

# Approaching MoW with Arts Education Projects

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## **Abstract**

Since recently the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme pursues with the SCEaR Working Group Schools the initiative to develop international educational programmes for schools and educational institutions in interdisciplinary teacher and research networks. In this context, the Arts Education opens with expanded objectives and policies possibilities, to develop a vivid and creative contribution to a widening of “world and artistic knowledge” in the richness of Memory of the World Programme. The aim is to initiate practical and artistic experiences and produce meanings and identities and also to create intermediational processes.

Through the use of artistic research practices and creative approaches, three specific art student projects focused with participative methods on the materiality and artistic value of archives and documents on the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme and their potential for exploring strategies of art, on communication history, memory culture and identity.

**Keywords** Art Education • Sky Disk Nebra • Grimm World • Remember 1914–1918 • Letter Art • University of Paderborn • Museum Coffer • Teacher training • European Integration

## Introduction

Since recently the UNESCO–Memory of the World Programme pursues with the SCEaR Working Group Schools (SCEaR) the initiative to develop international educational programmes for schools and educational institutions in interdisciplinary teacher and research networks. The first Meeting of the Working Group Schools (WGS) took place at the University of Paderborn, Germany, 20–21 December 2015, to discuss how to go about developing further strategies “with a view to institutionalizing education programmes on a global scale, based on MoW and the world documentary heritage (these could take the form of prepared, ready to use school kits and modules); to create a international network of cooperating schools; to implement teacher training programmes as well as to contribute to the ever ongoing innovation around national curricula in member countries, with a particular concern for examining the possibilities of doing this using the digital technology of the internet, in addition to examining the practicalities and possibilities of providing pedagogical kits in hard copy; all of this with a view to expanding the tools and materials of the MoW and the tasks of its programme: to promoting the awareness amongst young people of the importance and fascination of documentary heritage ('Archival Literacy'), contributing to preservation practices, advocating the reaffirmation of identity and increasing the possibilities of global dialogue and respect.” (Jordan, Porter, Ströter–Bender 2016, p. 1).

*Fig. 1 2016. To create archive-boxes in school. History of childhood. A memory box (Wintertime at UNESCO–Heritage Site Rammelsberg, Lena Heller) (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender).*

### The meeting

- initiated the creation of an international network of cooperating schools,
- proposed approaches to link existing curricula with MoW,
- discussed key concepts and disciplines to promote MoW teaching in schools,
- initiated collaborations with memory institutions and school networks and universities,
- emphasized the need for basic research teaching MoW in schools.

## **Art education as a field in the mediation of MoW**

### **Using artistic methods and art history**

In international perspective the field of art education covers a wide range of areas in elementary education, the curriculum and the levels of adult education, teaching strategies of art and subjects of art history. Although it may be argued that the themes of Memory of the World documents could be more attributed to history as its leading key science, it is precisely the immense creative potential of the World Documentary Heritage that could be used by art education in schools and cultural institutions in many countries. Thus, it opens a path into the various areas of art and cultural history, into the immense wealth of artistic strategies in material processing, written cultures and motifs, aesthetic communication in the most diverse historical contexts. Here arise themes and questions that can be artistically very inspiring and at the same time initiate reflexive processes in the exchange of history and cultural practices, different world views and identities as well as their artistic formulations.

In this context, art education opens up expanded interdisciplinary approaches, objectives and policies, methods to develop a vivid and creative contribution to a widening of “world and artistic knowledge” of the richness of Memory of the World Programme and the concept of Sharing Heritage.

Since September 2017, a working group Memory of the World and Art Education at University of Paderborn has devoted itself from the perspective of arts fundamentally to the development of mediation materials and basic research. From the perspective of cultural scientists, artists and art educators, the overriding aims of the working group are to open up the diversity and wealth of the world's cultural heritage with transcultural levels, such as links to art and cultural education, and for schools as well as for adult education and universities.

A special concern of the working group is the development of the contents of the World Documentary Heritage in connection with artistic–scientific methods of mediation, with particular attention to the dimension of Shared Heritage, the emphasis on commonalities and the contouring of the interconnecting levels and dialogues of the world document heritage. Its historical contexts, the materiality are as well included than the artistic–aesthetic design strategies, the curatorial levels and the elaboration of life–worldly references to the respective heritage.

