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**emagazine of professional practice
for early childhood educators
in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Kia Ora Koutou



**Te toi whakairo, ka
ihiihi, ka wehiwehi, ka
aweawe te ao katoa.**

Artistic excellence
makes the world sit up
in wonder.

**Janette Kelly,
Editor ecARTnz**

Welcome to the 9th issue of ecARTnz. 2014 looks to be a busy year with several major national and international arts conferences taking place over two consecutive weeks in July. Details about these conferences appear in this issue.

This issue features material from previous and new contributors to ecARTnz. From the Waikato/Tauranga Moana area we have Gaye Jurisich who returns with an article celebrating aesthetic and functional environments at Rosetown Preschool in Te Awamutu; and Gill Wright showing how the team at Papamoa Kindergarten used a picture book to provoke an in-depth exploration into skin colour with young children. International influences and sustainable practices are the focus of the Albany Kindergarten article where bathroom renovations became a whole lot more exciting following the Hundertwasser path. Finally, Shelley Auld a former centre director from Otago, who is currently teaching in an international kindergarten in Hanoi, shares about collaborative art-making with young children in that context.

Spread the word, forward the links and keep the stories and presentations coming for future issues and conferences. Please feel free to contact Lisa Terreni, me, or other Board members about your ideas or for support with spreading your arts projects beyond your immediate settings.

Kia tipu te wairua toi. Keep fostering the creative spirit in yourselves and young children.

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Stories

Can you believe it? Albany Kindergarten has a Hundertwasser wall.

All the colours of the earth: Painting our diversity.

The effects and effectiveness of aesthetics and beauty at Rosetown Preschool.

Collaborative art-making with young children: Reflections from Hanoi.

Can you believe it? - Albany Kindergarten has a Hundertwasser wall.

Fran Paniora and the team at Albany Kindergarten, North Auckland.



When we dream alone it is only a dream, but when many dream together it is the beginning of a new reality
(Hundertwasser, 1980)



On the evening of 27 February 2014 there was great excitement at Albany Kindergarten, in the Northern Auckland Kindergarten Association. It was the unveiling of our new Hundertwasser wall. For those of you who don't know, Friedensriech Hundertwasser (1928-2000) was a lateral thinker - in his art and architecture as well as his ecological ideas. He was an Austrian pioneer who challenged the world around him. He wanted to make people receptive to beauty and aware of their own creative thoughts and actions. When he became wealthy enough, he bought property in Aotearoa New Zealand and later spent much time here. According to his wish he was buried in what he called "the garden of the happy dead" on his farm in the Bay of Islands.

You may have seen or heard about the famous toilets in Kawakawa that he designed and built, probably the most unlikely building to have ever captured international visitor attention anywhere. The building is the only Hundertwasser structure in the Southern Hemisphere, and the last major project ever undertaken by the famous artist and designer. The project has attracted international French and Japanese television documentary teams to Kawakawa, together with tens of thousands of local and international visitors. Creative New Zealand gave the project the "premier" certificate in the Creative Places Awards in the 2000 contest. Hundertwasser also designed a New Zealand flag - food for thought considering the current debate in New Zealand.





Hundertwasser's ideas, values and art were something that the Albany Kindergarten learning community wanted to explore.

Our children's bathroom renovation/extension provided a great opportunity for the children and teachers to work on a large-scale collaborative project. Knowing the bathroom renovations were scheduled for the summer holiday break of 2013-2014, the teaching team discussed how we all could contribute to the aesthetics of this space. Exploring the visual arts is a strong focus of the kindergarten and the teachers wanted to weave this focus into the proposed renovations.

Initial discussions resulted in someone making connections between our children's bathroom and the famous Hundertwasser toilets so in July 2013 our five teacher team made a professional development trip to Kawakawa. We also visited Waitangi, the site of the Treaty of Waitangi signing, since we were in the neighborhood. We returned to kindergarten inspired by the visual beauty of the toilets and the concept of incorporating recycled materials, the ideas began to flow and planning was soon underway for our bathroom renovations.



