



DESTINATION: ART (KUNSTREJSEN) – On the trail of reality

Educational program Sorø Kunstmuseum (Sorø Art Museum), Denmark 2012 – 2014¹

Partner 5: Università Degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy > Emma Nardi

1.Exhibition Concept

DESTINATION: ART is an educational programme developed in Cultural Region Mid- and West Zealand, Denmark. The programme is the product of collaboration between three museums: the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde, Museum Odsherred and Sorø Kunstmuseum. DESTINATION: ART unfolds in a local context – the region of Zealand – but incorporates global perspectives on museum education and collaboration, transcending municipal and institutional borders in the region.

The essence of DESTINATION: ART is to provide unique and enriching artistic experiences for as many pupils as possible in a region of Denmark with limited museum access. Instead of perceiving the participating schools' remote geographical locations as a limitation, they are used to foster a sense of knowledge and ownership of the physical cultural landscape. DESTINATION: ART is, in this respect, both a journey into the world of art as well as a physical journey between three museums. The physical journey and its parameters are perceived as an extended, active learning space offering direct relevancy and support to learning in schools and museums. During DESTINATION: ART, pupils visit three art museums taking them on a journey through 300 years of art history –

¹ <http://www.sorokunstmuseum.dk/en>

from the 18th century to the vibrant world of contemporary art. On their journey, pupils are accompanied by an international contemporary artist whose task is to relate pupil experience in the exhibitions to her own artistic practice in an interactive workshop.

The objective of DESTINATION: ART is to increase and enrich schools' knowledge of the museums within their local cultural region helping them become engaged and critical users. An additional goal is to reveal and reinforce the synergies that arise as a result of cross-disciplinary collaboration between museums, schools and municipalities making best use of learning opportunities present before, during, and after a museum visit.

DESTINATION: ART's mission is to support Cultural Region Zealand's vision in accordance with the Danish Ministry of Culture's strategic programme *Culture for All*. This programme aims to make use of existing cultural resources within various regions in Denmark, so as to make regional cultural opportunities visible and readily accessible to as many local citizens as possible. In addition, the programme seeks to strengthen inter-municipal collaboration, develop and intensify collaboration between schools and cultural institutions, as well as between schools and local cultural administrators and, on the whole, contribute to the development of the cultural region's art museums.

DESTINATION: ART was also created upon the request of area schools and on the basis of experience gained during the pilot project, *On the Trail of Art (På sporet af kunsten)*, a collaboration between Sorø Kunstmuseum and Museum Odsherred. During the pilot project, pupils travelled between the two museums exploring two different collections as well as two different geographical areas of their own cultural region. DESTINATION: ART aims to extend this experience to a larger audience, this time incorporating a workshop session and introducing a greater contemporary relevancy and unique professional dimension through collaborative relations with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde and a contemporary artist. The journey examines the relationship between art and reality through the mediation of selected works from participating museums all varying in provenience, artistic media and style. Students are taken on an adventurous and imaginative journey, gaining valuable knowledge and experience of the art world as well as insight into the cultural life of their local region.

2. Reception

The overall response from pupils and teachers indicates strong support for the programme. The majority of pupils have found it amusing, educational, and exciting to participate in DESTINATION: ART. 85% say that they have developed the desire to visit other museums and 90% said that they have become more aware of art and culture in their geographical region. Teachers' responses to the programme's teaching materials have generally been positive. The majority of teachers have used it primarily in preparation for the museum visit and find the exercises relevant, well-adapted to the target audience and accessible, making working with art clear and engaging. The teaching material has also been very well received by the participating pupils. Upon completing assigned preparation tasks, pupils reported back that the exercises were fun, different and have helped them develop new knowledge about art – and, in