Using artistic research methods and creative approaches, some projects will be presented, which were initiated between institutions of Memory of the World Programme and UNESCO World Heritage Sites, University of Paderborn, Faculty of Arts and also schools – and which can serve as models for follow–up projects in the networks, partnerships and collaborations. With a strong interdisciplinary approach the projects focused with participative methods on the materiality and artistic value of archives and documents on the UNESCO–Memory of the World Programme and their potential for exploring strategies of art, memory culture, diversity and identity.

As this is a new area that is not yet included in the curricula worldwide and for which, at national and international level, the preparation of materials for school and education just started, the following projects are presented in the national (german) and in international (mainly european)

context. They are exemplary projects for teacher education and participative cultural communication, The model structures are transferable to other project concepts.

*Fig. 2 2014. Remember 1914–1918. The Letter–ART Project Exhibition Zeche Zollverein, UNESCO World Heritage Site, Essen (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender).*

## **Project 1 "Heritage for Peace: Remember 1914–1918. Art. War. Peace." A Letter ART Project. World Documentary Heritage: International Prisoners of War Agency (IPWA)**

### **The Project**

The Letter–ART project focused an international perspective the commemorative years of the First World War, remembering more than 17 million victims and unimaginable suffering and destruction world wide. The aim was to follow the traces of the First World War on an individual as as on a national and international level, and to share these experiences by exhibiting creative commentaries on envelopes. Students and pupils from more than 12 nations participated in the project, among others from Russia, Croatia, Turkey, Armenia, Syria, China and Ecuador.

The project received the patronage of the German Commission for UNESCO. It cooperates with the UNESCO Associated Schools, the German War Graves Commission and the UNESCO–Memory of the World Programme.

Using the medium Letter–ART – art on envelopes – for drawing and painting memories dedicated to the events of the First World War was a reminder of the traditional art of letter writing, but equally well of the field post cards and the conscriptions to war or death notifications from authorities. These were an important part of social life in the First World War. Also the famous letters of peace from that era inspired the work like those of the German artists Käthe Kollwitz or Heinrich Vogeler. The Letter–ART project was initiated since 2013 (until today) as an international exchange and exhibition forum of adolescents, students, scholars and artists as new form of culture of remembrance of the First World War in connection with the UNESCO peace thoughts. Numerous references to informations about the International Prisoners of War Agency (IPA), which has been part of the World Documentary Heritage since 2007, were created here.

The archives of the International Prisoners of War Agency (IPWA) were created during the early days of the First World War. “While seven million soldiers were taken prisoner and many civilians were interned on enemy soil. The task of the IPWA was to re–establish contact between people who had been separated by the war. It carried out pioneering work in civilian protection. Its archives illustrate its efforts to humanize prison conditions and make it possible to follow individually the tragic fate of two million victims from all continents. The database it created is enormous for its era and inspired the ICRC’s working methods in later conflicts, from the Second World War to Rwanda, including Algeria in between.”

[\(http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-1/archives-of-the-international-prisoners-of-war-agency-1914-1923/\)](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-1/archives-of-the-international-prisoners-of-war-agency-1914-1923/).

Two German World Heritage Sites, the Rammelsberg Ore Mine, Goslar and the Zollverein Coal Mine, Essen places, where prisoners of war were forced to work, joined the project. An internet call and two internet magazines with teaching materials reached several schools and age groups in Germany, France and Belgium. Three universities (the University of Paderborn, Osnabrück and Kiel University of Applied Sciences) followed the project call. By 2017, so far more than 1000 letter art works were created for the First World War, from primary level to artist contributions (Hinrichs; Ströter–Bender 2013). A traveling exhibition showed the works at the mentioned World Heritage sites in Germany and the universities, honored the anniversary of the famous painter August Macke (fallen in September 1914) in the Marienchurch, Bonn, than accompanied as an exhibition for peace the installation of the replica of Käthe Kollwitz Sculpture "Mourning parents" in the Peace Park of Rshew, Russia (9/2014), a memorial site for more than 1 million victims, Russian and German soldiers and civilians from the battles of World War II (1941-1943). Next, the Letter-Arts were shown near the memorial for the 250.000 fallen Breton soldiers of the First World War in Sainte Anne d'Auray (summer, autumn 2017), Brittany, France.

