

The Threadworks Project



One studio, one directing force.

At the same time, a path towards new horizons, path which bears meaning in itself.

I do not perceive myself as a collector of documents or an interesting teacher. Individual tutoring plans and evolution based on play with overtones and allusions are the foundation stones of my work. The approach to children is based on careful, highly individual evaluation. No one and nothing is set above anyone else, and the perfect way to employ the physical and mental abilities of each individual is sought with patience. I am a visual guide, immersed in my own images, yet capable of transformation and open to clues from others, children first of all.

„By making himself solitary and original, the artist fills himself with possibly fruitful, yet false hope, because such privilege he assigns to his own self does not have much to do with reality. Even when one believes that he expresses himself directly and that he creates an original work, one still refers to other artists, be it the past or present ones, or the ones which may be. No matter what we think, on the paths of creativity, we never travel alone.“

Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Way of the Masks

Spiritual world takes on new shapes in the spontaneous company of a child's drawing, and, when observed carefully, it opens new ways. Shall I be gifted with new visual perception? If I do succeed in penetrating into the child's world, and if I do understand the fine threads which bind a variety of objects, stories and colours together, new powers shall be born, unique and poetic...

...all of a sudden, through my thoughts, I come to an important realisation: the process, the path, the travel, observation, uncovering and searching, new connections, silent dispute between me and the child, a mere step in this direction is to become my future goal... Personal diary, Paris, 2007

To compare the worlds of children with mental handicap to the world of a healthy child is difficult. Yet they definitely share the sense of detail, perfect concentration, and originality.

The Threadworks

Project

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2006/2007 Entract Association, Czech Center in Paris
classes for preschool children
automatic drawing research, research into bilingualism

2006

The Audabiac association workshop, France. Children from the children's home in Nové Strašecí,
textile workshop – making puppets for a theatre performance
Association „Jardiner ses Possibles“, Meschers, France. Textile workshop – African weaving looms

2005/2006 Private tuition of painting and drawing

Teaching a variety of age and proficiency groups, children from four to ten years of age.

1999–2005 Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague

(textile design: print, etching, all textile technologies, hand-woven tapestry, practice in factories)

2004/ 2005 final project: art classes for children at Londýnská elementary school in Prague, ex-
perimental ceramics classes, focus on portrait, mask, self-portrait / Cycle of hand-woven tapes-
tries created in cooperation with people with learning difficulties from the Institute of Social
Care Javorník Chvalčov 2005 and Moravian tapestry manufacture in Valašské Meziříčí

2004 EVTEK Institute of Art and Design, Vantaa, Finland
The Home project

1994–1999 Art School of Václav Hollar, Prague
(Display Art, Display Design)

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Entract En France

The Entract en France association is a non-profit civic group, founded in 2001 under the patronage of the Czech center in Paris, whose main goal is to popularise Czech culture in France.

Since 2004, its main focus lies in Czech language tutoring for children living in France. In the course of three short years, the association succeeded in building a continuous linguistic education system aimed at children ranging in age from 18 months up to 11 years.

With the exception of school holidays, the association organises weekly courses of Czech language divided by the age of the pupils. Children ranging in age from 18 months up to 3 years attend a class of free art techniques combined with the development of speech: they read books, poems, sing songs etc. The classes for children aged from 3 to 6 years are similar in structure to Czech preschool. Through Czech national holidays, the children learn about Czech history and culture. School children up to 11 years have the option to attend the „Czech School“ every Saturday. Here, they learn Czech language, literature, geography and history.

The teaching follows the method of **total immersion**, where the child is exposed to purely Czech environment throughout the duration of the entire class. This approach differs radically from the traditional approach to foreign language teaching, mostly based on translation of individual words, and when compared to it, it enables the child to adopt much broader situational vocabulary. The child also grasps the structure of the language better and faster. Besides, most of the pupils are brought up in bi-cultural environment anyway, so this way of learning a language is most natural to them.

MUDr. Lucie Slavíková-Boucher, head of the association





Czech Center

My group of seven pre-school kids has shown immeasurable pleasure when diving into the prepared dough, printing their bare feet in flour, or dotting a swarm of wild flies onto paper...

Tuesday course of art technique for pre-school children,
Entract en France, Paris 2006/2007



It is wonderful to observe the energy and enthusiasm with which we make progress each and every time we meet. We do not start with a white sheet any longer, we continue from one activity we have mastered to another, building new fantasies from tiny pieces. No learned phrases, pre-set exercises, or restrictions. Of course, I do not see the process as a professional teacher, since I am not one, but it has been long since I've been charmed by the unbelievable visual freedom of children's drawing, where the whole reflection of the surrounding world concentrates in the moment when a simple circle is being drawn.



A child creates his own theatre; with his energy, he drapes the reality into the veil of his personal connections, colours, and materials, and his symbols are unlike real objects. A city, a dog, a flower, mother and father, they all take on a shape entirely new and surprising. Automatic drawing is a unique communication tool, full of freshness and unlimited possibilities.

