How can art act as an intercultural mediator for dialogue? In order to scrutinize this question, relevant theoretical ideas are discussed and artistic intervention projects examined so as to highlight its cultural, political, economic, social, and transformational impacts. This thought-provoking work reveals why art is needed to help multicultural neighbourhoods and societies be sustainable, as well as united by diversity. This edited collection underlines the significance of arts and media as a tool of understanding, mediation, and communication across and beyond cultures. The chapters with a variety of conceptual and methodological approaches from particular contexts demonstrate the complexity in the dynamics of (inter)cultural communication, culture, identity, arts, and media. Overall, the collection encourages readers to consider themselves as agents of the communication process promoting dialogue.
Art and Intercultural Dialogue
COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION:
A Diversity of Voices

Volume 39

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Comparative and International Education: A Diversity of Voices aims to provide a comprehensive range of titles, making available to readers work from across the comparative and international education research community. Authors will represent as broad a range of voices as possible, from geographic, cultural and ideological standpoints. The editors are making a conscious effort to disseminate the work of newer scholars as well as that of well-established writers. The series includes authored books and edited works focusing upon current issues and controversies in a field that is undergoing changes as profound as the geopolitical and economic forces that are reshaping our worlds. The series aims to provide books which present new work, in which the range of methodologies associated with comparative education and international education are both exemplified and opened up for debate. As the series develops, it is intended that new writers from settings and locations not frequently part of the English language discourse will find a place in the list.
Art and Intercultural Dialogue

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PREFACE

Art and Intercultural Dialogue

Festivals, exhibitions, drama, literature or film are among the most powerful ways at people’s disposal for them to express their worldviews, emotions and opinions. Art is the most used instrument (and through the most varied forms), for remembrance and celebration of important events, for preserving collective identities, for honouring people. Through art, individuals and groups also actively exert citizenship and propagate opinions: they claim rights, denounce atrocities, influence public opinion and encourage action of their peers. Art is used to educate youngsters, to animate groups, to stimulate solidarity and collective links and to foster community wellbeing, or solely to touch the inner world of spirituality and worship, delight and ecstasy.

Due to such great and subliminal power, and because art masters and joins the languages of thought and emotions, artistic expression is often used as a tool to better understand otherness and to communicate with the Other. In fact, art initiates, fosters and protects diversity and so it can be a universal tool to initiate, nourish and protect intercultural dialogue, while celebrating cultural diversity.

Imagination, creativity, innovation and problem solving are intertwined in the process of art creation. These ingredients are at the same time the manifestation of diversity and the result of interaction, dialogue and cultural influence which promotes new forms of cultural expression and permits cultural survival and adaptation.

Without undervaluing the aesthetic dimension of art, this book highlights its communicative dimension and cultural pervasiveness. Art seen as a manifestation of intentionality, personal will and social significance is analysed from the angle of its multiple impacts in cultural, political, economic, social, philosophical, or religious aspects of life in the public sphere.

What exactly is the merit of different forms of artistic expression in the field of interculturalism? How can art contribute to sustain or promote social cohesion in neighbourhoods, in the groups and community and in the larger society? How can art projects become part of the peace keeping process in unstable, conflicting societies? Are there any strategies and good practices for creative industries to act as promoters of intercultural dialogue and an understanding of the Other? These are among the questions discussed in depth by the experts in different art fields who authored the inspiring and challenging chapters in this book.

The book is divided in three parts: the first includes three chapters and deals with “The power of art: general dimensions”; the second, with six chapters, tells us about “Art as medium: dissent, dissection and agency”; the final seven chapters are gathered in the third part, on “Dialogue through art: Cases, projects and voices”. 

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Part I, “The power of art: general dimensions” gathers three foundational chapters, on the relations of art and diversity, art education and the role of the new technologies as medium for spreading intercultural communication and education through art.

Gonçalves in “Art and intercultural dialogue” shows how art may act as a cultural mediator and be taken as resource for intercultural cooperation and social justice. In her chapter, the author argues that art is both personal (an expression of feelings, ideas and experiences of the artist) and a product of multiple authorships, as the cultural background of the artist is one of its layers, thus making art a meaningful language. Focusing on photography and art projects involving vulnerable and at risk communities, examples are given of when an art project acquires the power to give voice to the voiceless and a face to the faceless.

Written from a personal point of view, Barbosa’s chapter, “An Interculturalist Declaration of Principles” analyses how she, coming from a conservative society, was impregnated by ideals of multiculturalism, inter-culturalism and inter-territorialism. Despite her own conviction of the importance and necessity of multi- and inter-culturalism, the author describes the opposing forces of the multiculturalist police that dominated the programs of the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo from 1987 until 1993 in a country where the Art Museums valued only hegemonic Art: European and North American white codes. She also discusses the cultural policy of Gilberto Gil as Minister of Culture in Brazil (2003 to 2008).

In their chapter, “Art, Education and Intercultural Dialogue mediated by the Information and Communication Technologies”, López and Ouis link the concepts of the intercultural, art and new technologies, as they find these connections to be a key feature for contemporary education and the development of intercultural competencies.

Part II, “Art as Medium: Dissent, Dissection and Agency”, including six chapters, deals with the influence of art upon social images, conflict and mediation. Forms of art such as visual arts, literature, cinema and theatre illustrate how art is both a cultural product, a genuine representation of a culture and at the same time a language that works as a tool for agency and dissent and as cultural medium with an impact in shaping cultures’ mutual representations and cultural dialogic processes.

Dragićević Šešić and Tomka in “Art and Dissent: Questioning the Grid” question the universality of interpretations of artistic dissent that see the mission of critical participatory art to be that of creating the “unpredictable subject”, by questioning and provoking large institutional structures, as happened with the intellectual tenets of artistic activism throughout the twentieth century. While studying several cases from the Balkan region, the authors suggest that there is a new climate around artists and civil society activists, one that departs from anti-institutionalism towards reconceptualization of the role of artist and cultural activists as active agents in the formation of the responsible democratic state.

Taking a critical view of the concept of art and its role in intercultural dialogue, Gomez and Giménez explore in their chapter “Artistic Expressions as Tools for
Mediator Action: an Implementation of the Interculturalist Approach” the ability of artistic expressions to serve as tools for mediator action and thus contribute to the promotion of social cohesion, dialogue, and mutual understanding in multicultural societies.

The authors’ understanding of mediator action in its widest sense, not restricted to open conflicts, but carrying out preventive work through its transforming power for the enhancement and recognition of those viewed as aliens is clarified with examples of artistic works showing the different roles of art: (1) as a means for knowing and meeting the “other”, but also for the opposite—promoting stereotyping, disagreement, and conflict; and (2) as a support for reflecting on meeting with the “other”, condemning stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination; but, conversely, also as a source of discourses that justify exclusion and inequality.