### **Commemorative Traditions approached by creative Strategies**

Already in the first few months, the Letter–ART project produced unexpected insights and questions about teaching Memory of the World Programme and art education in the context of European commemorative practices.

The focus on artistic work with a wide variety of media and materials, which, however, was thematically linked to levels to a historical epoch, that pupils and students never consciously reflected for their own biography or family. The memory traces of the First World War were in the overarching generational memory of the German project partners superimposed by the dramatic consequences of the Second World War. (see Hettling, Echtenkamp 2013)

First World War seems infinitely distant, unlike, for example, in Great Britain and France, where this heritage of the Great War / Grande Guerre is glorified in schools and linked with clearly nationalistic tendencies. In this context, regarding the efforts to create a European identity, it will be important to discuss the difference the "war of memories" in European memory culture: " (see Welzer, Lenz 2007: 7)

The diverging national commemorative traditions emerged clearly in the course of the project in the multinational groups, above all in the selection of the motifs and the development of creative strategies. While young adults and adolescents, such as those from France, Belgium, Russia and Turkey, were able to build their Letter Arts on family tales and, to some extent, very self–confidently, on ethnic and national remembrance cultures (e.g. Germans from Russia), the German First World War proved to be a kind of historical foggy country for German youth.

Rather, the project groups involved were interested in topics that seemed obviously authentic in their own life experiences as well as deeper emotionally charged topics, such as the fate of women, lovers, known and unknown biographies and anecdotes, aspects of everyday

culture (hunger winter), the story of landscapes (Verdun) and the fate of the animals used in the World War, especially the dogs, carrier-pigeons and horses.

The dominance of black-and-white war photographs and films stored in the collective memory, which is like a normative filter on the general culture of remembrance and shapes it across generations, has contributed to effective aesthetics of war representations, especially the Letter-ART project, above all beginning to determine with. The orientation towards the black-and-white or brown-tinted photographs of the great-grandparents and drab field postcards from the flea market, combined with the immense wealth of visual information on the horrors of the First World War, directly contributed to the fact that especially the young adults began to create their Letter-ART in drab gray and brown colors, too – to do justice to the seriousness of the subject. Only through discussions and reflections, which had to be worked out consciously and with effort against the power of black-and-white images, colorful approaches were developed.

*Fig. 2/b 2017. The pacifist message of the artist Käthe Kollwitz after the First World War. Aileen Salomon. Museum coffers exhibition in the Käthe Kollwitz Museum for the artist's 150th birthday. Berlin 2017 (Photo: Jutta Ströter-Bender).*

### **Museum Coffers communicating War and Peace**

The Letter-ART Project was also accompanied by impressive museum coffers to present the commemorative cultures and traditions of the World War with different materials as drawings, books and historical objects. This medium is particularly suitable for opening up the complexity of the World's Documentary Heritage.

In a general context museum coffers are didactic media in which various traditional functions within the MUSEUM context are "condensed", such as collecting and safekeeping, archiving, recording, curating, presenting, staging and imparting. The idea of transportable museum archives developed in the past century from the environment of children's museums. Since years, they are part of the preparatory educational material of world heritage sites and are now introduced successfully into the mediation of Memory of the World documents. Now this medium is regarded as impressive and successful within the framework of discovering the language of objects and exemplary learning. Museum coffers (or chests, bags, etc.) generally contain selected representative materials (originals, often also replicas), associated with complete teaching units and creative access, that records important topical themes of the documents concerned. They are lent to schools and other interested institutions, for preliminary and subsequent preparation for a museum visit.

Museum coffers are also suitable for schools as a specific teaching medium, that can be altered and nuanced according to the teaching requirements and changes in the target groups. Further target groups, from kindergartens to OAPs can also be approached with selected objects, topics and materials. Museum coffers are not industrially made up in most cases but are unique, small archives that have been put together with a great deal of care and enthusiasm. Precisely e.g. with regard to imparting regional cultural heritage, tradition, geographical and

biological specialities, emphasis can be placed where it will remain permanently in the memories of the target groups and encourage aesthetic processes.

