

# Considerations on education, art, and politics: experiences, alternatives, and resistance

**Edite Colares Oliveira Marques**

*Ph.D. in Fine Art from the University of Porto*

*Ph.D. in Education from the Federal University of Ceará – UFC*

*Professor at the Federal University of Ceará – UECE*

*edite.marques@uece.br*

## Abstract

This article addresses the interfaces between *education*, *art*, and *politics*, focusing on the history of Brazilian *art education* based on legislation and teaching experience in Art-Education at the Ceará State University (Universidade Estadual do Ceará – UECE). It is found, having the analysis of legislation as a basis, that the recent creation of a Common National Curriculum Base (Base Nacional Curricular Comum – BNCC) generates, within the school, a reduced space for *art teaching* in Brazil. We shed some light on art formativeness in human life; then, we link legislation to the art practice at school; and, finally, we exemplify the alternative ways found by the population as mechanisms to guarantee access to art and culture in Brazil. The utopian nature of art is what makes it have always been an expression of longings for a future built to seek a fairer society, where socialization of the immaterial heritage of humanity is guaranteed by the school.

**Key words** art education; politics; resistance.

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## Considerações sobre educação, arte e política: experiências, alternativas e resistências

### Resumo

Este artigo aborda as interfaces entre *educação, arte e política*, voltando-se ao percurso histórico da *educação artística* brasileira com base na legislação e na experiência docente em Arte-Educação na Universidade Estadual do Ceará (UECE). Constata-se, a partir da análise da legislação, que a recente criação de uma Base Nacional Curricular Comum (BNCC) gera, na escola, uma redução do espaço do *ensino de arte* no Brasil. Lançamos luz sobre a formatividade da arte na vida humana; em seguida, articulamos a legislação à prática escolar de arte; e, por fim, exemplificamos os caminhos alternativos encontrados pela população como mecanismos de garantia de acesso à arte e à cultura no Brasil. O caráter utópico da arte é o que a faz ter sido sempre expressão dos anseios por um devir construído em busca de uma sociedade mais justa, onde a socialização dos bens imateriais da humanidade seja garantida pela escola.

**Palavras-chave** arte; educação; política; resistência.

## Consideraciones sobre educación, arte y política: experiencias, alternativas y resistencias

### Resumen

Este artículo aborda las interfaces entre *educación, arte y política*, volviéndose al recorrido histórico de la *educación artística* brasileña con base en la legislación y en la experiencia docente en Arte-Educación en la Universidad del Estado de Ceará (Universidade Estadual do Ceará – UECE). Se constata, teniendo como base el análisis de la legislación, que la reciente creación de una Base Nacional Curricular Común (Base Nacional Curricular Comum – BNCC) genera, dentro de la escuela, una reducción del espacio de *enseñanza de arte* en Brasil. Arrojam algo de luz sobre la formatividad del arte en la vida humana; a continuación, articulamos la legislación a la práctica escolar de arte; y, por fin, ejemplificamos los caminos alternativos encontrados por la población como mecanismos de garantía de acceso al arte y a la cultura en Brasil. El carácter utópico del arte es lo que la hace haber sido siempre una expresión de los anhelos por un devenir construido en busca de una sociedad más justa, donde la socialización de los bienes inmateriales de la humanidad sea garantizada por la escuela.

**Palabras clave** arte; educación; política; resistencia.

## Considérations sur éducation, art et politique: expériences, alternatives et résistances

### Résumé

Cet article traite des interfaces entre *éducation, art et politique* et aborde le cours historique de *l'éducation artistique* brésilien basée sur la législation et l'expérience pédagogique en Art-Éducation à l'Université d'État de Ceará (Universidade Estadual do Ceará – UECE). Sur la base de l'analyse de la législation, il a été constaté que la création récente d'une Base Nationale Commune du Programme (Base Nacional Curricular Comum – BNCC) génère, au sein de l'école, un espace réduit pour *l'enseignement de l'art* au Brésil. Nous avons mis en lumière le caractère formatif de l'art dans la vie humaine; ensuite, nous articulons la législation à la pratique artistique à l'école; et, enfin, nous illustrons les voies alternatives trouvées par la population en tant que mécanismes garantissant l'accès à l'art et à la culture au Brésil. Le caractère utopique de l'art est ce qui fait qu'il a toujours été l'expression des aspirations d'un devenir construit à la recherche d'une société plus juste, où la socialisation du patrimoine immatériel de l'humanité est garantie par l'école.

