

THE ANALYSIS OF THE VISUAL IMAGE: HISTORICAL APPROACH FROM THE TEACHING OF THE PLASTIC ARTS

Leandro Ernesto Prado Soriano

Department of Theoretical Studies of the Visual Arts, Faculty of Visual Arts
University of the Arts of Cuba

Calle 120 # 904 entre 9na y 23. Cubanacán. Playa, La Habana, Cuba

E-mail address: lprado@isa.cult.cu

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5424-1016>

Joachim Nowak

Theological Institute in Spišska Kapitula

Catholic University in Ružomberok

Spišská Kapitula 12, 053 04 Spišské Podhradie, Slovakia

E-mail address: dr.joachimnowak@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7892-1016>

Andrea Konova

Department of Romance and German Studies, Faculty of Arts

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

Štefánikova 67, 949 74 Nitra, Slovakia

E-mail address: andrea.konova@ukf.sk

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1501-2418>

Svetlana Hubková

Theological Institute in Spišska Kapitula, Catholic University in Ružomberok

Spišská Kapitula 12, 053 04 Spišské Podhradie, Slovakia

E-mail address: hubkova.svetlana82@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8751-2011>

ABSTRACT

Aim. In the article, a historical approach to the analysis of the visual image is made in the way in which the didactic studies applied to the plastic arts in Latin America have treated it, with emphasis on Cuba, Spain, Brazil and Argentina.

Methods. The methods used are historical-logical and document analysis.

Results. As a result, a historical-trend study of the analysis of the visual image is offered during the last three centuries, a period in which it is possible to speak of a thought and didactic related to the plastic arts in the region.

Conclusion. The trend historical study and the criticism carried out demonstrate the need to base a method of analysis of the visual image that really responds to the purpose and objectives of Primary Education.

Cognitive value. The analysis of the visual image is an essential component of the didactics of plastic education that requires a renewal based on the knowledge of its historical evolution and the contributions of science on art.

Keywords: analysis of the visual image, didactics, plastic arts, fine arts, primary education

INTRODUCTION

In the article, a historical study is carried out on the analysis of the visual image in the teaching-learning process of plastic arts in primary education. The journey through the tradition of private didactics in Ibero-America took into account the following aspects: methods of analysis of the visual image used in the teaching-learning process of plastic arts in primary education, pedagogical practices of teachers and arts instructors in the teaching-learning process of the plastic arts, and the learning of the analysis of the visual image in schoolchildren of primary education.

The processing of the historical bibliography, as well as the analysis of didactic documents and the interviews with teachers and former school graduates of primary education at different times, allowed identification of three stages in the evolution and development of the didactics of plastic arts, with emphasis in visual image analysis. The identified stages are:

- First stage: from the 18th century to 1960. Oriented towards practical, academic, reproductive and geometrising purposes;
- Second stage: from 1961 to 1975. Focused on drawing, oriented towards sensory education, free creation and methodological eclecticism;
- Third stage: from 1976 to 2022. Of standardised appreciation, diversification of trends and first signs of analysis of the visual image.

Once the stages have been identified, we proceed to the characterisation of the analysis of the visual image in each of them, the identification of its regularities, and

the determination of its historical trends in the teaching-learning of plastic arts in primary education.

FIRST STAGE: FROM THE 18TH CENTURY TO 1960. ORIENTED TOWARDS PRACTICAL, ACADEMIC, REPRODUCTIVE AND GEOMETRISING PURPOSES

The teaching of plastic arts in primary education (elementary school), is developed in this first stage “under the common name of drawing. By drawing, historically speaking (...) we have to understand both the technical-utilitarian aspect—incarnated in linear drawing—as well as the artistic one. (...)” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 103) The teaching of drawing during the 18th and 19th centuries was characterised by being: pragmatic, that is, oriented towards practical purposes, academic, constrained to copy, imitation and reproduction, alien to the world of children (Cabrera, 2017) and with a “geometrising tendency” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 126, footnote).

In the historical approaches to the didactics of the plastic arts during this first stage, no evidence of any analytical exercise is left. Although the copies, imitations and reproductions demanded the systematic application of observation, and supposed the comparison between the original and the copy, both were methods that were legitimised in humanistic research, but that were applied intuitively, imitatively, and empirically by teachers, who basically followed the guidelines of art teachers in academies and schools of arts and crafts, since they were not contextualised and systematised the methods referred to in a particular pedagogical-didactic body.