Together with the children, teachers enjoyed exploring aspects of Hundertwasser's art. He used both paint and three-dimensional materials in his work and we were challenged to see the beauty around us and consider the environment. Over several months, prints of some of Hundertwasser's paintings were placed near the painting easel as a provocation for children to explore colour, technique and design.

Recycled bottle tops and materials from the kindergarten's recycling centre were also used to explore design and layout. Coloured shapes were projected onto a wall using an OHP and a bottle wall template was built so that the children could arrange coloured plastic bottles. This work continued for almost six months.



As the concept took hold and plans began to develop, parents and the wider community contributed in a variety of ways. A steady stream of coloured bottles arrived at the kindergarten and templates of these were used in the final design. A kindergarten dad offered to work on the project with the children and teachers, sharing his knowledge of art installations and restoration work. After much discussion it was decided that the bottle wall would consist of a see-through perspex frame with cut coloured bottles inserted. This was our take on a Hundertwasser-type installation. The frame could be viewed from both the children's bathroom and from the main area of the kindergarten. It would be an aesthetically beautiful feature wall for all to see.



The teachers, children and community are proud of the completed work and that it embraces sustainable practices, community involvement and the notion that art and beauty can be everywhere... even in a bathroom! Check out what else we get up to at Albany Kindergarten on our blog <http://albanykindy.wordpress.com/>

Finally, the following quote from Hundertwasser resonates with the teaching team and our work with children. It is our provocation to ecARTnz readers everywhere.

*We need barriers of beauty so that the world gets bigger
If you and your neighbour are creative we need not travel far
We need not walk far because paradise is just around the corner
(Hundertwasser, 1980)*



All the colours of the earth: Painting our diversity

Gill Wright, Papamoa Kindergarten

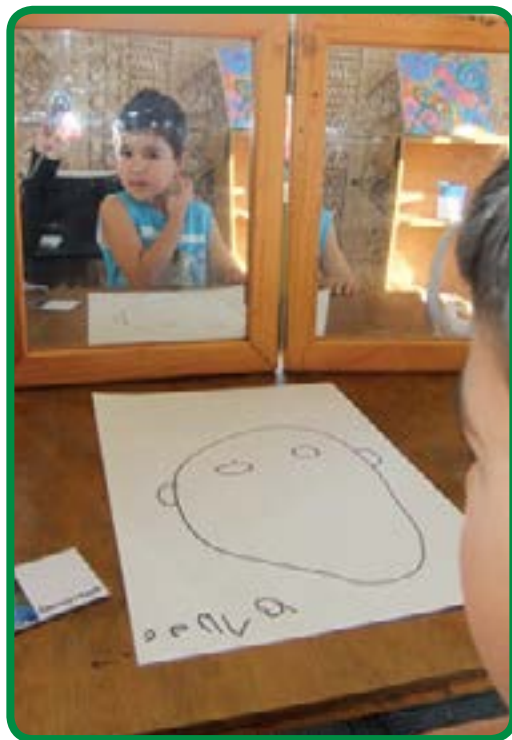


Our investigation into ethnic diversity arose from our observations of four-year olds playing in the family area with new dolls from different ethnic groups. A black African-American doll and a Chinese doll were added to complement the selection of white dolls, popular with children. After a few days of watching and listening, I joined their play.

“I’m wondering why this black baby is always left in the bottom of the container or on the floor and he never has any clothes on. I’ve noticed that no-one ever chooses this one to play with” I commented. “That’s because he is a bit too brown for me. I like white” replied one of the children. “Yeah! Too dark! We like these babies” [pointing to the white ones they had dressed] said another.

At Papamoa Kindergarten we pride ourselves on being ethnically diverse and respectful of differences. Children are used to playing and spending time with others who are different from them. However what I was hearing caused me to think that maybe, because of the colour of their skin, not all children were valued.

