The basic arts educations in crafts give tools to create a deeper relationship to place

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Contemporary discussion about ecological changes have defected the contents of teaching crafts. Nature and the environmental issues, an interrelationship between humans and nature have long been a part of Finnish traditional crafts: for example recycling, re-use of materials and the use of natural materials are old crafts values.

The contemporary society is worried about children’s and young people’s attitudes and relationship with the environment: arts education is seen one of the methods to deepen and broaden the relationship. My on-going PhD research focuses how nature and the environment related contents form a part of education in the basic arts education in crafts, the contemporary method to teach crafts. I approach the subject of my research by means of phenomenology and hermeneutics. The research material was collected over the period 2007–2013.

The Act on Basic Arts Education in Finland was passed in 1992 (424/1992) and renewed in 1998 (633/1998). The nine art forms included to it are: music, dance, literary arts, performing arts (circus and theatre), and visual arts (architecture, audio-visual art, fine art and crafts). Basic arts education is an extra curricula activity for children and young people: Children and young people mean here any person between the age of six and eighteen years of age.

I am arguing that the view towards the environment has become more conscious in the basic arts education in crafts. As an empirical case in my presentation I highlight arts education that takes place in such outdoor environments as cultural heritage sites. Activity in a given location makes the place familiar to children and young people and thus strengthens their relationship with a specific site; it creates a relationship – engagement – to the place and simultaneously communicates its cultural and historical significance.

Keywords: children and young people, basic education in the arts, relationship to place, heritage site

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