

# Between the Worlds – New Didactic Concepts for Art Education – 2018

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## Biography

Wolfgang Schreibelmayr was born on the 20. November 1960 in Linz (Austria). He is working as an associate professor at the University for Art and Design in Linz since 1996 and performs as head of the Department of Art Education since 2015. He is continuously active as an art teacher at the Georg von Peuerbach Gymnasium Linz since 1987.

## Abstract

**This article gives a new perspective of the power of art lessons and comes up with some methods and tools, which can be implemented and used for arts education. In a short review of the presentation „Between the Worlds“, the focus lies on two tool-constructions representing aspects of art education: “The pendulum” and “The 4 fields of potentials”. These implementations are also linked to other tools like the cockpit simulation in a shoebox “The Navigator Tool for visual arts education”, the real walk-in installation “Do You Commit Analysis?!” , the 3-dimensional visualizations “Tower of Learning” and “Sounds of the Mothership”, which all have been created in the last years. These methods not only serve to visualize complex interrelations, but also show up how**

visualization-model-tools deal with questions of the potential of processes in the context of visual arts education. Some suggestions will be introduced to the community of arts education and show up how art teacher can be aware of the power of art lessons and can implement these potentials in areas in and out of school systems.

## Keywords

Visual Arts Education, Subject-didactic Tools, Fields of Potentials, Pendulum, Tower of Learning, Fields of Potentials, Subject- didactic Playground.



Figure 1: Tool Pendulum

## Introduction

There is a great need to concentrate on European and Global issues! This article will deal with the question „What can the community of art education contribute and in which way?“ In order

to answer this question, it is necessary to reflect on the essence and potential of art education in general.

In my daily work as an art educator, as well in High School and at the University for Art and Design in Linz, I like to invent, develop and use tool-constructions and symbols to visualize essential decision fields of art education. These tools may exist only in the world of thoughts or as real material objects. The different constructions can interact and support each other. This method not only serves to visualize complex interrelations but also to find new ideas and perspectives for art education. Through this playful method, art education can be understood as a game character with multiple sub-characters and can be played worldwide. Each year some new points of view and ways of thinking appear on the subject-didactic playground, some vanish.

In this short review of the presentation „Between the Worlds“ I would like to focus on two tool-constructions representing aspects of art education: “The Pendulum” and “The 4 Fields of Potential”. These two tools interact with each other. They are also linked to other tools like “The Navigator Tool for Visual Arts Education”, the real walk-in installation game “Do You Commit Analysis?!”, the 3-dimensional visualizations “Tower of Learning” and “Sounds of the Mothership”. All these tools have been created over the years and some of them have been presented at previous Insea congresses.

### **How, when, why and by whom can those tools be used?**

First and foremost, the tools were developed to support the didactic training of art educators at the department for art education at the University for Art and Design in Linz. In the seminars at the university, lessons for visual education are prepared, carried out in school classes at practice pedagogues and subsequently reviewed and revised at the university. Many necessary decisions of a general and subject-specific nature should be made during an aware process using the tools.

The invention of new tools becomes part of a playful approach to lesson planning and reflection. These tools can be used by teachers in training and research contexts as well as by students in lesson situations. Therefore, the use of the tools opens up a playful approach; by constructing the tools themselves, knowledge processes take place.

Why do I like to share these tools with the community of art educators? There are so many challenges for educators in general and in different disciplines. This can also lead to a feeling of helplessness, overtaxing and inability to act. The other approach is to create spaces for action in all situations and new challenges. This assumes that they can at least be thought of. The pre-realization phase, the dreaming and finding examples of solution ideas are methodically supported by the tools. Problems that seem insoluble at first sight are at least solved in the game reality. This visionary game creates concepts and experimental arrangements that are actually tested in projects. For this purpose, however, it is essential to be able to reflect professionally on the power and potential of art-educational processes and materials. The key question is "What can be done through art education inside and outside of school systems, which is not possible in this way by other subjects and educators?" In this sense, the "Fields of the Potentials Tool" also serves the constant redefinition and re-identification of art educators. Especially for team teaching, it is essential to be aware of the own subject-specific and personal potential, but also of the limits. The power of interdisciplinary cooperation is deliberately reflected by the examination of the potential field of "Social Interaction".

