The Pictorial World of the Child

In this lavishly illustrated book, Maureen Cox gives a comprehensive and scholarly account of children’s understanding and appreciation of art and their developing ability to produce their own pictures. She discusses the main influences on children’s picture-making, including the popular media, adults’ examples and other children’s pictures, as well as children’s own inventiveness and level of cognitive development. She considers the intriguing question, does children’s art follow the same pattern of development as the history of art? Although much of the book traces the artistic development of typically developing children, it also includes a discussion of children with intellectual disabilities as well as those with a talent for art, some of whom are children with autism. We tend to think of pictures as a strictly visual medium, but the section on blind children’s ability to recognise pictures challenges this assumption. Maureen Cox evaluates the way that various professional groups use children’s pictures – to assess their level of intellectual development, to help diagnose and overcome emotional problems, and to aid recall of past events. Finally, she concentrates on children’s art in the educational context, discussing the art curricula in different countries and different educational philosophies and suggesting ways in which these different approaches could be evaluated.

The Pictorial World of the Child

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To Tony
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6.1 Claire, aged 4 years 2 months, has drawn the members of her family in different orientations on the page.

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6.15 Willats (1977) found that projection systems were related to children’s increasing chronological age. Reprinted from J. Willats, ‘How children learn to draw realistic pictures’, *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 29 (1977), 367–82, with permission from the author.

6.16 Ben, aged 4 years 3 months, drew a graded series of views of a steam train to show how it appears larger as it gets nearer to the viewer. Reprinted from J. Matthews, *The Art of Childhood and Adolescence* (London: Falmer Press, 1999), p. 115, fig. 77, with permission from the publisher.

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6.20 Children and adults were asked to draw this road. Reprinted from M. V. Cox and K. Littleton, ‘Children’s use of converging obliques in their perspective drawings’, *Educational Psychology* 15 (1995), 127–39, with permission from Taylor & Francis (www.tandf.co.uk/journals).

6.21 The sides of the road were drawn parallel by the younger children. Reprinted from M. V. Cox and K. Littleton, ‘Children’s use of converging obliques in their perspective drawings’, *Educational Psychology* 15 (1995), 127–39, with permission from Taylor & Francis (www.tandf.co.uk/journals).

6.22 All 6- to 7-year-olds could draw a converging road when asked to copy this example. Reprinted from M. V. Cox and K. Littleton, ‘Children’s use of converging obliques in their perspective drawings’, *Educational Psychology* 15 (1995),
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7.3 A 4-year-old’s use of literal expression: a happy tree (left) and a sad tree (right). Reprinted from W. Ives, ‘The development of expressivity in drawing’, *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 54 (1984), 152–9, with permission from the British Psychological Society.

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9.14 Table and chairs drawn by Gaia. Reprinted from J. Kennedy (as fig 9.10) with permission from the author.

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10.17 Detail from a drawing by a 6-year-old Warlpiri girl. Both tadpole figures and the Warlpiri U-shaped form have been used. This detail is from an original drawing collected by Rosemary Hill, producer of ‘Windows on the Mind’, course ED209 (BBC/Open University). I also acknowledge the help

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of Edith Bavin, the Warlpiri Media Association and the people of Yuendumu, Central Australia.

10.18 Detail from *Groups of people chatting around camp fires*, drawn by an 8-year-old Warlpiri girl. The Warlpiri symbol has been used for most of the figures, but the baby is a conventional western form. This detail is from an original drawing collected by Rosemary Hill, producer of ‘Windows on the Mind’, course ED209 (BBC/Open University). I also acknowledge the help of Edith Bavin, the Warlpiri Media Association and the people of Yuendumu, Central Australia.

10.19 Haida representation of a beaver.


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11.1 Picture drawn by 8-year-old Peter, who was referred to a clinician because of behavioural problems (from Machover 1951).

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A.1 The law of proximity. We see three pairs of lines rather than six single lines.

A.2 The law of similarity. We perceive similar elements (dots) as belonging to the same form.

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A.4 An ambiguous photograph: gravestone or archway in the wall? Photograph taken by Steve Forrester, a contribution to a project entitled ‘Visual Perception and Pictorial Representation’ co-ordinated by Alan Costall and Terry Wright at West Surrey College of Art and Design, UK. Reprinted with permission.

A.5 Pipe-cleaner figures recognisable from their linear axes. Reprinted from D. Marr and H. K. Nishihara,
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank friends, colleagues and publishers who have given me permission to reprint pictures and figures already published elsewhere. I am grateful to various libraries, archives, museums and galleries for their permission to reproduce works of art and for supplying photographs or electronic copies for this purpose. I also thank my undergraduate and postgraduate students for the use of the drawings they have collected. Finally, but by no means least, I thank my partner, Tony Wootton, for his support during the writing of this book, our useful discussions regarding its content, and his careful and critical reading of the manuscript.