Carnacea’s chapter, “Art, Intervention and Action for Cultural Transformation” discusses how art can work as an engine of social transformation and inclusion and a stimulus for social justice and diversity as principle. In doing so, the author presents a range of social intervention projects, published in a collection of articles in the book Art, Intervention and Social Action: The Transformative Creativity (2011). The projects use art as methodology and aim to empower and give positive visibility to the most vulnerable groups in society, such as immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Oprescu in “The Power and Subversiveness of Literature; The Romanian Case” discusses literature in the context of power abuse by totalitarian states, such as the Ceaușescu regime in Romania and aims to show that literature is a discourse that mediates between history and memory, struggling through different methods to deconstruct the excess of power. Even though literature was used to promote the ideology of the Communist Romanian state, through its subversive discourse, founded on its specific strategies of indirect speaking, literature also had, according to the author, an important role in preserving the ancient ideal of humanitarianism, and it was an implicit critique of ideologies that legitimated excessive power. Examples of this role of literature in totalitarian societies are given, especially from the Romanian literary panorama.

Quadros and Tran’s chapter, “Social Transformation in the Eyes of Contemporary Chinese Cinema and Dogme 95” tells us about possibilities of transformation through contemporary Chinese cinema and compares this phenomenon to the Danish movie movement Dogme 95. In their comparative film analysis the authors contrast two different ways of cinematic productions, analyzing two icons of contemporary Chinese cinema and one from Dogme 95, respectively Jia Zhangke’s “24 City” (2008); and Thomas Vinterberg’s “The Celebration” (1998). The authors argue that despite their fundamentally distinct historical and cultural backgrounds as well as socio-economical trajectories, China and Denmark have in common a contemporary cinema production that portrays on-going social changes in their respective contexts. From the authors’ point of view, cinema observes and reveals the transformation of society as its major theme, and portrays with critical thinking the particularities and singularities of societal changes in the recent past deciphering its present, and
offering some paths towards the near future, so as to facilitate the state and/in society
dialogue and to the understanding of social issues.

This part ends with Seçkin Özmen’s chapter, “Mediation of Culture and Intercultural Dialogue through Dramas”. According to the author, television dramas are the most watched genre of television programs in Turkey, and Turkish television dramas are sold to countries in the Balkans, as well as to many other countries in the Middle East, Europe, South and North America. With the support of Schwartz’s three universal requirements of human existence, the author argues that such television dramas attract audiences from different cultural backgrounds because they include features of realistic stories that belong to universal human existence codes.

The last seven chapters included in Part III, “Dialogue through Art: Cases, Projects and Voices”, introduce us to projects and case studies that demonstrate the use of art as cultural mediator and a promoter of cultural dialogue in educational settings, and cultural and rehabilitation programmes.

In their chapter, “Voices and Positions: Facilitating Dialogue through Arts and Media”, Savva and Telemachou draw attention to a broad theoretical framework, incorporating contemporary arts theories, new artistic practices and discourses from various fields such as social, cultural, multiliteracies and critical theory. Theories and practices are presented through two educational projects entitled “Voices and Positions” involving student teachers. Emphasis is given to the shift of the arts practices to issues concerned with a) the formation of identities, b) the power of representation and c) notions of citizenship. The chapter provides a more thoughtful approach to the arts and media’s role in relation to everyday life, by engaging student teachers in a dialogue in which the value of arts and media is focused on meaningful learning.

Based on a four year fieldwork study of the Spanish school Teatro de la Escucha (Listening Theatre), the chapter by Alvarado investigates the methodology used at this school, analyzing whether it has the specific training characteristics from an intercultural perspective and outlines the role interculturalism plays, both in training and in social dialogue. The school is based on three principles: promotion, non-violence and the perspective of the impoverished. Alverado describes the training process that participants in the “Teatro” undergo and also gives examples of performances that have taken place in the streets of Madrid. He also discusses challenges of the theatre, not the least of which is the fact that few of the groups for whom the performances are meant, that is, immigrants and the impoverished actually are part of the program. Still, Alverado is optimistic that the Listening Theatre does provide a model of intercultural theatrical techniques and hopes that the presence of the theatre will somehow help us to reach and learn about the “Others”.

Martins and Carvalho in their chapter “Green Architecture, Landscapes and Intercultural Dialogues: The Case of the MUN’Danças Festival” explore the relationship between cultural festivals, green architecture, landscape and intercultural dialogue developed through design, music and dance. To analyze the dialectic among
festivals, cross-cultural expressions, heritage and cultural landscape management, the authors present the MUN'Danças festival (Coimbra, Portugal, 2012) as a possible model, analyzing it in the broader context of the European Landscape Convention and European cultural diversity as expressed by the Arts and Festivals Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue (2008).

Saura, in her paper “enREDadas Exhibitions Project: Intercultural Artistic Creation for Teacher Training” presents an artistic and pedagogical research project developed in cooperation with hundreds of university art education teachers worldwide, all brought together through the E@ network (www.arteweb.ning.com). Via an intercultural dialogue the project has led to the development of informal and self-taught learning processes as well as strategies for improving the global visibility of the work of arts teachers within the Ibero-American context.

Porcellana and Campagnaro in “Beauty, Participation and Inclusion: Designing with homeless People” introduce us to a project on social inclusion of homeless people, where participation. “Living in the dorm” is an action research project addressing the issue of Homelessness. Its theoretical postulate is that, if social workers, guests, designers and researchers share knowledge, practices and customs, the housing service spaces for homeless people can be developed into places rich in symbolic contents and opportunities for relationships. Furthermore, they can better improve the daily life of the homeless. Using a participatory approach, anthropology interacts with design thinking in the development and implementation of multidisciplinary and immersive projects that offer the opportunity to the homeless to rethink their role in relation to the service received and to researchers to test their profession in a social context of practical need.

Ballengee Morris and Carpenter, in “Shared Reflections and Dialogues: Art Education, Collaboration, and Public Pedagogy” present a dialogue between the two authors to promote art education through collaboration. In their dialogic exchange, they explore two cultures/communities that focus on cultural interventions, collaborations, and community building through the arts and (inter)cultural dialogue. The authors describe two of their own art projects—one an on-going series of public performances in response to the global water crisis; the other an interactive website that promotes informal learning about indigenous earthworks through a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) approach—as examples of engaged and embodied community building curriculum, and share aspects of community-based, service-learning approaches, and public pedagogy. The authors consider critically key questions about ownership and access to water, indigenous spiritual spaces, game building, and pedagogy.

Last but not least, Caetano, Freire, Vassalo, Machado and Bicho, “Arts and the Voice of Youth in Dialogue: A Project in Portuguese Schools”, present their research project focused on the development of intercultural education. Through an action-research methodology, this project was focused on understanding intercultural education processes and perceptions of associated changes. The three case studies presented took place in different schools of the public school system in Portugal,
with a significant multicultural environment. Overall, 52 students were actively engaged in the development of activities that promoted interculturality, focusing on artistic expression as a mean for promoting intercultural dialogue. A reflection on the role of arts in intercultural dialogue was made possible by the analysis and interpretation of the processes and results obtained.

The unique collection of chapters in this volume addresses the important role that art plays in promoting understanding and tolerance in our globalized world using a wide variety of art forms as examples: film, visual arts, theatre and performance, literature and so on. Art in all its manifestations provides a platform of cultural discourse for intercultural mediation and dialogue. The significance for education cannot be underestimated. In our troubled modern world, art provides a beacon to bring humanity to mutual understanding.

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PART I

THE POWER OF ART: GENERAL DIMENSIONS
1. WE AND THEY

Art as a Medium for Intercultural Dialogue

All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people, like Us, are We
And everyone else is They:
But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!) looking on We
As only a sort of They!

