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## **‘A Breeze’ of Cubism at the Reggio Emilia Schools: “Mirror Triangle”**

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### **Abstract**

Education and art movements, which are common development and evolution tools for societies, have been affected by communities as much as they have affected one another. This affection, continues in a supporting way for decades just as in the spring of 1945; Reggio Emilia Schools was started by the natives of the small village, called Villa Cella (located in 50 kilometers northwest of Reggio Emilia region), building a school for the infants, and gone well beyond being a socialist based dream of Malaguzzi becoming common pre-school institutions of the modern day. Just as Cubism which signifies the geometric objects which are able to present the topic with its different aspects simultaneously. The research, aims to reveal ‘a breeze’ of Cubism at the Reggio Emilia Schools as an example of “mirror triangle”. As for the methodology, literature review orientated for the art movement and education; descriptive method of the non-experimental pedagogical research .

**Keywords:** Reggio Emilia Schools, cubism, mirror triangle, creativity, early childhood

### **Introduction**

Education and art movements, which are common development and evolution tools for societies, have been affected by communities as much as they have affected one another.

The main question of the study is: ***“If there is a connection between the 'mirror triangles' which are present at the Reggio Emilia schools and the 'cubism'”***

This is depending on the fundamental questions, Reggio Emilia Schools and Cubism has been described under separate subheadings.

### **Reggio Emilia School**

The Reggio Emilia is an educational approach focuses on especially preschool and primary education. The Reggio Emilia got its name from the town of the same name in the north of Italy. Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994) is the founder. A socialist based dream of Malaguzzi which is the approach and ideology becoming common pre-school institutions of the modern day.

1945's after The Second World War; countries, who participated in the war lost a lot of things humanity like Italy. Reggio Emilia citizens fight for democracy between 1945-1960 and the same years' seeds were taken of alternative educational ideas. Reggio Experience emerged from the political maelstrom of the battle between Facsim and Socialism/Communism<sup>1</sup>.

Since 1963, the city government has assumed the responsibility of running the schools started by the natives of the small village in the Reggio Emilia region called Villa Cella . In 1968, the city Reggio Emilia, took over the administration and financing and children from local government of children aged three to five so that they were entitled to preschool education. People there have contributed a lot to the understanding and meaning of quality preschool education. They were among the first ones who decided to organise day care for children. The schools of Reggio Emilia are built upon a social constructivist framework inspired by John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner<sup>2</sup>. Reggio philosophy is grounded in Kantian thinking that we do not learn about the world

because we observe it, but rather because we ask question of it. The way we propose how a school should be is an ethical, politic, social and economic responsibility for the entire community<sup>3</sup>

### **The Reggio Emilia Approach**

The Reggio Approach is a complex system that respects and puts into practice many of the fundamental aspects of the work of John Dewey. Malaguzzi developed his theory and philosophy of early childhood education from direct practice in schools for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Hall, K., Cunneen, M., Cunningham, D., Horgan, M., Murphy, R., & Ridgway, A. (2014). *Loris Malaguzzi and the Reggio Emilia Experience*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> Vodopivec L., (2012); *The Reggio Emilia Concept Or Different Perspective On Preschool Education In Kindergartens*.

<sup>3</sup> Hall, K., Cunneen, M., Cunningham, D., Horgan, M., Murphy, R., & Ridgway, A. (2014). *Loris Malaguzzi and the Reggio Emilia Experience*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

<sup>4</sup> Gandini, L. (1993). Fundamentals of the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education. *Young Children*, 49(1), 4-8.

This approach helps the toddlers to discover new experiences. While expressing themselves they can benefit from many different symbolic tools and materials. For instance; shadow play, music, drama and the others, in the Reggio approach called "The Hundred Languages of Children".

The child has a hundred languages  
a hundred hands  
a hundred thoughts  
a hundred ways of thinking  
of playing, of speaking.

Emilia approach which enable the students concrete experiences, are offered to children. Thus classroom environment is of great importance. It is an exciting place of exploration.<sup>1</sup>

### Reggio Emilia Mirrors

Raggio Emilia Schools as noticeable as the educational environment of the approach. Emilia teachers places mirrors on the ground as children walks, stood and even did hand stands over the mirrors. Here they also looks at their reflections. Back in class, students drew trees and pictures, cutting out their pictures and placing them near small mirrors so that their artworks could be reflected in the mirrors<sup>2</sup>.

