The space as an educational and a didactic tool of interpretation: the example of the atelier of "The child and the city"

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Abstract
This article entitled *The space as an educational and a didactic tool of interpretation: the example of the atelier of The child and the city*, aims to analyze some educational and instructional meanings of space, in order to provide new ideas and to address possible practices. Through variety of artistic languages (photography, street art, cinema, languages of children's drawings, performance, video and video game), integration and implementation of strategies, the atelier is an innovative space for the observation and the documentation of reflections and experiences. By the use of multimedia equipment and telecommunication environments, the atelier interprets and tells many examples of visions of the "Child and the city" in an original way.

L'articolo dal titolo *Lo spazio come strumento educativo e didattico di interpretazione: l'esempio dell'atelier "Il bambino e la città"* si propone di analizzare alcuni significati educativi e didattici relativi al concetto di spazio per restituire nuove riflessioni e indirizzare possibili pratiche. Attraverso una pluralità di linguaggi espressivi (fotografia, street art, cinema, disegni dei bambini, performance, video e videogiochi), l'integrazione e l'implementazione di strategie di realizzazione, l'atelier si pone come uno spazio didattico innovativo per l'osservazione e la documentazione di riflessioni ed esperienze. Sfruttando a pieno le strumentazioni multimediali, le potenzialità e le specificità degli ambienti tecnologici, l'atelier interpreta e racconta in modo originale le tante visioni del "Bambino e la città".

Keyword: Space, place, environment, languages, atelier

Parole chiave: spazio, posto, ambiente, lingue, atelier

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This article entitled *The space as an educational and a didactic tool of interpretation*, with special regard to the *atelier* about *The child and the city* aims to analyse some educational and didactic meanings of space in order to provide new ideas and design new feasible strategies[1]. Starting from the origin of the words space, environment and place, often used like synonyms, it is frequently possible to identify relevant educational meanings in both traditional and innovative contexts, including the virtual environment. In this way, the physical space becomes true experience, alive and dynamic existential context, sphere of social relations, as well as background of interpretation, thus emphasising its symbolic function and leading to a concept of space meant as the fine fabric of a wide and complex socio-cultural system.

In particular, this article aims to investigate how didactic contexts, such as the ateliers, primarily in their virtual dimension, can influence the research of new educational elements, testing different codes and

integrating practical strategies. As a matter of fact, the acknowledgment of such a virtual dimension involves the recognition of its distinctive potentialities. The atelier becomes therefore a dynamic space where reflections and experiences are observed and recorded. Though complementary to other spaces, thanks to its multimedia equipment and telematic environment, it highlights and originally interprets the manifold visions about "The child and the city". Art languages – such as photography, street art and cinema within a set of paths entitled *Narrazioni*, as well as drawing, performance, video and video games in *Sperimentazioni* – return and offer fundamental educational dimensions to the visitors of the atelier, where games, exploration and escape from realty can be found. Such dimensions need a dedicated place that is "part of space ideally or materially limited" according to the Italian definition of the word². The definition "part of space ideally or materially limited" suggests meaningful educational considerations. First of all a well-defined, clearly indicated place, just because enclosed, becomes cosy and intimate and arouses the curiosity to explore and to play in it. Furthermore such a place, just because limited, can be surpassed and lead to a positive form of escapism resulting from and coexisting with the reference life experience nearby.

Spaces, environments and places in education

According to a current interpretation, space is considered an unlimited and undefined entity, in which bodies are placed. Such a definition highlights the interesting relation, although not yet defined, between entity and bodies that emphasises how space can be defined in association with something or somebody else. Nevertheless, a second dimension seems to widen the meaning of the same word, emphasising the relation between space and bodies, in order to describe *space as an environment, a field, a fringe of action and behaviour*. It becomes so explicit not only a passive and random presence of bodies within an entity, but the possibility for every individual to act and behave according to a plan and in reference to rules. With the definition of space as *an environment of the realization of somebody or something*, the space itself loses its dimension of material location and is introduced as a space of possible action. Such a meaning surely implies a wide variety of contextualizations with reference to either the individual-subject or the space-environment. In the first case of an intentional subject and wishful to act, the space may become a context of original expression and personal reworking. In the second case, the space becomes a vehicle of meanings: whoever moves in and interacts with it may be stimulated and enriched by the space itself. What ensues is that educational experience cannot occur regardless of space: a space that according to Galardini (2012) assumes the function of "a powerful and silent language that voices thoughts and values".