(Excerpt from “We and They”, by Rudyard Kipling)

… and he said “Joan, you can’t talk about music! Talking about music is like dancing about architecture,” and I just said, “Well fine! Gonna get all philosophical on me, it’s just as pointless as talking about a lot of things, love for instance.”

(1998, Willard Carroll, Playing by Heart: screenplay)

Paraphrasing Joan, the character played by Angelina Jolie in Playing by Heart (1998, Willard Carroll, USA; UK) talking about art could be like dancing about architecture, but it isn’t pointless. How to define contemporary art? The complexity of art resides in the fact that it is a language made of situated emotions. Art takes detours from reality (it doesn’t seek to reproduce it) because its objective is not to present factual descriptions, logical sequences or objective and consensual visions. Today’s art is more concerned with meaning, revealing a personal appropriation of multiple senses of reality, but is not anti-social because it is a means of communication situated in a particular context. The expressive nature of art comes through interpretation, subjectivity, emotion, contemplative acts and intentions, permitting it to contest things along the full range of individual possibilities and liberties.

Contemporary art may be envisaged and created as a powerful message of citizens for citizens as it contains special features that make it a potential civic action: it is no longer seen as a kind of self-centred expression, art by art, art seen as the way to formal perfection and harmony, but a cultural expression of people, a message, a content to be interpreted and valued in its potential symbolic, explicit, contest message. As Garber puts it

S. Gonçalves & S. Majhanovich (Eds.), Art and Intercultural Dialogue, 3–23.
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The focus in understanding art in the postmodern era has shifted from the modernist emphasis on formal elements and art about art to art as meaningful expression of culture. Indeed, postmodern thinkers cannot conceive of understanding art outside of culture. The postmodern era has also meant the end of single meanings and solitary truths, raising our awareness that cultural groups and individuals within them hold different beliefs, practice different life styles, and make different styles of art, and that all of these are valid. (Garber, 1997, p. 74)

In any of its forms, from the earlier ones (music, visual or plastic arts, literature, photography, sculpture, architecture…) to the latest (cinema, video art, installation, performance, body art, graffiti, cartoon, digital art…) the communicative intention of art comes through the sensorial, imaginary and conceptual. Its intentionality is part of the epicenter and individuality of the artist.

Surpassing verbal expression and comprehension, art may be considered a universal language based on situated emotions – its codes must first be deciphered by the senses, and only then considered on an intellectual level (artistic comprehension may frequently require explanations, knowledge and ideas not immediately apprehensible).

Thus, alongside economics and religion, art is one of the most easily internationalized cultural products, more easily exported and appreciated from various cultural points of view. Economics and the market are also international (remember the ancient international commercial routes like the Silk Road, the slave and gold routes) for obvious reasons of trade, cooperation of some kind and consumer goods. Religion is international both by intention and the fact that spirituality and faith are universals – present in all cultures. Subject of constant movement and exchange, we see the great monotheisms established in all parts of the world since the age of discovery and the current expansion of oriental beliefs in the occident (such as Buddhism and other beliefs as spiritual alternatives to Christianity and Islam). Also, we currently see sport (led by Soccer) as one of the most internationalized of collective human practices.

Commerce and consumption, spirituality, the necessity of leisure and the search for esthetic harmony are common to all cultures. In the case of art, we should recognize that painting, sculpture, dance, music, poetry and literature exist among all peoples. Even the most primitive peoples and cultures use these means in a more or less sophisticated way to express their beliefs, desires, historical and daily circumstances and finally, their perceived identities.

Science, sport, commerce, religion and art are internationalized and intercultural human activities. Education and teaching, especially college education, have followed the same trend since the Renaissance (e.g. Erasmus of Rotterdam) with institutions initiating and taking part in international activities from the circulation
of professors and researchers to the numerous exchange programs for teachers and students that exist today, not to forget the links of the university to the world outside through research laboratories and institutes often financed through supranational organizations such as the European Union.¹

AUTHORSHIP, IDENTITY, ART AND CULTURE

The notion of authorship helps us make a parallel between art and culture. Culture doesn’t exist apart from individuals, it isn’t something in itself. On the contrary, culture is shared meaning, the result of individuals belonging to groups, and it is inscribed in the collective identity of a community. From this point of view, culture is a foundational dimension of identity. As a symbolic system conveying meaning and the possibility of communication, culture is the starting point for individual action.

With culture our acts become social and meaningful. Through culture we decode and see congruity in the acts of other people. Meaning is what we get as the result of this dynamic cultural process of coding and decoding. So, culture is a matter of co-authorship (and communication). Art, being part of culture, must also be a matter of co-authorship (and communication), even if there is a single artist’s signature.² The way artists express themselves depends both on their experiences of life and their affiliations. It is always easier to interpret a work of an artist if we have an insight into their lives. You can’t fully understand what he does if you don’t know who he is, his beliefs, worries, pains, joys, aspirations. Besides, artistic work is usually incorporated in specific art movements denoting philosophical, ideological, political and esthetic statements. Artists’ lives and works are evocative of a culture, a time, a place, an epoch and its intricacies. For example, knowing something about Picasso, his Spanish nationality, the military authoritarian regime called “franquismo” and the Spanish civil war, and also about the turbulence in Europe during the first half of the XXieth century will shed light over “Guernica”. On the other side, knowing something about Guernica, will shed light on the culture, time, place, and epoch that created it. Art is a situated expression of both an individual and collective body of ideas, concerns, expectations, and feelings.

I said before that science, commerce, sports and religion are, together with art, the most internationalized human activities. Of course, media and technology are also globalized in today’s times. Globalization flows in everyday life and ideas, information, desires and worries are easily created and co-created, spread, consumed and changed through what Appaduray (1996, 2003) called the five scapes (ethnospace, technospace financescape, mediaspace and ideoscapes). The scapes of globalization are all fertile ground for artistic production, as they are for scientific, religious, entertaining and spiritual human productions. This idea leads us to the theme of cultural encounters and dialogue.
ART AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

In the centuries following the age of discovery, the western world inaugurated contact with other worlds on a massive scale, rapidly colonizing, exploring, commercializing and dominating these other societies. The history that followed unfortunately brought new forms of colonialism and relations between peoples that have not always been peaceful. However, cooperation also happened, and it generated ideas, reciprocal learning, scientific and commercial cooperation leading to discoveries, innovation and inventions that might have never appeared without such encounters and communication between peoples from the four corners of the world.

There is no culture without art and there is no art without culture. This is reason enough to explain why art is a powerful instrument to foster intercultural understanding, communication and appreciation of diversity. Art has something that makes it a very special activity and human endeavor: we use it to tell about our fluid, dynamic and imagined world and communities (Appaduray, 1996; Anderson, 1984). Works of art are views and voices, narratives of possible worlds, scripts for posterity. Exhibited art plays simultaneous complex roles in society: it functions as a center of interpretation (thus spreading meaning, intention and agency); it serves as an archive of multiple worlds (so preserving collective memories); art mirrors our mindsets, worldviews and perceived realities. If we use it to express our identities and concerns, to preserve/fabricate memories and to state ideas and ideals, then we can use it too to explore, to understand and to get better acquainted with the cultural (and social, economic, ideological…) diversity, cultural watch and dialogue. Finally, art also fabricates new possible worlds and realities (by encouraging reflection, changing minds, and inducing action and intervention).