These conversations coincided with the arrival of a new book called *All the colors of the earth* (Hamanaka, 1994) which another teacher had purchased on an overseas trip. The book is beautifully illustrated and its language describes skin colour through similes e.g. Like caramel, and chocolate, and the honey of bees.



The children's comments and the picture book provoked an exploration of skin colour through painting self-portraits. After reading the book children looked closely at their skin colour and compared it with others around them. Initially there was not much language from children in the large group, rather they quietly contemplated and compared legs and arms.

More language came during small group work and one to one conversations with teachers in the weeks that followed. We started to look closely at ourselves in the mirror to determine the exact colour of our skin. Some children said they were "white" or "brown" yet when they put paint on the back of their hands, they realised that this monotone colour was not the best match at all.

Looking intently in the mirror, children chose and mixed paints, blending them into their hands (like rubbing in foundation make-up) to arrive at the hue and shade that they were satisfied best matched them. This was a lengthy process, which evoked thoughtful, rich language. Mitchell said, "This one, it's quite similar. That means this colour is like my skin colour. No! Too light, I'll add a brownish colour. Now it's the same colour". Arabella said, "Clove is too dark for my skin. I am brown but Maddison is a different brown".

This colour mixing enabled children to explore and 're-see' their skin colour. Through discussion, thoughtful deliberation and self-discovery, they moved from describing themselves and others as monotone pink, white, black or brown to using more sophisticated language to describe their skin tone. Presumably influenced by the book's similes, some children began to compare their skin colour to familiar things. Pa'Shence said, for example, "My eyes and eyelashes look like the sun. My skin is like Caramello chocolate bar brown".



Extending on these ideas, we asked children to think about what foods would best describe their skin colour and that of their friends. This language was documented and displayed on the wall next to life size individual self portraits of children's faces in many of the colours of the earth: "My skin is like cream with little dots. Triton's skin is like the moon" (Arwen). "I'm the cashew colour inside the dark chocolate" (Drew). "Mine is cookies and cream...whitish but with brown bits too!" (Kirk). Describing themselves supported children's developing awareness of, and appreciation for, similarity and more importantly, for uniqueness and difference.

This project reiterated the important ethical role teachers have in promoting an anti-bias approach with young children. This view is advocated by the Early Years Trainers and Anti-Racist Network (EYTARN, 1999) who argue that teachers have a role to play in supporting children to value and respect people of all skin colours. The Anti-Bias Approach promotes respect and positive self-esteem. Children are empowered to act against prejudice and discrimination.



Supporting young children to recognise and acknowledge diversity and difference is a fundamental component of intercultural education. As Aotearoa becomes more ethnically and racially diverse, teachers as agents of social justice have a fundamental role in supporting children's working theories about diversity and difference. As Giugni (n.d, p.4) suggests,

We are in a position to make a difference in the work that we do with children...we need to focus on anti bias and social justice...It is about human rights...respect and acknowledgment, acceptance of cultural, linguistic, religious diversity because that is what makes up society today.

Through this project, we were able to make that difference as we supported, challenged and explored children's working theories about diversity and difference through visual art. Our work in this area is ongoing.

References:

- Early Years Trainers and Anti Racist Network (1999). *All our children: a guide for those who care*. London: EYTARN.
- Giugni, M. (n.d). *Exploring multiculturalism, anti bias and social justice in children's services*. Children's Services Central, NSW, Australia. Retrieved from http://www.cscentral.org.au/Resources/Exploring_Multiculturalism.pdf
- Hamanaka, S. (1994). *All the colors of the earth*. New York: Harper Trophy.

The effects and effectiveness of aesthetics and Beauty at Rosetown Preschool

Gaye Jurisich and the team at Rosetown Preschool, Te Awamutu



Over the years I have championed the importance of considering aesthetics and the spatial dynamics of design in learning environments, as a way of encouraging creativity and enthusiasm for the arts. Since joining the Rosetown Preschool team, I have been able to bring my vision to life more fully, with the support of the owner and the other teachers. As our learning environment has developed, both inside and out, achieving aesthetic excellence has been at the forefront of our practice.