Nevertheless, it is with the expression *due to someone* that space is recognized as a right, we could say everybody's natural right, to be valued and grown, so that the experience that occurs may achieve a high level of quality just because it occurs in a high-quality reference space. These ideas introduce the pedagogical sense of space, duly and deeply emphasised by Iori (1996), who defines it as the

> essential moment of the educational event, its primary qualification. As a matter of fact any educational event fits into a space structured according to pedagogical plans. The objective and measurable dimension coexists with the subjective experience of space that changes with the change of mood. The experienced space may be empty or full, broad or narrow like the existence of whoever inhabits it. The educational space is neither neutral nor homogeneous. In the true experience of the educational relationship the classroom, the house, the roads expand and contract, become gray or bright, deserted or inhabited. Proximity and distance become means through which the educational relationship fits into a space dimension".

The writer claims the need to refer – as much as the educational experience is concerned – not to the physical, material and structural aspects in the light of objectivity, but to its features as an existential, living and dynamic context, populated by formative events. Consequently, a space strictly anchored to the concept of educational experience is expressed in the close relationship between human beings and the world they live in (Dewey, 1938). Human beings are not passive viewers but agents interacting with their surroundings. Individual thought proceeds from experience, the latter understood as social experience.

It is therefore appropriate to examine in depth the term environment, often considered as a synonym of space, starting from the entry of the Dictionary of Italian Language. The Zingarelli defines it as "the complex of external, material, social, cultural and similar conditions in which the human being develops, lives and works". Although such a definition fits within a figurative semantic field, it highlights the cultural and social dimensions characteristic of human life. In this sense, the space becomes a social and relational environment starting from the everyday life human beings lead.

According to Dewey, what has been experienced must gradually assume a more complete and organized form. Any experience becomes truly educational when it expands and enriches the individual, leading to the improvement of the self and the environment. A context accepting the plurality of various groups at odds with each other favours the progressive development of individual characteristics. The space cannot be considered only in a physical or geographical sense, but it must substantially refer to our experience, mirror the idea of space we have built and how it moulds our experience.

The space can take on a symbolic function and be used to express something in relation to a situation. In literature, the place/setting is the background of the events narrated, interacts with them and becomes a constitutive element of the story, can be cited and sketched, outlined according stereotyped patterns or described in detail. Within the narrative text, it has a fundamental function: not only it shows where the story takes place, but also and above all it explains events and characters and conveys the writer's vision (e.g.; man-nature relationship). The representation of a setting is not an end in itself, a simple backcloth, but has a prior role. As it were a character in the story it conveys ideas, hides symbols, is in close contact with other elements and needs continuous interpretation. In this sense, the setting is the place of interpretation through continuous readings and descriptions of situations.

Many studies such as the analysis of the concept of place, as another reference point, have highlighted a multidisciplinary nature. This term cannot refer only to physical buildings and natural habitat, but can be considered a point of integration where the physical and cultural dimension merges with the emotional perceptions and the functional needs of the individual (Bott, 2003). According to Pain (2001) et al., space and place are important means through which societies organize themselves and deploy resources.

With reference to children, Rasmussen (2004) distinguishes the concept of *space* from the concept of *place*: the former is a position, a physical area designed for children by adults, the latter is a space meaningful to children for their activities and interactions with peers. These ones are defined by their use, the knowledge of the place and the emotions they arouse.

Bott et al. and Rasmussen agree on the definition of *place* and claim it refers to subjective human experiences as well as the meanings "living" in a space. A space can be influenced by human perception, knowledge, affective inclinations, the concept of self, social dynamics, economies, cultures and stories. The qualities and the experiences of places can be associated with the social well being of the individuals and the whole community (Bott, 2003).