Art is a means to approach the unfamiliar and broaden our comfort zone. We know, from intercultural psychology, sociology and history, that intercultural contacts are never inconsequent. So, this process will convey hybrid results, affecting identity, life styles, attitudes, beliefs and values. When visiting international art exhibitions, watching foreign movies, listening to world music, or travelling and exploring festivities, architecture, street art, etc., we are being touched and influenced by other cultures and by the cultures of the Other. Slowly, smoothly, invisibly, styles and patterns, dimensions and shapes, are being added to our inner – already complex and multiple – identities. The power of art is similar to the power of travelling: with such (always intercultural) experiences we may well become the different, the Other, a being other – and, as Rudyard Kipling said, “if you cross over the sea” (your cultural boundaries) “you may end by looking on We as only a sort of They”.

Art may well be seen as a contact zone (Pratt, 1991, 1992), meaning those spaces, either geographical or ethnographical where cultures meet, often with tension and collision of interest and asymmetrical power relations. Much related to processes of assimilation or transculturation, cultural fusion and latter hybrid products (like
dialekt, mixed techniques, new religious sects and beliefs...), often are created in such spaces.

Autoethnography, transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression – these are some of the literate arts of the contact zone. Miscomprehension, incomprehension, dead letters, unread masterpieces, absolute heterogeneity of meaning – these are some of the perils of writing in the contact zone. They all live among us today in the transnationalized metropolis of the United States and are becoming more widely visible, more pressing, and, like Guaman Poma’s text, more decipherable to those who once would have ignored them in defense of a stable, centered sense of knowledge and reality. (Pratt, 1991, p. 4)

Intercultural dialogue is more difficult, yet enforced, in conflictual areas, where worldviews, sensitivities, interest and privileges clash. The Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention (Conference of the European Ministers of Culture, 2003) defines intercultural dialogue as

Tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy, and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities whether individual or collective, in transformations and in new forms of cultural expression. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible component of culture, without exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or political, economic, social, philosophical, or religious. In this context, for instance, inter-faith and interreligious dialogue must be viewed in terms of its cultural and social implications versus the public sphere.

For its part, Sharing Diversity, the ERICarts Institute study for the EU, envisages Intercultural dialogue as an interactive communication process resulting in hybrid outcomes, and defines the concept as follows:

Intercultural dialogue is a process based on an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or mindsets. Among its aims are: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation; to ensure freedom of expression and the ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes.

Intercultural dialogue takes place in an environment where individuals and groups are guaranteed safety and dignity, equality of opportunity and participation, where different views can be voiced openly without fear, where there are 'shared spaces' for cultural exchanges. (Sharing Diversity, ERICarts Institute 2008) http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu/web/files/14/en/Sharing_Diversity_Final_Report.pdf
The Council of Europe Declaration on Cultural Diversity (7 December 2000) sees Cultural Diversity as being “expressed in the co-existence and exchange of culturally different practices and in the provision and consumption of culturally different services and products”, and connects this concept with the one of intercultural dialogue as follows:

Cultural diversity should go beyond the “majority/minority” dichotomy and integrate the complementarity between the “universal” and the “singular” so that intercultural dialogue is experienced in a flexible, dynamic and open way. In all its dimensions, cultural diversity gives rise to the enrichment of individuals and groups, and produces not only new forms of social relationships, fueled by migration and strengthened by exchange processes, but also new forms of multicultural identity. Hence, cultural differences should neither result in a retreat into identity or community, nor justify a policy of forced assimilation, due to a will of domination, as both processes may lead to conflicts. On the contrary, cultural diversity can bring about a strengthening of peace through knowledge, recognition and development of all cultures, including those originating in or existing in Europe, or arriving from geographical areas outside Europe.

The Council of Europe’s White paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008) envisages Intercultural dialogue as ‘an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other’s global perception.’ UNESCO (2011) states that it “encourages readiness to question well-established value based certainties by bringing reason, emotion and creativity into play in order to find new, shared understandings. By doing so, it goes far beyond mere negotiation, where mainly political, economic and geo-political interests are at stake.”

Based on these definitions, in this chapter I think of intercultural dialogue as a fruitful exchange of ideas between people of different backgrounds, which empowers the interlocutors by expanding their comfort zones, their intellectual horizons and their worldviews. On a macro and historical scale, intercultural dialogue is the main process to foster civilization and peoples’ understanding. It is the basic process underlying human endeavours such as human rights, international solidarity and global sharing of useful information through social, academic and digital networking.

However, cultural clashes and delusion often take place in multicultural societies; even in peaceful and safe environments, intercultural dialogue is turning out to be a difficult achievement. Social and cultural exhaust pipes for such tensions are needed and they usually are embodied in communal organizations such as charities, churches, schools, municipalities or ethnic and leisure associations, focused on social, spiritual/religious, educational and artistic concerns and seen by the community as being free from economic interests or partisan biases. That is why these enclaves work well as places for intercultural dialogue, as people feel free to express their most inner soul (their identities) in such protected environments. Diversity, equity and inclusion
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are frequently the motto and the underlying values to their actions. A concern with youth, informal education, civic concerns, community service, solidarity, and the elevation of spirit is also a common ingredient. Amicable sport contests, cultural events, art exhibitions, free educational activities, inclusion projects are among the most usual projects offered to the community by these organizations.

The appreciation of diversity as a value becomes a fact as minorities are usually invited, welcomed or promoters and agents of such deeds. They are the locus of control for identities and plural voices. As these are not the real social-political-economical arenas where power imbalance, social injustice, discrimination and economical discrepancies are created and maintained, but at the same time they are real places in a real society, they can be used (and they are used) as remarkable forums for active citizenship to take place.

Going back to art, it is time to say that, from a citizenship education point of view, art may be used as a contact zone and its effects may work very well when produced and exhibited in such virtually neutral spaces. Due to its power to trigger intense emotion and critical thinking, art can be used as a teaching and learning tool. By connecting education, art, culture and identity uphold powerful intercultural experiences and make the university a suitable context for learning about cosmopolitan citizenship.

PHOTOGRAPHY, CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Multicultural cities all over the world became interested in community art projects as strategies for social inclusion and social cohesion, stimulating understanding between communities and cultures and bringing different groups together (cf. Anderson, 2010; Newman, Curtis, & Stephens, 2001; Sasaki, 2011). As I wrote elsewhere (Gonçalves, 2015):

Even if rooted in a specific place, nation, community and context, art is cosmopolitan by nature. It belongs to the global heritage and that’s a strong reason to include it in any effort of global, plural, international or intercultural education. Moreover, it definitely promotes emotionally involving experiences with diversity. (p. 206)

In the quoted paper I describe a few good examples of art projects with an educational focus led by community organizations and formal higher education schools, and, in many cases, also involving artists, social education and teachers. Here I would like to give emphasis to art projects focused on ethnic and cultural diversity and to discuss art projects in their intercultural and dialogical dimensions as well as the impact they may have on a wider audience, changing mindsets and worldviews.

