



Learning to be human through and for life-cycle:  
the key-role of art  
Apprendere per e attraverso il corso della vita:  
il ruolo chiave dell'arte

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**ABSTRACT**

Present paper aims to propose a reflection on the key-role that the aesthetic experience takes on in education, especially in view of a pedagogical paradigm concerned with the growth of the whole person: body - mind - heart. Education – being co-extensive with life – should represent the decisive path by which human beings learn to be and to “inter-be”. In this view, educational action finds its meaning in the promotion of vitalizing and constructive forces, to unfold inner personal potential and realize fulfillment. The first part focuses on the concept of lifelong, lifedeeep and lifewide education, taking into consideration the idea of childhood as a condition of continuous experience of new beginnings and wonder, on the one hand, and the holistic paradigm for a pronounced validation of ethical-aesthetical education, on the other. The second part devotes specific attention on the key-role of education through art, from childhood and the entire span of life, with a focus for art having its own method of inquiry over human qualities to be developed and expressed, on the one hand, and for the “architecture” of effective educational experiences through it, on the other. In this regard, space will be also given to the description of the project “Golden Apple” at the University of the Sacred Heart of Tokyo.

Il presente articolo intende proporre una riflessione sul ruolo chiave che l'esperienza estetica assume nella formazione, soprattutto in considerazione di un paradigma pedagogico orientato all'educazione della persona nella sua interezza: corpo – mente – cuore. L'educazione che è coestensiva con la vita dovrebbe rappresentare il percorso attraverso cui gli esseri umani apprendono ad essere e a “inter-essere”. In questa prospettiva, l'azione educativa trova il suo senso nella promozione di forze vitalizzanti e costruttive di sostegno alla persona nel dispiegamento del proprio potenziale interiore e nella realizzazione di sè. A questo riguardo, la prima parte dell'articolo si sofferma sul concetto di lifelong, lifedeeep e lifewide education, prendendo in considerazione l'idea di infanzia come una condizione di continua esperienza di nuovo inizio e stupore, da una parte, e il paradigma olistico per un pieno accreditamento di un'educazione estetica-etica, dall'altra. La seconda parte è dedicata a legittimare il ruolo chiave dell'educazione attraverso l'arte – a partire dall'infanzia e per l'intero arco della vita – sia sul piano teorico

per un pieno accreditamento dell'arte come dimensione portante lo sviluppo e la realizzazione delle qualità umane più elevate, sia su quello operativo della "architettura" di un'offerta formativa attraverso di essa. A questo proposito verrà dato spazio alla descrizione di un progetto attuato e in essere: "Golden Apple" presso l'Università del Sacro Cuore di Tokyo.

#### KEYWORDS

Being Human; Holistic education; Co-existence; Education through art; Sense of wonder.  
Essere Umani; Educazione olistica; Coesistenza; Educazione attraverso l'arte; Senso di meraviglia.

### 1. Complexity of being calls for rich and plural education<sup>1</sup>

Education, as a concept and as a reality, requires a vision in favour for raising questions over of its meaning and over the sense-direction of its intervention. I think it is fundamental, first of all, to place education in close contact with life. Being co-extensive with life, education acknowledges the multiplicity of spatial-temporal dimensions-intensities of existence and provides pathways for human beings to realise their being and inter-being. Life doesn't concern isolated dimensions and contexts, but the vastness of Cosmos and Nature, with human existence being part of it. (Morin, 2002). Existence involves human beings on a journey of growth, made up of encounters and exchanges with oneself, with others and with "otherness" (Panikkar, 2002). The concept of otherness permits to recognise difference as a pedagogical figure (Gardner, 2007; Poletti, 2010) that is decisive in the possibility of growth and fulfilment; difference is the sign of transformation as a condition inherent to the cycle of existence (Freire, 2004). In this view, lifetime can be conceived not merely from a chronological perspective but from a perspective of a continuous cycle of care, change and transformation, where education plays a crucial role (Duerckheim, 1971; Tulku, 2002). Education might unveil existence relational nature: enabling children to discover and express their potential becomes an irreplaceable source for the entire society – parents, educators, adults, community – to grow in humanity, lifethrough. (Korcuska, 2017). The life cycle, within which a person's existential project matures, is then part of a conception of time not restricted to the idea of duration, but meant as a space of intersubjective encounter, an interval within which to apply one's care, a pause to learn the delicacy of waiting for "the un-known" to take place, a rhythm to take part in the cyclical natural energy (Casadei, 2019). Moreover, many – among educators, artists and philosophers – recall the need for considering childhood lifetime under the sign of *aion* (a sense of time not limited by start and end) rather than *chronos* (a sense of time confined by start and end), therefore as something inherently constitutive of human life<sup>2</sup>, which should never be abandoned, forgotten or overcome (Kohan,