Emilia schools for young children have been developed by the collaboration with the educators and the architects in the construction. In Reggio Emilia Schools educational environment is organized promoting childrens creativity, for example: convex, concave mirrors and 'mirror triangle'



**Image 1: mirror cube**



**Image 2: Concave Mirror**

<sup>1</sup> Edwards, C. P., Gandini, L., & Forman, G. E. (Eds.). (1998). *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach--advanced reflections*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards, C. P., Gandini, L., & Forman, G. E. (Eds.). (1998). *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach--advanced reflections*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

There are mirrors with different properties on the ceiling and on the floor. Among all convex and concave mirrors, the one located at the entrance ‘mirror triangle’ is the most remarkable. ‘Mirror triangle’ basically aims to make *it possible for the children to see themselves, both back and forth in different clothes and in dramatic areas and how the backs of their bodies looked like. In particular, a mirror triangle, allowed the children to see other perspectives.*



**Image 3: Mirror Triangle**



**Image 4: Mirror Triangle**

### **Cubism**

Cubism was one of the most influential visual art styles of the early twentieth century. It was created by Cezanne (1839-1906). Two other important artists who developed cubism were Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and Georges Braque 1882-1963). Cubism was the cornerstone of twentieth-century art because it broke with past tradition definitively; established “modernist” flatness, opticality, and involvement with the medium of art; and thus sanctioned a new tradition that would lead to nonobjective art as well as to assemblage and to other “modernist” principles and practices. *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)* (Picasso 1911) was significant in Picasso's subsequent development of Cubism. <sup>1</sup>

The Cubist artists rejected the inherited concept that art should copy nature, or that they should adopt the traditional techniques of perspective, modeling, and foreshortening. They wanted instead to emphasize the two-dimensionality of the canvas. So they reduced and fractured objects into geometric forms, and then

<sup>1</sup> Fry, E. F. (1988). Picasso, cubism, and reflexivity. *Art Journal*, 47(4), 296-310.

realigned these within a shallow, relief in place. Relation of the Kantian art tradition with the principles of enlightenment modernity.



**Image 5: Les Demoiselles d'Avignon (Picasso 1907)**



**Image 6: Head of a Woman (Picasso 1960)**

## Conclusion

In this paper we want to discuss; *“If there is a connection between the 'mirror triangles' which are present at the Reggio Emilia schools and the 'cubism’”*

Studies have shown that; The aim of the Reggio approach is to promote children’s education through the development of all their languages: expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, ethical, metaphorical, logical, imaginative and relational. Reggio approach is not only influenced by John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner but also Kant’s philosophy. Reggio Emilia approach and cubism is oppoiste to Fascism.

One of the key principles of the Reggio Emilia schools is a deeply held belief in the positive image of the child. It builds on the premise that each child has the desire to connect with others, to engage in learning, and to enter into a relationship with their environment.

Malaguzzi’s *Reggio Emilia* project was also exceptionally successful in the development of artistic creativity and creative thinking in pre-school children. Mirror triangle is of great importance for the Emilia Project. Reggio classrooms often use mirrors on the walls and in other places in the environment, including on table tops and in conjunction with light tables and a whole range of open-ended, free materials.

'Mirror Triangle' gives chance to the children to see themselves from different perspectives just as in the cubism...

The limitations of perspective were also seen as an obstacle to progress by the Cubists. The fact that a picture drawn in perspective could only work from one viewpoint restricted their options. As the image was drawn from a fixed position, the result was frozen but the Cubists wanted to make pictures that reached beyond the rigid geometry of perspective.

According to sources, many of the schools are named after people who influenced the thinking of the community. One of the infant-toddler centers Cervi school, was named after Genoeffa Cervi, a mother of 16 whose seven sons killed by Fascists in 1943 during Second World War. Other schools were named after important events. For example 25th April after the liberation of Italy after the Second World War. Others were named after well-known artist Pablo Picasso. Schools have been named in honor of artists, scientists, writers or poets<sup>1</sup>.

According to Einstein's 'Theory of Relativity'; the apparent reality is relative and the variable and represents only an aspect of the truth. Art has occurred by reflection of the different perceptions of reality<sup>2</sup>.

This work as in the "Theory of Relativity" tries to reveal an unknown connection between cubism and Reggio Emilia schools from a different perspective. Following works on the subject will either prove or disprove this hypothesis.

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