I will focus on my own experience as a consumer of art and as a photographer, and I will mention a few photographers and their projects to illustrate my points. Like other forms of non-verbal communication, photography conveys meaning and influence ideas and emotions. As Barnbaum (2010) states,
A true photograph possesses a universal quality that transcends immediate involvement with the subject or events of the photograph. I can look at portraits by Arnold Newman or Diane Arbus and feel as if I know the people photographed, even though I never met them. […] I can do this because the artist has successfully conveyed a message to me. (p. 1)

And the author goes on to say that

A meaningful photograph—a successful photograph—does one of several things. It allows, or forces, the viewer to see something that he has looked at many times without really seeing; it shows him something he has never previously encountered; or, it raises questions—perhaps ambiguous or unanswerable—that create mysteries, doubts, or uncertainties. In other words, it expands our vision and our thoughts. It extends our horizons. It evokes awe, wonder, amusement, compassion, horror, or any of a thousand responses. It sheds new light on our world, raises questions about our world, or creates its own world. (Barnbaum, 2010, p. 1)

These words are more than enough to stand for the potential of photography as medium for intercultural dialogue. Not only does photography convey messages to the observers, it also helps the photographer see his world from other angles and perspectives. As the author says, a photograph has the power to make the reader “feel as if” he had this or that experience, known this or that person, been in this or that environment. This way, photography is a promoter of empathy. Unknown realities are reconstructed in the mind of the observer, feelings aroused and opinions formed, a promise for future action considered.

We know the role of documentary photographers and photojournalists in raising awareness about remote people and modes of living, poverty, disadvantage and social unfairness, social corruptness, wars and catastrophes. On a positive light, they also play a role in the recognition of generosity, heroism, bravery and solidarity. Sebastião Salgado, the renowned Brazilian photographer, can be taken as an example. Being a Magnum photographer, his work has been seen and acknowledged all over the world. His photographic work covers countries, landscapes and people worldwide, and is thus appropriately appreciated as a global work. Three of his large scale projects are titled Workers, Migrations and Genesis. If the first two scrutinize the dark side of societies, aspects of modern slavery, poverty, social unhappiness and desolation, Genesis has been conceived as a hymn to the planet and the untouched being, both animals and peoples still living in perfect harmony with the environment. The photographer says “you photograph with all your ideology” and his work is his word; with images he tells us stories and makes us think. As with the other photographers of the Magnum Agency, Salgado’s work is mostly photojournalism and documental or research photography, focusing on the outside world, society, politics, the events that shape an era and a place. These high-impact photographs are exhibited worldwide and have been seen by
thousands of people who, guided by the photographer, have considered realities and worlds they may not have otherwise given thought to.

Outside of the restricted circuit of galleries and museums, a few artists and photographers take the promotion of their work in own hands and use the real world as the exhibition place, in an effort to make art accessible to all and use it as an instrument for denouncing injustice and inequality. Photography exhibited in the streets and the places where people live daily is the option of the French artist JR. Like Street Art, his work appears to be deceptively simple ephemera but has global impact. Pasting oversized black-and-white photographic canvases in public locations (always unauthorized and “illegal”), JR mixes portrait graffiti (his first artistic expression) and photography—he calls himself a “photograffeur”.

This is how the artist is introduced in his website (www.jr.art.net/il): “JR owns the biggest art gallery in the world. He exhibits freely in the streets of the world, catching the attention of people who are not typical museum visitors. His work mixes Art and Act, talks about commitment, freedom, identity and limit.” The artist’s goal is to put a human face to the impoverished and marginalized areas, his street art approach took him to a recognition and level of respect compared to Banksy, the famous British graffiti artist.

His project Clichés de Ghetto, which portrays young people from the housing projects around Paris, was one of the first to bring the artist’s work into the spotlight. It was launched in 2004, one year before the riot in the suburbs of Paris, and brought attention to the social restlessness of these youngsters, mostly from minority and immigrant backgrounds. The 28 Millimètres project took JR to the Middle East, where he pasted on a border wall running the length of the disputed areas between Israel and Palestine a giant triptych of a rabbi, a priest and an imam showing intentionally comic expressions. Supposedly the largest illegal photo exhibition, it was “about breaking down barriers”, circulating the message in a remarkably simple and humoristic way.

JR’s work has a humanistic purpose and, as he claimed when he received the TED Prize in 2011, his wish is to “use art to turn the world inside out”. In the same year he was also awarded the title of “Young Artist for Intercultural Dialogue between Arab and Western Worlds”, which was given to twenty artists aged under 35, in recognition of his contribution to the Face2Face project in 2007. In this project JR posted huge portraits of Israelis and Palestinians face to face in eight Palestinian and Israeli cities, and on both sides of the Security fence/ Separation wall. JR communicates his powerful messages through the city walls, by exhibiting huge format images of peoples’ faces, their eyes looking at us and making it impossible not to notice them and their conditions of living. What JR does is outstanding. As written in The Guardian, in conclusion of the interview “The street art of JR”, “he takes those who live on the margins of mainstream society and he gives them back their individuality. Paradoxically, perhaps, the photographer without a name creates extraordinary art by restoring the identities of the nameless.” (http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/mar/07/street-art-jr-photography).
As artists and curators became more aware of their role as active citizens, able to use art to disseminate ideas and information, galleries and museums all over the world became places where cultures and multiculturalism are exhibited and recognized, where global and multicultural citizenship is discussed and where discrimination, prejudice and social injustice are responded to. Moreover, it is through the exhibition of the work of immigrant artists or the minority groups that the voice of such groups is heard and new social and political prospects circulated. The exhibition “Points of departure: Photography of African migrations” (21 Oct. – 1 Feb. 2015) (http://scva.ac.uk/art-and-artists/exhibitions/points-of-departure), which has been curated by the Sainsbury Center of Arts (University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK) illustrates this trend. With their pictures (2015), West African photographers Hélène Amouzou, Mamadou Gomis and Judith Quax examine African slave trades and contemporary migration and the problems of psychological and social (dis)connection that comes with labor migration of people from low-income countries to high-income countries.

Quax’s photographs tell us about the absences of Senegalese immigrants as experienced by the families they have left behind to embark on risky journeys across the Mediterranean, resulting in their death. Amouzou’s photographs are about the conditions of social, legal and economic uncertainty and about the crisis of identity that migrants experience when disconnected from their homeland. Gomis’s work focuses on the slave trade, taking the House of Slaves at Gorée Island (Senegal), which for centuries was a departure point for slave ships, reflecting on the great social and economic disturbances generated by this trade as explanation for Africa’s under-development.

The International Guild of Visual Peacemakers (IGVP) – http://visualpeacemakers.org/guild – is another great example. IGVP is an international membership-based network of visual communicators united by a purpose of Visual Peacemaking, especially in the midst of the tensions between the West and Eastern Muslim cultures. IGVP is a collaborative peacemaking movement, gathering members of multiple ethnic and religious backgrounds who use photography to show the dignity of cultures, to break down cultural stereotypes, and to highlight people’s common humanity. As said in its website, it was created “to build bridges of peace across ethnic, cultural, and religious lines through visual communication that is both accountable to an ethical standard and created by those who authentically care about people.”