In relation to the pedagogical practices of drawing teachers during the teaching-learning process of plastic arts in primary education, José de la Luz y Caballero abounds:

In the first semester they dedicate themselves to the relief and shading of works of art, such as houses, churches, vessels, etc. In the second they copy good drawings of landscapes, flowers, with the idea of familiarising themselves with the style of the best masters. (Luz, 1952, as cited in Cabrera, 2017, p. 109)

Regarding the learning of the analysis of the visual image in students of primary education during the first stage, it can be inferred that it was intuitive, elementary, reproductive and limited to the verification of the quality of the copy and imitation, as it results from the observation and comparison, the methods used empirically in elementary schools of the time.

As a summary, it can be considered that during the first stage:

- A theoretical-methodological body of the didactics of plastic arts had not yet been formed, which had an impact on the teaching-learning process of this artistic manifestation in primary education, by determining the inclusion of linear and natural drawing as content of the geometry, fundamentally, given by the practical purpose of its teaching, academi-

cism, the limitation to copying, imitation and reproduction, its distancing from the world of children and the geometric tendency;

- Among the methods of analysis of the visual image used in the teaching-learning process of plastic arts in primary education during the first stage, observation and comparison were identified;
- The pedagogical practices of teachers during the teaching-learning process of plastic arts in primary education can be considered intuitive, imitative and empirical;
- The learning of the analysis of the visual image in schoolchildren of primary education, it can be inferred that it was elementary, reproductive and limited to the verification of the quality of the copy and imitation.

Once the insufficiencies and potentialities of private didactics have been identified and explained during its first stage, the second stage of this historical-trend study begins.

SECOND STAGE: FROM 1960 TO 1975. FOCUSED ON DRAWING, AND ORIENTED TOWARDS SENSORY EDUCATION, FREE CREATION AND METHODOLOGICAL ECLECTICISM

The teaching of plastic arts in elementary school during the 20th century was characterised by being centred on drawing, oriented towards sensory education and pragmatism —generally practical purposes—, due to its mimetic spirit, and methodological eclecticism (Cabrera, 2017), while maintaining during the first decades “the old geometrising tendency” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 126, footnote), “as if the nineteenth-century tradition were maintained” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 111).

Regarding the methods of analysis of the visual image used in the teaching and learning of plastic arts in primary education, the plastic arts plan specified that work would be done to develop the observation of formal characteristics in the surrounding world, for which the system of constant questions would be used, with a view to stimulating the capacity for observation (CNC-MINED, 1970).

Another transcendental solution to confront the shortcomings of the teaching staff responsible for the teaching-learning of the plastic arts, was the edition of the book *Ver, hacer y apreciar las Artes Plásticas* [See, do and appreciate the plastic arts], composed by María Elena Jubrías and Oscar Morriña (1976). The exercises in this book “meet the condition of not requiring a direct judgment from the teacher regarding its aesthetic quality, because the most important thing is not the immediate result of the realisation itself, but rather the development of his creative ability as a means “expression.” (CNC-MINED, 1970, para. 25)

In relation to appreciation, the book by Jubrías and Morriña states that it is made up of “a series of questions aimed at motivating observation with a direct

use of the plastic aspect” (CNC-MINED, 1970, para. 26). This shows that, from the methodological point of view, even when steps were taken towards the organisation of the appreciative activity, the old method of observation was not transcended, now with a characteristic that would mark entry into the third stage: standardised appreciation of the visual image. For this, the guide for the teacher was prepared, which indicated “which exercises, which assessment questionnaire and which sheets should be used in each thematic unit of the programmes” (CNC-MINED, 1970, para. 27).

The pedagogical practices of the teachers during this second stage continued to be tied to the often insufficiently understood criteria of the specialists, to their appreciation guides that were applied uncritically, and to the spontaneous activities of free creation with the available materials, which evidenced the lack of commitment of many teachers in relation to the Plastic Arts, resulting from their limited assessment of the formative scope of this subject, as well as from the consideration of its hygienic function within the teaching process.” The lack of experience of our teachers in this matter and the scarcity of materials imposed a basic limitation on us that conditioned some of the characteristics of the plan” (CNC-MINED, 1970, para. 36).