**Mots-clés** art; éducation; politique; résistance.

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## Introduction

We began this reflection driven by the proposal of addressing the interfaces between *education*, *art*, and *politics*, identifying feasible routes through experiences, alternatives, and resistances and resuming the Brazilian artistic education's pathway within the last decades. We found that a set of measures in the area does not put us in a comfortable position, if we focus on art teaching in Brazil. From the outset, we are faced with a historical process of denial of the indigenous peoples and their manifestations, which were not regarded as art or culture; therefore, the colonizing standard is what has been imposed as the only valid one.

A people that has always been victimized by the occupation of its lands and by their denial does not enjoy optimal conditions for artistic expressions or for learning their languages; nevertheless, the main feature that marks us is the creativity to find alternatives and keep alive the spark that ignites a bonfire of colors and shapes that represent our way of being and living in the universe. Ritual dance, drum-beating music, endless representations, which explode in the most varied visualities materialize art unequivocally, and the latter has always been an instrument of resistance to colonialism – adopted by the Brazilian educational system. In spite of the denial of indigenous identity, it constitutes an artistic-cultural scenario in Brazilian society and education, in which the official discourse enters into a debate with a genuine, experimental, and marginal art and a resistance to the monoculturalism that some people intended to deploy here.

Today, what we have as legislation in the field of art teaching in Brazil is the result of historical struggles that, in a crescendo, have achieved victories since the inclusion of art as an activity, back in the 1970s, until compulsory inclusion of the area in the curriculum of primary education, as a subject component, which we have achieved by means of Lei n. 9.394 (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação [LDB], 1996), to finally find in the new Brazilian educational legislation, the Base Nacional Curricular Comum (BNCC, 2017), a resumption of its presence as an area of the subject component Language – an actual regression. Because, although we are still far from reaching a minimally desirable level for a significant teaching of artistic languages at school, we cope with retreats and attacks by the political and economic group that governs Brazil, something which has made us lose ground regarding art at the time the BNCC (2017) was deployed. The fact is that, in addition to the interests of a multinational economic elite, the education system subjects the Brazilian people to remain in a learning process linked to the knowledge needed in the world of work and, to do this, art shows to be unnecessary.

The issue we introduce herein is understanding on the links between art, education, and politics, unveiling alternatives, resistances and experiences forged for the purpose of noticing beyond appearances and the official discourse concerning the place of aesthetic

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education and cultural and artistic studies in Brazil. And, finally, the issue of knowing how to identify the connections between historical development of art teaching/learning and the idea of an objective goal present in the pertinent legislation in the area in terms of school education, i.e. aiming to think about what such a minimization of arts as an area in the Brazilian curriculum.

So, we outline a route in which: a) first, we shed light on art formativeness in human life; b) then, we link legislation to the art practice at school; and c) finally, we seek the alternative paths found by the population as mechanisms to guarantee access to art and culture in Brazil. This procedure of analyzing the reality of cultural and artistic development as an art teaching at school provides a broad view of everyday experiences, in search of artistic expression and education.

## **Art formativeness**

Which human needs does art meet that in no other way human beings could do it? What is the use of art in a world so full of appeals and activities?

Since the early days of men in standing position, a rock painting practice has emerged not only to represent what is experienced, but to create counting systems, indicate movement and, it is believed, to transcend in a cosmic connection through ritual dances, later on entering this universe and intervening with the physical environment, building circular structures, with giant monolithic stones, and devising celebrations that make us think that senses, emotions, expression and art experiences constitute the individual, in her/his humanization process. Art has always intervened with the human being's way of marking her/his presence in the world, i.e. by means of an artistic expression, using any of its languages, a person is also shaping and constituting her/himself as a subject of her/his history, interconnected to *history* and *actual conditions of her/his existence* – situated in space and time.

