities favoured them and made them have fun and develop their abilities and skills more.
Material	Cotton swabs, sewing thread, containers to clean brushes, newspaper, pencils and blank sheets of paper, charcoal, markers, colored soft crayons, colored pencils, pens, acrylic or tempera paint, plastic cups, brushes, small paint rollers, plastic sheeting, newspapers, scissors, large plastic to cover the ground, for dripping use large cardboard.
Session objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn to express their feelings through music. - Have fun creating art.



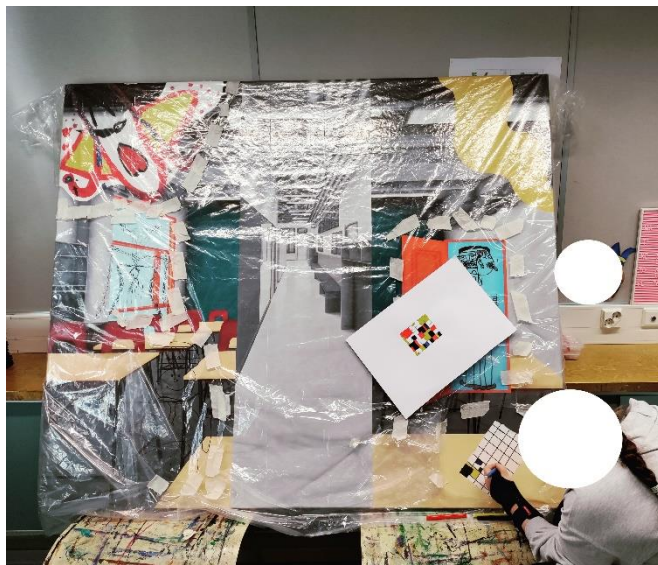
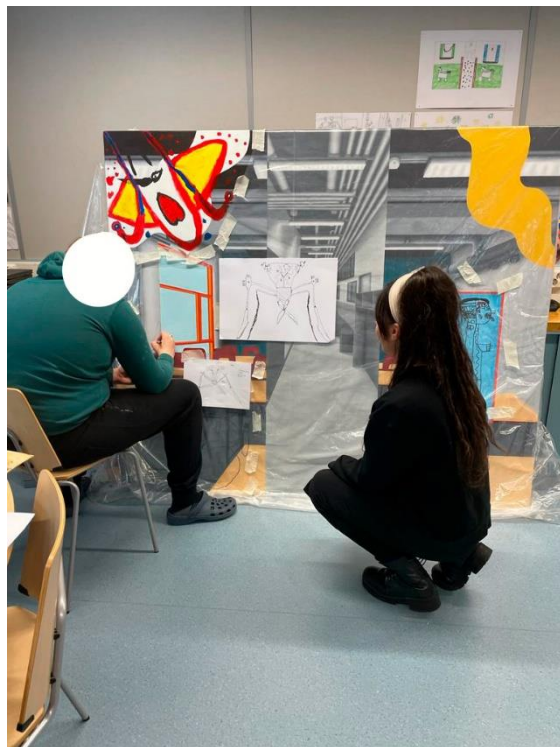


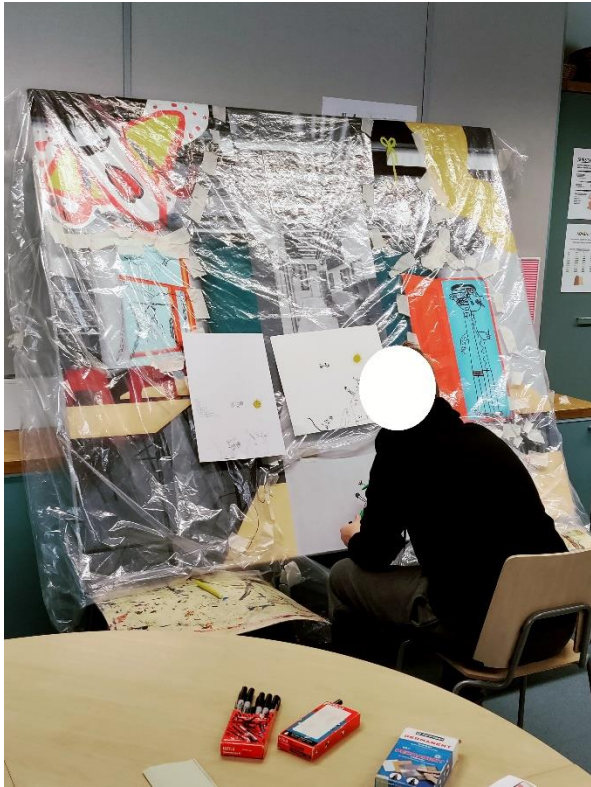
Day 5 (9.12.2022)	
11:40-14:00	
Students present	7
Theory and Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief introduction to David Salle and his works. - Activity 8. David Salle and cut-out paper figures. On white painted cardboard, about 100 x 120 cm, they will make a work inspired by David Salle. For this, I will distribute photocopies of the works they have made during the sessions of this workshop. They will have to cut out and paste their work on this cardboard. In addition, they will also paint with colors and draw with markers, colored crayons, and charcoal.