As a consequence of the pedagogical practices, the learning of the analysis of the visual image in students of primary education during the second stage was basically limited to the free and spontaneous creation, which emphasised the expression of the affective states of the student, and whose appropriation transcended more for the ludic component of the activity, than for its formative incidence, which corresponds to the aforementioned vision of the plastic arts as a basically hygienic matter within the pedagogical process.

As a summary, it can be considered that during the second stage:

- A methodological body of the didactics of plastic arts is built, still focused on drawing, oriented towards free creation, sensory education and pragmatism, and characterised by its mimetic spirit and methodological eclecticism;
- Among the methods of analysis of the visual image used in the teaching-learning process of Plastic Arts in Primary Education during the stage, observation based on creation predominated.

The pedagogical practices of the teachers during the teaching-learning process of the Plastic Arts in Primary Education, were conditioned by the documents.

Methodological side panels, but they still showed insufficient cultural, technical-artistic and didactic preparation.

The learning of visual image analysis in Primary School students was intuitive, elemental, spontaneous and reduced to free creation and playful activity.

Identified and explained the insufficiencies and potentialities of the particular didactics during its second stage, we enter the third stage of the historical-trend study.

THIRD STAGE: FROM 1976 TO 2022. OF STANDARDISED APPRECIATION, DIVERSIFICATION OF TRENDS AND FIRST SIGNS OF ANALYSIS OF THE VISUAL IMAGE

Although the definition of plastic education is a contribution from the end of the previous stage, the third stage has begun with reference to it, as it determines many of the dominant didactic ideas since then. In 1974, the Argentine pedagogue Dora M. Acerete wrote her book titled *Objetivos y didáctica de la educación plástica* [Objective and didactics of plastic education]. guide for the undergraduate teacher, where she argued that she would use the name plastic education for the subject called drawing until then, because that name did not cover all the activities that the children carried out, which included modeling, building, gluing, cutting, and draw (Cabrera, 1989).

In Cuba the denomination is adopted, and from this moment on, a theoretical and methodological didactic body is generated, directed to plastic education teachers, fundamentally, but also to Plastic Arts Instructors. In this sense, it is opportune to mention that the didactic body of Cuban production was consolidated from the work developed by specialists such as Rafaela Chacón Nardi, Ramón Cabrera and Ligia Ruiz Espín, among others. Subsequently, towards the second decade of the 21st century, there was a split between the followers of the national didactic tradition, generally belonging to the Ministry of Education and the System of Houses of Culture, and those who, headed by Ramón Cabrera from the Faculty of Arts Visuals from the University of the Arts, have brought national thought into dialogue with numerous universal tendencies, including the triangular proposal, systematised by the Brazilian Ana Mae Barbosa, in the teaching-learning of the Plastic Arts.

Since 2004, plastic arts instructors have been incorporated into Cuban schools, who have the basic technical-artistic preparation, essential for the development of creative and appreciative processes in school. However, their actions in relation to appreciation and analysis generally remain tied to the observation guides or systems of questions, orientations and activities included in the basic texts, such as *Ver, hacer y apreciar las Artes Plásticas* by Jubrías and Morriña (1976), *Apreciación de las artes visuales* [Appreciation of the visual arts] by Cabrera (1978), *Fundamentos de la forma* [Fundamentals of form], by Morriña (1982), *Metodología de la enseñanza de las Artes Plásticas* [Methodology of the teaching of plastic arts] by Cabrera (1989), *Metodología de la Educación Plástica en la edad infantil* [Methodology of plastic education in childhood] by Ruiz Espín, et al. (1991), *Indagaciones sobre arte y educación* [Inquiries on art and education] by Cabrera (2010), *Por los Caminos del Arte: un acercamiento a sus manifestaciones en Cuba* [Along the paths of art: An approach to its manifestations in Cuba], by Paula M. Sánchez et al. (2013), among others, generally distant from current didactic thinking.

Among the methods of analysis of the visual image that are applied during this third stage are the appreciation guide by Ligia Ruiz Espín (1978), the appreciation activities proposed by Ramón Cabrera (1978), visual perception and the analysis of relationships in the system-form, by Morriña (1982), the steps and questionnaires for observation, and the guide for the evaluation of the results of creation by the teacher, postulated by Ruiz Espín et al. (1991), the visual analysis of a plastic work with a more integral sense, proposed by María del Carmen Rumbaut & Joaquín Yánes (2004), the expressive means to determine, indicated by Sánchez et al. (2013), the background and foundations of the appreciation, and the formal analysis according to Edilia Perdomo, et al. (2013), the reading of the image proposed by Barbosa (2012) and Cabrera (2017), and the comparison, also based on Cabrera (2017).