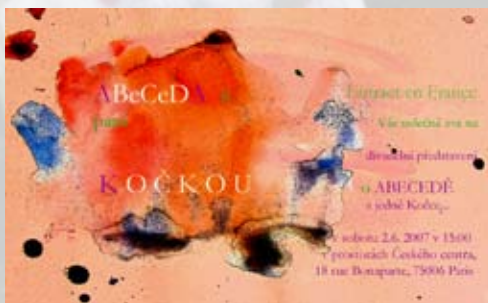
Personal diary, Paris, 2006



The Alphabet with Miss Cat

All the children from our classes sang together about the letters attached to their bellies... they sat together, holding their breath, watching the scene with the alphabet and the glass city, where an old gentleman collected broken and sad letters for his cat...

Final theatre performance, The Alphabet with Miss Cat, Entract en France, Paris 2007



Byl jednou jeden starý pán a ten měl černou kočku.

Básnil pro ni a zpíval pro ni:

*„Měla jedna kočka na punčoše očka.
Očka se jí rozutekla,
ať si na ně počká.“*

*Černou kočku to moc nebavilo, nudila se a starý pán přemýšlel, jak by ji zabavil.
Ve městě našel pokažené nápisy s rozbitými písmeny. Posbíral písmenka do brašny, odnesl je domů a rozhodl se, že naučí kočku číst.*

*„Á, BÉ, CÉ, DÉ,
Kočka přede, ale mluvit neumí.
Hlásky loví, nevysloví
Své kočičí rozumy.“*



Our material was everything you find in the streets, boxes, carry bags... I wanted to show everyone, especially the adults, that their children may be happiest with little things: a bird made of a plastic bag or loo roll cardboard, or with a hat made from a microwave box... the goal was to focus on natural skills, innovation, and relationship with nature!

Museums

Every Sunday, we tried to unravel a mystery, even though sometimes we were eight and sometimes just two years old. Sometimes it was Egypt, sometimes scary Gothic gargoyles nearly killed us with sprouts of fire. Other times, we were welcomed from afar by Mr. Spear from Africa, who danced in the rhythm of drums in the African collection of Louvre... so we used to sit there and talk with a tiny bit of paper in front of us.

Private art tuition, Museums Alive, Paris
2006/2007

I found the bilateral visual approach really useful. Individual visual expression is confronted with historic reality. Even very small observers are very attentive hunters of details and hidden meanings!



Alex and Maxim

The biggest discovery was movement, birds, fish, clouds, leaves, everything kept moving and changing.

Big flat fish kept circling the space, allowing themselves to be drawn carefully. It was always a challenge to try to capture the movement on paper... we could sit quietly for three hours, being circled by free flocks of birds...

Private art studio in Paris, 2006/2007



The Old Rag is walking in the forest, on her back a bag with drinks and a rope, and a watch on her wrist. She encounters a wolf who asks: „What is your name?“ „My name is Old Rag,“ answers the pilgrim. The wolf leaves, disappearing deeper into the forest, and the Old Rag hurries to school. She came to a big hole in the ground, where something shone on its very bottom. It attracted her very much so she jumped right in. She flew long, long and deep... all of a sudden, she landed on the very bottom, where there was something hard. She took a bit of rest and then continued to journey the bottom of the hole, which attracted her so much. After a while, a desert appeared in front of her. At its beginning, the Beetle welcomed her, her fellow traveller, protector, but, most of all, a friend. „You have come to an indefinite space,“ he told her. And they went on together. All of a sudden, a strong tornado surprised them. Beetle the friend dug a pleasant pit underground, where they hid.

from the Story of The Old Rag, author Maxim, 8,5 years old

The Face

Cycle of tapestries, happening on the borderline between an artists' approach and the unrestricted vision of a person with learning difficulties. The border between two worlds: my imagination and professional zeal, and the clients' surreal world of absurd conjunctions. Free wandering of different approaches, however, with one common objective - to unveil the shroud of new learning, and to point to new ways of textile design.

At the beginning, some doubts surfaced, taken the complexity of the theme, full of important moments and hidden psychology, however, we succeeded in finding strong links between my world and the world of the girls. The participants themselves did not perceive the continuity as a whole, they were closer to fractional perception, typical for my imaginary dreamy reality. We must admit that to search for rigid rules in such fragile co-existence of dream and successive creative work is, to say the least, problematic. The process of joint wandering, specifying of the common path and understanding was the greatest contribution of the project to my personal artistic growth. Certain things remain hidden both to participants and to outside viewers, the door to thoughts not pronounced and hard to grasp remains open.





The girls were fascinated by the challenge of the giant frame. Work went on for even 6 hours a day. Positive atmosphere and zest to do new work permeated the whole building, and everyone kept coming to take a look at us...

girls from the Art Therapy
tapestry workshop,
Institute of Social Care Javorník,
Chvalčov 2005

