

On-stage drawing project: interdisciplinary and collective practices through digital education

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Integration of arts and technologies as cross-cutting axes in educational processes

The On-stage drawing project, carried out since 2016 in public secondary schools with an arts orientation in the city of Buenos Aires, emerged from the need for a proposal that would incorporate digital culture into artistic practices from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The proposal proved timely, on the one hand, because it approached digital culture through a language familiar to arts schools: drawing. Digital drawing is animated in real time, giving prominence to a primitive use of technology, with the intention of showing the act of drawing in the very same time in which it takes place. In this way, digital effects are placed at the service of freehand drawing.

On the other hand, on-stage drawing understands drawing as an art of time, since the specific features of digital drawing are combined with the real-time animation of lines. This makes it possible for drawing to enter into live dialogue with other disciplines of the temporal and performing arts, functioning as a medium that connects different artistic languages through digital culture.

One of the foundations of this language is the incorporation of collective drawing methodologies, opening up the practice of drawing, generally understood as an individual practice, toward collective creation, drawing through dialogue with other people's drawings. Drawing takes place in the way musicians play: forming a band in which all voices participate in the composition. Many of the methodologies used are inspired by those of dance, music, and theater, where dialogue among different participants and the development of the work over time are highly developed, becoming an important resource when developing drawing from this particular approach, which expands its disciplinary field.

On-stage drawing as an artistic and pedagogical practice has enabled the appropriation of languages and technologies, allowing them to be used in the future to address different curricular contents. It has facilitated the appropriation of drawing as an expressive and relational tool, taking the language of art as a cross-cutting axis of education.

An important axis of the project is the use of Free Software technologies: Andiamo and Trazos Club, which are accessible to the school communities and encourage continued use beyond the school environment.

Origins of the proposal

The proposal was developed from the coordinator's experience in these areas, which includes creative processes in performative works, educational projects, cultural mediation projects, and participation in the development of Free Software technologies: the platforms Moldeo, Andiamo, and Trazos Club.

The On-stage drawing laboratories have been carried out since 2016 in interdisciplinary workshops as part of the implementation of the Digital Education Plan in public secondary schools belonging to the Directorate of Artistic Education, Ministry of Education of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires.

The first realizations of this artistic-pedagogical proposal took place at Puerta 18 in Abasto, Buenos Aires, in 2011; at the Expin Medialab Workshop in Cali, Colombia, in 2012; at the ACTI Theater Festival in Bogota, Colombia, in 2013; and as part of the training project of Club Cultural Matienzo between 2014 and 2016. The workshop was also carried out virtually at the Multinational Workshop of Mexico in 2015.

On-stage drawing has been offered as a postgraduate seminar since 2016 at the Universidad Nacional de las Artes. Since 2020, the artistic and pedagogical research has been part of the UNA research project Dibujo Abierto, with the participation of researchers from the university community, as well as teachers from public schools and workers from the Digital Education Plan.

Development of the proposal

Across the different stages of the project, teacher training sessions, student workshops, exchange experiences between schools, support for school event projects, and collaborations between cultural spaces and schools were carried out. The project works together with digital pedagogical facilitators, who are the people responsible for integrating digital culture into the classroom in schools.

Experiences: first exchange between schools

In 2016, the first exchange between three schools took place: the Rogelio Yrurtia School of Fine Arts, Dance School No. 1 “Nelly Ramicone”, and the Nini Marshal Theater School.

Workshops were first held separately in each school, orienting each workshop toward the school’s specific discipline. At the visual arts school, the focus was on deepening the contents of visual language adapted to live arts; at the dance school, drawing was approached through movement; and at the theater school, the work explored possible dialogues between drawing, acting, and dramaturgy.

In a second stage, workshops were held in which the schools came together and the students worked jointly. For example, in the exchange between the theater school and the visual arts school, a shared staging was developed, in which groups made up of students from both schools improvised from a common structure, collectively defining actions for the projected drawing, the movements of actors, and the text.