Some scholars however believe that a historical lack of attention to the experience of place in modern society has resulted in the loss of significant places and an excess of places "without meaning" (Bott, 2003). The latter refers to the need to redefine meanings related to spaces, places and environments starting afresh from educational and didactic theories. We refer in particular to Frabboni and the need to design qualified experiences within *an educational city* as then characterized by the concept of integration of the many places and educational agencies, where each of them can redefine a pedagogical model of their own, but in close and reciprocal interdependence with the others, aiming at the realization of a context that may offer plenty of educational opportunities, each with its own dominance (Guerra, Frabboni, 1991). In particular spaces with cognitive and socializing aims, others with historical and scientific rigour or affective and ethical aims; expressive-creative experiences with a high coefficient of imagination-fantasy-adventure.

In the light of the concepts hitherto scrutinized, we can say that a further area of study reference analyses the relation space-new media with particular reference to the network space. Nowadays when we talk about digital media – according to Rivoltella – we do not refer only to the "new media" (cell, note-book, I-pad) compared to the traditional ones (television) but also to the same media ability to perform different functions (what is called *intermediality*) that with other characteristics – such as *portability*, *connectivity* and *being authorial* – define present-day media. These technological transformations showed a paradigm shift in the

conceptualization of the media themselves: designed as a means since the 60s they were reconceptualised as environments in the 80s and 90s. The media environmental perspective in fact suggested greater pervasiveness, implying the idea of a *means-environment as a context of action in which man is inserted* and can operate[3] (Rivoltella, 2012). The advent of digital and social media provides an additional cue for a new change of perspective. Nowadays media can be thought as a sort of connective tissue, as highlighted by Rivoltella, "the nerve system of our culture, something that is perfectly integrated with our lives and has become a spontaneous mode through which we communicate, produce cultural contents, build knowledge and express our identity" (Rivoltella, 2012). It is thus expressed also the link between space, environment and knowledge, where, within the teaching practice, network environments support educational processes focused on communicative exchange and production of knowledge. In this regard, the philosopher Cassirer speaks of "a concrete feeling of space" like an inborn feeling activating a knowledge based on space orientation in human beings. At this point, the space becomes cognitive, that is "the place where knowledge occurs and the conceptual means that is able to produce knowledge" (Gennari, 1988).

Didactic spaces

According to didactic, the space is the fundamental element that guarantees and motivates an open, versatile and multifaceted learning model, by offering high-level relational situations associated with a practice of research and discovery of knowledge. Its distinctive practical and scientific mode can implement a high-level educational practice.

An educational proposal of space in a learning context, in the school and also outside, is motivated by the need to enhance the autonomous participation of anyone being trained, by building, reprocess and discover knowledge through direct experience, putting an emphasis on both the learner's motivations and the cultural reasons of the object of knowledge. What follows is a high involvement of the individual and the community towards a way of producing culture, guaranteed by a continuous design of the whole educational process.

The privileged educational space is the laboratory that can be found in two distinct types of school the so called Active School and the Full Time School.

The bond with the Active School lies in the fact that the learners are involved in the learning process and operate in situations, and thus come to know and experience the basic alphabets that allow them to interpret the reality. On the other hand, the bond with the Full Time School emerges in the fact that the laboratories are intended for secondary literacy, organize interpretation activities, identify cognitive tools necessary to analyse situations and research logical solutions. In this sense, the lab is a privileged educational context moulded by educational goals and didactic practice.

In this regard De Bartolomeis (1978) states that not only it enables the class to move from a classroom to an equipped area, but also that it requires a "mental mobility", a "flexible forma mentis" ready to face the unexpected that stems from doing. Action that is not random but the result of accurate planning.

The didactic laboratories that spread first at school and then in extra classroom settings, differ for the objectives they pursue and for the organization of the training setting, as well as for the methods and the strategies they implement together with the relationships they establish between the subjects.