1 Structure and contents of this paper are the result of shared analysis and proposal between the two authors. In details, Rita Casadei is responsible for paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and Naoki Mizushima for paragraphs 4, 5, 6.

2 There can be no single way to conceptually exhaust the time flow. In the awareness of time as a

& Weber, 2020). In this view childhood refers to being in a continuous new beginnings, a daily experiencing life as if for the first time. Learning to be is a process of continuous experience of feeling and inquiry aimed at probing the mystery of life; it can't be separated from nurturing, as well as interest and responsibility, a deep sense of wonder and reciprocity. Such a sensitivity allows to develop a participatory disposition interested in and in love with life, filled with awe, certainly appropriate to sense the depth of existence (Saint-Exupéry, 1978; Carson, 1998). Never losing sight of wonder, desire for discovery and asking questions (concepts that will later be taken up by Mizushima, with regard to education through art) education should guide the entire course of life as an enjoyable experience and a crucial pathway to imagine and realise one's own life-design and project (Lodi, 1974; Munari, 1981). In this respect we refer to the concepts of life-long, life-deep and life-wide education as multidimensional and dynamic process committed to the constant renewal of human being and society; in the first instance, it presupposes that the educational sciences are attentive – from a theoretical-epistemological point of view – to promoting renewed conceptions of the person and the development of his/her needs for growth, by acknowledging and enhancing multidimensionality and interconnectedness as constitutive existential marks (Dozza, 2018). From the fundamental acknowledgment of the complexity of human being, in terms of biological, physiological, mental, psychomotor, emotional, spiritual aspects – just to remind some of them – education should attune to this complexity (Bruner, 1997) being rich and plural (Frabboni & Pinto Minerva, 2000). Richness, within educational realm, suggests power in order to support the energy of learning how to become human, feel free and aware to express it to the full. Living should be an extraordinary creative experience, for which empowering the sense of imagination, care, responsibility and freedom is highly required (Rodari, 1973). The term “human” comes from a latin word *humus*, that literally means “ground-soil-earth”. This first hint can suggest us to not ignore – as human beings – the need of rootedness in the ground, with Earth and Nature. Feeling one's self grounded involve a concrete experience of corporeity which is the first reality of being in the existence (Merleau-Ponty, 2003), and sets our experience of life in terms of relationship and inter-being. An affinity can also be captured with the japanese ideogram 人 *hito* for human being. It is composed of two traits, with one supporting the other, as if to remind us of the fundamentally relational nature in which existence is situated (Suzuki, 2003). Corporeity is the “space” for experiencing inner-outer relationship (Durckheim, 2003), not in an oppositional sense but in a mutual one: feeling “one” within oneself, with the soil on which one stands, with the sky towards which one naturally extends, with other being on which co-existence depends, with other existing forces from which life draws nourishment. Corporeity is fundamental to realize the unity between body-mind-emotion (Maturana & Varela, 1992). The subtle, profound interconnection of mind-heart-spirit – in japanese culture – has taken body and shape in a single ideogram 心 *kokoro*; expressing that these dimensions are not susceptible of duality. Further-

mystery, perceivable in the continuous renewal of humans and things, in the different existential value of phases or single moments of life, at the origins of Western philosophy there are the concepts of aion (αἰών), kronos (χρόνος), kairos (καιρός), each with a complex weave of meanings that here it is not possible to argue in all its depth. By necessity of synthesis aion can be brought back to the dimension of consciousness irreducible to a linear and quantifiable logic, kronos to quantifiable and calculable time, kairos to the occasion as a propitious opportunity to be seized in its instantaneousness.