Starting from the principle of art formativeness, we find a historically situated person – and it makes all the difference to be born in Brazil or Germany, for instance. It does not mean that Richard Wagner is greater Heitor Villa Lobos, but because access to music at school is diametrically opposed in these countries; talents do exist and, in different ways, all of us express ourselves using music, first spontaneously, a potential that may be developed or not. Creativity is real, but in cases where it is repressed or not encouraged, ceasing to provide conditions for these tendencies to have effects, an expectation is repressed, not allowing the full development of the human potential for creation and free expression using the arts.

We emphasize the distinction between Brazil and Germany to exemplify that, in these teaching systems, the attention given to music, for instance, is opposite – not due

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to the creative quality of those who are there, but because of the learning conditions regarding the musical language found at the primary school by youngsters. Thus, in the end of primary school, a German student knows musical writing and she/he can do simple readings of sheet music, with the aid of melodic instruments, while a Brazilian student is not literate in Western music and she/he does not play any instrument at a basic level. Here, only a few years ago, the legislation managed to institute compulsory music education at school, but it has already retreated and, in the most recent piece of legislation, the whole field of art was reduced to the condition of part of the subject component Language. That is, the mandatory status, just recently achieved, has ceased to exist in the BNCC (2017). This is very discouraging, since we do not even reach the minimum music learning levels and no longer mention it as a specific field of knowledge and, therefore, as a specific subject component in the BNCC (2017) concerning this major knowledge source, which opens room for creativity and worldview, a particular phenomenon of human communication, indispensable in school learning: *art*.

The formative nature of art, its source of communication, its various forms of human expression, potentializing discoveries and learning, among other categories of analysis that surround the human need for the arts, constitute the focus of the first moment of this article. The matter of art, both according to Eco (2013, p. 17, our translation) and to us, is its *formativeness*, an essential category at school and in human development:

[...] according to the aesthetics of formativeness, the artist, when educating, effectively devises entirely new laws and rhythms, but this novelty is not born out of nothing, but it rather arises as a free resolution of a complex set of suggestions that cultural tradition and the physical world have proposed to the artist under the initial form of resistance and coded passivity.

In the school environment, art must be recognized both as a form of communication, interpretation, expression, and as a source of many discoveries. So, the question to ask is:

- Why should attention be given to Art as a component at school in a specific and distinctive way?

Herein, we take music as an example, but it could be another language, like theater or dance; in all of these expressions, one of the first elements to highlight may be the creativity involved. When dealing with the constituent elements of the language at stake, such as rhythm, melody, and timbres in music, a person must articulate them harmoniously, producing beauty in a piece of music within the most varied musical genres. Such a process is unique, but its uniqueness depends on a minimal repertoire, in order to allow its articulation, creating something of its own. Stammering the first sounds heard on the lap, to

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sleep, a child already gives an interpretation to them and represents the lullaby situations. It is usual that small children sing made-up songs, that is, supported by constituent elements of the artistic languages they know, children begin a creative process that needs to be enriched by the family and, above all, by the school.

Without a doubt, the element creativity does not consist only in art. Men develop it in many ways and, undoubtedly, respond to many daily needs with creativity; however, in art we have its inseparability, because the contact with art already requires a creative reaction even in moments of contemplation. Each spectator resignifies an image, a piece of music, or any artistic expression that comes across. Imagination and representation ability are elements strengthened in contact with art, because all the time shapes, colors, sounds, and movements are generated to feed imagination, the substrate of creativity. This way of interacting with the work evolves to the extent that there are more opportunities for contact, that is why access to art at school is so indispensable to a student.

