“Streets are liminal places to explore the spaces of growing up, to negotiate hybrid identities, to experiment with ambivalence, and set a public identity.”


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This article focuses on issues of childhood identity and urban environment. It discusses how a performance art pedagogy inspired by nomadic and relational aesthetics can provide a framework to promote creative learning experiences that address migratory conditions and forms of public alienation lived by young people today. As Lefebvre (1991) suggests, a group only can be recognized as distinctive from others when they have the capacity to generate space. Taking this idea as a starting point, the article holds an interdisciplinary perspective and connects ideas from fields outside art education including reconstructionist studies of childhood, contemporary aesthetics, and critical pedagogy. It studies how public places and spaces are imagined and transformed from a child-sensitive perspective, and how children are public cultural agents and creators of visual culture. This theoretical discussion is projected into the interpretation of a visual ethnographic study centered on visual strategies, field narratives, and outcomes of migrant children documenting their urban environment, El Raval Sud, an intercultural neighborhood situated in Barcelona’s downtown.

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This article discusses the role of art education in enhancing aesthetic and social interconnections between urban children and contemporary urban environments. As Greene (1995) affirms, it requires imaginative actions to teach children who see differently from their teachers because such children have been reared in poverty or have come from distant places. Both the critical re-viewing of the knowledge that we conceive to be foundational to our discipline and the involvement in interdisciplinary endeavors are prerequisites for these imaginative actions. Following this direction, the article interweaves a network of ideas inspired by reconstructionist studies of childhood, nomadic and relational aesthetics, and performance art pedagogy. The aim of this interdisciplinarity is to serve a pedagogy centered on producing knowledge in action, avoiding mystification, and opening new beginnings in relation to which young people feel valued as participants in dialogues and other instances of public knowledge.

The article follows and extends Duncum’s (2002) statement that art education should include more consistent and realistic views of children. Art education should engage in more significant ways in current sociological and humanistic debates on childhood identity. Art education needs further experimentation with pedagogies that overcome modernist ideas, like seeing children as abstract and universal projects of development toward adulthood, to understand them instead as individual agents who create and modify cultural meaning.

The article is also inspired by ideas of environmental education and the role of the arts in teaching responsive and transformative pedagogies that enhance the relationships between subjects and their local environments (e.g., McFee & Degge, 1980; Blandy & Hoffman, 1993; Congdon, 2004). Followers of this perspective maintain that art education has a social responsibility in bettering the quality of shared environment and in educating children with different cultural backgrounds to creatively cope with the complexities of today’s changing and fast-evolving societies (McFee & Degge, 1980). In this respect, place-based art pedagogies support all kinds of people’s creative, affective, and aesthetic practices of place-making and spatial appropriation (Blandy, 2008), even when those practices challenge acquired ideas about what counts as art in modern and contemporary history (Blandy & Congdon, 1998). They concentrate on local forms of knowledge, art, and aesthetics rather than on models of globalized and standardized curriculum decided elsewhere (Graham, 2007).

The Spatiality of Growing Up
Reconstructionist studies of childhood emerged as a response to the multiple dissonances existing between the material experiences of being a child in the actual world and the institutional forms and discourses framing childhood. Theorists working in reconstructive practices of history, sociology, psychology, and pedagogy agree there exists not only one form of childhood, but different childhoods and children, existing as specifically located socio-constructions and subject positions (Aries, 1962; Jencks, 1996; Cannella, 1997; Duncum, 2002; Cannella, Kincheloe & Anijar, 2002). Biological facts of infancy are but the raw material upon which cultures work to fashion a particular version of being a child” (Jencks, 1996, p. 20). For this reason, reconstructionist studies contest language and images that naturalize, generalize, and globalize a dominant Western understanding of childhood as an innocent adult-protected experience. This is a discourse that emerged in the 18th century and
progressed through the later development of disciplines like pediatrics, psychology, and pedagogy, which centered on the creation of a distinct type of specialized knowledge about children. In this history, what stands for adult protection sometimes can be better re-named as regulation or control. While children are given rights and duties, they are also emptied of all responsibility, political agency, or autonomy. Often children are spoken for through the voices of their parents, teachers, doctors, and other adult representatives, while their own voices are rarely heard.