more, the concrete sense (not only concept) of unity can be recalled – in reality – also as ecology (Naess, 1994), with the need to comprehend nature and quality of the relational systems, within which human existence evolves and matures. Thinking of an educational approach in terms of interdependence and multidimensionality makes it possible to rethink the value of the relationship, in its various aspects: a) intra-subjective – through an education to interiority; b) inter-subjective – concerning human, cultural, social and natural environment; c) instrumental – involving the comprehension of most appropriate tools for discovery, growth and self-actualization. Human being needs to situate himself/herself in meaningful experiences so as to be able to become aware of one's powerful resources, and to understand how they can be nurtured (Korczack, 2011). An aesthetically rich environment is sure to provide relevant learning experiences in order to mature comprehension, expressiveness, fulfillment in a context of encounter, beauty, and sensibility (Montessori, 2018). It is important to perceive that one's own fulfilment is a source of personal gratification and joy, also a resource of harmony and well-being for the society and the entire Cosmos in which one lives. According to major theories on lifelong, life-deep, life-wide education a sound ecological identity is target of authentic educational process. where the identity-building process is achieved through self-expression and harmonious personal response to the natural-social world, developing self-reliance, independence as well as a sense of share and care.

## **2. Holistic and transformative approach to education**

From this perspective, a holistic approach to education provides a transformative model that is appropriate for reading the multidimensional nature of human beings, and the constantly changing world in which we live; it is also an effective driver of change for the world (UNESCO, 2017). Humanity is a quality developmental in nature and thus learnable: providing consistent education that is up to that task is a great deal challenge and commitment for all the mankind (Montessori, 1999). Holistic-transformative model rises a crucial question: what is education for? Thus, we might find a radical answer by saying that education is for life, for being and inter-being; a formative process of growth of the whole person, concerning body and mind, intelligence and sensitivity, aesthetic sense and spiritual values, so as to mature personal capacities such as learning to live and to live with others. It is important that learning – as a process of comprehension – links understanding to emotion (Goleman, 2018); therefore education is moving beyond the borders of subject knowledge accumulation towards mastering the instruments of learning and application of knowledge in a variety of contexts. Life is our everyday experience of exploring, learning, judging, feeling joy or sorrow, satisfaction or disappointment. By acting and relating we face the need for design, decision and problem-solving skills, and for the use of strategy that requires imaginative thinking to adjust conceptual knowledge to creative and procedural one – most of the times applying to insight, unconventional viewpoint from which reconsider perspectives and give them a new set design (Resnick, 2017). Holistic transformative education acknowledges the multiple dimensions of human personality – physical, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, spiritual – moving towards an integrated individual living in – hopefully – a harmonious planet (Malavasi, 2021). Purpose of this educational model is to transform the way we look at ourselves and our relationship with each other and with the entire Cosmos, from a

fragmentated perspective into an integrated perspective. Whithin a holistic approach we can conceive the teacher (educator) as a constant learner: active, participatory, critical, imaginative, creative. The teacher should be a model of a learner: considered, involved and enthusiastic in discovering, questioning, inventing, creating and knowing how to do it cooperatively (Kohan, 2006), a living witness of sense of wonder. To sum up, such a personal growth encompasses some areas, as follows: self and interpersonal awareness; disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and understanding; cultural and intercultural awareness. These are just a few umbrella-areas that welcome a series of attitude, values and skills: desire for exploring, understanding, experiencing, creating; capacity of listening, interaction, relationship, cooperation; joy, integrity, trust, fantasy, confidence, self empowering. By way of example, it is possible to summarise by listing some key-factors that are relevant for a sound personal growth from childhood to be constantly developed all along the life cycle.

- Self awareness: open mind and ability to change one’s own view, to evaluate one’s own worth and values system, challenging with sense of delight and wonder.
- Interpersonal awareness: learning how to establish and maintain relationship; showing sincere interest of others, recognizing their views.
- Communication skills: selecting appropriate communication route; using effective verbal and non-verbal languages to transmit message and meaning, to create and transform environment.
- Collaborative skills: actively listening to others; facilitating-welcoming dialogue; supporting-encouraging the activities and the involvement of others.
- Disciplinary-Interdisciplinary skills: realizing the transferability of knowledge and skills; showing self-discipline and creativity in the use of exploration, understanding and action; appreciating accuracy, nourishing the sense of beauty.
- Cultural and Intercultural awareness: recognising the need to express one’s sense of life, the plurality of forms of expression, valuing the view of different cultures; avoiding judgmental approach; developing a global perspective.