In front of a work of art, the spectator's interpretation is what matters. According to Eco (2013, p. 60, our translation), "a full interpretive experience will also coincide with that productive experience in which the work had significance by itself, but this is going to take place from a personal perspective." In this way, personal experience completes the meaning of art, interpretation gives it meaning. According to Eco (2013, p. 61), "this personal perspective is, by itself, implicitly a judgment, but so rich and articulated that the subjectivity elements that constitute it, instead of affecting its validity, underlie its effectiveness and novelty." Therefore, contact with art is a creative act in itself. Introducing students to arts, in a variety of formats, at frequent moments and taking a diversified approach is a must for the school, but in a country where even primary school is not a guarantee, we still have to do a lot in order to have the minimum level required by an education that also address sensitive issues, an aesthetic education.

The acts of enjoying, knowing, and experiencing art became a triad on which the need and structure of support for the teaching of arts at school was sustained. This triple action in the arts (enjoying, knowing, and experiencing), back in the 1960s, is claimed by Herbert Head (1983), with whom I share the opinion that this support is very capable of managing a more creative human education and aware of the challenges that must be faced in the constitution of art as a subject in education. Ana Mae, in the 1990s, brings this thought to Brazil and, along with the organizers of the National Curriculum Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais - PCNs), establishes the triangular proposal that guides the 1998 PCNs, published by the Ministry of Education (Ministério da Educação - MEC), on elementary art teaching in Brazil.

It is the same formative nature that we resume herein to say that we should not regress, but advance at Brazilian schools about the valuable educational role of art, by a triple possibility of making this human way of assigning meaning to existence. Either in

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the enjoyment of artistic works and experiences or in the discovery of the social contexts of their creators or, also, experiencing artistic invention, in all cases this contact will be an opportunity for discoveries and creations, putting a student in a propositive, active, thought-provoking situation that we must provide in the school context.

## Methodology and discussion

### *From the analysis of legislation to the art practice at school*

We proceeded to documentary analysis. In a historical retrospective, we elaborate on the evolution of legislation relevant to the field of art in the domain of regular education, as a source of data on which we can identify advances and setbacks, seeking to unveil the causes and effects of the current educational model.

Going back to the Brazilian educational history, we can identify an evolution in the educational legislation, which has come, within the last three decades, since the Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil (CF, 1988), intervening directly in the art teaching practices at school in an increasing and propositive way. Let us see how:

- **CF (1988, our translation)** – “Art. 210. Minimum contents will be established for elementary education, in order to ensure common primary education and respect for cultural and artistic, national and regional values.”
- **LDB (1996, our translation)** – “Art. 26. Curricula for early childhood, elementary, and high school education must have a common national base, to be complemented by a diversified party, in each teaching system and in each school facility, which is required by the regional and local characteristics of society, culture, economy, and learners.”
- **Lei n. 11.645 (2008, our translation)** – provides for the mandatory inclusion of the theme “Afro-Brazilian and Indian History and Culture” in official curricula, in accordance with Art. 26-A of the LDB (1996, our translation):

§ 1 The programmatic content to which this article refers will include many aspects of the history and culture that characterize the education of the Brazilian population, based on these two ethnic groups, such as the study of the history of Africa and the Africans, the struggle of the blacks and the Indian peoples in Brazil, the black and Indian Brazilian culture, and the black and the Indian in the formation of the national society, resuming their contributions in the social, economic, and political areas, pertinent to the history of Brazil.

§ 2 The contents related to Afro-Brazilian history and culture and that of Brazilian Indian peoples will be taught throughout the school curriculum, especially in the areas of art education and Brazilian literature and history.

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We also recall that the most recent specific piece of legislation on art, Lei n. 13.278 (2016), reinforces the previous idea that art teaching should occur in the 4 languages (Colares, 2018).

It is also appropriate to recall that the musical language was highlighted and President Lula sanctioned Lei n. 11.769 (2008), which established the obligation for the area of musical education in the country. The approval of this law was, undoubtedly, a major achievement for everyone who militate in the area and for its biggest beneficiaries – the student category.

These documents establish a set of standards that needed to be put into practice, but they were not, like so many other laws related to teaching and education, and they were eventually replaced without ever being implemented.

In addition to these documents, to which we have already referred, we also highlight another piece of legislation: that providing for black and Indian culture, which within the last decades has been providing a more balanced view of Brazilian ethnic and cultural matrices, in an educational context.