The idea is remarkable, as it assumes that in a visual era, where communication technologies and media rapidly spread images throughout the globe, photography and photographers play an important role either in creating barriers or creating bridges between peoples and cultures. War, conflict and distrust can be fueled with a single image, as can peace, cooperation and trust, even where the photographer did not intend it. IGVP is aware of the power of an image and encourages [or offers incentives to] their members to photograph in a manner which is respectful and ethical, reinforcing this attitude with an ethical code for visual communicators, a charter for visual peace, and a set of values (including people’s dignity, humility when approaching cultures, a sense of solidarity and community, acceptance
of divergent opinion and servanthood). Thus photography is used to serve and honor their photographic subjects, the peacemaking community, and humanity. Photographers and filmmakers are also encouraged to understand that before being able to respectfully portray the Other and their cultures they first need to be confident with their own culture, to be able to understand hidden meanings and to explain unfamiliar, strange, or odd customs and behaviors.

Reza Deghati (http://www.rezaphoto.org/), a French-Iranian National Geographic photojournalist, also deserves a mention as his life and work are committed to humanism and philanthropy, influencing the lives of many. He travelled the world for thirty years to cover political revolutions, armed conflicts, catastrophes and other major events, developing generous programs to support refugees, women and children. His work has earned him prizes such as the UNICEF Hope Prize, the Prince of Asturias Prize or the World Press Photo second prize, among many others. Reza’s outstanding work has contributed to a better understanding of the conditions of life of the victims of war and human tragedy around the world, and also highlighted the beauty of humanity. The titles of his photo expositions express his principles: Crossed Destinies, War + Peace, One World One Tribe, Land of Tolerance, Hope, or Windows of the Soul. But the photographer has also helped these victims develop resilience and the skills to strive for a better life by training them in visual media and communications through the NGO Aina that he founded in Afghanistan in 2001 with the aim of encouraging media training around the world.

I would like to make special reference to his projects A Dream of Humanity and Land of Tolerance. A Dream of Humanity is Reza’s most recent exhibition. This huge outdoor photo display is located opposite the Orsay Museum in Paris, between the Louvre Palace and the Pont Royal (July–October, 2015) and it covers the walls along the banks of the Seine. The photos represent humanity and diversity and they are connected to key words translated into languages from all around the world: respect, peace, solidarity, friendship, dignity, hospitality and hope. The exhibition has been organized by Reza in partnership with UNHCR and the “Mairie de Paris” and includes a selection of his photos, taken all over the world in his 30 years’ career. Also included are portraits of refugees by photographer Ali Bin Thalith and, most interestingly, photographs taken by Syrian refugee children living in the Kawergosk refugee camp in Iraq, who have been trained in photography by Reza. Not too far from the exhibit, the photos turn into reality as refugees and migrants sleep under a bridge.

The exhibition has been sponsored by the Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum International Photography Award (HIPA) to document the living conditions of refugees and their everyday struggles. As Philippe Leclerc, UNHCR’s Representative in France, said at the time of the exhibition’s launching, “In the current context of the worsening situation of asylum in Europe and worsening conditions for asylum seekers and refugees, the exhibition is reminding us that 60 million people are uprooted around the world and that many of their basic needs are not covered. We hope that the exhibition will invite visitors to reflect on the situation
of refugees, create awareness, empathy and actions of solidarity,” (cited in Zeinab Abouquir & Moumtaz, 2015). And so it does, as the impressed visitors interviewed by the journalists Zeinab Abouquir and Moumtaz have observed, particularly impressed by the photos of the Kawergosk refugee camp taken by Syrian refugee children:

“I think that France and Paris should be more open to hosting refugees. I don’t know if borders should exist. It is not only the French, but it is all the nations who don’t react. We should at least give them the minimum, to give them back their dignity…” said 63 year-old Cecile while talking to UNHCR volunteers who guide the visitors through the exhibition.

The striking photos are the result of a photography workshop facilitated by Reza in December 2013 to 10 refugee children aged 12 to 15. The Exile Voices project is another result of this experience. It is a series of photo workshops for youth in refugee camps throughout the world co-organized by Reza in partnership with UNHCR. The photographer’s hope is that this will help these children tell their own stories to the world and have a voice of their own. A particular photograph of a pair of shoes damaged by frost has a story worth mentioning here. It was taken by 12-year-old Maya Rostam during Iraq’s harsh winter. For two days she had been standing outside the tent where Reza was teaching his workshop participants how to use a camera. Acknowledging her interest, Reza gave her a camera and told her to come back the next morning with some shots. She arrived late and was met by a disappointed Reza. Handing him a simple image of a pair of worn-out shoes covered in frost, she explained the reason for her tardiness: she had to wait until she could put them on to come to the workshop. For Reza this image captured “the essence of photojournalism”. The photos taken by these children tell their stories from inside, capturing the everyday life in a refugee camp. They are not only moving but true, and it is not easy to remain indifferent or to escape their inner humanity (story taken from Leduc, 2015).

In his acceptance speech of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society of Magazine Editors, James Nachtwey (2015), one of the most important and notorious war photographers of our time says, referring to war photojournalists:

Our work is aimed at our readers’ best instincts – generosity, compassion, a sense of right-and-wrong, a sense of identification with others – on a human level, across cultures, beyond the borders of nationality – and perhaps most importantly, the refusal to accept the unacceptable.

We question the powerful. We hold decision-makers accountable. The chain we help forge links the people we encounter in the field to millions of other individual minds and sensibilities. And once mass consciousness evolves into a shared sense of conscience, change becomes not only possible; it becomes inevitable.
These wise words could be extended to other photographers who work across cultural borders, bringing to light the beauty of diversity, the unsustainably of discrimination, the global need to overcome intolerance, prejudice, and cultural narrow-mindedness. Paraphrasing Nachtwey, photographers are witnesses, their pictures testimony. In the era of the image, photography is one of the greatest influences in social images, helping people along as they make up their minds about others’ identities and cultures.

ART IN FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

The idea of artistic creation as a promoter of intercultural dialogue is a multiple-step process that might by schematized as follows:

1. We start from an artistic creation idea. Behind the idea we find one or several artists.
2. The creation can use one or more artistic disciplines, such as music, dance, puppets, video, theatre, circus, visual arts…
3. The theme proposed by the artist or the development of his/her idea in a space of creation incorporates cultural diversities present in the surroundings of the project itself.
4. We can incorporate diversity if the artists are of diverse origin and contribute their own identity/heritage to the creation.
5. We can also incorporate diversity through the developed theme in the project.
6. Another way to incorporate diversity are the artistic workshops to develop the project. The artists direct the workshops, opened to amateurs and participating citizens that contribute elements of their cultural identity/heritage.
7. The production of the project, which will be presented in diverse public spaces, is realized through workshops. The dynamics of the project must ease the presence of new orientations and their cultural diversity.
8. It is important to count on one or various local entities with capacity to participate and the capacity for production management in order to create a space of creation and exhibition that responds to diversity and participation criteria.
9. It is convenient to count on the support and the recognition of the Municipality in order to ensure a public presence and to count on the availability of representative spaces for workshops and for the final exhibition.
10. A project can be the result of a new artistic idea or the adaption of an existing work that is modified in order to accommodate new artists and cultural dimensions to reinforce its intercultural character.
11. It is important that the role of the artists is to help overcome the repetition of traditional expression that does not enable new influences or cultural contributions, where immigrants only appear as extras. The artists are to propose new ideas, direct the workshops and take part in the public exhibition along with the participants.
12. In each project, we can find adaptations and variations of the stated principles in this list (Fundació Societat i Cultura, 2008, ref. in Cliché & Wiesand, 2009).

