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What's the meaning?

The relations between professional theater performances and children's cultural life

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Aesthetic practise

Breughel, 1560



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The meaning!



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Theatre for children is not ...



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- Professional performances for children are **not** intellectual exercises for beginners.
 - Professional performances have **not** been produced in order to make children healthier, more tolerant, more democratic, well-bred, educated, ...
 - Professional performances for children and young people have **not** been produced and performed to serve the pedagogical developmental work in daycare institutions. The meaning of this particular art form is **not** to contribute to the schools formal teaching, **not** even to learn children about art.

Children's cultural communities



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- Children's cultural communities **communicate through action.**
 - They constantly **deal with transformations.** You can actually be what you eat.
 - They are **practicing the aesthetic- symbolic dimension – fictions – every day.** In this dimension **everything can take place, but never ever for real.**
 - There is **one golden rule** here: children never start activities, they don't like.

Cultural reality



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- Children's playing communities carefully distinguish between social reality and cultural reality.
 - Social reality just is.
 - Cultural reality, you have to create and maintain yourself.
 - Cultural reality is only present as a fourth dimension raising **while** you are running, jumping, swinging, singing, playing, listening, reading, talking, laughing. A way of life connected to the very moment, the now and here.

Cultural reality – the fourth dimension



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- This fourth – aesthetic-symbolic – dimension is the Alfa and Omega of children’s culture. It rises when you are playing, laughing together, when you are absorbed by a book, a performance, a film, a concert, involved in an exciting discussion on ideas or feelings. When you stop playing, reading, listening, discussing, it fades away.
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 - The fourth dimension never rises by itself. You need a variety of cultural patterns, experiences and expressions – rhymes, rhythms, movements, figures, words, narrative patterns, metrical patterns, playing patterns – in other words - aesthetic tools - to create and maintain it.

The meaning of cultural policy



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- Cultural policy and cultural communication is committed to this register of cultural expressions.
 - It is the most distinguished obligation to secure and guarantee that the register, children already possess, gets the possibilities to be inspired, to grow, to be practiced.
 - The dynamic relations between this popular cultural tradition rooted in our bodies and practiced in daily life and the artistic developments are the crucial point.
 - Meeting and dealing with art – in music, theatre, films, dance, performances, paintings and installations, medias, computer plays – is the heart of these dynamic relations.

An expressive cultural policy



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- The meaning of experiencing a theatre performance is not to be taught, but to be touched.
 - An expressive cultural policy is a policy respecting the meaning of the cultural dimensions in our lives.
 - It is a policy with the crucial quality, that it can't be tested and measured. But it can be seen and heard.
 - The effects of it are laughing, crying, enjoying, discussing, making fun, creating daily quality. A policy contributing to a rich personal life.

A shift of paradigm



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- From the late 1960s a major shift of paradigm started to take place in the Nordic countries questioning the educational cultural system and its instrumental standards.
 - To meet and experience from wonderful literature, exiting illustrations, touching performances, scary films do not depend on reading and writing skills or on abilities to intellectual understanding.
 - Authors, illustrators, dramatists, musicians, film makers started to insist on children as an artistic challenge, **children as beings**.

UN's Convention on Children's Rights



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▪ **Article 31**

- 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- 2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Tak!



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Thank you!