Our actual facilities are not beautiful; the building is old, the carpet is worn, and the layout presents a number of challenges. But together we have used fabrics, collectable items, trinkets and baskets, jewellery, large hanging ribbon artworks, woven balls, adult art books and cultural artworks to make our place feel like a beautiful home. Within the layout, we provide opportunities and challenges that encourage trust and respect for the spaces and the environment.

The children experiment, transport things and reproduce play experiences in multiple settings, and endless creativity and language grows out of these experiences. Everything is on hand for the children, so there is no waiting for it to be supplied by the adults. They know we trust them, and so they 'go for it'. As a team, we constantly share and affirm our thoughts about the effectiveness of our decisions, and we see the sense of purposefulness that has been generated through children having freedom to explore ideas, and to engage in multilateral ways of thinking in our colour-filled, vibrant, beautiful spaces.



One of the most significantly visible ways that we have seen the children respond to the aesthetic changes made within the centre is their ownership of the space. When we bring out beautiful items to be placed with care and thought, like the brilliant coloured fabrics we use in our outside environment, the children want to be involved in choosing and arranging. As we discuss changes to the environment, such as moving furniture, the children have ideas and suggestions. This illustrates their sense of belonging and confidence within the centre. This is their place, and they care about how it looks and works for them. They trust that their opinions will be heard and incorporated.





Some children within the centre have always been tuned in to details, seeking out small things and sharing their discoveries. Over time, as it has become more obvious that the teachers value an aesthetic and interesting environment, more children have become enthusiastic about finding and pointing out things that they find beautiful or appealing.

The other day, one very active child stopped still in the playground and turned towards the streamers hanging in the trees. He pointed to them with a very calm expression on his face as he smiled at me. "I looking (at) the wind," he explained. Quietly, we watched the streamers and leaves moving around, appreciating the beauty of movement not caused by human touch. Later in the day I saw the same child standing amongst the streamers, running his hands through them. Moments like this, of pure contentment and engagement with beauty, build powerful learning experiences.



A sense of harmony and peace is now noticeable in the children as they choose places to play. They negotiate with others about the use of space or materials, and they stay engaged with their play for longer. We believe we are offering a chance for children to grow lifelong dispositions towards learning, and an understanding of the value of aesthetics and social competence in our lives. The use of colours, textures, sounds, scents and form shows the children and their families that we care. We know that what appeals to one may not hold the attention of another, but as we provide a range of sensory experiences and satisfying forms of beauty in their play space, we are empowering the children to find the beauty in the world around them. To us this is part of the role of aesthetics.

Recommended reading:

Curtis, D. & Carter, M. (2003). *Designs for living and learning: Transforming early childhood environments*. St. Paul: Redleaf Press.

Collaborative art-making with young children -

Reflections from Hanoi

Shelley Auld and the teaching team



Having spent the past six months working at an international kindergarten in Hanoi, Vietnam (pictured to the left), I am interested in the similarities and the differences between teaching young children here and back home in New Zealand. One of the differences I have noticed is the emphasis on collaborative art making in the classrooms here. Although in previous teaching roles I have been involved in supporting teachers and working collaboratively with children, in my view the emphasis on collaborative art-making in this school is markedly different.

I work with a young teacher who regularly engages in 'hands-on' collaborative artworks with the three and four year olds that she teaches. Becca and the children discuss and negotiate the subject of their artworks. Together they decide on the directions the work will take. If the proposed work is a picture or a painting, Becca will draw an outline. Then if the group agrees with Becca's outline the work progresses. The medium and the colours to be used are discussed by the group.



Whilst Becca instigated the collaborative art sessions with children in this class, the other teachers in this team also value collaborative art practice. Sarah and Rosie enjoy working with the children on the group artworks and often make suggestions and offer help to the children. Marlene, our newest teacher has been working closely with this teaching team to learn more about our kindergarten's approach. She speaks very enthusiastically about the collaborative process, as well as the product.