In this sense, several specific types of laboratories can be identified:
• *centres of interest and didactic corners*, mainly in nursery and primary school that satisfy fundamental needs such as communication, socialization, perceptual stimulation and creativity;
• *specialized classrooms*, such as scientific, language and computer laboratories, permanent didactic spaces in the secondary school, that enable learners to achieve high levels of competence, in line with the learning objectives;
• *multidisciplinary ateliers* dedicated to expressive messages (visual, musical, tactile and body messages) are proposed in intersection and interclass areas;
• *equipped outdoor spaces* that enable activities of contact with nature, exploration of its elements as well as any physical outdoor activities.

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The term "laboratory" denotes both the crafts and the spaces for scientific experimentation. These two meanings, related to the concepts of action and experimentation, define the theory and the practice of didactic laboratories, as they stand out in the contemporary pedagogical scenario.

In the nursery school, the laboratory becomes a space dedicated to the discovery and manipulation of various unstructured materials. In the didactic mode of the primary school, it plays an innovative role partly breaking up the rigid and prescriptive methods of formal teaching and emphasising expressive languages such as art, music and drama. In both grades of the secondary school, it is generally considered a space for scientific experimentation or specialized education through a heuristic-constructive approach to subjects, mainly individually or in small groups. What all these experiences have in common is the active role the learner plays that is the opportunity to experience a creative mode of knowledge, use of specific materials and a rigorous scientific method.

In education, different natures of the laboratory are distinguished.

The didactic space has a metaconstructive nature when the activities are structured in relation to *different level cognitive processes*. This is the reason why it must offer tools that start the process of knowledge discovery conveying the subject content.

The didactic space has a strong expressive nature that offers learners the opportunity to convey knowledge by means of various techniques. The didactic laboratory thus becomes a *space for languages* and makes the written and oral text interact with tactile, aural and body experiences. The multilingual approach facilitates the analysis of knowledge from various points of view.

It also expresses a relational nature as the activities are designed according to the learners' needs, their backgrounds and interests. The learning process occurs through a research process that actively involves the learners in the relation with themselves and the others. According to the contents dealt with, the laboratory promotes activities for individuals or small, medium and big groups.

To conclude the space has a methodological nature when it adopts a flexible working style that can be modified according to the spaces, the contents, the materials and the techniques used. A laboratory school needs a gamut of materials to be considered, according to Munari (1977), an "offer of knowledge", that is elements leading to the creation of knowledge: in this sense the laboratory becomes an orderly container of tools and materials.

Particular attention is paid to the teachers and how they sense different relational stimuli: by paying attention to educational needs, encouraging participation and exploration, according to a complex, active and immersive way of operating. While respecting the freedom of expression but with the aim to inform about and experiment with the alphabets, the pillars of creative language, the logical connections of and across the fields of experience and some models of interpretation, a teacher should stimulate research and discovery, limiting direct explanations, comments and judgments as much as possible.

"Atelier": a creative, virtual laboratory

In compliance with recent norms, the *atelier* is regarded as a creative laboratory (The Italian National Plan for Digital Education, Law 107/2015)[4]. In a didactic environment, the atelier will act as a means to observe, plan, build up and experiment different codes, searching for new meanings. The different codes of communication and conceptual elaboration, together with verbal and logic elements, help to improve imaginative development and knowledge construction, already a creative process.

The atelier is therefore a simultaneous environment involving numerous, diverse forms of expression for total communication, characterised by cohesion and coherence, according to the best prerogative of knowledge. The artistic seduction becomes immediate where pleasure and involvement become paedagogic, narrative and expressive values. The different creative procedures the atelier offers mainly belong to the world of art: from drawing to painting, from photography to street art, from performance to installation, from cult movies to animation, videogames and Aps. These different means of communication should lead to discovery paths, even if these are partly misleading, enabling original interpretations.

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The lab can offer everybody the possibility to ignore rules and to exploit schemes towards the open world, so it becomes a physical place where you can critically elaborate your own thoughts and to encourage the quest of beauty, according to the development of an aesthetic experience (Panciroli, 2016a).