## **The Pendulum**

One visualization-model-tool is the pendulum. It represents the oscillation between different areas in the context of art education. There are lots of worlds between art teachers and students are moving like pendulums. The following figures will give some examples for the "Worlds" between persons involved in art education processes might oscillate. This movement between

the worlds could also be described by the words commute, swing or fluctuate. It is of importance to point out, that the persons are in these different worlds at the same time, simultaneously. The tool “Pendulum” tries to show the process of moving in a holistic area, to be in one moment mainly in one part, in the next moment mainly in another part. The idea of the pendulum as a tool for the visualizing of subject-didactic decisions to be made, tries to support the awareness of all the different influences acting at the same time. It describes a reduction and abstraction to illustrate the oscillation process only between two poles. The next pendulum tool should be moving in a 3-dimensional space. In that way, it will be shown better, that the poles themselves are mixtures of different general conditions.

Instead of oscillating between the worlds, I would also suggest to use the term of floating in the world. This means to be everywhere in the same time but focussing a special point of view, like the pendulum pointing at one part of the whole. One simple example comes from the German lesson dealing with the nursery rhyme “The flying Robert” by Heinrich Hoffmann (1844). Pupils have to imagine what Robert can see and feel, while he is flying through the air with his umbrella, taken away by the storm. The kids in the classroom oscillate between the view of Robert and the view on Robert. They write down what occurs to their minds while floating through the worlds. Empathy is an important ability for art educators and creators and could be described by the question in post-human style “What would the environment say about humans?”

The following tables show some examples of worlds between which you can oscillate.

<b>In-school system areas</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Out-of-school system areas</b>
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Table 1: Mapping areas “In-school-system Areas & Out-school-system Areas”

<b>In-pictorial content</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Non-pictorial content</b>
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Table 2: Mapping areas “In-pictorial and Non-pictorial content”

<b>UNDERSTAND</b> <b>Visual</b> <b>Informations</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>PRODUCE</b> <b>Visual</b> <b>Informations</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>USE</b> <b>Visual</b> <b>Informations</b>
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Table 3: Mapping areas “Understand & Produce & Use”

Table 3 refers to the publications of the Austrian Federal Working Community BAG BILD (BAG BILD, 2013).

<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>DURING</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>AFTER</b>
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Table 4: Mapping areas “Before & During & After”

<b>Structure Analysis</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Emotion Analysis</b>
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Table 5: Mapping areas “Structure Analysis & Emotion Analysis”

The search for general rules, Itten also applies to mathematical series of numbers and theories, the number becomes a universal key to Itten’s analysis of the visible and shows his universalistic convictions of a neo-Pythagorean Weltanschauung (Wagner 2003, S. 21).

<b>The Known</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>The Unknown</b>
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Table 6: Mapping areas “The Known and the Unknown”

„The connection with the unknown creates the constantly necessary unleashing and liberation of art and life. The future is in subordination a sub-region of the unknown.“ (Baumeister, 1947)

<b>Esotherik</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Exotherik</b>
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Table 7: Mapping areas “Esotherik & Exotherik”

In the spring of 1923, Johannes Itten retired from the Bauhaus due to disagreements with Walter Gropius and ended up the predominant mixture of Indian mythology and esoteric aesthetics (Wyss 1996, S. 235).

<b>Reflection</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Meta-Reflection</b>
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Table 8: Mapping areas “Reflection & Meta-Reflection”

„Watching the Watcher“ (Pink Floyd, 1968) has become a metaphor for self-reflection in the department for art education in Linz.

<b>Dreaming</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Wide Awake</b>
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Table 9: Mapping areas “Dreaming & Wide Awake”

„I belong to the odd fellows who believe that one is not only dreaming when sleeping, but always dreaming ...“ (Kubin, in Hess, 1988/2001)

<b>Potential Material &amp; Technique</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Potential Social Interaction</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Potential Meaningful Creation</b>	<b>Oscillation</b>	<b>Potential Art References</b>
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Table 10: Mapping areas “Potential Material & Technique, Potential Social Interaction, Potential Meaningful Creation, Potential Art References”

## The Fields of the Potentials

The other visualisation-model-tool deals with questions of the potential of processes in the context with visual arts education. There are 4 areas of potential of art education based processes we focus and research in our department: the potential of material & technique, social interaction, meaningful creation and art references (Table 10).

The measuring discs of the dashboard can be filled with any legend, for instance 4 fields of potential. The “Navigator Tool Box” for visual arts education was presented at the Insea Congress in Lisbon 2015. Once sensitized, you could discover the measuring disks everywhere.

Jennifer Eder is a student of art education at the University for Art and Design in Linz. She created the following illustrations to support the visualisation-model-tool “The Fields of the Potentials”.