The collaborative artworks started off as large group endeavors but have changed over time. Nowadays we often observe children working in pairs on an artwork. Teachers have also noticed that children who have not regularly participated in artmaking are more likely to do so if they have a friend to work alongside. We have also noticed that the 'non-enthusiastic' artmakers spend more time on works and are more likely to try different media and techniques if they are working with another child or teacher.



Watching the experiences of the teachers and children in their classroom has sparked my interest in collaborative arts practice in ECE. I was also curious about the teachers' backgrounds and previous experiences in this area so have sought information and feedback from them all. Becca has a fine arts background and tells me that she has always enjoyed working collaboratively; this has been a constant feature of her own arts practice. Working collaboratively with the children and teachers in her class is a natural way for her to work and she has not considered working any other way.



Becca's colleagues Sarah and Rosie also come from art education backgrounds where their experiences involved teachers demonstrating how to draw or make something. Students were then expected to replicate what they have been shown. These teachers find the collaborative art-making approach with young children less unusual than privileging individual art-making. Meanwhile, Marlene's background is in occupational therapy and she is learning about teaching 'on-the-job' so to speak. When I asked her about the collaborative approach she responded positively enthusing that children love it and they learn so much.



An interesting paper that I read recently about collaborative art-making was titled *Collaborative art practice and the fine arts curriculum* (Dunhill & O'Brien, 2004). Reading this article, I quickly realised that the authors were referring to the fine arts curriculum in tertiary settings. However, in my view, much of what they discussed is relevant to the ECE sector. The article discussed a research project located mainly in the UK but where data was also collected from around Europe and New Zealand. From the data, these authors identified that the main function of the tertiary fine arts curriculum appears to be supporting and developing individual creative expression. This is a mono-cultural understanding of art education and the function was set many years ago, they noted. In contrast, collaborative art has its roots in the 1960's and was seen as anti-establishment in its heyday. Dunhill and O'Brien note that this genre has moved into the mainstream of contemporary art practice in the past decade. They identify that the challenge to fine arts education curriculum [and the ECE arts curriculum] is to broaden its function and be inclusive of collaborative art.



The other teachers and I strongly believe that there are many positive potential benefits to be gained from young children and teachers working collaboratively on artworks. The benefits include developing: negotiating and interpersonal skills, team-working skills and confidence. Children can also motivate each other and share skills, knowledge and experience.

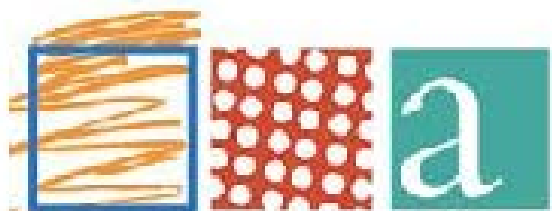
These potential benefits for young children will be familiar to ECE teachers in New Zealand. Yet I wonder how common the ways of gaining them are? Working with these teachers and children in collaborative art-making endeavours has caused me to question and reassess the strong emphasis I previously placed on individual art making and development of individual creative expression.

Reference:

Dunhill, M., & O'Brien, T. (2004, April). *Collaborative art practice and the fine arts curriculum*. Retrieved from: <http://collabarts.org/?p=205>

Special thanks to the teaching team: Becca Tooley from South Africa; Ng Thi Hong Nhung [Sarah] from Vietnam; and Marlene Langvad from Denmark for their assistance with this article and photographs. It was another collaborative effort.

InSEA World Congress 2014 - 'Diversity through Art'



InSEA2014

Melbourne Australia | 7-11 July 2014

Diversity through Art

The Call for Papers is OPEN!

Abstracts due by 1 November 2013. The website is now LIVE!

The *International Society for Education Through Art* is a non-governmental organization of the *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) and was founded in the aftermath of World War II. One of its aims was to promote education through art as a natural means of learning at all periods of the development of the individual. It was also seen that art could foster values and disciplines essential for full intellectual, emotional and social development of human beings in a community.