Reconstructionist studies of childhood instead see children as competent agents and active creators of their own lives (Rasmussen & Smidt, 2003). They call for an increased reflexivity between adult researchers and pedagogues and younger participants. This reflexivity aims to displace the control of adults upon childhood’s knowledge by envisioning ways to collaborate with children, that acknowledge children’s different views and that help researchers and pedagogues to find new forms of knowledge and representation that help us speak on behalf of young people without manipulating their voices (Aitken, 2001).

In postindustrial metropolis organized through capitalist hierarchies, cities function as landscapes of power (Matthews, 2003) where public spaces are designed for the comfort and use of middle class adult professionals. Life is spatially separated between production (work) and reproduction (home). Children are either kept at home or sheltered in specifically designed spaces-for-childhood. Children in the street are barely understood anymore as a community of risk; they are otherwise represented as the risk itself. This representation especially affects working class and/or ethnically and sexually diverse childhoods.

The city as a landscape of power operates through a fragmentation of space and time. Children grow up learning to organize and manage the time-space itineraries that set the separated spheres of production and reproduction. Since in globalized capitalism the times of production are becoming more and more flexible, the time to come back home to the rituals of reproduction has been increasingly delayed. Families are obliged to buy private services, where institutionalized others cover parcels of the time for care and play. Consequently, families and children devote an important part of their lives commuting between disconnected islands where supposedly safe activities for children take place. How families and children decide on these itineraries and places, and how children enjoy more or less freedom of movement and decision to organize their leisure determines spatial conceptions that will become relevant for the rest of the child’s life and will shape his/her own desire to find a way into his/her own places (Zeihier, 2003; Aitken, 2001).

Reconstructionist studies of childhood advocate that forms of spatial occupation of the street, including the performance of usual itineraries and social encounters in the neighborhood, is an essential element for the growth of children’s social identity as well as their senses of location and sociability (Christensen & O’Brien, 2003). Streets are liminal places to explore the spaces of growing up, to negotiate hybrid identities, to experiment with ambivalence, and set a public identity (Matthews, 2003). In order to make urban knowledge, representation, and change to be child-sensitive, researchers and pedagogues are collaborating with children to gain knowledge and include them as co-authors of their studies.

**Nomadic and Relational Aesthetics**

It makes sense to interconnect contemporary issues about childhood and spatiality with theories of nomadic and relational aesthetics because both encompass critical reconsiderations of modernist notions of belonging, emplacement, movement, and identities and can support the transition from a universal idea of the child to situated and evolving conceptions of childhood.

Nomadic aesthetics are concerned with creative juxtapositions, unexpected encounters, and forms of parody that open intermediate spaces within
dominant cultures. They constitute a creative space to be strangers to ourselves, a practice of healthy skepticism toward mother tongues, and permanent identities or places of origin and adscription. Nomadic aesthetics encompass a critical, anti-capitalist idea of movement and spatial occupation that gives visibility to marginal identities and practices (Braidotti, 1994).

In the age of globalization and digital technologies, space-time distances may have shrunk but current imperial politics make evident that freedom of movement is a privilege, not a choice, which does not belong to everyone equally (Kwon, 2004). Subjects and communities from different parts of the world are displaced against their will, or are kept in walled territories, refugee camps, or prisons with no possibility of movement (Durrant & Lord, 2007). Nomadic artists experiment with narrative as a vehicle for weaving stories of fragmmentation, representing paradoxes like the desire to access specific places and the impossibility of entering or inhabiting them (Saloul, 2007). It seems that the experience of growing up in cities with limited or very controlled experiences of movement and transition contains many similarities with other geopolitical forms of spatial control. While the voices of children who are shaped by migratory experiences or who suffer social alienation are not heard in large public forums, they do have the need to express and connect contradictory, complex, and disjoined experiences.

Nomadic aesthetics favor spatial metaphors like tracing and mapping that entail reflective and alternative practices of movement and transition. Space in nomadic aesthetics is a relational specificity made of dialogical tensions between different spatial experiences. It is about the subjective negotiation of the possibilities opened by new fluidities together with the ruptures and disconnections that those provoke (Kwon, 2004). Artists interested in the representation of this form of spatiality re-create localities "shaped by global dynamics, operating in different domains, so that every location must be understood as the provisional effect of its relation with other locations, and with the global processes linking them" (Hoving, 2007, p.179).