We propose to ground the discussion on art, politics, and education – regarding art teaching in Brazilian primary education – in these recent national legislative texts, which the BNCC (2017), in the process to standardize teaching and learning in primary education, ends up disregarding, supported by the administration now in charge of the nation's command and destiny. Let us look at Lei n. 12.287 (2010, our emphasis, our translation) – § 2 of Art. 26 of the LDB (1996), which already established art teaching as a mandatory subject component at the various levels of primary education, also highlight the presence of regional expressions:

§ 2 Art teaching, **especially in its regional expressions**, will constitute a mandatory subject component at the various levels of Primary Education, in order to promote the cultural development of students.

The LDB (1996) already required the study of Afro-Brazilian and Indian culture to share space with that of European origin, the only one until then, systematized in the Brazilian school curriculum. Lei n. 11.645 (2008) gave the following wording to Art. 26-A of the LDB (1996):

§ 1 The programmatic content to which this article refers will include many aspects of the history and culture that characterize the education of the Brazilian population, based on these two ethnic groups, such as the study of the history of Africa and the Africans, the struggle of the blacks and the Indian



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peoples in Brazil, the black and Indian Brazilian culture, and the black and the Indian in the formation of the national society, resuming their contributions in the social, economic, and political areas, pertinent to the history of Brazil. § 2 The contents related to Afro-Brazilian history and culture and that of Brazilian Indian peoples will be taught throughout the school curriculum, especially in the areas of art education and Brazilian literature and history.

It is worth asking about the reasons why the guidelines contained in the aforementioned legislative texts are neglected in the BNCC (2017), without deepening the discussion with teachers from the primary school and/or the educational systems. Thus, the approach adopted herein highlights, above all, the two themes supported by Brazilian legislation itself: Brazilian cultural diversity and art teaching, both in the educators' education and their insertion in the classroom of primary school and, on the other hand, it aims to provide a sharper look at the BNCC (2017) in its 'non-subject' component Arts.

Our talk tries to involve university professors and primary school teachers, as well as undergraduate and graduate students, in the reflection, based on experience reports, visits to art spaces, and teacher training practices, on our view of art and how far/close we want to be from/to it, what should serve as a cultural common base to any child, as well as on the cultures that have interacted here, that is, the people from the rural and the urban areas, from the sertão and the coast, the black, the Indian, and the white.

We believe that the "know thyself" should be the starting point for education as a whole. A man, a woman, a child, and a youngster, these real individuals, as they situate themselves in the local life, projecting themselves according to the other's view, must go on, more and more, managing to express themselves and to communicate also by means of their arts, at schools, throwing themselves into a broad social space – the goal of a liberating school education. We agree with Rancière (2015, p. 87, our translation), according to whom "the principle of truthfulness is at the heart of an emancipatory experience." And nothing is more liberating than art, as it does not give up the truth of the self in harmony with the whole.

As we can see, educational public policies have reoriented the pedagogical practice in arts towards a view of ethno-cultural diversity, in an interdisciplinary approach that has forced us to re-address the issue of art education, since the 1990s. Dialogue between founding ethnic matrices of Brazilian society might effectively contribute to fostering discussions about the themes proposed, developing some knowledge of art and culture in a diversified, multicultural, and inclusive way. This would result in a reverberation in school communities, something that, it seems to us, is not the goal of the class that holds power.

All of these pieces of legislation had implications for the educational systems and education practitioners, with important guidelines aimed at a broad discussion about how

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Brazilian art and culture have been taught in Brazil's primary school and how this should actually occur.

The social model drawn up, during the administration of the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT), although not revolutionary at all, had been taking small steps towards enhancing and recognizing the Afro and Indian culture, at least from the legal viewpoint, in the domain of school education. We could see in the legislation referred to a project that did not exactly meet the interests of the business class, which is significantly represented in the legislative houses.

So, on April 6, 2017, after removing from the National Council of Education (Conselho Nacional de Educação – CNE) the whole opposition and half of the civil society representation, following the political coup that removed President Dilma Rousseff from the Federal Government, the CNE received from the MEC, in compliance with legal and regulatory guidelines on the subject, the document of the BNCC (2017), with a proposal agreed upon in all of the Units of the Federation, establishing in the legislative text rights and goals related to learning and development, for Primary Education students, at the stages of Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education.