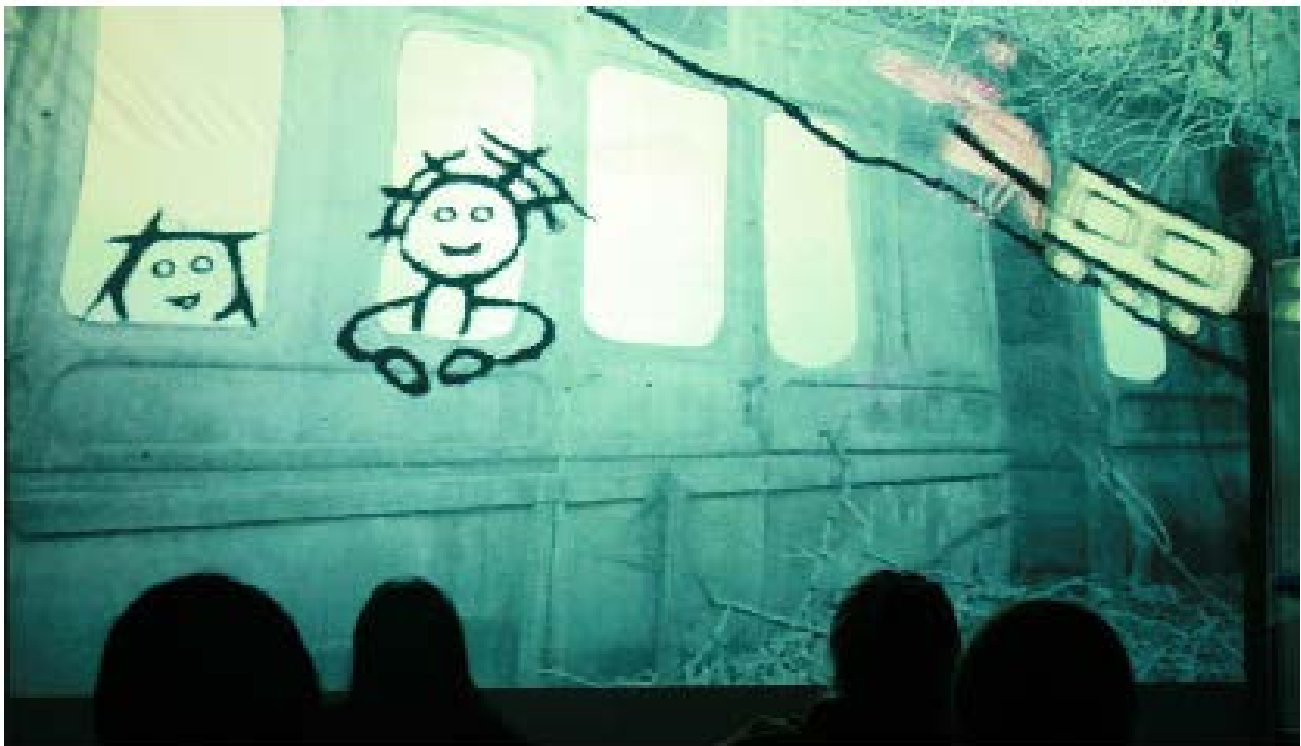
Today's InSEA has succeeded in establishing an international community dedicated to advocacy, networking and the advancement of research in art education. InSEA has on-line and face-to-face meetings, virtual and on-site exhibitions of children's art, research publications and symposia, and Internet portals to a vast range of teaching and learning resources often with access to museums and galleries world-wide.

Please visit www.insea2014.com , to check out the theme and information about the Melbourne conference!



ANZAAE Conference 2014

15 - 17 July
AUT Auckland



The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators (ANZAAE) is the professional association of Visual Arts educators in Aotearoa New Zealand. The ANZAAE promotes and supports art education by facilitating the sharing of ideas, resources, and research between art educators, and providing opportunities for the collective promotion of art education to government and educational authorities. The association draws its membership from the early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors, as well as from art museums.