Nomadic aesthetics and relational aesthetics have points of connection because both envision alternative spatial and social relations. Relational aesthetics are a political project that "draws inspiration from the flexible processes governing ordinary life" (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 47). Relational aesthetics change modernist notions of value associated with the object and the hermeneutical mastery of the artist and the critic to focus on relational, durational, and cumulative processes of exchange and dialogue. This seems consistent with a model of research centered on the representation of urban space and life that incorporates forms of doing based on conversation, negotiation, and collaboration between adults and children. Here adult researchers, like the artists working on relational projects, might need to give up on their gained expertise and professional technique to engage with other forms of representation and world-making that are more child-sensitive.

Relational aesthetics are more concerned with formations than with forms. In this sense, artists working with relational art projects are not only drawing inspiration from the world of art and its traditional disciplines, but from models that come from the social fabric and its ways of making. As Bourriaud (2002) affirms, "[Art] refers to values that can be transposed into society" (p. 18). Relational aesthetics bring the opportunity to see children as social actors whose cultural production does not belong to a lower cultural rank (child art). Instead, young people collaborate with adults artists/teachers/researchers to bring emancipatory insights into productions of art and urban space.

Performance Art Pedagogy

Both Nomadic and relational aesthetics can be connected to what Garoian (1999) calls performance art pedagogy, that concentrates on "the transformation of the artist/teacher and spectator/student from the object to the subject of cultural
history [through] ... liberatory forms of action” (p. 57). Garoian’s performance art pedagogy challenges the mono-culturality, standardization, and prescription that characterize the places and spaces where learning takes place, like the school or the museum. He considers that the primary source of pedagogy comes from students’ lives and cultural perspectives. Bringing non-academic, non-dominant intercultural and cross-disciplinary ideas into these two institutional contexts is a way of disrupting their pre-assumed purposes. Garoian views pedagogy as a collaborative construction of public discourse and practical democracy in which cultural agency and memory cannot be sacrificed for art’s sake, curriculum standards, or disciplinary traditions. In this sense, pedagogical practice is made of participation, interculturality, and cross-disciplinary dialogues. This inter-social transformative quality connects performance art pedagogy with relational aesthetics.

Performance art pedagogy situates the presentness of the living body as a site where cultural codes are inscribed, lived, and can be transformed through the language of culturally responsive and relational actions. Knowledge does not precede the learning actions, but knowledge happens in-the-making and by learning to think experimentally about important cultural transformations (Ellsworth, 2005). Performance art pedagogy embraces the indeterminacy of learning outcomes and considers that interpretation is a non-fixed, situated practice of meaning production (Garoian 1999). Learning is not only or mainly about cognitive levels or patterns but about sensational and affective knowledge made of felt experiences happening in transitional spaces and times between knowing and not-knowing (Ellsworth, 2005). It is in relation to the refusal of dichotomous thinking and the acknowledgment that learning is not only based upon logical statements but non-logical, indeterminate, undecidable, contradictory, unfinished experiences that performance art pedagogy links with nomadic aesthetics, and its pedagogical use of art as a site of productive disjunctions, paradoxes, and moving identities.

A Visual Ethnography Centered on Childhoods, Migration, and Urban Space

Inspired by the framework of social, aesthetic, and pedagogical ideas discussed above, the second part of the article presents a visual ethnography done with two classes of 6th-grade children (40 children with five working groups per class) attending an urban intercultural school, an art specialist, two course tutors, and two researchers from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The author of this article is one of the two researchers. In this study, the street becomes a pedagogical site and a place of transition, occupation, cultural encounter, visual representation, and sensational pedagogy. These actions challenge modernist binary divisions between childhood and adulthood by situating young people as the central subjects of symbolic and spatial production.

Socio-historical Context of the Research

The scenario of this case study is an elementary school located in the core of El Raval Sud, a historical neighborhood in Barcelona’s old downtown. Barcelona is well-known for its modern architecture with its bohemian bourgeoisie flair that attracts many across Europe and the world. However, the modern history of the city is also represented by its growing industry and the massive migration of rural population to the metropolis at the turn of the last century. This working class migration became key in the transformation of Barcelona as a cosmopolitan European center.