In fact, the atelier is a place for aesthetic experience, according to its Greek lexical meaning, involving the five senses, enriching knowledge and encouraging a creative thinking. The aesthetic different forms reinforce human knowledge or their new construction; the lab becomes a place for research and reciprocal cognitive exchange, where visual images have no support, but encourage new reflections. These images highlight intercultural and cross-curricular aspects, as each work is perfectly set in a well defined historical, cultural, literary social and scientific context.

In detail, the configuration of a *didactic lab, exploiting internet resources*, should aim at a methodological research approach, by enabling the identification of themes and new ways of interpretation, through various educational meanings.

Hence, internet exploitation is proposed as an effective "intellectual amplifier", since it facilitates the learning process favouring knowledge. Therefore, the opportunity of exploiting a variety of cultural materials easily increases the possibilities to decode and express themes, already dealt with. Thus, the use of a virtual atelier, strictly integrated with art codes, enhances possible educational situations, as follows:
• it promotes selflearning conditions;
• it favours explorative and research skills;
• it promotes interaction and highlights the complex structural net at the basis of knowledge;
• it favours the adoption of a methodology based on reality observation, working hypothesis configuration, tool, material and testing research method;
• it allows access to a wide range of information systems, facilitating study and learning time, through graphic experiments, according to a hypertextual structure;
• it encourages contacts with different educational and cultural agencies.

"The child and the city" atelier

Within a virtual environment the creative lab owing to its characteristics and potentialities, makes it totally different from a real one. This is quite evident in the "The child and the city" atelier, an educational, dynamic space, open to discussions about the themes proposed by the International Conference *Il bambino e la città. Il piccolo flaneur*[5]. This lab, referring to a MOdE (Bologna University) specific platform, narrates and gives meanings to the numerous ideas about child/city relationships[6].

In fact, the atelier has two virtual paths: one *narrative* and the other *experimental*, where the child and the city become respectively subjects of narrations and creators of significant experiences.

Firstly, the *narrative* path offers images belonging to different ways of communication which, even if dealing with the same visual form (photo, street art) re-consider and change the relationship child/city, matching unknown aspects with new meanings. Attention is therefore focused on images, chronologically and territorially far from each other, but showing children in different town environments, always offering a new and semantically complex interpretation. In several images, children actively interact with the town, by walking along the street, or moving about in the centre and in the outskirts, during their daily routine. In street art works, set in urban contexts, children are so downsized or magnified, that they cover the whole wall, and are shaped by using common objects, such as a bike, a scooter, a pipe. These children, who ignore the camera, are playing and trying to cope with school, or daily problems, as happens in everyday life. In the path, the city is described through different stories, according to their perspectives.

The second path, based on *experiments*, consists of drawings, performance, video and videogame codes. Apart from their different ways of communication, these codes are particular as far as new attention, focusing on the child's actions, is concerned. The child plays the role of an author and a creator of images within a well defined urban context, in other words through drawings children describe their daily life. Notwithstanding this, while drawing a landscape or choosing colours, no reference to reality is focused. Right from the scribbling phase, the child represents the basic elements, surrounding his/her world, e.g.

houses, trees, people, cars, by sketching a sort of story. According to Kellog (1979) children don't draw buildings as they really see them, but from their imagination and according to basic concepts. In fact, the houses drawn by the child are the same all over the world (Poli, 2006). These drawings can have spatial or figurative mistakes as children draw what they know, not what they see, so they do not stand for objective reality, but what children feel and perceive. Children can express themselves through their drawings that become useful tools to understand how they experience space, so their need to emotionally express their experience of life is quite evident (Panciroli, 2012). Drawings become a good opportunity to represent, communicate and describe children's reality and consequently to analyse their emotional aspect. Drawings therefore enable the adults to understand the way children perceive and cope with a sudden, sometimes harmful, frightful event, such as an earthquake or to flee from their mother country.

The atelier should be seen as a place suggesting inner feelings, where different spatial assets, through cooperation and multicode interaction, can communicate numerous contents and where various ways of interpretation are discovered thanks to experiments.