The appreciation guide, by Ligia Ruiz Espín (1978), includes the approaches to the author and the addressee, the formal aspects and the content of the work, and the information that it provides about the time and the author. Some intentions of dialogue with culture can be appreciated in this primitive form of analysis, which are reflected in the study offered as a sample by the author, about the work *Interior with columns*, by Amelia Peláez del Casal, when referring, in a very elementary way: “What does it say? (...) the capital (typical architectural element of the time) (...) a wicker chair, a piece of furniture that was widely used at the time (...)” (Ruíz Espín, 1978, p. 39). In a general sense, this guide reveals the limitations of the didactic thought of the time, which in turn reflects, to some extent, the state of theoretical studies of plastic arts.

The appreciation activities of Ramón Cabrera (1978) fundamentally ponder the comparative and observation methods, bases of the author’s didactic thought. Questions that aim to identify the radical differences that are observed between two axes (Cabrera, 1978), to compare the image of the work *La carreta* [The road], by Federico Amérigo, with the reality that the peasant lived, and the causes of the treatment given to that reality in the work (Cabrera, 1978), or the similarities and differences that can be established between architecture and painting (Cabrera, 1978), between many others reveal an advanced ideology for its time, but limited in the present if it is intended to legitimise only the comparison as a didactic principle, essentially related to visualisation and creative practice (Cabrera, 2017).

Also found in the book *Apreciación de las artes visuales* by Cabrera (1978), are questions that point to other methods of analysis of the visual image, such as sociological, historical, and structural-functional, without arguing them didactically. Among these issues, there are those that are oriented towards the identification and assessment of the transformations that the Cuban Revolution has carried out in the urban elements of cities (Cabrera, 1978), the function that the design has fulfilled graphics in revolutionary processes (Cabrera, 1978), or the treatment of the plastic elements that are observed in the painting of artists such as Carlos Enríquez, Eduardo Abela or Arístides Fernández (Cabrera, 1978).

The method of analysis of system-form relationships, proposed by Morriña (1982), conceives the work of art as a system (Zavatsky as cited in Morriña, 1982), and is based, at least in its intention, on the dialectical relations of content and form, immanent to the plastic work. Morriña's method, which "does not intend more than to suggest a certain ordering in the search" (1982, p. 71), includes three stages that are barely interrelated: location of the work, formal analysis, and conclusion-assessment. Morriña briefly mentions the function-meaning-assessment unit. It is prudent to point out that the method of system-form relationships is not didactically based, but it is included in this study due to its wide use in the training of Art Instructors, and in the teaching-learning of Plastic Arts in Primary Education.

Morriña socio-historically and biographically contextualises the work of art in its creation contexts, but does not take into account the role of the recipient, nor the incidence of decoding contexts in updating meanings and senses. In the stage of formal analysis, he does not take into account the intratextual functionality of the structures, and does not establish a pragmatic dialogue with the cultures and contexts of creation, in such a way that the approaches of the first stage of analysis are justified. The formal study is based, fundamentally, on the identification of the structural and thematic features, separately, and the method concludes with the assessment of the work, based on its degree of contemporaneity, social value of the content, and aesthetic quality, without explaining the relationships of the conclusion-assessment stage with those of location and analysis of the work, nor the appreciation and analysis with the creative processes of the artists or schoolchildren.

Ruiz Espín et al. (1991) address the interrelation and interaction between the arts, their incidence in the development and enrichment of the different manifestations, and the relationship between materials, which refers to the current conceptions about intertextuality and the semiotic transposition of languages, without sufficiently arguing the ways of educating schoolchildren for the determination (identification) and awareness of these relationships and incidences.