Educational set design requires imagination and investigation on what experiences are significant. Certainly those that allow one to grow, to transform, to be free to experience, to create and share meanings: art plays a decisive role in it – as Mizushima will deepen afterwards in this paper. «Too many teachers are unaware of the importance of art for the balanced development of the personality in the perspective of a truly civilised society that leaves more and more room for non-competitive playful activities and the culture of truth, beauty and peace» (Lodi, 1999, p.11). In this regard, education through art is essential – engaging corporeity, thinking and reflexivity. In aesthetic experience, these dimensions are highly considered and employed. A rich aesthetic experience awakes the whole person (corporeal-sensory-emotional-mental dimensions); also providing appropriate experience for self-discovery together with tools for a full opening of the spirit and expressive freedom. «The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world. [...] The arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor number exhaust what we know. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition. [...] The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source, and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling» (Eisner, 2002, pp.70-92). It offers the opportunity to dis-

cover what one loves, loves to do with all one's energy. Love is linked to the sense of delight and beauty. Education through the experience of beauty means building strength, courage, sensitivity, trust to embrace goodness and integrity (Gardner, 2011). Through the experience of beauty, the sensitivity to imagine, recognise and create it can be internally structured; linked to the sense of the goodness, it nourishes all energies to feel a sense of dignity, sacredness and respect for life. In this sense it is important that lifelong, lifedep and lifewide education is also geared towards nurturing a continuous condition of childhood in its being a privileged disposition to seize the transformative nature of existence, applying playful and utopian cognitive combination for creative personal growth. Munari often reminded of the importance to keep the childhood inside of oneself for the whole life, to preserve the curiosity to know, the pleasure to understand, the desire to communicate (Munari, 1977).

### 3. What are significant and transformative experiences?

In the light of the holistic paradigm and the unity of body-mind-emotion therein valued, aesthetic experience seems to be regaining educational relevance, since it is able to significantly encourage the whole personal growth, involving discernment, sensibility, action. Teacher and learner are involved in their plural personal aspects with multiple languages, strategies and tools that help cared, enthusiastic, imaginative, sensitive, considered and creative attitude, and so shouldn't be marginalized. In this respect I would like to recall some significant points about the importance of aesthetic education: a) the preservation of the natural intensity of all modes of perception and sensation; b) the co-ordination of the various modes of perception and sensation with one another and in relation to the environment; c) the expression of feeling in communicable form; d) the expression in communicable form of modes of mental experience which would otherwise remain partially or wholly unconscious; e) the expression of thought in required form (Read, 1958; Hickman, 2004). Among many others, Malaguzzi has worked to guarantee the possibility of plenitude and fulfilment, from childhood and throughout life, designing an education strengthened by the variety of experiences and plurality of languages to read, interpret, shape and create a healthy life project: *the child is made of one hundred*. «The child is made of one hundred [...] but they steal ninety-nine. The school and the culture separate the head from the body [...]. They tell the child to discover the world already there [...] And thus tell the child the hundred is not there. The child says No way. The hundred is there» (1996). There is an inner voice that pushes children on, but this force is greatly multiplied when they are convinced that facts and ideas are resources, just as their friends and the adults in their lives are precious resources. It is especially at this point that children expect – as they have from the beginning of their life adventure – the help and truthfulness of grownups (Edwards et al., 2017).





N. 1 Painting with friends – 1 yrs. old children

Richness in languages, contents, tools and skills can support for a personal fulfillment in terms of love for life. One of the most serious disruptions in educational processes as well as in personal growth lies in the lack of love, giving birth to heartless thought and action, leading to lack of interest and loss of creativity. «[...] the secret of our collective ills is to be traced to the suppression of spontaneous creative ability in the individual» (Read *cit.*, p. 202). If love is neglected in educational process we deny children, students and everyone the chance to realize what lies at the heart of education: learning to be. Finding inner motivation is the door to start engaging with one's life, giving it a beautiful shape: which does not mean worrying about merely external and superficial aspects but dealing with existentially strong and profound issues. Everyone needs to express oneself to the full. The joy to do it is linked to spontaneity and motivation; it also comes along with fantasy to shape will and inspiration. Dreams, desire and imagination can be expression of aware and concrete energies to see the future not as lapse of time to be feared about, but as laboratory for creation where hopes come real and dreams come true. In view of zest for living, rather than obligation or convenience, pleasure and delight should find place as educational categories to be engaged with personal growth: they go along with the authentic sense for discipline in exercise, accuracy in work, responsibility and respect for the environment. Education through art has a true key-role in it (Mizushima, 2020), giving the freedom to explore, imagine and create and moreover to take risks and make mistakes in a participatory, non-judgmental context, valuing the sense of awe, wonder and love instead. In such an atmosphere learners and teachers inspire each other, get engaged, delighted and full of a sense of achievement. For a teaching-learning process to be successful is to create a sympathetic atmosphere in which spontaneity and "joyful industry" are promoted. A further crucial aspect – among many others – lies in the humanising power of art due to its intrinsic dynamic nature, its multicultural approach, its being a driving force for aesthetic awareness (Lowenfeld, 1957). In this regard, a significant contribution is also offered by Langer (1965), who emphasises that the full possibility of human expression in all its complexity lies in feeling: the emotional world of subjective life, in its entirety,