With the massive arrival of the newcomers, working class neighborhoods expanded in the city. El Raval Sud was one of them. Its landscape was a peculiar combination of very poorly designed residential buildings for the urban proletariat, artisan workshops, hostels, charity hospitals, orphanages, clandestine brothels, and religious churches and convents constructed in earlier periods. Its location within the perimeter of the old medieval walls
made El Raval Sud a narrow, dark, damp, and often unhealthy living space for the urban poor. Although the economical conditions have improved since then and urban reformation has affected large sections, El Raval Sud still shows many characteristics of this early working class urban structure (Villar, 1997).

During the last 30 years, El Raval Sud, like many other metropolitan centers in Europe, has become the site of arrival and the home to international immigrants coming from Magreb, Sub-Saharan countries, the Hindu peninsula, and South America. These irregular and regular citizens are the new occupants of the old working class apartments, coexisting now with new building constructions for an emerging creative class and liberal middle class professionals. While some see this heterogeneity and hybridization as quintessential elements that define cosmopolitism, others interpret this as a process of gentrification whose goal is to keep El Raval Sud with a tolerable and appealing level of cultural diversity (Goytisolo, 2004). In this context, immigrant is a political and social construction that does not apply to all travelers setting foot in a new land, or other bodies in transition, but those coming from the so-called Third World countries, who enter through the back door, with no visa, a lack of skills, and barely any money in their pockets. They are the most vulnerable in the whole social structure (Delgado, 2008). The public school where this visual ethnographic study took place has 96% of students connected to this recent migratory history, and 4% of students who live with enduring forms of social disadvantage that are a product of earlier histories of marginality in El Raval Sud.

**Goals of the Research**

The goals of the research are:

- To create a social and relational space of artistic production and interpretation that connects the classroom with the neighborhood and the street. The research draws inspiration from a model of performance art pedagogy based on rethinking how we (children and adults) relate with ourselves, others, art, and the public world and to engage with anything and anyone that is different from ourselves (Garoian, 1999; Ellsworth, 2005).
- To experiment with a model of curriculum that alters the linearity of the times and places of learning, as well as the disciplinary departmentalization of knowledge, and to promote a model of learning based on connecting art with other forms of knowledge and with the real-world experiences of children. This is also a model of curriculum that defies the standardization and globalization of knowledge and focuses on local webs of relations (Graham, 2007).
- To produce visual-ethnographic knowledge that narrates the process and outcomes of a nomadic/relational aesthetic that challenges modernist and canonic approaches to art and artists and avoids representing children as mere depositories of artistic content (Kerster, 2004) by setting art in a long-term dialogue with current social issues and formations connected to the lives and interests of young people (Bourriaud, 2002).

**Visual Ethnography**

The methodology used in this research is a reflective approach to visual ethnography. According to MacDougall (1995), visual ethnography rethinks anthropology’s orientation as a discipline dominantly conducted by words to consider other forms of anthropological knowledge. In this sense, visual ethnography is not a copy, substitute, or complement to written ethnography but an alternate form of representation that focuses on those parts of culture that cannot be accessed by just the use of words (Pink, 2002). As Berger (1977) affirms, “Seeing comes before words … and establishes our place in the surrounding world” (p.7). Therefore, the research uses the conceptual and analytic possibilities of visual texts to elaborate critical insight on the cultural relations between
childhood, relational aesthetics, nomadic identities, and metropolitan conditions of life in El Raval Sud. This critical insight relies on the capacity of visual images "to reveal what is hidden in the inner mechanisms of the ordinary and the taken for granted [as well as] the connections between things of different scope and scale" (Knowles & Sweetman, 2004, p. 7), like children's cultures and their urban imaginaries.

According to Pink (2002), visual ethnographic narratives aim to represent how participants construct different meanings at different points of the ethnographic research, analysis, and representations. Following this idea, the research concentrates on three different types of visual ethnographic narratives:

1. **The archive of visual strategies: Robert Frank as a case for relational aesthetics.** This ethnographic narrative reconstructs how the researchers produced meanings about Robert Frank's photographs that connected with children's lives and memories of migration. They produced this narrative through conversations and collaborative research at the exhibition and the library before the field experience. The visual ethnographic narrative expanded during the field experience through conversations with 6th-grade students both at the museum and the classroom.