In its Art. 1, Resolution No. 2 from the CNE and its annex, establishing the BNCC (2017) as a normative document, defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning contents as a right of children, youngsters, and adults in the domain of primary school education, and guide their implementation by the educational systems of the various federative bodies, as well as by the school institutions or networks, as follows:

Art. 2 Essential learning contents are defined as knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and the ability to mobilize, articulate, and integrate them, expressing through abilities.

Art. 3 Within the scope of the BNCC, ability is defined as the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures), skills (cognitive and socioemotional practices), attitudes, and values, to meet complex needs of everyday life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work.

Art. 4 The BNCC, in compliance with the LDB and the National Education Plan (Plano Nacional de Educação – PNE), applies to Primary Education, and it is grounded in the following general abilities, expression of rights and goals of learning and development, to be developed by students: 1 To appreciate and use historically constructed knowledge about the physical, social, cultural, and digital world in order to grasp and explain reality, keep learning, and collaborate in the construction of a fair, democratic, and inclusive society (BNCC, 2017, p. 4, our translation).

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It is quite symptomatic of the setback that we have been experiencing that, in the first 4 articles of the BNCC (2017), the ability is always highlighted to justify performance in the world of work as a goal of student development and not as part of learner's comprehensive education. No. The starting point is already the ability, which raises no doubt about the attention to a subject who prepares at school for this society. Who do we want to educate?

In the legislative text itself, in § 1 of Art. 36 of the LDB (1996, our translation), it is clarified that "the term 'abilities and skills' should be regarded as equivalent to the term 'learning rights and goal' contained in the Law of the National Education Plan (Plano Nacional de Educação - PNE).

The ideal explained in the BNCC (2017) makes clear that the interest advocated is plainly perceptible: seeking, first and foremost, to prepare for the world of work and not to educate a self-conscious individual who looks for an emancipatory education and a fairer society, which redistributes social debts, where a fairer division of wealth is found. The world of ability and not that in pursuit of happiness, balance, and creativity. A very clear type of citizen is the goal of our latest educational legislation: a quiet citizen, conformed to a life focused on mechanical work.

Art is always the first area to be attacked in societies where citizens are more exploited, due to spurious interests of a business class. The more people explore, the more they want an alienated individual, attached to established conditions, a breeder of what is ready made, a fulfiller of tasks, a 'pack donkey,' an obedient worker. In this case, the world of art is dangerous, because the subject becomes more radical, curious, creative, question asker. She/he is not interesting to the current system.

We emphasize, in the BNCC (2017), the reduced importance of art in knowledge areas, since it is not even included in the set of subjects, becoming part of the subject component Language. Such a contraction has a very profound meaning in an education that brings as a principle not only the world of work, but an idea of education as knowledge reproduction instead of knowledge construction in a propositive, active attitude.

Depriving it from its key role, its nature as a specific subject component, represents putting it at the bottom, because, as we are quite aware, this is an already undeveloped school content, a virtual nullity among school practices, even considering that since the LDB (1996) this is a mandatory subject component in the school curriculum. That is, the compulsory status of art at school has been regulated since the 1990s, assigning it with the status of subject, although the level of arts at school is still very incipient, a fact that we may confirm when receiving university students attending the "Introduction to Art-Education" at the State University of Ceará (Universidade Estadual do Ceará - UECE).

Its importance has been confirmed in the Curriculum Parameters of Elementary Education, which gave it the same attention as the other subjects, since the late 1990s (20 years ago), which has been slowly evolving through almost imperceptible changes. This

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may be demonstrated by the outcome of school art learning, when we observe the newly High School graduates that enter the UECE. In fact, we needed to deepen actions that already begun, which have been expanding the field of arts at school instead of reducing it, as the BNCC (2017) did.