## **Results**

The Letter–ART project thus provides opportunities for the development of reflexive–aesthetic memory practices, it refers to biographical research levels and previously unknown areas of knowledge. The project opened up opportunities, also for art classes, to expand one's own consciousness of history through intensive retrospectives on the early 20th century and thus to experience the consequences about the traumatic events of the First World War, – and possibly also contribute to "positive values and perspectives for the future" (Assmann 2013, p. 75), for the ongoing process of European integration.

*Fig. 3 2016. Museum coffer dedicated with paintings and models to the Sky Disk of Nebra and the disappearance of the night. Workshop painting at the University of Paderborn and Matea Cubelic (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender).*

## **Project 2 "The Disappearance of the Night". The Nebra Sky Disk**

Among the 95 activities that took place officially in the context of the International UNESCO Year of Light 2015 in Germany, belonged at University of Paderborn the workshop painting seminar "The disappearance of the night". 40 students worked on artistic research into contemporary and historical positions of painting. Of the participating students, more than half of them, had never seen the Milky Way in the night sky during their life, because of the so called light smog. Some did not even know that the Milky Way exists.

The light pollution causes the night sky to disappear with all its stars in the daily life perception. Here is to be remembered, the starry sky gave humanity fundamental knowledge of time and space. Its observation caused the creation of calendars, was important for the orientation and navigation on the rivers and seas. Till the end of the 19th century, the stars appeared in most countries much more colourful. They could be seen with the eyes to the fifth or sixth size and observed in their different colours: From blue to red, from white to orange and emerald, from yellow to navy blue, the stars shimmered in pale green, purple, reddish yellow or blue–green tones. The colours of the stars are not as common as those on paintings; they are much more transparent and luminous. Now the starry sky is slowly getting lost as a significant cultural asset (see Bogard 2013).

The loss of the night and the perception of the starry sky means for future generations, that, according to Marcel Robischon questions concerning the views on nature are no longer asked, thoughts are no longer be thought and stories will no longer be told. (see Robischon 2012: 273f). Therefore, the problem of increasing global light pollution received special attention and contrasted with the diverse mythologies and imaginations of the night in ancient Europe, combined with phantasies of stars and the milky way, spirit worlds and animals.

The observation of the concept of the richness of the starry sky until the early modern era was supplemented by the example of the Nebra Sky Disk, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany (dated to c. 1600 B.C.) which has been part of UNESCO's World Heritage List since 2013 and is classified as one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the late 20th century. The Nebra sky disk represents the oldest concrete depiction of the cosmos worldwide. It is a bronze disk of around 30 cm with a blue-green patina and covered with golden symbols, representing potentially a sun or the full moon, a lunar crescent or sun bark and 27 stars (Meller 2009)

The concept of the Nebra Sky Disc inspired the student group to search approaches into the archaeology of the world view in the bronze age. In the age of light pollution and the world wide disappearance of a dark night sky, – the confrontation with the mythological world view on the surface of the Sky Disk of Nebra and its far reaching perspectives of mythological imaginations encouraged a creative research to the representations of the the stars and the moon in art history. The students took some everyday life materials like scraps of wrapping paper and cardboard boxes, gift and tissue papers, packaging materials and choose some colours.

The traditional expressive spectrum of painting and the potential of classical design sketches were experimentally used to open up innovative forms for the mediation at the interfaces of natural and cultural heritage. One student resumed: “Now I pay more attention to the night sky and I am now aware of the problems concerning the global light pollution. An unknown world was opened to me. The mythology of the Sky Disk of Nebra and the old representations of the moon (the stars and the sun–bark) provided a strong impact on my artistic inspirations.” Continuing their inspirations, the students developed a participative museum coffer project, which was dedicated to the Nebra Sky Disk.