On the other hand, they expose valuable didactic ideas about observation as an intellectual ability "rector of all appreciation" (Ruiz Espín et al., 1991, p. 118), offer methodological recommendations, propose six "levels of development that the observation activity can reach" (p. 122), as well as a series of "general steps that the student must follow to carry out the observation" (p. 123), and detail the different aspects to be taken into account for an adequate observation: place where it is found, period and style, author, classification, elements of the plastic arts (shape, area or size, colour, texture and lines), principles of design (proportion, balance, rhythm or emphasis, perspective), material from which it is made (technique), and general assessment of the work (Ruiz Espín et al., 1991).

This proposal, indebted to the previous one elaborated by Ruiz Espín (1978), and superior to that one and others for transcending the age limits of early childhood, shares the limitations of the theoretical-methodological thought of didactics at the time,

by limiting itself to the identification and uncritical enumeration of formal features or characteristics, without establishing relationships between the structure of the work and the content, nor establishing a systematic dialogue with the culture (time, style, author), or the contexts of appreciation. These authors do not sufficiently explain the relationship between observation and creative artistic processes.

Ruiz Espín et al. (1991) also propose to teachers the development of “well-structured” (p. 161) assessment questionnaires, and offer a simple example. In addition to observation, in their *Metodología de la Educación Plástica en la edad infantil*, the authors operate with the ability of comparison, “whether between objects, phenomena, etc., to establish similarities and differences.” (Ruiz Espín et al., 1991, p. 171)

In relation to the assessment of the works created by schoolchildren, Ruiz Espín et al. (1991) offer a series of five indices addressed to the teacher, which include compliance with the class objective, completion, knowledge and use of materials and utensils, and cleaning, for the evaluation, by the teacher, of the formal and semantic values present in the work of schoolchildren. Likewise, they offer guidelines such as: the organisation of the works within the visual plane, the sense of unity, the rhythmic and balanced use of plastic elements, the function of colour, line and texture, the form-content relationship, expression of feelings, etc. (Ruiz Espín et al., 1991). These guidelines are not based on the development of the appreciative and creative processes of the schoolchildren, but rather as criteria for hetero-evaluation, since their appropriation is not contemplated in a way that contributes to plastic education and the integral development of the personality, to At the same time, it stimulates developing forms of learning evaluation, such as self-evaluation and co-evaluation of Primary School students.

At the Regional Conference on Art Education and Creativity in Latin America and the Caribbean (Uberaba, Brazil, October 16-19, 2001), Barbosa, from the University of Sao Paulo, presented her experience entitled *Arte/educación en Brasil: hacemos educadores del arte* [Art/education in brazil: let's become art educators]. In this document, Ella Barbosa makes references to the relationship of “artistic production with analysis, historical information and contextualisation” (Barbosa in UNESCO, 2003, p. 21). According to the Brazilian author:

The reading of visual discourse, which is not only summarised in the analysis of shape, colour, line, volume, balance, movement, rhythm, but is mainly focused on the significance that these attributes in different contexts give to the image is an imperative of contemporary times. (p. 23)

She also mentions the relationship between the modes and contexts of reception, and their incidence on the meaning of the plastic work and the visual image, the active role of the receiver, among other aspects (p. 23). However, she, Barbosa does not offer or suggest any specific method for the analysis of the visual image.

The visual analysis of a plastic work with a more comprehensive sense, proposed by Rumbaut & Yánes (2004), includes, in accordance with the generalities for Primary Education, the “identification of the work, author and title” (p. 5), as well as:

(...) the comparison (similarities and differences) of two or three works on the same theme, (...) by different authors, reflecting different eras and forms of expression, represented with different techniques and materials make them reflect on these aspects, arguing their assessments. (p. 5)

In the general objectives of the fifth grade, is included: “Sharpen the development of observation as a necessity to achieve a greater understanding, appreciation and enjoyment that leads to the appreciation of the world of visual images that surrounds it.” (Rumbaut & Yánes, 2004, p. 36) In the general methodological guidelines of this programme, emphasis is placed on what refers to observation. References are also made to the textual and extratextual functionality of the line as a “fundamental element of the drawings” (p. 40), the analysis of “chromatic spaces” (p. 41), the search for similar colours in the environment and its conscious application in creation, the observation of sizes and proportions, and indicators of depth (contrasts of size, warm and cold colours).

For the sixth grade it is suggested in the general methodological guidelines: “the visual analysis of a plastic work with a more comprehensive sense” (Rumbaut & Yánes, 2004, p. 51), with emphasis on the analysis of the chromatic circle, of the content, of certain intertextual relationships (psychological and sociological), structural descriptive of “different visual components present in the work” (p. 56), comparative-evaluative and, of course, observation.