Ways of interpretation

The atelier's technological configuration offers many virtual paths. In fact this space cannot be exploited, only by adopting a one-way path, but using a net approach, thus creating several possibilities. In detail, we can find three guidelines, referring to *games*, *exploration* and *flight* connecting the lab works, apart from their different way of expression and time and place features.

First of all we should consider how *games* are expressed as meeting/socializing events, enhancing a sudden and unexpected atmosphere. Town children do not pay attention to the camera, as they are deeply involved in their games in a square, in a public garden, on town pavements and are turning public areas into places where they can play and enjoy themselves, where everybody can personally gain game experience.

According to this, a meaningful example is the performance entitled *Kickstarting*, planned and carried out by the artist Andrea Mastrovito, in 2014 in NY, in Bushwick, a multiethnic working class district. The practice was carried out in an old, deserted parish yard involving parishes, teachers and the primary school principals with 100 children. In the first phase, children are encouraged to speak about themselves, using pictures belonging to their imaginary world (trees, flowers, toys, soldiers, dolphins). In the second phase the artist turns these pictures into stencils in order to stick them up to the yard wall. During the third phase children, after covering the wall with tempera powder, dip their fifty balls in the colour and kick them against the wall. After moving the stencils and using specific detergents, on the yard walls you can see a 100 meter long frieze, as a special present to the district. In an interview with Mastrovito you can read the description of his project as follows: "After covering the cobblestones with tempera powder, we played football for two days and the ball hit against the wall created a huge *wall drawing*" (Di Nuzzo, 2014). In this case playing football pushed children to re-discover an open space area.

On the contrary, some street art works encourage reflections on the idea of prohibition. In *No Ball Games* (2012) by Banksy, we can see two children throwing a forbidden ball game sign, this sign obviously replaces the ball itself.

Exploration can be seen as a second way of interpretation, since it implies eagerness to analyse, test and detect a place, to find its characteristics, or what can be hidden inside. In photos and films children, who are walking, biking, going shopping or crossing the street during the rush hour, seem like curious explorers of the urban environment. These are children, who in groups, together with adults, or on their own, make experience of their daily routine in town. In *Riverbed* by Olafur Eliasson (2014), installation hosted in Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Copenaghen, children gain experience by exploratory tension, following the water course flowing among black stones and soil and in different assets. It is up to the little visitor/explorer to get down to work walking and following possible paths. While carrying out the *Little Sun Blackout* experience, young explorers, well equipped with their kits – Led solar torch (Eliasson, 2012) social project – cross the *Riverbed* space, walking in the near darkness, among stones and streams.

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Exploration plays a meaningful role in the works by the street artist David Zinn, who directly interacts with children, involving them thanks to fantastic characters – little mice musicians, funny dinos – drawn and coloured with crayons on street walls and pavements. These characters who come out of cracks and fish in manholes are discovered by curious children.

In some video projects such as *Turismo siamo tutti* (2009), exploration, dealing with discovering the territory, aims at spreading citizenship, tradition and memory education.

The third way of interpretation is *flight*, as an escape from a place, an environment, a distressing condition. François Truffant (1959) in his work, *Quattrocento colpi* deals with this subject, through his protagonist Antoine, a young twelve year old boy, who is misunderstood and neglected by his family and put in a reformatory. This condition increases his desire for freedom, so he escapes to reach the sea, he had never seen but deeply dreamed of. The sea has a completely different connotation in the drawings by young Syrian refugees[7], who are in search of freedom, far from any restraint, as George Perec's words remind us: "I would like untouchable, unchangeable places; places as reference and departure points. My birthplace, my family cradle, the house where I would be born, the tree I would see growing. The tree my father would plant on my birthday, my childhood attic full of fantastic memories" (Perec, 1989).