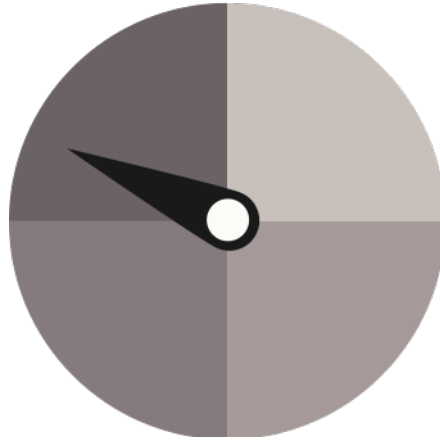


Figure 2: Navigator Tool measuring disc

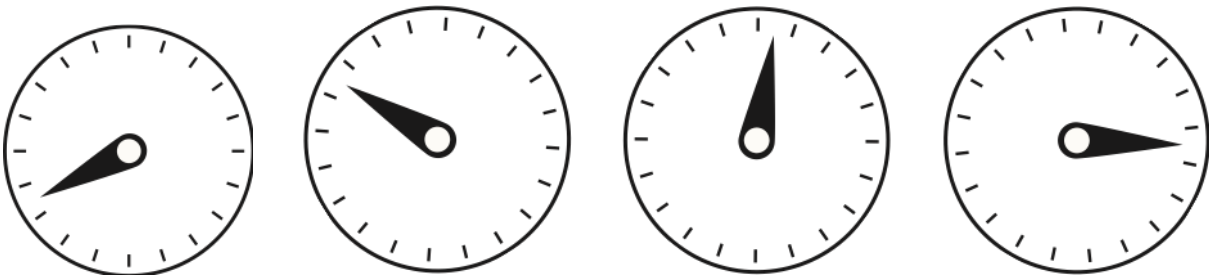


Figure 3: Navigator Tool measuring discs



Figure 4: Wall tile: found Navigator Tool measuring discs





Figure 5: Illustration Potential Analysis for art education



Figure 6: Illustration Potential Material & Technique



Figure 7: Illustration Social Interaction



Figure 8: Illustration Meaningful Creation



Figure 9: Illustration Art Reference

## **What for using the tools? Field Didactics Projects “Floating Art Education”**

Art teachers can be aware of the power of art lessons. It can be a great chance to use these potentials in areas in and out of school systems. The presentation at the congress in Helsinki shows a view examples of out of school work with refugees. Students of art education use the power and potential of art to get in contact with the others. This contact is determined by empathy, authenticity and acceptance. Processes of oscillation between the acting persons take place. The whole experience might be called “Floating Art Education”. The aim is to be part of the process but also to be the alienated watcher in the same time. A now over 18 years proven method of teacher training in Linz is, that students collect art education practical experience in extracurricular areas. We call this seminars and educational events “Field Didactic Projects”. Two intentions are pursued: on the one hand, students react to real, current social challenges and strive for a concrete improvement of a certain situation, on the other hand, the outside school-based intercultural interventions are used to gain experience for the teaching of art within schools. The potentials of art education activities are tested, analyzed and categorized.

The presentation is a summary from 85 different projects that have been implemented over the course of 18 years. In the center are the current projects with young people on the run. Some parts of the video documentations could convey an impression of how the field didactic projects were realized.

### **Objectives, results, conclusion**

An example of a field didactics project is given here. The preparation of the workshop follows the structure of the tool „**Fields of the Potentials**“. The objective is to get in touch with un-accompanied adolescent male refugees. They should be given the opportunity to experience a different kind of day while they wait for pending decisions from authorities.

Students of art education build a playground for traces of graphics and painting. The construction of the different stations of the playground requires the cooperation of students and refugees. Only together can work be done at the stations. The potential of the "**Social Interaction**" comes into play.

The students and teachers test materials and techniques in the preparatory phase of the project. These are random techniques in which there is no risk that something might be wrong, but the results are aesthetically pleasing. No one needs to have a special artistic talent or previous experience. The potential of "**Material & Technique**" is discussed in more detail on the example of 2 stations:

#### **The tracks creating remotely controlled vehicle**

It basically makes fun for young people to try out the car after they have watched it in function. The peculiarity lies in the fact that the vehicle generates traces of paint on the surface of paper by means of its wheels. The combination of technical toy and drawing instrument fascinates the



Figure 10: Film still Tracks Creating Vehicle

participants. The aesthetic impressions are discussed intensively. It is both about the process and the resulting work.



Figure 11: Film still Tracks Creating Vehicle

### Spin Paintings

A turntable is driven by an electric motor. On the disc a piece of paper is fixed. Paint is applied to the rotating background by means of a brush. Reacting to the random results, consciously controlled design processes begin. The nature of color combinations, the consistency of color and the type of ink application on the rotating disk - all affects the result, which can be perceived only when the disc is stopped. This is expected with great excitement. In this way, fascinating spin paintings emerge. From these designs, circular cut-outs are selected using circular motif viewfinders and squeezed into buttons.