finds its possibility of expression through the artistic form, which thus assumes a value that is logically verifiable and conforms to experienced life (Silvestri, 2012). The artistic symbol articulates and presents its emotional content, more essential than any possible heuristic scheme. Educating through art provides irreplaceable tools for personal enquiry, reflection, contemplation, initiative and expression. In line with the demands of a life-long, life-deep and life-wide education, the artistic experience is able to promote mature capacities for dialogue and citizenship because it is based on the legitimisation of difference and the plurality of elements, forms, meanings and interpretations.

#### 4. Art Education and Human Existence

In this essay, I will try to recapture the relationship between art and human beings from the educational dimension, keeping in mind the thoughts of expansion and deepening in education shown by Rita Casadei's in the previous paragraphs focused on education through and for life-cycle. I will describe it based on the situation and concrete examples. However, I hope that the existence of "art and human beings" and the composition of the educational dynamics that occur between them will reach the readers in Europe. The source of the description is the content of the book *Under the Tree of the Golden Apple* (*Ogon no ringo no ki no shita de*, in Japanese) published in March of this year, with some modifications.



N. 2 From the book *Under the Tree* (of the Golden Apple).  
Sangen-sha, Tokyo, 2021, Photo: Yamano Mariko

#### 4.1 From Sense of Wonder

Human beings, by nature, potentially enjoy to create and express. And human beings are beauty-oriented. What is the origin of such intentionality?

When British neo-naturalist artist Andy Goldsworthy came to Japan, I asked to him: "What is your greatest motivation for your work?". He replied: "My inner child drives the work". He was the same age as me, and although he was already mid-



dle-aged at that time, I was very impressed and sympathized when I heard that his excellent and naive works were attributed to his own “inner child”. In other words, no matter what age are, the “inner child” should be the engine for the world of beauty. At the same time, I was ruminating in my mind the following sentence by Rachel Carson.

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength. If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in (1965, p. 44).

As Rachel Carson pointed out, it makes sense to share the beauty of the world with others through own “sense of wonder”. And she insists that the process requires one adult (as a facilitator rather than as a teacher) to live together with a conjugate gaze. Not only the expression / appreciation activities at school, but the whole of the original child's activity begins with “finding, expanding, and deepening while being involved with things”. However, those such as “ability / competency to be nurtured” are not a given external *a priori* content. Given materialized content risks fixing the situation and closing the possibilities. In a co-existence relationship, one learns a lot.

## 5. Towards Human Existence

In Japanese school society, in generally speaking, “art” education is given as a subject. Art classes are conducted by an adult called a teacher. Teachers work (function) in a purposeful device called “school”. In the past, the goal of art subjects was based on an external index that clarified the purpose such as “teaching goal”, “instructional objectives”. In recent years, there have been many cases of aiming for “internal standards” such as Elliot W. Eisner's “Expressive Objectives”. His theory had affected by John Dewey's philosophy, and new paradigm of educational evaluation had constructed. That was based on J. Dewey's view of “experience” and “education”. Every experience lives on in the next. The core work of experience-based education will be to select the type of current experience that will lead to a creative life in subsequent experiences. In addition, Eisner did not make art education “education for art”, but grasped the significance of art in the dimension of daily life in “aesthetic education theory”. On the other hand, in Herbert Read's book “Education through Art (1943)”, (Japanese translation published by 1953 Art Publishing Co., Ltd.) which had a great influence on Japanese art education in postwar. In that book, the prepositions that indicate the relationship between “education” and “art” were not “of”, “for” or “by”. He applied “through”. Didn't he mean that human beings can only become human beings through education “through” art? Read started out as a poet and was an art critic with a keen