	<p>- Also, I will teach how to make figures cut out of paper and cardboard for this work.</p> <p>-They will go out in groups to paint. The first group will go out to paint on the cardboard; meanwhile, the rest will cut out pieces of their work to paste them later on the cardboard; the first group will do the same when it is the second group's turn to go out and paint.</p>
Process or/and observations	<p>Today the activity has been by groups. I asked them how they wanted them to be grouped, and they opted to be separate girls and boys. The boys went out first to paint, and meanwhile, the girls cut out part of their drawings that they photocopied (from activities carried out previously), and if they finished cutting, they made a free drawing on a piece of paper.</p> <p>The work of art has been made by relays of 15 min. for each group. Then the girls went out to paint; however, the boys had already painted most of the cardboard, so I decided to have the girls paint on the other side. Now it was the boys' turn to cut out shapes from their drawings; When they were done, I showed them how to make shapes out of paper. In this workshop, I let them play the Christmas music they wanted.</p> <p>After the rest of 15 min., I let them glue the shapes (which they had cut out of their drawings) to the work they had done. And then, we all started looking at the painting they had done collaboratively, commenting on it, and asking what they thought of the result.</p>
Materials	<p>Acrylic paint, large cardboard size 100 x 120 cm, brushes, scissors, glue, oil pastel colors, charcoal, plastic cups, and containers to clean brushes.</p>
Session objectives	<p>- Exhibit their works.</p> <p>- Foment the grupal work.</p>

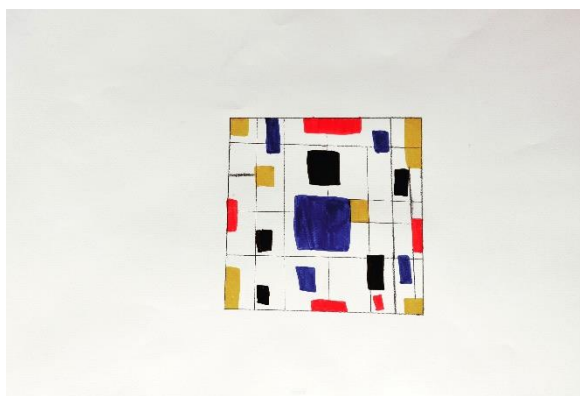
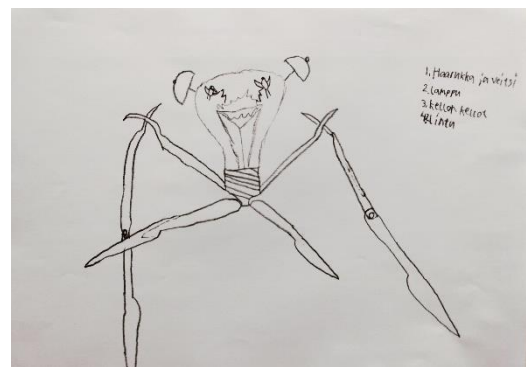