This programme emphasises the use of observation guides, the creation of conditions and the importance of analysis. In a general sense, the look at the visual analysis offered by Rumbaut and Yánes (2004), does not establish enough links between the plastic work and the collective culture and of each school, it does not include the referent in the significant visual units, and it reduces the structural functionality to the relations between the content and the form of the work. In this sense, the programmes refer to the classic document *Ver, hacer y apreciar las Artes Plásticas*, by Jubrías and Morriña (1976), which shows their dependence on these theoretical and methodological ideas already enriched by the theoretical studies of the plastic arts.

Lucía Gouvêa Pimentel (2009), from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, noted in her “Metodología de la enseñanza de arte: algunos puntos para debatir” [Art teaching methodology: Some points to debate], that: “Artistic production, its analysis and enjoyment require constant speculation” (p. 33), which evidences a necessary and essentially phenomenological affiliation of the didactics of plastic arts, as far as analysis, value appreciation and visual creation are concerned. The author

does not offer any method of analysis that can help teachers or instructors of plastic arts in the teaching-learning of this artistic manifestation.

At the same time, Aroa Mediero (2012), at the University of Valladolid, Spain, wrote the thesis entitled *New methodologies and innovative practices in the Plastics classroom of the sixth year of Primary Education*. In the document, Mediero cites Objective 4 of Decree 40/2007, which establishes the primary education curriculum in the autonomous community of Castilla and León, which requires: “Apply artistic knowledge in the observation and analysis of situations and objects of everyday reality and different manifestations of the world of art and culture to better understand them and form one’s own taste.” (Autonomous Community of Castilla y León, 2007, as cited in Mediero, 2012, p. 23)

Also related to this aspect is the analogy revealed by Mediero between Royal Decree 1513/2006, which institutes the minimum teaching of Primary Education in the Kingdom of Spain, and Decree 40/2007, which contextualises it. According to Mediero, both documents guide the analysis and assessment of the communicative intention of images in the media and information and communication technologies, the analysis of the representative shapes of volumes on the plane, depending on the point of view or the situation. in space, as well as the comparison between the forms and the representation of space adopted in different areas or fields (p. 25). It is significant that, even with the aforementioned issues, Mediero does not offer or base any method of analysis on her thesis, so that she contributes to complying with legal regulations as far as plastic education is concerned.

On the other hand, although contextualised in Secondary Education, in Cuban primary schools there is a document entitled *Along the paths of art: An approach to its manifestations in Cuba*, by Sánchez et al. (2013), which distinguishes and delimits the plastic and visual arts, offers the general classification into planimetric, volumetric, spatial and kinetic, characterises “the most representative: painting, graphics, sculpture and architecture” (p. 43), and identifies the expressive means of visual language: “lines, colors, textures, values, areas and volume, as well as between principles or laws balance, rhythm and proportion” (p. 80), all these resources necessary for “a formal analysis taking into account the elements and principles studied” (p. 86). This formal analysis, like the observation and comparison referred to by other authors, represents one of the most elementary and merely reproductive stages of text analysis, enriched and surpassed decades ago by theoretical studies about culture and plastic arts in particular.

The International University of La Rioja published a collection of articles written by María Andueza Olmedo et al. (2016), which includes some notions of visual rhetoric (pp. 190-191).

This collection also includes a chapter dedicated to the analysis of children’s drawings (Andueza et al., 2016, pp. 265-280), where methodological tools are offered for the “analysis of children’s drawings” (p. 264), and the “analysis of their plastic

codes” (p. 264), based on the uses of color, line, format and stroke, depending on the age and level of development of the child. These tools, more formal than functional, are mostly based on the assumptions of Rhoda Kellogg (1969) in her *Analysing Children’s Art*.

Another methodological reference is that of the University of Extremadura (2016), which in its *Plan docente de la asignatura: Expresión Plástica y su Didáctica en Infantil* [Teaching plan for the subject plastic expression and its didactics in primary], Brief description of the content, emphasises: “The practical activities that will train students for the analysis and synthesis of plastic and visual languages” (p. 3), although It does not offer a method of analysis on which Plastic Arts teachers and Instructors can develop their work.