eye for cultural events from education to politics. Conceived under the circumstances of World War II, this work is based on the proposition that “art should be the basis of education”. Read points out that since Plato, this proposition has not materialized even today, but it may be unrealistic to introduce this Read’s anarchism directly in modern times. However, in view of today’s cultural or educational context, Read’s philosophy and position in the present context seem to be similar rather than opposite. Read contributed to the establishment of the International Society for Education through Art (1954), InSEA, an advisory organization to UNESCO that is a specialized agency of the United Nations. And it is well known that the organization name of its advisory organization, InSEA, comes from Read’s “Education through Art”.

About half a century behind the Read, UNESCO published *Learning: The Treasure Within* in 1996 with the aim of rebuilding education in the 21st century. This content conceptually defines the essence of education as “the four pillars of learning” with the belief that education is indispensable for the realization of social values such as peace and freedom. The four pillars are “Learning to know”, “Learning to do”, “Learning to live together”, and “Learning to be (Living as a human being)”. I think the philosophy of “Education through Art” is behind this idea. “Education through Art”, that is, “become a human being through artistic experience”. The existence of the school, which was born as a system of modern society, may have been based on the mechanistic idea of filling a piece of the missing jigsaw puzzle. Compared to the traditional knowledge and skill acquisition learning form on which modern school education focuses, there is currently a need for reciprocal generative value formation, self-transformation, social transformation, etc. that involve learners. In modern times, the form of education is transforming into the vision that Reed envisioned.

## 6. How can art education resonate with lives, human existence?

Bin Kimura, Japanese psychiatrist describes in connection with “things” in his book *Time and Self* as follows. «Our world space is filled with “things” objects <もの> [*mono*], but we humans find that there is a completely different way of appearing in the world. We (Japanese) call it situation <こと> [*koto*] ... this is unique to humans. For example, an “apple falling from a tree” is a movement of an objective “thing” called an apple object, but when we stop the objective view through our eyes (additional subjectivity), it is “the situation an apple falling from a tree”. It changes to another thing, situation <と> [*koto*]» (1982).

As Kimura mentioned above, there are two aspects of meaning in things. One is, the state in which the object exists. Another is the situation where a story is born from things in the relationship. The role of education is to promote creating new meaning and value in the process of going back and forth between things, or to try to co-produce it. And how is art related to learning to “be as a human being”? The following is based on my experience at the university where I work at. Art work, the mosaic mural *Golden Apple* (sized 13m× 6 m) by Kyouji Takubo, which was born at the University of the Sacred Heart Tokyo in 2017, as a symbol of “inter-being”. This work was created under the themes of “co-existence”, “sustainability” and “biodiversity” which are common issues in the world, advocated by Sacred Heart Institute for Sustainable Futures (SHISF).



N. 3. Takubo Kyouji #2 Le Pommier d'or MMXX 2020 16 × 22.5 cm

The murals were made by crushing natural stones collected from all over the world and combining stones of different sizes, shapes, and thicknesses. The golden apple fruit has gold leaf on top of the granite, which stretches its branches to the ceiling and fills the wall in front of the atrium entrance, is spilling golden fruits from the branches. The floor is lined with a special steel called “corten” steel. When you step on it, you can experience the feel and sound of the soles of your feet. How did this work come from an objective object to create a generative meaning? The educational activities under the golden apple tree include the following. How is art related to learning to “be as a human being”? The idea of “co-existence with nature” that instinctively makes one feel «Oh, that’s amazing!» is also present in encountering art, and seeing beauty in the connection between “life” and “symbiotic sensitivity” typical of children who are in harmony with others and the world. The mosaic mural *Golden Apple* was completed in 2017.