It is a shame that Art. 14 of the BNCC (2017) states that:

[...] Elementary Education, organized into Knowledge Areas, with the respective abilities, namely:

- I. Languages,
- II. Mathematics,
- III. Life Sciences,
- IV. Humanities, and
- V. Religion.

It is at least innocuous not to find arts as a specific knowledge area, not remaining as an independent subject in the recent BNCC (2017). It is at least contradictory, in a secular State, that we have Religion as a compulsory school content, because, when thinking of the school audience that come from the working class, we see that the most erudite artistic expressions, for instance, can be accessed by these children only at school, because often the most complex or elaborate cultural patterns are only available at school, while Religion is also learned at the Church and during religious advice offered by the families.

## **Results: alternatives and possibilities**

Based on experiences that prove the relevance of art in the education of children and youngsters, we think that alternatives should be sought by educators and learners. It seems to us impossible to agree with the reduction of art in the BNCC (2017). It is an absurd to aim at denying access to art at school, even more blatantly today. Hiding arts behind the subject component Language further complicates a good possibility to learn them.

It is not put into question that *arts* are *languages*, we only claim that they constitute a specific knowledge area, with constituent elements of their own, which are not limited to the subject component Language, as human beings, in the making of arts, more than communicating, absorb and redesign their emotions, resignifies, ruminates, experiences in a reflected, meaningful way... So, from the educational viewpoint, the primary function of art is contributing to emotional education, leading a student to live the experiences that emotions and feelings propose, putting the individual in balance and deep harmony, knowing the other and knowing her/himself.

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We refer to the self-knowledge role that art provides and that turns this artistic know-how, even more than a creative form of expression and communication, into a rich support for poetic enjoyment of feelings, ideas, and emotions, leading the individual to work on her/his emotions, mastering them and facilitating a greater personal and interpersonal balance.

The experience of art in the school environment generates a relaxed, lively, cheerful atmosphere. Ancient popular wisdom already claimed that “those who sing chase their evils away;” we would say that whoever sings, dances, paints, and stages chases her/his evils away. Because even when dealing with feelings of loss and pain, art is done with beauty and harmony, that is why pain is relieved, giving poetic contours and accommodating everyday situations with greater emotional balance.

Artistic making at school, precisely due to the collaborative environment it favors, is a major content, if we may name it this way. What is sure is that working on the emotions of children and educators in the school environment creates the conditions for an engaging and interactive school relationship between students and teachers. For the sake of a pleasurable creation, many tensions existing in the classroom are relativized. Therefore, there is a rather sensitive work that is prior to language.

Ultimately, what is at stake here is the condition prior to the language that art applies, this *poiésis*, which makes life and school something nice, an emotional need, significant and signifier, rich in emotional maturity, indispensable to a good-quality education.

There are many successful experiences in art education, both in and out of school. However, because the school does not have the conditions required to carry it out, studies show that many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cultural spaces, art schools, and other types of civil organization engage in many teaching-learning situations in this field of knowledge.

Numerous successful experiences took place in Fortaleza City, outside the regular school education, in art schools, for instance. We will cite one, because, by means of this example, we represent a range of art education possibilities that are wasted year by year by the educational system. At the School of Dance and Social Integration for Children and Teenagers (Escola de Dança e Integração Social para Criança e Adolescente – EDISCA), students enjoy an art education, with dance classes, classical ballet, and, along with school studies, they add psychomotor, spatio-temporal, and emotional development, resourcefulness in public, among other skills that favor a student’s learning and comprehensive education. There are already very positive outcomes in the education of these learners, because after studying for years, some of these youngsters pursued a career in dance and today they are teachers and professional dancers.

We mention the EDISCA to demonstrate the great potential that art represents in human life and how the school loses by not engaging in rather creative, exciting, enriching, stubborn efforts. Another experience model that is worth mentioning herein consists

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in traditional community groups, such as that found in the Pirambu, which is animated by Master Zé Pio. In it, community members, indistinctly, children, youngsters and even the elderly get together to enjoy the Ox [Boi] and they make a joke that gains meaning and increases knowledge on the popular arts with people at the most varied ages. The traditional community culture and art practice, we think this is the most organic mode among all experiences in the domain of art teaching, as it interacts with the community in a way that is fully integrated in the set of values that have been provided with meaning. I mention the Master Zé Pio's Ox, since he has had an insertion and a representativeness in the lives of children and youngsters in a community that, although being among the most violent in the city, manages to involve many people who learn music, dance, and stage a folk play that involves all the arts there.