The work of photographers such as JR or Reza illustrates very well how these suggestions can be put into practice and the fantastic results it may accomplish. All forms of art may be used to empower the oppressed, to allow them a voice, to promote diversity as a value, to stand for human rights, social justice, social cohesion and a sustainable multicultural and global society.

Art education plays a role here, as it helps the full expression of individual and collective opinions, worldviews and the collaboration of diverse artists and other players in the arena of a wide range of professions and professional settings, from education to economy, from communication and media to sciences and social service, from politics to religion… art is so strongly impacting in both soft and hard arenas of social living that new ideas of art inclusion are taking shape. Art is part of life and cultures all over the world. Its place in education has been widely recognized by education systems up to the secondary level. However, it loses its status when it comes to higher education, as if it was not compatible with the apparently more “serious” areas of sciences, technology and economy and had a place only in the strict area of art education for artists.

As art has been progressively more used by creative people and teams at the service of social, humanistic, commercial, scientific causes, it has also been revalued as a way to promote teaching and learning and so used in many pre-college educational projects in pre, as well as in university courses where it would be unexpected before to see art used and represented. Art as a place in holistic education systems and brain-friendly teaching and learning methods, as shown by the so-called STEM (acronym for science, technology, engineering and maths) to STEAM (acronym for science, technology, engineering, art and maths) approach, which is defined by its founder Georgette Yakman as “Science and Technology, interpreted through Engineering and the Arts, all based in Mathematical elements” (taken from her speech “STEAM: Learning that is representative of the whole world”, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtjuALN4qrw).

Interdisciplinary projects including art, science, philosophy, and social intervention are remarkable prospects and may result in pleasing results. A very good illustration of art at the service of people’s harmony and dialogue is the project “The Arrival”, a visual wordless stage production by Red Leap (www.redleaptheatre.co.nz/), a New Zealand Theatre Company; it is an adaptation of the homonym award-winning graphic novel of Shaw Tan (2006). “The Arrival” tells the universal story behind the journey of a man who leaves homeland and family searching for work and a better life. The narrative pays homage to every migrant, refugee, and displaced person. Set in a fantastic world, the story voices the adversity and hope of migrants, and also the strangeness of first intercultural encounters. As his journey goes, the man faces strange buildings, bizarre creatures, strange customs, and undecipherable languages. He meets other migrants, each with a special life story. Each new experience and
encounter contributes for him to place himself in the new world, developing his own identity and skills to understand and feel at ease with diversity. The tale is not only about displacement and distress; it is also about intercultural dialogue and hope.

The stage production is a true multi-dimensional show, a combination of dance and drama, movement and image, puppetry, shadow theater, physical work and imagery. In sum, a very imaginative way of turning a graphic novel into a show where different art forms interplay, the result of cooperation, intelligence and a strong message being spread.

Another good example is “Art for Humanity” (http://www.afh.org.za/), a South African non-profit organization that produces fine art print portfolios, exhibitions, and research projects aiming to advocate human rights issues at both national and international levels. “Dialogue among Civilizations” (2010), one of the organization’s projects involved the collaboration between visual artists and poets from Africa and those countries who participated in the 2006 Soccer World Cup. Participants were invited to create work on the theme of identity, land, object and belief. The resulting creative works, art and poetry, were exhibited through an inspiring portfolio and exhibitions in public spaces throughout South Africa, by the time of the 2010 Soccer World Cup. The aim was to inspire ‘moral ownership’, challenging and opposing the prevalent scale of racism, xenophobia and victimization of refugees in South Africa and to engage viewers with the values underlying the art works (such as freedom of expression, human rights, dignity, respect for individual rights and independence).

Dismaland, another multidimensional art production appropriate for mention here. Dismaland Weston-super-Mare, United Kingdom (August–September, 2015), a pop-up exhibit conceived by Banksy, the graffiti artist and political activist, with the collaboration of 46 other artists, is a unique theme park, which is describes by Banksy in his official website as “a festival of art, amusements and entry level anarchism” and “an alternative to the sugar-coated tedium of the average family day out.” Dismaland is not about pleasure, fairy tales and a healthy-looking world; it is, instead, a black parody of Disneyland, a dystopian, anti-theme park, and satirizes problems in the contemporary world. Dismaland reminds us of clandestine migration from Africa to Europe and the tragedy of thousands of migrants dying in shipwrecked boats, of oil spilled into the sea, causing death and devastation, of the death of Lady Diana, caused by the voyeuristic fury of the paparazzi working for vain tabloid newspapers, of war and guerrillas in the service of obscure economic interests... the troubles in an unbalanced and endangered world are exposed with black humor and intelligence.

Teatro IBISCO (acronym for Inter Bairros para a Inclusão Social e Cultura do Optimismo – Inter-neighbors for social inclusion and culture of optimism) (http://ibisco.org/teatro-ibisco/) is a pioneering project in the process of inclusion through art, and succeeded very well in gathering troubled youngsters from Quinta do Mocho and other neighborhoods considered to be the most dangerous districts (bairro social) in the outskirts of Lisbon. When the media call attention to this area it is usually due to the worst reasons, such as riots, drugs, violence, or arrests.
Through theater, IBISCO helped these youngsters learn the value of discipline, self-esteem and empowerment.

Since 2014, the neighborhood has become an open air art gallery, as a result of an art project launched by IBISCO with the support of the mayor. The initiative was integrated in the Festival “O Bairro i o Mundo” (the neighborhood and the world”), a production of Teatro Ibisco which was an awarded project of the Council of Europe award “Diversity Advantage Challenge”, aiming to celebrate ethno-cultural diversity. Graffiti artists and street artists were invited to paint the walls of the buildings and more than two dozen walls have been painted by the artists. According to a delegate of the district’s House of Culture (cf. www.conexaolusofona.org/bairro-problematico-na-periferia-de-lisboa-vira-galeria-de-arte/#.VdjDkvlViko), the festival has had a positive influence in raising the neighborhood inhabitants’ (mostly from African minorities) self-esteem and a sense of belonging, as people were there around the painters, giving them ideas, walking around, proud of the paintings in their backyard; children drew similar motifs in school and offered them to the painters; they also drew on the walls, scribbling with chalk on the paintings they saw arise. Visitors arrived, and enjoyed the painting, opposing the former avoidance motivated by prejudice and fear.

These examples are inspiring and also easily adaptable to pedagogical projects, both in art education and for the purpose of intercultural education (whatever the umbrella under which that is done might be – social studies, civic education, politics, community service, social and cultural projects …). They illustrate how interdisciplinary activities and projects using a variety of art forms might be used in a complex approach to the teaching and learning process.

Specific learning contents, creative thinking, social intervention, cooperation, a sense of wider community, of belong to the vast community of mankind and not only to one’s own family and the background culture are all important ingredients for living together in multicultural societies. Specifically in the field of intercultural communication and dialogue, what art projects or art used as complementary resources for learning add to the learning process is a way for learners to combine emotions and feelings with intellectual insights in a form of expression that is at the same time safe and powerful. Art can be a pamphlet for peace and harmony, its hidden and apparent messages decipherable worldwide, softly spread, slowly contributing to a change of mentality, denouncing injustice, prejudice and discrimination, and celebrating diversity and the values of democracy and human rights.