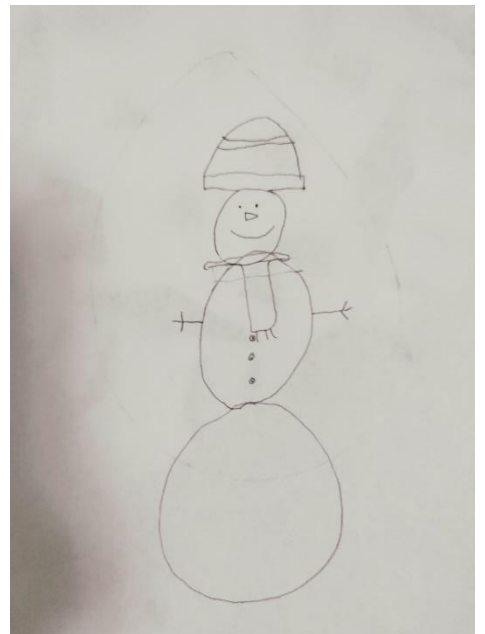
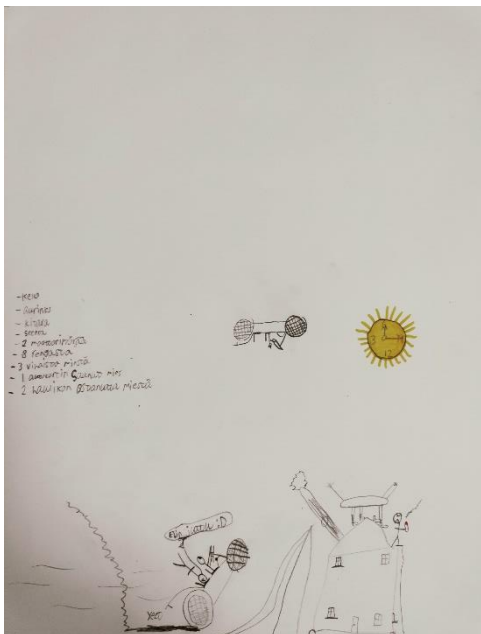
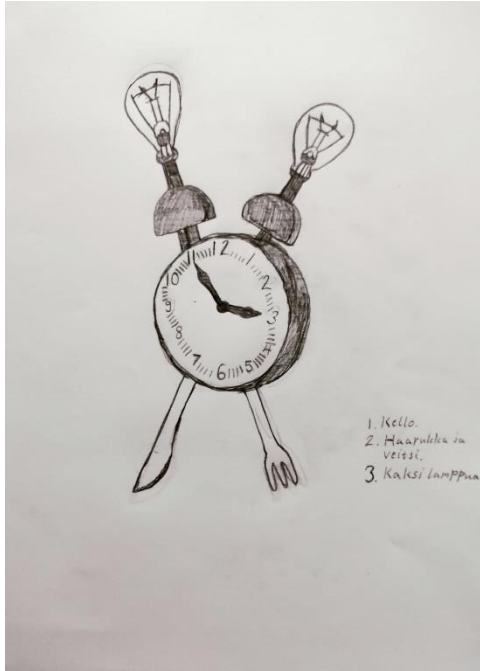
2. Intervention of adolescents in the painting