In 2017, Cabrera published *Educación Plástica y su enseñanza* [Plastic education and its teaching], “result of a critical review and an update of the note made up of the text Methodology of plastic arts” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 7). In this document, Cabrera states that: “The act of appreciating, always present in classes, increases its complexity in the last two grades of primary education” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 34), which corresponds to the intention of the present investigation, directed to the second cycle of this education. The most immediate antecedent of the teaching-learning of text analysis in plastic arts classes and workshops appears to be based as a didactic principle in the aforementioned study by Cabrera (2017).

According to Cabrera, the unity between appreciation, comparison and visual artistic creation in plastic education is a principle of particular didactics that must be duly attended to by teachers and art instructors. This didactic principle refers to the fact that appreciation, comparison and creation are manifested in the plastic education of the school in close unity. Every act of appreciation is based on a comparison, more or less complex, of artistic or natural visual reality, and leads to visual artistic creation. Likewise, any comparison leads to an appreciation, which is reversed in visual creation. For its part, visual artistic creation results from an investigative process based on comparison and appreciation of reality creatively internalised by the subject. From this point of view, it is inappropriate to develop classes or workshops that aim to achieve a visual creation, for example, without the analysis and corresponding appreciation or reading of what is intended to represent precede it.

The unity between appreciation, comparison and visual artistic creation in plastic education is based on the approach/proposal or triangular approach, systematised by Barbosa (2012) and Ramón Cabrera (2017). The didactic relationships between artistic making, reading works of art and contextualisation are explained in the so-called triangular proposal, a pedagogical practice that results from the attention provided by the Fine Arts teacher or instructor at the beginning of the unit between appreciation, comparison and visual artistic creation.

Barbosa and Cabrera refer that artistic work or creation is based on the reading of works of art for their technical, aesthetic and ideological appreciation, as well

as their contextualisation, understood as the dialogue that must be fostered between individual experiences or the experience of the subject, the artwork being read, and the creative visual outcome of the process. According to these ideas, by establishing contextual links with individual experience, with what is known or experienced, with needs and interests, a functional and developing learning for the school child is favoured.

In the texts by Barbosa (2012) and Cabrera (2017), in addition to reducing creation by making visual art, and almost obviating the appreciative-evaluative production of the schoolchild, a basic contradiction can be seen: while the Brazilian pedagogue advocates a reading of the work of art, “as an act of giving meaning to what we see” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 45), as the term reading is used in the semiotic, sociological or pedagogical texts of authors such as Pierre Bourdieu (2002), Paulo Freire (1989), Lorenzo Vilches (1995), Umberto Eco (2007), Luis Camnitzer (1988), Yuri M. Lotman (2004, 2014), and Taniuz Karam (2014), mostly systematised by Cabrera, the Cuban author emphasises the old method of comparison, which together with the visualisation “are at the very centre of any of the basic actions with images (in doing, in reading and in contextualising as an indissoluble triad)” (Cabrera, 2017, p. 45). According to Cabrera, “making see” and “see doing” were not possible “without the existence of comparison (...) Comparisons based on similarities, differences, and oppositions are enriching the visual/cultural knowledge of schoolchildren and from them both the expressive action and the reader action with the images” (Cabrera, 2017, pp. 42-43).

As it has been possible to appreciate, although in the third stage some of the methods of analysis of the visual image have been didactically based, systematised by the theories of art and theoretical studies about the Plastic Arts, there is still much to be incorporated into the pedagogical practices of teachers and Instructors of Plastic Arts, so that the formalist and behavioural positions are transcended in the teaching-learning of this artistic manifestation.

Methods of artistic analysis such as sociological, psychological, biographical, archaeological, functional stylistic, semiotic, among many others, are not yet systematised in the didactics of plastic arts, and even less have the relationships between the methods of analysis been argued, analysis that can be incorporated into the content of workshops and classes, the remaining categories of Didactics, and the subjects involved in the process.

In relation to the learning of the analysis of the visual image in students of primary education, it can be affirmed that there has been an appropriation of the artistic and aesthetic values of the plastic arts, although this appropriation is fundamentally reproductive, mechanistic and formal, while the scholar does not fully perceive the scope and importance of this learning for life. In the best of cases, still limited appreciations and evaluations of works of art are achieved, and knowledge about the elements and principles of design is reversed in the creative activity of schoolchildren.