The project focused on the art of imagination, but guided the students also to the creation of little archives of night views and creative approaches with their museum coffers. Exhibitions (UNESCO Paris, 2016; Arche Nebra 2017/2018) communicated their very personal views and discoveries of the Sky Disk of Nebra. With this exhibition, the results became an idea reservoir for teachers in the Nebra region.

*Fig. 4 n. d.. Fairy Tales. Vera Buck. Collage 18x24cm (Photo: Jutta Ströter-Bender)*

*Fig. 5 2017. Märchenhafte Kommentare. Maria Nebeling. Acryl auf Kartons (Photo: Jutta Ströter-Bender)*

### **Project 3: "Shared Heritage" Brothers Grimm Archive, Kassel**

The project “Creative Comments on Grimm's Fairy Tales” (2016/2017) took place in collaboration with the GRIMM WORLD Kassel. In this outstanding new museum building, the two hand-copies of the children's and house fairy tales collected by the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimms, are exhibited to the public. The first edition appeared in 1812/15 in two volumes. 1819 a second edition with three volumes was published. These famous volumes belong to the World Documentary Heritage since 2005



The project at the University of Paderborn inspired more than 50 art students to look more closely at the history of the Grimm's fairy tales, their global importance and the art of illustration, choosing methods of drawing, painting and mixed media. But the project intended also to open up an artistic approach to remember and to share moments from the own childhood and biography, – for many students in Germany, fairy tales are still part of their cultural socialization. The topics was also discussed in the context of the story of fairy tale illustration, didactics and bibliotherapy. Likewise, the project evaluated new methods for classroom teaching and workshop methods combining storytelling with creative processes.

This project will also be part of a digital educational portal that will feature various documents from the Memory of the World Global Education Program. In the context of art education it will also be a matter of finding new ways with simple, locally available materials and central information. Through personal experiences with art, a rapprochement and engagement for World Documentary Heritage can take place.

*Fig. 6 2016. Museum coffer dedicated to the poetry and biography of Christopher Okigbo (1932 – 1967), (Sabrina Zimmermann, Wolfgang Bender). The Nigerian poet, teacher, and librarian. His work was inscribed in Memory of the World Register 2007 (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender)*

## Summary

The different fields of Arts Education opens in schools, museums and other cultural institutions with expanded interdisciplinary approaches a creative contribution to a widening of “world and artistic knowledge” of Memory of the World Programme. But the successful implementation of this educational work will depend in the future on several factors:

- Educational and cultural initiatives through World Documentary Heritage sites, here are in Germany inspiring role models to name the GRIMM WORLD and Ark Nebra.
- Developing structures and programs for networking schools and educational institutions with MoW
- Raising awareness of the underlying issue of MoW and providing catalogs of digital information and teaching materials for schools and educational institutions; Integration of topics into teacher trainings and school profiles; Conception of a digital education portal in which schools communicate their successful projects internationally.

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### Biographical Note

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## **Captions**

Fig. 1 To create archive–boxes in school: 2016. History of childhood. A memory box (Wintertime at UNESCO Heritage Site Rammelsberg, Lena Heller) (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender)

Fig. 2 2014. Remember 1914–1918. The Letter–ART Project Exhibition Zeche Zollverein, UNESCO World Heritage Site, Essen (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender)

Fig. 2/b 2017. The pacifist message of the artist Käthe Kollwitz after the First World War. Aileen Salomon: Museum coffers exhibition in the Käthe Kollwitz Museum for the artist's 150th birthday. Berlin 2017 (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender).

Fig. 3 2016. Museum coffer dedicated with paintings and models to the Sky Disk of Nebra and the disappearance of the night. Workshop painting Paderborn University and Matea Cubelic (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender)

Fig. 4 n. d. Fairy Tales. Vera Buck. Collage 18x24cm (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender)

Fig. 5 2017. Märchenhafte Kommentare. Maria Nebeling. Acryl auf Kartons (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender)

Fig. 6 2016. Museum coffer dedicated to the poetry and biography of Christopher Okigbo (1932–1967), (Sabrina Zimmermann, Wolfgang Bender). The Nigerian poet, teacher, and librarian. His work was inscribed in Memory of the World Register 2007 (Photo: Jutta Ströter–Bender)