

Editorial

It is no coincidence that the launch of this new journal happens at a time when perspectives, responsibilities, as well as contextual conditions and objectives of Cultural, Aesthetic, and Arts Education (CAAE) are evolving quite dynamically. In the last two decades, significant initiatives and policies emanating from UNESCO have been of considerable importance for the development of corresponding international discourses. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage touches on and promotes the core concern of CAAE, which is engaged in all its branches with cultural heritage, its transmission, and its creative development. The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions underlines the importance of arts education drawing from a diversity of cultural expressions, and both conventions highlight the responsibility of arts education as a project that links regionality and history with planetary perspective and future in increasingly globalized times. The expanded understanding of sustainability of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, first published in 2015, shapes policy processes on a broad societal level, and it also leads to the question in CAAE's discourse of how sustainability and arts education are connected, and how this connection can be conceptualized through research and strengthened through practice.

If “education for all”, anchored and differentiated in SDG 4, was and is one of the most important guidelines for the development of education systems, then in view of the current transformations and disruptions on a planetary scale – under the perspective of the Anthropocene – the need for a “new social contract for education” has come to the fore: an education for all, that guarantees access to education and training at a high level of quality, is still in demand. Moreover, an education is required that at the same time focuses on the major and pressing challenges of our time. Education must play its part in counteracting inequality, exclusion and in handling transformations and disruptions in an appropriate and targeted way: equity, inclusion, cooperation, solidarity, and sustainability are the milestones of an education for a (world) society in which resilience does not only mean reacting to the next crisis, but the ability to enable and sustainably shape the future from the strength of our diverse traditions. “Reimagining our Futures Together” (UNESCO 2021) – this requires educational approaches that specifically promote and support the ability to imagine. Imagination is an aesthetic

process in which emotional and cognitive, traditional, and innovative elements are entangled to form something new. Such processes are the very domain of CAAE.

CAAE has made many efforts over the past decades to actively, competently and creatively meet these challenges. It has taken up the inspirations of the discourses emanating from UNESCO in many ways, discussed them, and translated them in its own way for its field. From the Lisbon “Roadmap for Arts Education” (UNESCO 2006) to the highly impactful “Seoul Agenda” (UNESCO 2010) to the current preparations for the 3rd World Conference on Culture and Arts Education (2023) – with its stopovers in Seoul, regional consultations in all continents and a major multi-stakeholder dialogue in Paris – CAAE is taking up the transformational dynamics of our time, including the rapid digitalization of society, environmental crises, geopolitical conflicts, and significant socio-cultural shifts, (re)positioning and, to some extent, reinventing itself.

This first issue of the IJRCAAE gathers renowned scholars and researchers in the fields of CAAE to present the range of topics that this platform intends to address and discuss in the coming years. Our position in the research landscape – alongside many excellent research journals in the field that we hold in high esteem – derives from the following agenda: Firstly, the IJRCAAE is a journal that aims to systematically transcend established genre boundaries and approaches in CAAE, to assemble and contextualize its diverse aesthetics. Secondly, it focuses on the question of what contributions CAAE can make – across its fields (formal, non-formal, informal) and across its diverse understandings of culture, aesthetics, arts, and education – to the transformative tasks and challenges of our present. These include responding to the increasing digitization of life and work, addressing the ecological crisis and contributing to sustainable development, promoting peace and understanding in a world often marked by conflict and tension, and tackling inequalities and exclusions in education and society. What conditions can be identified, what obstacles exist, what paths can and must be taken – at all levels, from didactics to policy – and what research approaches prove to be fruitful and appropriate for this? – As Liora Bresler brilliantly puts it in her contribution to this volume: This journal should be a “multi-level plaza”, a resonating space for the shared responsibilities of CAAE beyond its immensely diverse institutional forms, roots, and histories.

Plurality, diversity and difference are central to this. After decades and centuries of Western dominance of educational discourses – which cannot simply be wished away, but whose structural after-effects we all have to work on – this journal is to become a platform that enables and initiates South-South-North dialogues and polylogues and that strives to increasingly reflect this diversity in its editorial board. As an inclusive project, this journal can and must be an *OpenAccess* journal that is freely available worldwide and that does not charge its authors any fees. Quality, relevance and originality alone should determine the dissemination of ideas in this journal, not institutional budgets and individual financial means. We would like to take this opportunity

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Many colleagues have contributed to the creation and facilitation of this journal – most of them are represented in this first volume with an article – and we thank them deeply for their commitment. Instead of listing names here, we would like to refer to the academic networks and UNESCO structures on whose work, built over many years, the idea that this journal is possible and necessary could emerge in the first place: This is the *International Network for Research in Arts Education* (INRAE), which has since merged into the *UNITWIN Arts Education Research for Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Education*, it is the *European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education* (associated member of the UNESCO), and it is the *UNESCO Chairs* in the fields of CAAE – all these institutions are represented on our Editorial Board. A big thanks goes to the editorial office team of the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Culture in Education, Dr. Tanja Klepacki, Jacques Zannou, and Stephanie Leupert, for their dedicated work for this journal.

With regard to the structure of this first and very special volume, we have chosen the non-hierarchical form of an alphabetical order of the articles. The short and concise contributions we have asked the authors for – and which we hope our readers find an interesting departure from the usual formats – stand here in representation of a great variety of possible and certainly still significantly expandable topics. The following issues of our journal – on Arts and Peace Education, on non-Western-centred aesthetic discourses and practices, on questions of digitalization and AI in Arts Education, on cultural resilience and sustainability, and many other topics – will each offer about six double-blind peer-reviewed papers, selected from submissions from open calls for papers in a multi-stage process. As you have already been reached by this first digital issue, we cordially invite you to follow our *call for papers* on the journal website or via newsletter entry. We look forward to your participation and feedback.

On behalf of the editorial board
Benjamin Jörissen, Executive Editor