Drawings clearly point out the condition of children searching for a safe place, a shelter, where they can spend moments of their common life. Children aim at a normal life, with no social conflicts and turmoil, that frequently characterize cultural and environmental poor condition in the outskirts. According to these ideas, the experience entitled *Pa-ra-da* (2008) carried out by "boskettari", is worth mentioning. Street children and teenagers (from 3 to 16) fleeing from orphanages and dramatic situations, live and sleep in the town underground, full of heating pipes, and survive by begging or robbing. Once they become street artists, they work differently leaving their usual way of life, returning to the sunlight.

Summing up, the atelier suggests a lot of ways of educational interpretation regarding connections between the space and the human being, especially between a well defined space and the child who gains experience and who considers the space duality: the former real, concrete, the latter fantastic and imaginary.

In most of the atelier images, children have to turn their backs or have a cap hiding their face, according to Jullien Malland (otherwise known as Seth Globepainter), the artist's specific choice. "I often hide the faces of my subjects, so people can identify themselves in them. Everybody should be able to find a personal message in the images".

On the contrary, children are sometimes looking at the walkers directly, as it occurs in *Untitled* by Cattelan in 2004 where children are 3D represented. In this work three children in full scale, similar to puppets barefoot, in jeans and T shirts, are hanging from an oak in the middle of a square, staring at you. Cattelan claims he wanted to shock people about violence on children. "Sometimes we should have the courage to create shocking works in order to awaken our sense of reality. These three children, hanging from a tree are staring at you and saying: Ask yourselves!"[8]. In this work traditional "roles are capsized, here the children are looking down on the adults, even from a moral point of view" (Conte, 2011). Cattelan explains this choice: "these children seem three judges, three prophets .They are looking down and judging as well. The adults forced the children to live in this condition, and now they are drawing attention to what they are doing and what they will do to themselves in the future"[9].

The atelier, as a place of research, observation and experiments, can pose questions and give possible solutions, it's a place that can be easily changed and for that reason, it evolves and is enhanced by further reading at and interpretation paths. Thanks to the interaction of different expressive forms, several sensorial perceptions are enhanced, and free interconnections of images highlight the importance of connections among various paths.

Notes

[1] This contribution, developed and shared jointly by the two authors, was drawn up as follows: Introduction, paragraphs "Spaces, environments and places in education", "Didactic spaces" by Chiara Panciroli and paragraphs "Atelier: a creative, virtual laboratory", "'The child and the city' atelier" and "Ways of interpretation" by Anita Macauda.

[2] Definition from *Zingarelli. Dictionary of Italian Language*.

[3] Intervention by Pier Cesare Rivoltella, Catholic University (MI), at Conference on "Communication as an Instrument of Evangelization, Dialogue and Peace in the Middle East" (Lebanon, from April 17 to 20, 2012), in collaboration with the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs of the East.

[4] Note 5403 of March 16, 2016. "Avviso pubblico per la realizzazione da parte delle istituzioni scolastiche ed educative statali di atelier creativi e per le competenze chiave nell'ambito del Piano Nazionale Scuola Digitale (PNSD)".

[5] "The child and the city" atelier was made on the occasion of the International Conference on "Il bambino e la città. Il piccolo flâneur" (from 6 to 8 May, 2015), at the Department of Educational Sciences "Giovanni Maria Bertin" University of Bologna – Alma Mater Studiorum.

[6] The Museum Officina of Education (MOdE) is expression of a Research Project, started in 2008 within the Department of Educational Sciences "Giovanni Maria Bertin", University of Bologna – Alma Mater Studiorum; MOdE is a virtual environment that aims the exhibition, development and dissemination of the "objects" of the educational sciences (Panciroli, 2010). Web address of "The child and the city" atelier: http://omeka.scedu.unibo.it/exhibits/show/il_bambino_e_la_citta

[7] The exhibition "In viaggio verso il futuro" exhibits drawings of Syrian children and young, accommodated in Milan in the two reception centers of the hub of Milan Central Station.

[8] Interview with Maurizio Cattelan, by Sara Bracchetti and Daniele Lorenzetti, La Repubblica (December 28, 2004).

[9] Interview with Maurizio Cattelan, by Anna Cirillo, La Repubblica (May 6, 2004).

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