

Rhoda Kellogg Child Art Collection – Introduction

Rhoda Kellogg

Original: Rhoda Kellogg: Rhoda Kellogg Child Art Collection. Washington, DC., Microcard Editions, Inc., 1967.
 Digital Reedition: Birute Gujer, Dieter Maurer, Claudia Riboni, Karin Wälchli. www.early-pictures.ch/kellogg/, 2007.
 (Technique and Design: Christian d'Heureuse, Jürgen Ragaller)

In order to give an introduction to the Rhoda Kellogg Child Art Collection, below, two extracts of here book «Analyzing Children's Art» are given. In addition, some indications on publications of Rhoda Kellogg are added.

Pages 2-5. extract of the Introduction

«The best introduction to the main points of my research is provided by Herbert Read:

It has been shown by several investigators, but most effectively by Mrs. Rhoda Kellogg of San Francisco, that the expressive gestures of the infant, from the moment that they can be recorded by a crayon or pencil, evolve from certain basic scribbles towards consistent symbols. Over several years of development such basic patterns gradually become the conscious representation of objects perceived: the substitutive sign becomes a visual image. Scientists may object that the analysis of this process has not been carried far enough to justify a generalization, but we have an hypothesis that should hold the field until it has proved to be false. According to this hypothesis every child, in its discovery of a mode of symbolization, follows the same graphic evolution. Out of the amorphous scribbblings of the infant emerge, first certain basic forms, the circle, the upright cross, the diagonal cross, the rectangle, etc., and then two or more of these basic forms are combined into that comprehensive symbol known as the *mandala*, a circle divided into quarters by a cross. Let us ignore for the present the general psychological significance of the process: I merely want you to observe that it is universal and is found, not only in the scribbblings of children but everywhere where the making of signs has had a symbolizing purpose-which is from the Neolithic Age onwards. [Read, 1963, p. 4.1]

[...]

The basis of the investigation that follows is my examination of approximately a million drawings done by young children. More than half of these drawings are filed in the Rhoda Kellogg Child Art Collection of the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association, housed at 1315 Ellis Street, San Francisco. This collection is accessible by appointment to professionals and to persons interested in children's art. Of these half-million and more drawings, some 8,000 are generally available, in microfiche form, from Microcard Editions, Inc., 901 26th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. The microfiche system, a variation of microfilming, permits twenty-nine drawings, plus an identifying label, to be reproduced on a sheet of film three inches by five inches. The drawings are enlarged when the film is inserted in a special reading machine, which projects the film image on a ground-glass viewing screen or on a wall screen.

More than 250 paintings and drawings, selected as outstanding examples of children's work, are reproduced in full color in *The Psychology of Children's Art* (Kellogg and O'Dell, 1967). Like the microfiche cards, this book provides a view of a portion of the material that I have collected.

The drawings that I have examined as a basis for this book come chiefly from children enrolled in the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association's nursery schools in San Francisco. From 1948 through 1966, the Association administered classes for approximately 2,000 children of ages two, three, and four. (Despite its name, the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association is now mainly concerned with nursery education.) In 1966, all of the classes administered by the Association were moved into a new, model building that contains a nursery school for ninety children and additional classrooms where older children -aged four to fourteen- attend art classes. This building is known as the Phoebe A. Hearst Preschool Learning Center, and this is where the work of collecting child art proceeds.

Of the drawings done by children in the Association's nursery schools, 200,000 have been filed under the children's names, with the date of each drawing, a sequence number, and the child's age in months recorded on the back. This method of filing lends itself to the study of the individual child's development, a work partially done. Another 100,000 preschool drawings are not classified. (Older children who attend art classes in the Center have not yet produced a great quantity of drawings, and so their work does not happen to form a significant basis for this book. These children come from the neighborhood of the new Center. They are given access to art material rather than any formal instruction, they are treated as guests, and their attendance is entirely voluntary.)

The nursery schools administered by the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association have consistently enrolled children of varied backgrounds, both racial and cultural. As a consequence, the drawings on which this book is based were done by youngsters of diverse home environments.

In addition to the 300,000 drawings by nursery school children, the Rhoda Kellogg Child Art Collection contains approximately 200,000 drawings that I obtained from 1953 through 1960, when I taught courses dealing with the developmental sequence of children's art for the University of California Extension Division. Most of my students were teachers in child care centers and public elementary schools in the Bay Area of California, and they brought the drawings to me to be examined and analyzed. These drawings represent the work of an estimated 10,000 children aged four to eight. The majority of these drawings are filed by subject matter: designs, scenes, people, houses, vegetation, etc..