Many projects I have developed with my student teachers and social pedagogy programmes, in the course of intercultural education which I have been involved in for the last fifteen years at the university level are comparable to the examples given above, “the arrival” theater production, “Dialogue among Civilizations”, the projects of socially committed photographers like the ones mentioned. What I have learned from using art as a teaching and learning resource and as a product of learning and intervention projects led by students is that a lot of contemporary trends in learning theories and practices of teaching (such as multiple intelligences,
learning styles, disruptive learning, project based learning, reflective learning, CLIL; and so on) are perfectly connected and integrated, and students like to learn this way. Even when they start the intercultural journey suspicious of such methods, very soon they will recognize that art gave them new possibilities of understanding and expression, also contributing to make learning a very special, even unforgettable path in their personal and professional development both as persons, and as citizens.

Going back to the scheme suggested by Fundació Societat i Cultura (2008, ref. in Cliché & Wiesand, 2009), consuming and creating art products as a promoter of intercultural learning and dialogue can be taken as a multi-steps process:

• It starts with an idea (might be questions such as the one posed by Shaun Tan: what drives a person to start a journey alone into an unknown future, leaving behind a comfort zone family, a familiar environment and community?);

• The idea is discussed, researched, reformulated and taken to a higher level by means of cooperative learning (students do some research, develop the idea, plan a way to find answers and translate it into a product where art is present);

• An interdisciplinary approach is valued, with knowledge developed from multiple areas and information obtained in many forms, including art forms (students are encouraged to find their answers anywhere, in scientific reports, exhibitions, monographs, media, internet, people, mates, family, migrants, experts, artistic projects, museums,…);

• The result of the cooperative learning project shall be materialized and directed with sense and relevance, towards an identified audience, scheduled in a clear plan, with a clear purpose, to influence somehow the designated audience (students think of the messages they want to convey to their audience and the best way to do it; the values they stand for become clear and are pillars of their project; the sense of purpose and the relevance of the project are strengthened; the group cooperation turning into a force for real social intervention);

• The working group should incorporate diversity in their project, inviting colleagues, listening to other voices, asking for suggestions, including cultural elements from diverse backgrounds (an element of continuous assessment and dialogue is included along the process);

• The resulting project should be presented to the intended audience and allow for active participation, inclusion and negotiation (the project might be an exhibition, a blog, a stage show, a performance, an art collective portfolio, a painting,… and it should be made for a specific audience, with attention paid to its needs, motivation, age, etc.; aesthetics and content, structure and harmony are shaped and reshaped with mind in quality and relevance of the project).

• The original idea is challenged through the project exhibition and evolves, leads to new ideas and questions, the beginning of potential new projects (evaluation inside the group, in plenary with colleagues, in public with the audience, is a final step and the beginning of new endeavors).
• Art has been used and created in the service of intercultural dialogue, information acquired turned into knowledge, new ideas about the social world, multiculturalism, migration, cultures and identities matured, moving further in the process of becoming a citizen of the world.

The following idea from UNESCO (2011) is of great significance:

Increased internal reflexivity is a natural ally of intercultural dialogue, as it creates a space to perceive the possible gaps or deficits in one’s own cultural system. Likewise the capacity for conviviality encourages intercultural dialogue by opening the door to conversation. Finally, where there is openness to creative change within a cultural system, intercultural dialogue is always welcome, as it presents possibilities for new designs for living. More importantly, the relationship between cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue is a two-way street.

Intercultural dialogue can create new incentives to strengthen internal reflexivity, it can strengthen the capacity for conviviality, and it can open the door to interesting external possibilities for new cultural goods and adapted cultural designs. In the era of globalization, there is an even deeper need for UNESCO to seek, identify and nurture those forms of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue that are especially likely to strengthen rather than weaken one another. This is an important policy distinction and will have policy consequences, which cannot be met by simply ratifying the status quo. In brief, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are ‘intimately’ linked: neither of these two notions can flourish without the other. (p. 14)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This chapter discussed the role of art in the advancement of intercultural dialogue. I took visual art, particularly photography, as my main example to illustrate this role and the power of art in approaching peoples and cultures. Many examples of art work that contribute to intercultural dialogue may be found in the arena of other forms of art, such as sculpture, music, dance, video art, and so on, but the examples previously given clearly show that the promotion of Intercultural dialogue through the arts is not only possible within the agenda of an institutional or governmental framework; it can also be the result of individual initiative, especially when there’s artistic cooperation and exchange moving artists and communities, both locally and across-borders.

A global study (Cliché & Wiesand, 2009) shows that the way Intercultural dialogue through the arts is seen has regional differences, but the majority of the respondents selected the following five out of eleven options:

#1 A means to promote understanding and relationships between diverse ethnic, religious or language communities in my country.
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#2 A core objective to promote (project) cooperation between artists from different countries.

#3 A process of exchange between artists from different cultural communities living in my Country.

#4 An inherent feature of official bilateral cultural exchanges.

#5 A result of special events to educate the public about the traditions of other cultures.

If based on an ethos of conviviality, art offers many possibilities for co-existence, cooperation and mutual learning and development. This is a treasure that can flourish and should be nurtured through formal and informal education.

NOTES

1 The internationalization of learning and teaching began in the last decades of the 20th century embracing the emerging information society, globalization and mass migrations with the inclusion of intercultural studies at the college level. This was manifested in the development of programs in prestige languages (especially English in many European university courses), and the appearance of courses and disciplines in diverse cultures (such the flourishing Mandarin and Asian Studies in Portugal), and intercultural education emerging with a transversal theme in undergraduate courses in education or for specialized master’s courses. Inclusive racial ethnic environment, intergroup dialogues, service learning, education abroad, and intercultural training are all ingredients that contribute to academic experiences in diversity to affect the development of the student, namely intercultural competence (Gualasci & Cornwell, 1997; Salisbury, 2011; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002).

2 Even in collective artistic projects, authorship is necessary, that is, the guiding vision of the project leader. Artistic co-authorship is possible (e.g. in cinema the director and script writer depend on each other for the realization of their respective works) and collaboration can produce a coherent expression of message, sensorial, imaginary and conceptual plans. Nonetheless, a collective work needs to respect the direction/vision of the coordinating artist (e.g. the cinema director even though he is interpreting the work of the script writer; an orchestra conductor; the director of dramatic theater …) or, alternatively, there can be shared autonomy of a group of artists that accept the final result of their collaboration, in parity where each operates within the collaborative process according to their own artistic sensibility, imagination and intentions, like what we see in improvisational jazz or interpretation in the painting of an “exquisite corpse”.

REFERENCES

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WEB-SITES OF ART PROJECTS

Art for Humanity (http://www.afh.org.za/)
Banksy (http://banksy.co.uk)
Dismaland (http://www.dismaland.co.uk)
House of Culture (www.conexaolusofona.org/bairro-problematico-na-periferia-de-lisboa-vira-galeria-de-arte/#.VdjDkvlViko)
JR (http://www.jr-art.net/)
Red Leap (www.redleaptheatre.co.nz/)
Reza Deghati (http://www.rezaphoto.org/)
STEAM: Learning that is representative of the whole world (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjjuALN4qrw)
Teatro IBISCO (http://ibisco.org/teatro-ibisco/)
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