N. 4. “Smiling Apple Tree (2018)” as for pre-event of the Tokyo Olympics Games 2020, university students created a symbol tree of the event, based on the image of the mural golden apple tree in the common space of the United Nations University in Tokyo (Aoyama)

The place where the mural work was originally located was a building of another organization. For several years, no one was there. Until the year before work's completion, it was a dim space with no sunlight or lamp light. From there, the book of genesis of "the golden apple tree" started. Authentic art is committed to sensibility and transforms consciousness. The *Golden Apple* is not a real reproduction of a tree, but it is read and shared as a symbol of university facilities, and it is still growing in the common space. In the history of art, apples have been shaped as symbols of various concepts such as "original sin", "beauty", and "life". Children, on the other hand, have the sensibility of a sense of wonder and are essentially intuitive. «When I first saw it, I thought that one tree gave birth to many apples. Looking closer, the apples and the light and air around them were many pieces of stone with different shapes. It was made of, and I felt that one life was made of many lives». It is an impression of a primary school fifth grade child (10 yrs. old) who saw the work. No one teaches to the child background of the mosaic murals. "Seeing" is not only forming an image on the retina, but also "seeing" as a valuable act. Awe and holy feelings arouse. These are the contents newly created and created on the spot by the experience of the viewer. The seeds were sown and internalized, and for the first time, the existence of a golden tree was touched – this child touched the "life" of the work.



N.5. As an appreciation teaching material for a nearby elementary school. Photo:Kyoji Takubo, he told elementary school students. The common space with the works of golden apples has good sound and is also an event space for concerts

I think that the education system since the modern era has been driven by the obsession with productivity. In the planning and efficiency based on *Logos*, "time and space to live" is being diluted from the place of education. On the one hand, it is an era in which a rich place of life is shared and a principle of symbiotic behavior based on nature as a *Physis* is required. In the past, humankind has encountered various disasters, but through repeated trials and errors, we have overcome the situation and created new culture and value. The driving force of such experimental intelligence has its origin in the orientation to the values such as "play", "beauty" and "holy" that human beings in this world originally have. Like the children who came into contact with the existence of art and discovered Lascaux murals, having an inspiring encounter is nothing more important.





N. 6. It was used as a presentation of creative works (original picture books) in university classes

## Conclusion

With reference to the demands of lifelong, lifewide and lifedeeep education questions rise: about meaning, sense and direction of time-space of life and education; then, about model and tools essential to realize the existence, which is a creative process. Our common proposal has sought to focus attention on the significance of educational models and experiences good at promoting humanity as a plural dimension to be developed; then, to reflect on which learning and sensibility have to be nurtured to understand and live the reciprocity of being-inter-being – warding off a triple reduction: of being exclusively to the human, of the human exclusively to the mental dimension, of the mental dimension to the mere reason. We found an appropriate rationale within the holistic approach and the aesthetic education, insofar as human being is considered in his/her wholeness of body-mind-emotion and his/her deepest educational needs recognised, including those of an education to interiority and expressiveness – not according to a narrow view of the self or of isolation but rather of depth and openness towards existence. We embrace the idea that one of the most important sensitivities to nurture is that of a sense of wonder, the expression of an authentic and mature attitude of awareness of the extraordinariness and mystery of life; already strongly rooted in childhood. For this reason, childhood should be given pedagogical attention that deeply respects this way of seeing, feeling and exploring life. In this view lifelong education could be seen as a commitment to protect and cultivate the condition of childhood as an essential quality for nourishing the existence with meaning, freed from stereotypical and trivialising vision. In this view, art plays a key role, having itself a pedagogical vocation. Art educates to care and beauty that, taken in their plural aspects, are decisive in freeing and shaping the person's dynamic and constructive energies which constitute those unitary and common characteristics of the humans. When a free spirit exists, it has to materialise in some form-shape of work and for that inspiration, imagination, creativity are needed, being found and co-produced in relation to the natural world and the encounter with



otherness. It could be said that from a pedagogical perspective one of the most relevant aspects is that Art keeps the sense of wonder alive. The amazement at beauty when encountered or produced promotes a sense of joy and achievement that contributes to a person's well-being and motivation to seek and realise one's place in the world. Without a sense of beauty, humanity would feel lost, unable to find meaning and direction in its own existence. The continuation of the "sense of wonder" as a child will be the dynamo engine for the subsequent world production. And in the process of going back and forth with "things", human beings form a passage to the world. In the process, art education introduces a gateway to poetic life. Art can lead to recognition that cannot be reached by daily life experience alone. It becomes a primordial experience of facing oneself, and art brings a new experience to human existence. Such a cycle will be passed on to the next generation, leading to the renewal of human culture.

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