A third source of the art in my collection is the various countries I visited in 1954, 1960, and 1961. I was privileged to lecture on child art in schools and universities in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Goteberg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Munich, Zurich, Cairo, Athens, Teheran, Beirut, New Delhi, Bombay, Katmandu, Tokyo, Nagasaki, Osaka, Hong Kong, Manila, and Bangkok. Through these lectures I received some 5,000 drawings and paintings from thirty countries. Other examples of child art in the collection come from a variety of friends and interested persons.

The quantity of drawings that I have examined during my years of teaching far exceeds the number that I have been able to save and house, but the Collection alone seems ample evidence for the conclusions that I have formed. In fact, the Collection appears large enough for statistical analysis (see pages 192 and 193, for instance). I regret that the limited space available in a book restricts the number of drawings and other kinds of children's art that can be displayed. The illustrations that follow are typical of the work that I have seen, and the reader may find many additional examples of children's art in homes and schools.

Some of the illustrations are author's sketches of children's work, used for the sake of clarity. They are identified as such. The illustrations of the works of children have not been changed in any way except when the mark of a light crayon had to be strengthened to show the line formation in the original drawing.

The reader who is familiar with the precursor of this book, titled *What Children Scribble and Why* and published in 1955, may be interested to know that nothing stated there is negated by my present findings. Rather, my intervening study has extended the scope of my conclusions. Particularly, in 1955 I did not recognize the developmental meaning to be seen in the scribbles of two-year-olds. The fact that the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association has for twenty years conducted classes for children as young as twenty-four months has allowed me to consider large quantities of very early work. The current book also extends the analysis of child art to age eight, though the previous book did not go beyond age four. The classifications I employ here are similarly extended to supplement the ones formerly used.»

Pages 268/69. extract of «Classification System»

«The classifications presented here parallel those in my *Handbook for Microfiche*, a publication designed to accompany the 255 microfiche cards that contain some 8,000 drawings from my collection. The cards are produced by Microcard Editions, Inc., 901 26th Street N. W., Washington, D.C. 20037, and they were described briefly in the Introduction to this book.

In considering the classifications, the reader should be aware of the restricted meanings that I have given to certain words. "Horizontal," for instance, refers to a line going from one short side of the paper to the side opposite, regardless of the paper's position when the child draws on it. Similarly, "vertical" refers to a line

going from one long side of the paper to the other long side. "Balance" in an arrangement of markings is in relation either to the area of the paper or to the area of the Gestalt formed by the markings, and "centeredness" designates balance in relation to the center of the paper or to the center of the Gestalt.

The "base line" of a drawing refers to the line along the bottom of the drawing in its presumed position in front of the child. "Emergent" applies to a line formation that has some characteristics of the stage of work that the child is moving toward. "Inherent" pertains to a Gestalt that may appear automatically in scribbling done with or without *eye* control. The child can recognize the inherent Gestalt even when he did not attempt to draw it. An "implied shape" is produced when the perimeter of a Gestalt has a regularity that would be shown by a line drawn around the outermost parts of the Gestalt. A "build-up" is a structure of scribbled lines within an implied or outlined shape, and the structure appears to have been made one part at a time. A "fill-in," on the other hand, is scribbling within an outlined shape in which the outline seems to have been made before the scribbling.

Finally, it is worth noting that the classifications are not mutually exclusive. A single drawing might serve as an illustration of several different categories. The classifications are comprehensive, however. Any drawing may be viewed under the heading of at least one classification, and by "drawing" I mean any surface containing marks made by a human hand.»

(For the Classification System, see pp. 269-279.)

Related Resources

- Kellogg, R.: What Children Scribble and Why. Palo Alto, California, 1959.
 Kellogg, R.: Early Expressionists. 16mm movie, ASU movies C871, 1965.
 Kellogg, R. and O'Dell, S.: The Psychology of Children's Art. Del Mar, California, 1967.
 Rhoda Kellogg: Rhoda Kellogg Child Art Collection. Washington, DC., Microcard Editions, Inc., 1967. Handbook.
 Kellogg, R.: Analyzing Children's Art. Mountain View, California, 1969.
 Kellogg, R.: Children's Drawings, Children's Mind. New York, 1979.