As a summary, it can be considered that during the third stage:

- A theoretical-methodological body of the didactics of plastic arts is consolidated, which responds to various pedagogical tendencies, focused on the creative activity of the schoolchild — intentionally directed by the plastic arts instructor—, and oriented towards increasing the activities of appreciation-assessment during the terminal grades of primary education;
- Among the methods of analysis of the visual image used in the teaching-learning process of plastic arts in primary education during the third stage, observation, comparison and formal (structural) analysis predominate, depending on the creation and critical-evaluative appreciation;
- The pedagogical practices of teachers and arts instructors during the teaching-learning process of plastic arts in primary education, in the third stage, are conditioned in Cuba by the methodological incidence of the system of Houses of Culture, the development of the particular didactics, and the methodological documents prepared jointly by the Ministries of Education and Culture, but there is still insufficient cultural, technical-artistic and didactic preparation;
- The learning of analysis — in primary school students, is more systematic, less spontaneous and oriented towards creation and critical-evaluative activity, although it is still reproductive, formal, descriptive and not very functional for the school's life.

The historical and critical study of the didactic treatment of the analysis of the visual image in the didactics of plastic arts, reveals as essential regularities: the emphasis on the creative activity of schoolchildren, the scarcity of didactically argued analysis methods, the insufficient theoretical preparation and methodology of the teachers and instructors of plastic arts, the ludic character of the subject, and its little functional learning for the life of the schoolchildren.

As a synthesis of the study carried out on the didactic treatment of the analysis of the visual image in the didactics of plastic arts, the following historical trends can be identified:

Of a meagre theoretical-methodological body of the didactics of plastic arts, distanced from the world of children, which determined the inclusion of linear and natural drawing, and conditioned the practical purpose of teaching, academicism, the limitation to copying, imitation, reproduction and the geometrising tendency, it passed to the conformation of a methodological body of the didactics of the plastic arts, still focused on drawing, oriented towards free creation, sensory education and pragmatism, and characterised by its mimetic spirit. and methodological eclecticism, and from there it evolves towards a theoretical-methodological body that responds to various pedagogical tendencies, more focused on the creative activity of the scholar, and oriented towards increasing appreciation-assessment activities during the final grades of primary education.

Among the methods of analysis of the visual image used in the teaching-learning process of the plastic arts, it is based on observation and comparison, with a regression towards the predominance of observation based on creation, and from this progress is made. Towards a relative methodological diversification, in which observation, comparison and formal (structural) analysis predominate, based on creation and critical-evaluative appreciation.

The pedagogical practices of the teachers and Instructors of plastic arts, start from intuitive, imitative and empirical positions, advance to the subjection to the methodological documents, limited by the insufficient cultural, technical-artistic and didactic preparation, to advance towards a relative improvement, given by the incorporation of the instructors of plastic arts to the primary schools, the methodological incidence of the system of Houses of Culture, the development of the particular didactics, and the methodological documents elaborated jointly by the Ministries of Education and Culture, but it is still evident insufficient cultural, technical-artistic and didactic preparation of teachers and art instructors.

Learning to analyse the visual image in primary school students, which in the beginning was elementary, reproductive and limited to verifying the quality of copying and imitation, maintains this elementary character, together with the spontaneity of free creation and playful activity, to evolve towards a more systematic, less spontaneous learning, and oriented towards creation and critical-evaluative activity, although still reproductive, formal, descriptive and not very functional.

CONCLUSIONS

By way of conclusion, it can be stated that the trending historical study and the criticism carried out demonstrate the need to base a method of analysis of the visual image that really responds to the purpose and objectives of primary education.

The critical systematisation of the historical antecedents of the analysis of the visual image showed a theoretical deficiency in the didactics of plastic education, which has only included observation, comparison and formal analysis among the methods of analysis, sometimes based on creation and critical-evaluative appreciation, without offering didactic foundations and methodological procedures for its application in primary education.

The study carried out revealed the fundamental historical regularities and trends in the teaching-learning of visual image analysis, appreciable in several pedagogical systems and scientific bodies developed in Latin America during the last three centuries, with very slow evolution of didactic methods, always far behind the advances of the theory of plastic arts and other sciences on art.

It is appropriate then to base this aspect of the content of the plastic arts from the sciences that contribute to the particular didactics.

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