Presentation for the ESI day

The project was taken up again that same year at the request of students from the Aida Mastrazzi Dance School and the Rogelio Yrurtia School of Fine Arts, in order to create a live presentation for the ESI days. The presentation was framed within the theme of gender. Rehearsals were held between students from both schools, who made joint aesthetic and conceptual decisions in order to address the theme.

Teacher training and support meetings

Following the experience between the Donn and Arranz schools, which incorporated teachers, the same training and support dynamic continued to be used throughout the year in different

schools. First, an on-stage drawing workshop was held for teachers; later, different meetings were dedicated to supporting the planning of the proposal, its follow-up, and, in some cases, the workshops with students.

During 2018, training sessions were held for digital pedagogical facilitators, pedagogical advisors, teachers, and students, from which specific school projects emerged.

On-stage drawing and ceramics

At Ceramics School No. 1, work was carried out throughout the year on different projects. It began with On-stage drawing training sessions for the digital pedagogical facilitators, followed by support to help them prepare an on-stage drawing space within an activity presenting resources to teachers in the digital space.

To carry out this activity, work was done together with the digital pedagogical facilitator, exploring the possibilities of bringing the school's materials into dialogue with the language of on-stage drawing, creating experiences that integrated plastic and digital resources. As a result, in the presentation for teachers, an interactive space was created where participants were invited to draw with Andiamo on ceramics, various objects, sculptures, plaster casts, and clay that could be manipulated live. The intention of these interventions was to bring the language of on-stage drawing closer to teachers by relating it to familiar elements from the school's workshop practice.

In this way, participants could intervene through projections of animated drawings created live, clay manipulated by other classmates, and sculptural objects that they themselves could modify in space, generating a composition.

Collaboration project between the Digital Education Plan and Usina del Arte

After Usina del Arte contacted the Digital Education Plan to carry out joint activities with schools, a collaboration project was developed with the Lola Mora School of Fine Arts. Within the framework of the exhibition about Lola Mora at Usina del Arte, visits, on-stage drawing and mapping workshops, a meeting on educational curatorship, and a live presentation at the school were carried out.

The first meeting with the students consisted of a guided visit to the Lola Mora exhibition at Usina del Arte, which included a workshop activity in which they created their own versions of the Fuente de las Nereidas. In the discussion after the visit, topics such as gender, historical context, art, and power emerged.

Then, taking advantage of the geographical proximity between the fountain and Usina del Arte, the group moved to the fountain and developed a drawing workshop centered on movement, whose contents were later taken up again in the on-stage drawing workshop at the school. During this workshop, students also made film and photographic records, which were later used in the mapping and on-stage drawing workshops.

After the two workshops, the education team at Usina del Arte gave a workshop on educational curatorship. In it, they showed the process of designing the activities that accompanied the Lola Mora exhibition, and an activity was carried out in which the students developed their own proposals. This stage also sought to introduce them to the possibilities of cultural mediation as an artistic practice and as a professional field.

Support project for the Mañolo Festival

That same year, a training session was held at Special Education School No. 29, School District 18, Dr. Osvaldo Magnasco, for the Mañolo Children's Festival. A workshop format was developed with different collaborative drawing spaces for the children to move through during the festival. The temporal possibilities offered by the language of on-stage drawing were used so that the deaf-mute community could work with drawing. The project was supported both before the festival and during the workshops held as part of it.

Projections at school project

At Ceramics School No. 1, the Projections at school project was also developed. It aimed to integrate different ways of intervening in school spaces through projections. Digital and analog media were combined, integrating the languages of on-stage drawing and mapping, shadow theater, the use of slide projectors, and other analog light sources.

The work was carried out together with the coordinator of the digital pedagogical facilitators, the digital pedagogical facilitator, and teachers of visual arts, technology, and music. Workshops were developed throughout the year, and a live presentation was held at the school in November, within the framework of La Noche de los Museos.

