

Project: Art Education project (Fontys Hogeschool voor de Kunsten)

Year: December 2020 – March 2021

Name project: Dat bepaal ik zelf wel!

Collaboration with: Kai Chang

How to develop an art educative product for a museum

This project was part of the course Kunsteducatie/ museumeducatie (Art Education for museums) during the third year of Visual Arts Teacher Training at FHK. The students of the course were free* to choose a classmate to pair up with to create an art educative product for a (Dutch) museum.

The target demographic was not completely optional: a duo could choose every target demographic except teenagers between 12 until 18 years. This had to do with the semester before this project. In the previous semester the course Art Education focused on designing a course for this target group about Romanticism and the Sublime.

Felipa paired up her DTV-3 classmate fine artist and poet Kai Chang.

*Due to Covid-19 in academic year 2020-2021 the third year students of Deeltijd Verkort (ENG: abbreviated parttime) Visual Arts Teacher Training was split into two. Even though the course took place at the same night. Felipa and Chang weren't in the same timetable, but with a bit of effort they got permission to become a duo for this project.

Inspiration

Inspired by their own nostalgia for tongue-in-the-cheek Dutch Children's TV-program Villa Achterwerk from the 90s, the paper [Museums as avenues of learning for children: a decade of research](#) and their introverted personalities Chang and Felipa saw potential in children be in charge of their own experience in a museum. They also saw a lack - in general - of really taking the time to look at art. This has to do with the smartphone and the social media platforms for example Instagram and TikTok . The attachment towards electrical devices of people (young and old) within public spaces for example museums fire started the idea for the duo to create an analogue product in a time that people are too much immersed in a digital environment.

Concept

They created a Do-It-Yourself booklet, which contains a few short exercises - adapted visual looking strategies - and a roadmap that children can plan their own (small) tour to guide family and/or friends around through a museum. The booklet contains a map of the museum and a selection of exhibited artwork. This is to give room for children to choose an artwork and not be overwhelmed by many the choices. In the booklet is made clear that a child is also free to choose an artwork by itself.

Felipa and Chang wanted to challenge a museum (Voorlinden Museum) which is labelled as the 'most instagrammable museum' of the Netherlands. They did so by creating an analogue art educative product. Central to the product is to shift the focus of looking at a phone and using apps all day, even in a museum, to explore art by using your imagination.

Products

A small printed booklet containing 3 sections: Visual looking exercises, tips how to be a museum guide and pages to note the story of an artwork in writing and drawings.

And a short written research about the theory they used as basis for the product and written reflection on the collaboration during the project.

The role of Keshia Felipa within the team

Art Educative concept designer, illustrator and graphic designer.

Personal reflection

I think that this booklet can give self-confidence to children who believe or are told that their stories do not matter. Dutch parents have given more space to their children to speak up their minds. But even here in the Netherlands there is still a lot of improvement needed. This art educative product can give children room think about what an artist wants to tell with their art. And what an artwork can say about the world inside and outside.

This was a project that like the project Black Satire changed my vision as upcoming Visual Arts Teacher. And shifted my goal as what kind of art educator I thought I wanted to be.

About the collaboration between a commercial designer and a fine artist

The beauty of art (and pop culture) is that can build bridges between people but also on a personal level. The two of us in a team looked like an odd one, but in the end this collaboration turned out to be right.

This makes this project a turning point in how I look at myself as maker, art educator and person. How much my upbringing and my Caribbean background has limited me in the feeling that my story and vision matters. And how much I still need to grow as person when it comes to who I let in, who I block out and who I should trust. And how low my self-esteem is when it comes to communicating and connecting with people. Even as an intuitive person I do get things and my perspective on people wrong from time to time.

When it comes to my role within the duo: thinking back I took over the leading position; something that is strange to me. Within collaborations and group work I am the one who has a serving role. The assistant to the one who is the leader. Personal issues in that period of my life made me hyper focused and a bit of a goal digger as this thing must be finished. I needed and wanted to be with my family. So unfortunately I haven't enjoyed working in a duo as much as I should have, due to personal obligations I had towards my family.

That is, too bad, because I hardly work with others. Something I really need to improve, especially if I want to challenge the current vision on art education. I am too shy to ask professionals to collaborate with me (Which formed an obstacle for me to continue as small business owner). Whether it is inside a study, course or outside of academic environment. It

makes me having this mentality oozing out from me that I want to do everything alone (self-fulfilling prophecy).

Therefore, I was surprised that Kai immediately contacted me after first class we had that semester. I would never had the nerve to ask him to do this assignment with me. Firstly, because he scared the shit out of me. Or to say it in positive way: he overawed me. Before the project we never really talked to each another. Looking back I think I got scared of him, was because he saw the potential in me as art educator, which I was afraid to see for myself. That thing what is your greatest strength, is that what you fear the most of. In this case I not only got scared of my destiny as innovative educator, but also that he would be the first messenger to show me what I capable to do. In the end it turned out that we were both impressed about each another presence in the room.

Big thanks to Kai. For following through: making sure we could do this project together. Even though I am super shy: I have worked with people at work and at school in group work. And that works out fine most of the time. But this collaboration has been the first time someone GOT and really SEE me instead of me getting the members of a group. You have no idea how much working with you have changed me as educator, maker and person.