<http://www.arteducators.org.nz>



News

The Editorial Board want to take this opportunity to formally congratulate several of our peers for winning prestigious grants and awards for projects connected with the creative thinking and the arts. Professor Margaret Carr from The University of Waikato and her team of researchers have been awarded a Marsden research grant. Their research is entitled 'Children visiting a museum: information gathering or creative capacity building?', and is designed to examine young children's creative inclinations to puzzle about the unknown and develop innovative working theories. It will challenge international mono-cultural definitions of innovation potential and creative capacity by examining children's responses to well-designed museum visits.



Adam Buckingham, an Auckland kindergarten teacher whose book *Turning trash into treasure*, was advertised in ecARTnz Issue 5 has also just received one of New Zealand's top environmental awards. His awesome book won in the Community Impact category of the NZI Sustainable Business Network Awards, the longest-standing sustainability awards in New Zealand.



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Member Profile

Nicky de Lautour, Dip ECE, B.A (Ed.), M.Ed Leadership, (Dist); is a Senior Lecturer in the Early Childhood Education degree programme at the School of Education Te Kura Mātauranga at the Auckland University of Technology. Before this she was both a kindergarten teacher and community pre-school supervisor.

Nicky specialises in teaching Curriculum in ECE with an interest in developing students' understandings around sound pedagogical practices. Her particular interest is finding the balance between this and the creation of dynamic learning spaces with a passion for the arts. She has introduced ukulele classes for ECE students and regularly invites artists to share their work and work alongside students to co-create artworks.

With Dr Bev Clark, she is involved in on-going research related to both adults and children's roles in visual arts and the myriad of ways these are expressed in several early childhood settings. Nicky and Bev will be investigating the synergies and links between these primary school environments and curriculum with Te Whāriki and ECE environments. An interpretive, qualitative approach with a phenomenological framework will be used to reveal the place of the visual arts in this context, and focus groups will involve the new entrant classroom teachers in the four schools.

A new interest for Nicky centres on developing children's ecological identity within an early childhood curriculum and how this may occur within group settings for very young children.

Her recent publications include:

Clark, B., & de Lautour, N. (2013). In the flow: Relationships and rhythms in the arts. In B. Clark, A. Grey, & L. Terreni (Eds.), *Kia tipu te wairua toi - Fostering the creative spirit: Arts in early childhood education* (pp. 131-141). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education.

de Lautour, N., & Clark, B. (2010). Yesterday today and tomorrow: Cultivating dreams and possibilities with young children. In B. Clark, & A. Grey (Eds.), *Ata kitea te pae - Scanning the horizon: Perspectives on early childhood education* (pp. 124-135). Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson.

Clark, B., & de Lautour, N. (2009). In early childhood education, should the adult's role in the visual arts be hands-on, or hands-off, or is there a role which is somewhere in-between or somewhere beyond? *Contemporary Research Topics Art & Design*, 4, 15-119.

de Lautour, N. (2009). Through others' eyes: Reflections of a tertiary teacher. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers Work*, 6(1), 79-89.
Retrieved from <http://www.teacherswork.ac.nz/twjjournal.php>

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Editorial Board information

ecARTnz, an emagazine of professional practice for early childhood educators, is a publication developed to generate new interest in visual arts education in Aotearoa New Zealand. The intention of the editorial board is that ecARTnz will showcase examples of teaching and learning, literature, and conferences of interest to educators in early childhood education and beyond.

Members of the editorial board are: Lisa Terreni (VUW), Janette Kelly (UoW), Dr Beverley Clark (Unitech), Nicky de Latour and Janita Craw (AUT), Rosemary Richards (ACU) and Lesley Pohio (UoA).

The board is responsible for promoting the magazine, writing, reviewing and editing contributions, and ensuring that the emagazine is of a consistently high standard. The views in this journal do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board members.

Contributions are invited for the next issue of ecARTnz. Submissions of 500-1000 words accompanied by up to eight photographs sent as .jpegs are welcomed.

For further information please email Lisa Terreni at:
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