Virtual on-stage drawing

In 2020, a virtual training proposal was developed, giving continuity to the On-stage drawing project and responding to specific needs linked to the suspension of in-person classes. In particular, it addressed the need to find workshop practices that could be carried out online and collaboratively, something that is complex due to the importance of in-person work in artistic education.

In this sense, the main objective of the proposal was for teachers to acquire tools to carry out practices in virtual environments that would allow them to sustain and strengthen the forms of teaching specific to their artistic disciplines. Likewise, the project sought to enable them to carry out interdisciplinary proposals, allowing articulation between subjects and schools, since the proposed activities approached Visual Arts as arts of time, just like music, theater, dance, and others.

Training sessions were held for teachers from arts schools, followed by support for the projects that emerged from them. The experience Exchange between schools was also organized, with teachers and students from the Esnaola School of Music, the Manuel Belgrano School of Visual Arts, and the Jorge Donn Dance School. The aim was to generate a dialogue between live drawing, music, and dance.

All these projects were part of the DGEA ICT Days at the end of the year, as well as events such as the Arts Week at Ceramics School No. 1 and the Esnaola Arts Festival.

The training sessions for teachers from arts schools were based on animated, collective, and live digital drawing using the Trazos Club platform. Through different didactic sequences, the tool and its pedagogical potential for virtual workshop practice were explored. A dynamic was then proposed so that teachers could begin designing their own projects, with virtual follow-up offered for them.

The exchange activity between schools consisted of visual arts students creating live drawings recorded on video, and students from the percussion ensemble "interpreting" those drawings and recording their production on video as well. In turn, students from the Jorge Donn Dance School created a dance interpretation of that exchange between drawing and music.

Previously, live animated collective drawing workshops were held with students and teachers, along with exchange meetings with pedagogical advisors and teachers to organize the different stages of the activity. This exchange had as a precedent an experience carried out together with Prof. Pablo Laporta, in which students worked from the open meetings Trazos Club Jam, organized during quarantine by Equipo Trazos.

Work was also carried out with other schools in the exchange project. Although they did not ultimately join the final video, they were able to develop different proposals, as in the case of Ceramics School No. 1, where workshops were held linking drawing and theater, the activity Building a collective trace, and two collective drawing meetings with Trazos Club. One was part of the Virtual Arts Week of Cera, as a meeting space to create drawn improvisations, and the other was part of the project A fallen leaf, where participants were invited to draw leaves as a tribute to those who died during the pandemic.

During 2020, the On-stage drawing project also had a space during the breaks of the Digital Education Congress, where a live animated drawing workshop with Trazos Club was held for digital pedagogical facilitators.

On-stage drawing + +

In 2021, a new stage of the project began through teacher training sessions that integrated different ways of intervening in the school through projections, complementing the practice of on-stage drawing with videomapping and creative coding.

In 2023, another stage of the project began, incorporating electronics content through the construction of Arduino controllers for the Andiamo software. The first stage of the project is being developed through training sessions for facilitators from arts schools and through the construction of controllers for those schools. In a second stage, in 2024, technical schools and instances of work with students will be incorporated.

This new stage consists of developing pedagogical instances to teach artistic and technical languages in an integrated and complementary way. The experience aims to create dialogue between the communities of arts schools and technical schools through an integral pedagogical proposal, while also producing didactic material that can be useful in all secondary schools to bring programming and electronics languages closer through artistic languages. In this way, the arts are taken as a cross-cutting axis in education, articulating the playful potentials of the arts and digital culture.

Conclusions

In the narrated experience of the artistic-pedagogical project On-stage drawing, the effectiveness of articulating diverse institutional contexts and work groups becomes evident: a socio-educational program, the Digital Education Plan of the Ministry of Education of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires; an independent group, Equipo Trazos; and a university research project, Equipo Dibujo Abierto, UNA.

The organization and constant work of many people over time made it possible to disseminate Free Software technologies and innovative languages within the educational community. At the same time, these technologies and languages have fed back into themselves and grown through this expansion. One of the great achievements of this project is the development of such an enriching process in public schools.