2. **A video-narrative of knowledge-in-the-making as a shared cultural process between children and adults.** This narrative intended to capture the process of knowledge-in-the-making during the interventions in the field (the museum, the classroom, and the streets). The outcome is a 10-minute video-documentary. Figure 1 shows a linear arrangement of selected stills from this video.

3. **The montage of the images and texts produced by two groups of 6th-grade students.** This is a collection and connection of children's texts and images that represent multiple and dissonant points of views concerning the urban themes that children documented.

The following two sections discuss narratives #1 and #3 in more detail. Aspects of narrative #2 are incorporated within these two sections.

**Frank's Relational Archive of Visual Strategies**

At the time when the fieldwork of this case study was developed, Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA), located in El Raval Nord, was showing Robert Frank Storylines. This exhibition presented "the creative journey taken by this artist from the 1940s to the present day" (Todolí & Brookman, 2005). We constructed an alternative non-linear, non-chronological journey to the exhibition by focusing on specific visual strategies present in Frank's work. Knowles and Sweetman (2004) define visual strategies as the uses that the image can be put to both represent and construct realities.

The focus on visual strategies had a double intent. First, we wanted to produce a relational space between Robert Frank's biography and how this affected his own view of public life in a foreign country, the United States, and children's life experiences of migration and urbanity in El Raval Sud. And second, we expected that those concepts and practices emerged and discussed during the looking and talking at the museum would transfer and affect children's photographic practices in the street (see Figure 1). The itinerary concentrated in the exploration of the following two visual strategies: the migratory point of view and the motion picture.
Figure 1. Video stills representing aspects of the field process: conversations in the museum, actions of photo-documentation in public spaces, discussion and selection of images in the classroom.
I do not like dirty streets. I do not like narrow streets. You can see more people and more happiness in the wider streets... (Yuni)

Raval is a really big barrio. It is kind of dirty because people dump garbage in the street, and also some men sleep outside... (Maribel)

The people who live in el Raval is different. They are from different countries Morocco, Pakistan, Rumania, Spain, the South and East of Africa, England and India. Also many tourists from different countries come to visit the city. (Abdelnor)

There is an enormous iron cat in La Rambla del Raval. The people who live there have a great time because the bigger parties always take place there (Laura)
across different countries in Europe, Peru, and finally the United States, his new homeland, were implicitly presented in the exhibition narrative. We decided to concentrate the itinerary on creating a relational space centered on discussing how Frank produced images that showed a migratory point of view. As Garoian (1999) affirms, the rationale was to deconstruct and recompose art in ways that the expressive character of Frank’s photos and his personal concerns as an artist found a parallel with the lives, desires, and imaginaries of our children in order that they could see their own migratory experience “within a context of history” (p. 198).

The Motion Picture. Differing from earlier photo-documentalists like Cartier-Bresson who centered on the capture of decisive moments that summarized a totality within one sole image, Frank opposed the idea that one single instant could represent the complexity of life. Focusing on different examples through the exhibition, we observed how Frank worked with highly orchestrated sequences of images “that collapsed or even subverted time, to present multiple and layered meanings, to elicit numerous and conflicting emotional responses” (Greenough, 1994). Children were asked to capture public life in El Raval Sud also in terms of narratives and sequences of images showing contrasts and differences that were meaningful to them (see Video Stills E, F, G, and H in Figure 1).

Like other photographers of the late ‘40s and ‘50s, Frank experimented with the motion picture and the idea that the point of view can move with the flow of cosmopolitan life, having as a result an embodied representation of the ephemeral, random, and transitional character of urbanity (Kozloff, 2002). The motion picture style allowed children to experiment with movable and volatile points of view while they occupied and transited city itineraries that were familiar and attractive to them.

Raval’s Montage of Images

The two montages presented in this final section account for the multiplicity of readings and views that acted together in the final outcomes of children’s selected urban themes, photographs, and writings (see Figures 2 and 3).