particular, art in their local communities (see teaching material, maps 1-3 at www.kunst-rejsen.dk-undervisningsmateriale). The material was evaluated by the pupils as being “cool”, “different” and “interesting” and by the teachers as “relevant and instructive”. The website has, thus far, been widely used and pupils have uploaded their productions, written posts in the travel log, commented on the productions of others and tagged their travels. In general, pupils and teachers feel the artist workshop is an important and essential activity in the DESTINATION: ART sessions. It gives pupils a better understanding of the artistic process and the transformation from idea into reality. Pupils also acquire better understanding of a current artist’s aesthetic field and working conditions. Approximately 80% of pupils rated the artist workshop as being the most fun, giving them a hands-on understanding of what it means to work with art. DESTINATION: ART’s participating artist (in this case, Marie Kølbaek Iversen) received high praise from both teachers and pupils for her pedagogical approach during the workshop. Her open-ended presentation of her own artistic practices which raised more questions than answers about the life of an artist, was particularly appealing to both teachers and pupils and an exciting counterbalance to the museum educators’ clearly defined and facilitative role. Prior to the various museum visits, the artist writes a letter to the pupils in which he or she tells a bit about him- or herself and his/her artistic practice. The pupils are also given the artist’s e-mail address, so that they can communicate directly with the artist at any time or location. On the whole, pupils assessed their relationship to the artist as “inviting”, “exciting” and “educational”.

3. Exhibition Design

The structure of the programme is based on a three-stage approach - before, during and after the DESTINATION: ART museum visit. Active learning during each stage is facilitated by the pupil material, the teacher’s guide and the website.

Stage 1: BEFORE: Art appreciation and understanding (at school).

Stage 2: DURING: Art experience and in-depth reflection (on the journey – this stage entails both the physical journey between the school and the museum as well as the intellectual and creative journey through a first-hand art experience at the museum).

Stage 3: AFTER: Art reflection and follow-up work (back at school and on www.kunst-rejsen.dk).

4. Visitors Approach-Activation/Participation

Pupils as active travellers – before, during and after

Throughout the course of DESTINATION: ART, pupils are active travellers - during preparation in the classroom, on their travels through the local landscape, when experiencing art at the museum, when meeting the workshop’s contemporary artist, and on the project website. This perpetual process of active learning is reflected in DESTINATION: ART’s teaching materials where pupils work academically and creatively on a variety of levels. They

transform their perceptions into creative expression and increase their ability to combine a personal understanding of art with knowledge gained during their museum experience.

The teaching material is likewise divided up according to the aforementioned three-stage approach. The material has been developed by pupils and for pupils and fulfils the official learning objectives for mid-level primary school pupils as specified by the Danish Ministry of Education. By endowing pupils with an active and developmental role in the production of the material, they are given a sense of ownership and influence on the journey, which increases motivation, a sense of responsibility and academic enrichment.

In addition, the project website is a practical working tool, which acts as a liaison between the three museum visits, between the school and the students, and as a concrete didactic tool in a variety of teaching situations. It is a hub for student activity and production generated in connection with the workshop sessions. The website acts thus as a “station” connecting the different museum visits and can be used in the classroom or at home between museum visits. The website is structured like a map that functions on multiple levels. On the one hand, it is a geographical map, which gives the students an overview of the local region, and on the other, a tagging map, where the pupils can tag different destinations running from Odsherred through Sorø and over to Roskilde. Each tag has an associated thematic focus, which brings together content from pupils’ various trips. They can upload productions, pictures and comments from their coursework as well as share their own personal travel guide. Once again user involvement creates interest and ownership in the user through his/her contribution to relevant and customized information and knowledge-sharing, which will lead to mutual enrichment for the participating schools and museums.

During the course of the DESTINATION: ART programme, pupils visit three different art museums taking them on a journey through 300 years of art history – from the 18th century to an exploration of modernist trends, all the way up to the vibrant world of contemporary art. Pupils are exposed to various artistic media from painting and photography, to sound and performance as well as a series of active didactic methods such as narration and role play. On their journey, pupils are accompanied by an international contemporary artist whose task it is to relate pupil experience from the museum exhibition space to his/her own artistic practice in an interactive workshop conducted at the individual museums.

The objective of the journey

- To strengthen visibility and promote collaboration between the region’s art museums.
- To strengthen teaching in schools, during the physical journey, at the museum and on the internet following the museum visit.
- To provide all school children – regardless of their geographical residence – with a museum experience.
- To strengthen pupils’ ability to experience and immerse themselves in art and explore the diversity of its meaning-making and forms of expression.
- To make art accessible and relevant to pupils’ own reality, so that they can relate their visits and experiences at the art museums to everyday life.



- To utilize art and aesthetic learning processes as catalysts for diversified and inspiring teaching as well as facilitators of the development of creative processes that extend beyond the traditional visual arts.
- To support, complement and re-contextualize the core curriculum requirements and standardized learning benchmarks set for Danish primary schools in the subjects of Danish and Art.