This process creates the transition to the potential field "**Meaningful Creation**", where it is important that creative activity can be meaningful. On the playground is also a major construction of a rotary disk, which is driven by a drilling machine, situated. With this device, T-shirts and gym-bags can be designed using textile colors for the spin painting. All participants



Figure 12: Film still Spin Painting on T-Shirt



Figure 13: Film still Spin Painting on T-Shirt

want to create and own these things. It makes sense to act because there is a product that everyone likes so much that they would like to own it. Each product is unique and distinctive.

The "**Art Reference**" potential field means that the students draw their inspiration from their personal engagement with various examples of contemporary and historical art. The power of chance and surprise based on surrealistic methods are used. Aspects of Action Painting are taken as a suggestion. Works by Alfons Schilling, Damien Hurst, Max Ernst, Jackson Pollock and others are being studied more closely by the students. If the young people are more interested, art books brought along will be viewed and discussed together. The collective creative activity and the subsequent consideration of art bring people together in discourse. All contributors give verbal feedback in German or English after the day. The following intentions were achieved:

Everyone got involved and created products. There were interactions and conversations between people who did not know each other before. The joint playful, creative action with colors and constructions brings unknown people into contact with each other. Human-to-human encounters take place, especially through the spontaneous reactions to the surprising results. Real laughter, joy, surprise and playfulness are possible. Everyone involved would like to experience such a day again, a holiday of everyday worries and fears.

The tool "**Pendulum**" is used in the context of the planning and reflection of the project for the clarification and visualization of interacting systems. It's about the movement between and the connection of areas and worlds. Some areas relevant to this project are listed in the

in-school system areas		out-of-school system areas	
known previous experience of students		unknown previous experiences of others	
more playful		more purpose-oriented	
more process-oriented		more product-oriented	
more uncontrollable, random		more controllable, controlled	
reflection		reflection on reflection, metareflection	
before the project	during the project		after the project



following table as an example.

## Conclusion

The playground for traces of graphics and painting is very well suited for the planned meeting of people from different cultures and individual biographies. The project is defined by an ideal combination of playful testing, process-oriented action and consistent product development. It is desirable to include examples from the cultural context of the refugees for further projects in the context of the potential field "Art References". When referring to art forms that have inspired the students, there is a good exchange among the participants. The refugees use their mobile phones to show works of art from their cultural environment.

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### **Image sources**

- Figure 1: Tool Pendulum. Illustration and Graphic Design by Jennifer Eder and W. Schreiberlmayr
- Figure 2: Navigator Tool measuring disc. Graphic Design by W. Schreiberlmayr, A. Rumetshofer 2015
- Figure 3: Navigator Tool measuring discs. Graphic Design by W. Schreiberlmayr, A. Rumetshofer 2015
- Figure 4: Wall tile: found Navigator Tool measuring discs. Foto and Graphic Design by W. Schreiberlmayr 2015
- Figure 5: Illustration Potential Analysis for art education. Illustration and Graphic Design by J. Eder and W.S. 2018
- Figure 1: Illustration Potential Material & Technique. Illustration and Graphic Design by J. Eder and W.S. 2018
- Figure 1: Illustration Social Interaction. Illustration and Graphic Design by J. Eder and W.S. 2018
- Figure 1: Illustration Meaningful Creation. Illustration and Graphic Design by J. Eder and W.S. 2018
- Figure 1: Illustration Art Reference. Illustration and Graphic Design by J. Eder and W. Schreiberlmayr 2018
- Figure 1: Film still Tracks Creating Vehicle. Video 4: Auf der Flucht 2017. Projekt Lichtenberg, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2017
- Figure 1: Film still Tracks Creating Vehicle. Video 5: Auf der Flucht 2016. House of Hope, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2016
- Figure 1: Film still Spin Painting on T-Shirt. Video 4: Auf der Flucht 2017. Projekt Lichtenberg, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2017
- Figure 1: Film still Spin Painting on T-Shirt. Video 5: Auf der Flucht 2016. House of Hope, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2016

Tables 1-10: Mapping areas. Graphic visualisations by W.S. 2018

### **Documentation Video Sources** (shown in excerpts in the presentation)

- Documentation Video 1: Malspielplatz, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2015
- Documentation Video 2: Wunsch Traum Raum, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2016

Documentation Video 3: Auf der Flucht. Malwerkstatt, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2018

Documentation Video 4: Auf der Flucht 2017. Projekt Lichtenberg, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2017

Documentation Video 5: Auf der Flucht 2016. House of Hope, Camera and Aftereffects by Anna Strasser 2016