The analytical perspective in reading these two montages is inspired by Rasmussen and Smidt (2003), who affirm that in analyzing children’s photographs of their neighborhoods one can gain three different types of knowledge: visual, physical, and narrative. The visual concerns the photograph and what it is shown and how it is shown. The physical knowledge shows the embodied and lived perception of the photographed reality. The narrative knowledge is related to the statements, anecdotes, and stories that children project into these photographs.

Montage #1: Places of Work along Calle Sant Pau. During the field trip to Robert Frank’s exhibition, children were attracted to the series of images presented in the section named Detroit 1957, which showed the life in and around a Ford Motor factory. While looking at those images, we read a paragraph from a short story depicting working and living spaces in El Raval Sud, and we discussed possible correspondences between the pictures and the narrative. These conversations seemed to have had an impact on one of the working groups that selected “Working Spaces in Calle Sant Pau” as their theme for the photo documentation of public life in El Raval Sud.

Children in this group were interested in representing the actions of people while they work. They came into different businesses and negotiated the possibility of taking pictures. Children asked the workers who agreed to participate not to look at the camera and act as if they were doing their jobs. Days later when the group had the opportunity to look at the resulting photo-contacts, different members had varied opinions on how to organize their visual sequences (see Video Stills I and J in Figure 1). Some of the children in the group were especially interested in putting together a linear
People work constructing new streets and buildings. They also work in stores, bars, calling centers, hotels. Many workers are from other countries. People also come from other countries to take photos of Raval (Alex)

In Raval you can find many restaurants that sell shawarma. There is a sandwich store called Atlas, where they cook very tasty stuff. There are many stores selling phones, and also many bars (Kaula)

Most of the stores are from Pakistan or Morocco (Ghizlane)

Figure 3. Montage #2: Representing transitions and situations. 6th grade students, class 2005, Escola Collaso i Gil.
series of images showing the different moments of a work action. Some others preferred to show situations that were fun and worth remembering. Some others wanted to put together sequences of places where they go to eat or buy regularly, connecting existing social bonds to their invented theme.

**Physical Knowledge.** From a physical perspective, children used play and fun to create an alternative mapping/itinerary of Calle Sant Pau. Taking pictures of all these different work places along the street that they walk everyday at different times was a practice of seeing this space differently and of making childhood culture visible in the public realm.

**Visual Knowledge.** From a visual point of view that concentrates on what is shown in the photographs, we can see that the children’s focus on the theme of work demonstrates that children negotiate their social identities by not only relating to childhood culture and children acquaintances but by experiencing, from their own point of view, the realities defining the world of adults (Mathews, 2003). The photographs in Figure 2 show in a concrete manner how children gained knowledge of these different places by exploring given environments, items, persons that were interesting to them. It is difficult to separate the visuality of these images from their physicality. The frames show specific senses of belonging, transition, occupation, and proximity. Some were taken from outside of the store, because their owners or employees decided not to participate (see photos of Raval Döner restaurant and butchery shop in Figure 2). These certainly differ from images that were taken inside with the consent of the owners. In these images you could see the proximity and the comfort both of adults and children interacting together in these places. See in Figure 2 the three images in the hair salon that intend to show the process of cutting hair. This is a transcription of what happened in the field:

(A group of children enter the barber’s shop.)

**Israel:** Hi, we are from the school. We would like to take some photos.

**Assistant:** Of my face or of the place?

**Yunaida:** Of you working.

(Assistant laughs while owner walks in.)

**Assistant:** Juri they want to take some photos, it’s for schoolwork.

(Owner receives a phone call. Children wait grouped in front of him. Owner looks at the children while he is talking over the phone.)

**Fabio:** Can I sit there?

(Fabio points at the chair in front of the mirror. Israel also addresses the owner.)

**Israel:** You can do like you are fixing his hair.

(Before the owner takes a decision, Yunaida sits in the chair. Owner hangs up and walks toward the chair, and puts a robe on Yunaida. He starts combing her hair. Owner smiles.)

