

Dear Readers,

We present you with an issue of the magazine which is entirely devoted to literacy in music and art. Both music and art education develop a sphere of the personality that is either untouched or only marginally touched by other subjects. This is primarily an emotional sphere, an understanding of art as a language of its own, which uses means other than words to communicate. That is why musical and visual art works can easily cross borders and in different countries do not need interpreters in the true sense of the word. However, a deeper understanding of the musical and visual arts cannot be achieved without systematic education, which should develop perception, skills and knowledge. Proportionate representation of these components also ensures the development of musical and artistic literacy.

The contributions on musical literacy are aimed precisely at the level of perception and skills. The authors of the empirical study 'Musical Literacy in Primary Education' examine musical skills in Grade 6 of primary school. In doing so, they draw on investigations that have been conducted in the past. And although the

actual level of musicianship was quite satisfactory, new questions arose. Musical literacy is not only formed by musical ability, but also by the aforementioned knowledge. Future testing will therefore need to examine both areas in their interconnectedness.

The authors of the research study 'Visualisation of Music and Its Application into the Process of Education' focused on the connection of auditory and visual perceptions. They presented a number of models and options in which visualisation is an important support for musical perception, particularly based on synaesthesia. However, despite their usefulness, there are still gaps in teaching and textbooks in this area.

Connecting musical activities with activities from other areas is also the subject of M. Kmentová's peer-reviewed publication, 'Musical and Speech Expressions of Preschool Children and Their Mutual Influence'. The publication presents the results of research in which the musical and speech expressions of preschool children were used to mutually support both types of expressions. Musical activities proved to be a positive factor in the development of speech and vocabulary. And the vocabulary in the

musical expressions in turn provided a space for developing musical skills. All of this happens in a natural way, in a way that is most beneficial for the child.

The contributions on the study of visual literacy focus on the development of the topic internationally and in the wider context of critical practice in visual culture, visual arts and education. These fields operate through processes of communication and symbolic exchange, operating against a backdrop of economic and political dynamisms of local and global dimensions. Multimedia communication technology and its audio-visual modes have been determining the ways in which contemporary society functions, and the ways of thinking and acting of individuals, cultures and societies since the 1990s, and are linked to the emergence of the Internet and digital technologies in general. We have been involuntarily experiencing the extreme effects of a mechanical organisation of interpersonal communication for more than a year now, during the COVID-19 pandemic. What has changed, what will remain and what do we need to be prepared for in education in the future?

The current social situation demands social distancing from people, which is a radical change in the onto-epistemic domain. At the same time, it requires tremendous flexibility and speed in communication; these are demands on specific literacy skills to create and understand visual messages. The image as a complex

meaning-making entity dominates our understanding of the world, our position and our identity or subjectivity. Visual literacy is a new challenge for education and for changing mindsets. How do we currently define visual literacy, its forms and functions, and how can it be taught and learned? Where do art educators find themselves? What is the role of visual art, inter-visual experiments and multimedia interfaces that visual art experiments with, deconstructs and problematises in this situation? Concepts of visual literacy have been emerging in education since the mid-1990s, with the advent of the Internet and political, economic and social changes on a global scale. After a period of 'educational resistance' and latency, visual literacy became firmly established on the international stage around the turn of the millennium, when new reflection on the so-called society of the spectacle, visual media, the development of new vocabularies and structural models of visual and cultural education began. Czech art education reacted immediately to international developments and did not lag behind in this respect. We will be mapping its territory in a future issue of this journal; however, in this issue we have decided to include contributions by foreign authors with whom we cooperate within the ENViL network - the European Network for Visual Literacy.

Authors Tedi E. Asher, Peter Carpreau, Lode Vermeersch, and Ernst Wagner

form an interdisciplinary art education team consisting of experts in neuroscience, culturology, art history, and art theory. Their conversation 'Conversations on Visual Literacy, Resonance, and a Found Cat' presents, in the form of a tetralogue, a very lively and witty analysis of the issue of visual literacy, its development and its application in the field of art mediation in the authentic environment of museums and galleries, which is now an integral part of the system of general cultural education from the earliest age.

The other four authors, Diederik Schönau, Andrea Kárpáti, Constanze Kirchner and Maria Letsiou, are prominent members of the Working Group for the Development of Visual Literacy in European Education, which is involved in the establishment and development of the European Network for Visual Literacy ENViL. In their article 'A New Structural Model of Visual Competencies in Visual Literacy', they reflect on visual literacy as a dynamic field of multiple competencies and sub-competencies and present a prototype of visual literacy with a new set of process-oriented sub-competencies in the domains of creative production and reception for readers to discuss. The authors believe that this alternative VL prototype will spark further discussion and research in the field of assignment and assessment in visual literacy education, in relation to the so-called skills for the 21st century.

The collection of articles is logically linked by Jaroslav Bláha's study, which represents a highly scholarly contribution to the interdisciplinarity of the visual and musical disciplines, a unique phenomenon in art education and its theory. Its great and main strength is its sophisticated and comprehensible expert language: the author does not leave terms like „interdisciplinary literacy“ in abstract ambiguity. The author's treatment of the phenomenon of interdisciplinary literacy, conceived as a „triad“ of word, image and sound, draws on an extremely stimulating theoretical background: Gadamerian hermeneutics, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, information theory, etc. At the same time, however, it provides a whole series of concrete examples that very clearly enable the author's general reflections to be given a very tangible content. Among the most stimulating moments of the text is the questioning of the „conservative view“ in the form of „the division of art into temporal and non-temporal“ with a remarkable reference to the „instinctive life“ of forms and tones in Kandinsky's painting and in Schoenberg's compositions. Equally pertinent is the concluding emphasis on the fact that the „multimedia environment of communication“ in which we currently find ourselves has deep historical roots, which the author traces back to medieval culture. All in all, Bláha's study creates an elegant theoretical framework for both the musical and visual texts, and com-

pletes their synthesis towards a logic of the pedagogical implications of visual literacy.

Again, as so many times before, we must point here to the baffling neglect of the phenomena and specificity of visual communication, the cognitive potential of visual and musical disciplines, the operation of audio-visual modes, and the effects of symbolic cultural and intercultural exchanges of meaning that constitute the synthetic social environment in which we live and will live. Visual and musical literacies are not a kind of sensibility for the elites of the last century and the one before that, but basic, general

educational and competence equipment for the present and the near future. Are we and will we be ready? The unprofessional interventions in the framework curricula in the field of Arts and Culture rather show a profound misunderstanding of the issue. That is why we appreciate the opportunity to publish in the pages of this monothematic issue and we hope to interest readers from other disciplines.

On behalf of the editorial team, we wish you good health and strength,

Michal Nedělka and Marie Fulková