When a class books a “journey”, each pupil receives a DESTINATION:ART set. The set consists of eight cards with various activities to be carried out in preparation at the school, on the way to the museum, at the museum itself and back in the classroom. The pupil materials and website aim to ensure continued contact and knowledge-sharing between DESTINATION: ART, PUPILS and MUSEUMS. This builds bridges between preparation at the school, the visit to the museums and follow-up work back at the school (www.kunst-rejsen.dk/turen-går-til).

DESTINATION: ART is bound together by various pathways in art’s expression, media and method. At Museum Odsherred pupils examine, through a collection by Odsherred’s painters, how artists portray and convey personal experience of the realities found just outside their door. There is a focus on narrative and how a single painting can contain a treasure trove of good stories. At Sorø Kunstmuseum, pupils examine selected periods in art history and how they relate to the reality of the day. There is a conscious focus on the photographic eye as well as issues like documentation, self-portrayal and dreams and reality. At the Museum of Contemporary Art, pupils zoom in on reality as seen through the eyes of the present and examine how artists work today. With a focus on contemporary forms of artistic expression such as installation, performance and sound art, pupils look at the relationship of art to authenticity, individuality and artistic process as well as the relationship between action and recollection. Academically, DESTINATION: ART is the study of various media, such as photo, video and painting, as well as of methods such as narration and role play. DESTINATION: ART is, however, also a movement between personal art narratives, an art historical tour de force and a contemporary meeting with our vibrant present

5. Conclusion: “ DESTINATION: ART” project with respect to COP1-COP2

Toolkit 1 – Making Europe visible. DESTINATION: ART was developed with the objective of providing unique and enriching artistic experiences for as many pupils as possible in a region of Denmark with limited access to museums. Many schools located in Cultural Region Mid- and West Zealand are geographically located far from the region’s artistic and cultural institutions. Unfortunately, coordinating public transport between schools and institutions is often so costly and resource intensive that museum excursions are far from top priority for area schools.

DESTINATION: ART’s mission is to support Cultural Region Zealand’s vision in accordance with the Danish Ministry of Culture’s strategic programme *Culture for All*. This programme aims to make use of existing cultural resources within various regions in Denmark, so as to make regional cultural opportunities visible and readily accessible to as many local citizens as possible.



Toolkit 2 – The Museum as a ‘social arena’. Instead of perceiving the participating schools’ remote geographical locations as a limitation, they are actively utilized to foster pupils’ sense of knowledge and ownership of the region’s physical cultural landscape. DESTINATION: ART is, in this respect, both a journey into the world of art as well as a physical journey between three museums. This physical journey and its parameters are integrated as an extended, active learning space offering direct relevancy and support to learning processes back at the schools and museums. All DESTINATION: ART sessions include an artist workshop, where a current contemporary artist initiates and contextualizes creative processes among pupils. The workshop results in a product, for example, a photograph, audio recording or performance which pupils can upload on the website

Toolkit 3 – Bridging-the-gap. DESTINATION: ART unfolds in a local context – the region of Zealand – but incorporates global perspectives on museum education and collaboration, transcending municipal and institutional borders in the region..

Toolkit 4 - Synaesthetic translation and transformation of contents. DESTINATION: ART wants to define and develop a common future vision for the journey of art - a vision that must be supported and strengthened by inter-museum collaboration with schools, local authorities and contemporary artists. A collaborative alliance that will create breeding ground for new alternative learning environments – upon the journey through the local landscape, at the museum and later back at school. In this way, art itself, as well as the journey to art and with art, will not only include primary school subjects such as Art and Danish, but also subjects as history, geography and physics, thus supporting the school’s work with interdisciplinarity in and outside of school. In addition, the programme also has a future ambition of collaborating with the Danish national public transportation system.

Toolkit 5 - Social web and interaction with new media. On kunst-rejsen.dk students can share experiences from their journey with classmates, friends and family. Pupils can see pictures from their museum visit, upload their own works, comment on friends’ pictures and works, meet and read about the DESTINATION: ART participating artists, carry out creative exercises and much more.



Pictures are downloaded from
<http://www.kunst-rejsen.dk/>

Click here to watch a video of the “journey” from school to the museum and back to school.
<http://www.kunst-rejsen.dk/din-rejse>