4. Works they did in the first workshop sessions as a source of inspiration

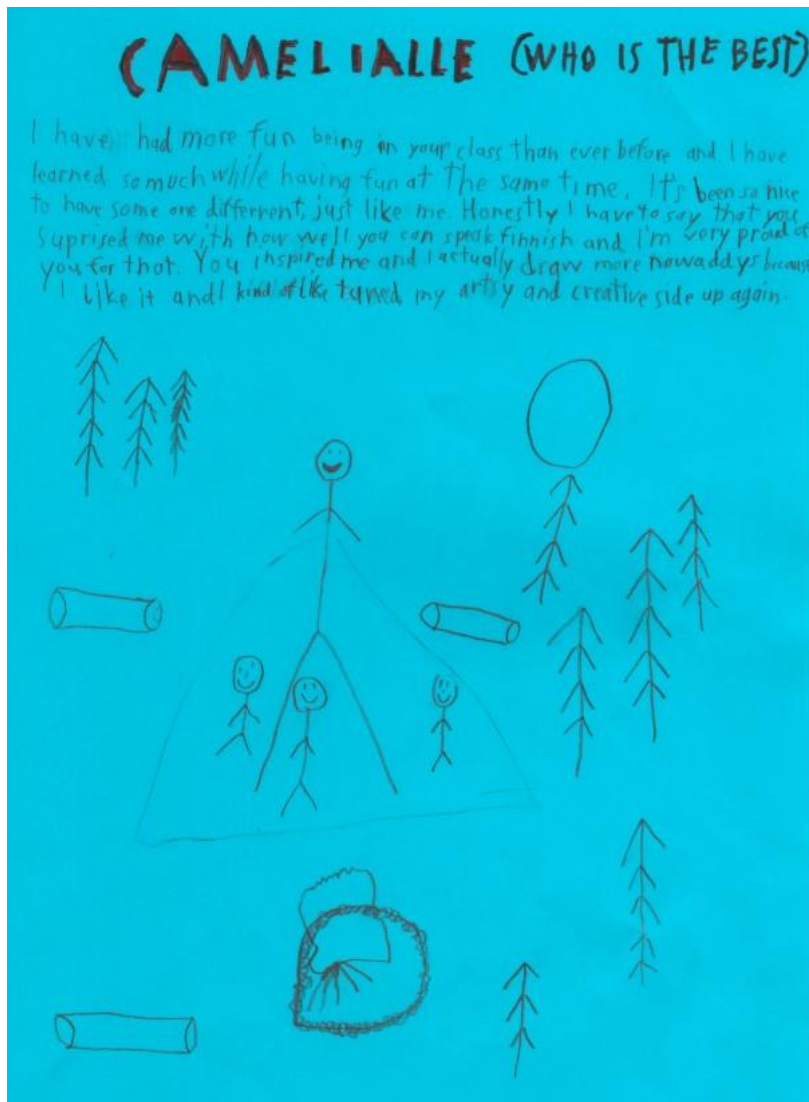




5. Evaluation of the adolescents of the art workshop

Terve Camelia Olet ollut mukava opettaja.
Olen tykännyt sinun kurssitunneista ja niiden
tehtävistä.

Haluan myös sinulle toivottaa hyvää joulua ja tule-
vaa uuttavuotta.



Hei Cameliale Suomeksi/in Finnish

Kiitos Camelia mukavista tunteista ja kivoista tehtävistä mitä olet keksinyt minulle. On ollut todella hauskaa olla sinun tunteilla ja oppia paljon uutta taiteesta. Olit hyvä opettamaan.

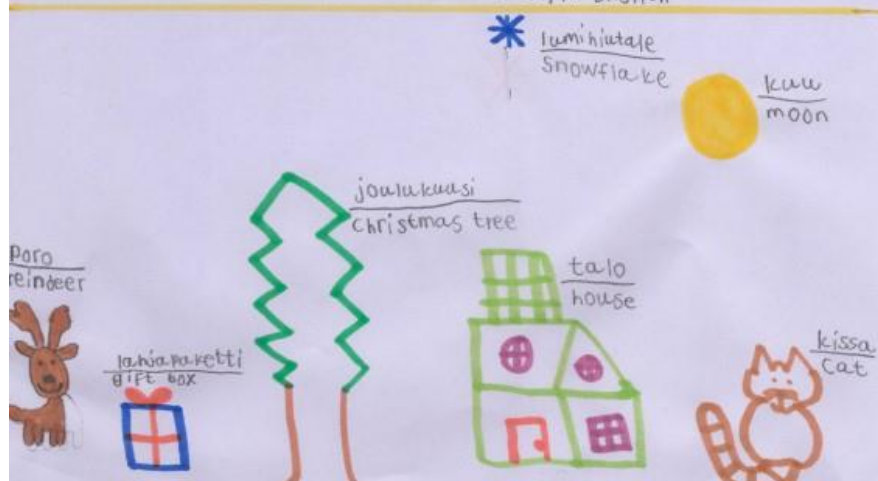
Hello, Englanniksi/in English

Thank you Camelia for the nice hours and nice tasks you have come up with for me. It's been really fun being in your classes and learning a lot about art. You were good at teaching.

Kivointa oli piirtäminen sokkona koska niistä tuli kivaja.

The hardest part was drawing blind because they turned out to be painful.

Englanniksi/in English



Hello Camelia, It was so great to come to your lessons after the break. I hope you like this beautiful country full of freedom, lakes and natural freedom. And I really hope you could visit our school before we will be on our own paths after the 9th grade comes to its end.

Thank you so much for teaching us. It was fun sometimes and time went on flying.

CAMELIALE

Kiitos Camelia näistä vuorista, on ollut tosi kivaa
te haistaa! Sinä olet hauska ja hauska.

Oon oppinut uusia asioita sinun sunnilla, on ollut
mehvästä tutustua sinuun!

Hyvää joulun odotusta camelia!



Camelia

Hey! thank you for these days!

Good luck ahead!

Hi Camelia! Thank you for the good teaching, I didn't understand anything about art before, but when you taught me what art is, I understand what art is today,
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2023