**Yunaida:** Please, do not cut my hair!

**Owner:** Nooo.

(The rest of the children take lots of shots of the situation. (Rifà & Trafí-Prats, 2005))

**Narrative Knowledge.** From a narrative point of view we can see how Alex’s statement focuses on the experience of taking the photos, the things that can be photographed in Calle Sant Pau, and the different people, like tourists, that take photographs in el Raval. Kaula’s statement concentrates on the things represented in the photographs that she likes, and more specifically, food. Ghizlane’s statement about the fact that many businesses are owned by individuals from the Hindu peninsula and the Magreb region is more a re-affirmation of the intercultural character of the neighborhood, where different ethnic communities are associated with different types of jobs and forms of public life, than a negative remark or complaint. (Read all these statements in Figure 2.) The different characters appearing in these pictures are not shown as aliens or immigrants; they are represented as dignified individuals performing ordinary tasks in the daily life of their neighborhood. Most often urban experiences and social interconnections
in the metropolis defy this fixed and monolithic model of identity associated with a place of origin to favor instead hybridized cultural experiences and nomadic and evolving models of identity.

**Montage #2: Representing transitions and situations.** During the field trip to Robert Frank’s exhibition, we spent time observing and discussing the series named *From the Bus* (1958). In this particular series, Frank uses the camera as a device to capture different situations while traveling in a New York bus. The results are an evidence of flying situations and moving sights and bodies.

When looking at these images, children showed interest in knowing how the images were done. They discussed if they were real or fake situations while performing the possible situations and actions that the photographer did to take those (see Video Stills C, D in Figure 1).

**Physical Knowledge.** One of the working groups decided to base their photo-documentation on people walking and doing things in the street (see Figure 3). The idea of capturing fragments of situations, and moving realities, is very perceptible in these images. The different points show what the very focus of the image is. When this focus is a tiny dog, children cropped the heads of the people to locate the dog and the street floor in the center of the image. When children represent someone walking through a street, they situate themselves as followers or crossers.

**Visual Knowledge.** The photos demonstrate that children are using Frank’s moving picture strategy. Some photos show dynamic framings and moving subjects because children took the images while walking and following people. They used Frank’s aesthetics in relational ways to experiment with new ways of viewing and representing what is familiar to them. Some other images show forms of occupying the space and actions that happen in the street like sleeping outside, doing construction work, meeting with others, and so forth.

**Narrative Knowledge.** Children’s statements show different feelings, narratives, and anecdotes about sociability and coexistence in El Raval Sud. Some are more positive than others, and we can see how children worry about poverty, public behavior, and healthy spaces, but also feel part of a community to which specific spaces contribute to that feeling. All statements show that children care about the spaces where they live and that those spaces affect who they are.

Photographs and texts in these two montages have a highly experiential content. They are a proof of the different and specific perspectives, points of view, and body perceptions through which children show that the neighborhood is a “sensed, perceived, and experienced reality that it is stored within the child’s body … The body and its movements are vital building blocks in making meaning of the environment. The creation of meaning is basically a physical manifestation” (Rasmussen & Smidt, 2003).

**Conclusions**

Interdisciplinary efforts are needed to construct a model of art education centered on relations and transformative actions with young people growing up in changing and challenging urban environments. The knowledge that we often consider foundational for art education needs to be transformed to adopt a pedagogical perspective centered on the cultures, memories, and interests of young people whose social, cultural, and geographical biographies significantly differ from the ones of their adult caregivers.

In this sense, it is urgent that art education participates more actively in contemporary discussions about childhood occurring in the sociological, pedagogical, anthropological, and historical fields. The actualities of contemporary children, their visual culture experiences, and the geopolitical complexity of the world where they grow up are forcing us to review beheld conceptions of universalism, ethnocentrism, innocence, dependence, or spatial-temporal unity, through
which modern disciplines, like art education, have conceived childhood. A defining trait of the new world order is that the commonality of public space is being challenged by corporate privatization. As a result of this movement, children are pushed out of the streets and shuttled to different private realms of activity. This situation contrasts with the reality that year after year more children move to metropolitan centers. Currently, 75% of the world’s population of children lives in urban environments. Art educators interested in social justice and visual culture need to engage in imaginative actions that cultivate forms of aesthetic relationality between children and the spaces where they live. Among these imaginative actions is the use of contemporary art, collaborative research practices, and visual narratives as a way of participation, exploration, and transformation of art, adult-children relations, and urban realities.

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