Another initiative that took place in Fortaleza, which was very timely for art teaching and which allowed improving youth talents for the arts over the 3 corners of the city was the CUCA Network of social protection and opportunities, consisting of 3 Urban Centers of Culture, Art, Science, and Sports (Centros Urbanos de Cultura, Arte, Ciência e Esporte – CUCAs), maintained by the Fortaleza City Hall through the Special Coordination of Public Policy for the Youth. Managed by the CUCA Institute, the CUCAs Barra, Mondubim, and Jangurussu primarily serve young people aged from 15 to 29 years, offering courses, practices, cultural diffusion, training opportunities, and works in the area of communication and activities that strengthen youth protagonism and promote and guarantee the rights to culture and art. Also, the CUCA network has also taken to the outskirts of Fortaleza possibilities and alternatives for artistic enjoyment, by holding events, festivals, fairs, exhibitions, and permanent programs of shows, spectacles, and cinema. In these 3 neighborhoods of Fortaleza, the action has created zones for providing youngsters with art training, which today have a very positive and purposeful effect on the city, since some of these young individuals joined groups or stand out individually in the arts scene of the capital city of Ceará.

## Final remarks

This article aims to think through the field of art in Brazilian education, along with public policy scholars in the area of art, culture, and education, historically based on the latest legislation and observing the current legal provisions. It is easy to see that we had a significant retreat, above all in the school context, concerning the space and appreciation of the arts, since it has been reduced, in the most recent educational legislation, i.e. the BNCC (2017), to a part of language and it does not address the human needs for artistic development among children and youngsters in school, community, and/or other contexts, but in the occasional initiatives such as those mentioned herein, namely the EDISCA, the CUCAs, and the Master Zé Pio's Ox.

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It is precisely in politics, first, and then in a set of initiatives that the obstacles and possibilities of art teaching are found, because outside of the school we observe more successful experiences with arts than inside of it. If, on the one hand, public policy in regular art education is discouraging, given what we have already discussed, its almost insignificance for the lawmakers, who created the BNCC (2017),, on the other hand, experiencing it outside of the school gives demonstrations of rich opportunities, among them those cited by us, which illustrate the argument that the positive outcomes of artistic learning are irrefutable. We insist herein that even before constituting a language, there is already an ancestral art in gestures, affections, and jokes that lead to early contacts with art and to fully feel it, still without constituting a language, but being a first part of life in human communities since the earliest times.

Therefore, we warn that art is a source of creativity and discovery, also constituting utopia and cultural resistance. Thus, what we find in the various artistic experiences, even outside the school, is a means of keeping alive the ancestral flame of feeling as a part of community life, of human possibilities for expressing ways of living and feeling the reality that surrounds us. Thus, these examples are demonstrations of seeking alternatives to guarantee access to art, when the school does not fulfill its role of disseminating culture and of fertile ground of creations and discoveries. The utopian nature of art is what has led it to have always been an expression of the yearnings for a becoming built by social players who look for a fairer society, where the distribution of the immaterial goods of humanity is guaranteed by the school, transcending its role as ideological State apparatus, from a perspective of social transformation and collective creativity.

Therefore, we need, still on the school floor, to arouse the resistance that Brazilian society requires of its citizens, under the penalty of deepening unacceptable setbacks, such as the minimization of art at school. It is a must to keep, even if within the division of time of the language area, art classes at all schools. It is also urgent to use the time of diversified contents, which accounts for 40% of the school time at all levels, to expand the time of art at school, with practices such as popular culture, in which regional knowledge is widely disseminated. So, we conclude by adding that the training and artistic-cultural performance of teachers and students inside of the school should be instruments to pursue the expression of the yearnings of the population, children, youngsters, and educators, for a rather critical and creative education.

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