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## Developing Creativity: American Experience based on Interview with Jennifer Lehe, the Manager of Strategic Partnerships, the Centerfor Creativity at the Columbus Museum of Art



Jennifer Lehe, MałgorzataMuszyńska

### Summary

In February 2016, I met at the Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, Ohio, USA) with Jennifer Lehe, the Manager of Strategic Partnerships, Learning Department of the Columbus Museum of Art who gave me an interview on the implementation of projects related to creative thinking and activities of children and young people attending museum extra-curricular programs. The main

goals of the Center for Creativity at CMA are the design of the “ecosystem”; (the term used by Jennifer Lehe), such as tasks, which correspond to the complex creative process of the artist. The Creativity Center builds its projects on the basis of scientific concepts. Diversity and creativity form the basis for better understanding of multicultural world, its similarities and differences. The Center provides also the basis for building the predisposition of the discoverer – scientist, who strives to describe new components of creativity, while investigating this process. It creates the ecosystem with community consisting of children, young people, immigrants, scientists representing various disciplines, artists, animators as well as creative but unrelated to art people. Connected elements of this ecosystem form a complementary whole, which is launched towards development of creativity

**Keywords:** creativity, ecosystem, development, transdisciplinary teaching.

In February 2016, I met at the Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, Ohio, USA) with Jennifer Lehe, Master of Arts in Art Education who gave me an interview on the implementation of projects related to creative thinking and activities of children and young people attending museum extra-curricular programs.

I was interested in: goals of this activity, contexts of its creation, similarities and differences in these areas between Polish and American museum-based education. Above all, my attention turned to the museum itself, whose exhibition art is specific, because of common use of “links” described in the interview in detail by Jennifer Lehe, that show the correspondence of works of art from past centuries with contemporary art. This way of looking at the pieces of art works, their affinities, similarities and analogies has been discussed in my books and papers. That is why I tried to take advantage of this meeting to ask questions about opportunities created by museum environment in development of creative thinking.

**Maybe at the beginning you can tell something about yourself, about your education, your interests etc.**

Sure, yes, of course. My name is Jennifer Lehe and I oversee our programs for children 18 months to 19 years, and the teachers who work with them, here at the Columbus Museum of Art. I specialize in learning, and in the programs that we do, and in teachers workshops. I got into this field in a sort of circular way, by a circular path or winding path. I started as a photography student, my Bachelor’s degree is in Photography, and I wanted to work in youth development, helping young people to get involved into photography. And I did it for a while but I felt like there was a huge ecosystem of learning and many of my students attended schools that were not worthy of their skills. These kids were amazing, they were dedicated, creative and I would hear stories about the ways that they experienced to learning at school, and I became very saddened. I felt like I was just taking a tip of an iceberg. So I went to study education. I got my Master’s in Art and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and there I thought that I was finding answers but I just found a lots more questions. So I ended up going to work, essentially advocating for better public schools, and it is very frustrating ... It is sort of a long story but I ended up teaching kindergarten.

In America kindergarten is for kids 5, 6 and 7 years old. And that was really amazing experience and it gave me a really different perspective on the purposes of education, and the kind of experiences that we could or should be providing for kids. Then I lived in Switzerland for a couple of years and did odd things and I came back and I started working here. One of the things that I think is really exciting... Oh, we can see if it comes from your questions, but that is just a little bit about me.

### **What is the role of education in a museum?**

I think that the role of education in a museum should be to provide deeper learning, to show young people, and actually learners of all ages, how artists think, what matters about the creative process. So I think the role of education in a typical museum is probably quite different from how we approach it here. Our big idea is creativity, and everything that we do in terms of learning at the Columbus Museum of Art is about this idea of creativity and I brought a couple of things to give you if you want them. This one, and I apologize that it is very wordy, but this is basically a framework that we use to look at how artists practice creativity. So these are the sort of dispositions of thinking like an artist, we say. So when an artist is engaged in a creative process this is what the engaging ends: play, curiosity, experimentation, imagination. When we think about the role of education in a museum it is to spark all of these creative dispositions. We think that the arts are uniquely powerful ways to cultivate these dispositions but it doesn't happen automatically. Museum educator has to help to make that bridge between a work of art and the experience, and the engagement that you want to have.

### **Does it have an elitist or an egalitarian character?**

Uhm.. It is a very interesting question. I hope that in the next few decades the answer to this question will change a lot. I think that the answer to this question is already changing. I think that the history of museums is without a doubt elitist. It is an elitist one. What we are trying very hard to do here is make it more egalitarian one. When we were preparing to reopen our new wing we articulated a new set of values for the institution as a whole not just a Center for Creativity. And the three values that we highlighted were creativity, which is our big idea, relationships and experience. Cutting across all three of those we must have a core value – radical inclusion, meaning not just having free admission on Sundays, which we do so, and then pay what you wish on Thursday evenings. But that is not enough just to open the doors, you must truly create a sense of welcome and a sense of active invitation. Otherwise it will only be the sorts of people who can see themselves coming to the museum. I talk about this with my friends a lot, that even myself as a highly educated person who comes from, you know globally speaking, a lot of privilege, I don't necessarily think to go to a museum on a Saturday afternoon. Why is that? What we are offering that is not

only welcoming people in, but making them want to come in. Because until we can begin to answer that in an active way museums are not going to truly be egalitarian. They will only over-represent a subset of the population. So that is a long answer to a very short but dense question. I hope that we are moving into egalitarian direction.

**Is the idea “Art as Experience” of John Dewey still alive, particularly in your museum?**

I would say, speaking of elitist, so I love John Dewey. I read that book and we have many copies of it downstairs. I think that one thing I try to be conscious of with myself is inclusive language. And I think Dewey is an example. He has got a lot of beautiful ideas that can be difficult for people to access, especially for people who haven't had a certain educational experience. We use particular John Dewey quote a lot, especially when working with teachers which is (I am paraphrasing): “we don't learn from experience but we learn from reflecting on experience”. I would say that in a short answer it is not an active, it doesn't play an active role in a way we approach pedagogy in our Department.

**How the recipients of art can be prepared to interpret the contemporary art?**

Can you say more about that question?

**The contemporary art is really difficult. How can you help people of different ages to understand contemporary art, to explain it to them?**

We have some very challenging works in our collection, and by challenging I mean a whole range. Some stuff that is very abject, and people have a strong aversion to other works that are just a sort of ... people look at them. We have a Rauschenberg up right now that many people, staff members – when they saw it being installed they were not sure if it was a work of art, right. So a couple of things. We approach the facilitated tour with a thinking routine – it is an acronym, it is ODIP, and it stands for **O**bserve – **D**escribe – **I**nterpret – **P**rove.

And we use this with all works not only contemporary, because what it does is by forcing people to spend a full minute just looking, and in just describing, resisting interpretation. Just describe a bunch of things you see, and only then begin to ask what might be happening, and always what might, so it is the conditional. We are not looking for a single answer for what you think might be happening, what might be the story. And then prove, not prove in a sense of there being a one single answer but reasoning with evidence, so what do you see in a work of art that makes you say that. Coming back to this question what makes you say that. So that is our core routine for looking at works of art. And what happens is sometimes people really don't like the work of art, and that's OK. And I actually think with contemporary art – it can almost be as productive if they have a strong aversion to it, as if they like it. Because I think one thing I see is

when I map a galleries I see people walk past impressionist painting at look at it for three seconds and keep going and think – oh that’s pretty, that’s nice, but then they see a work of art - a contemporary work that really challenges their idea of what should be in a museum or what might be in a museum and they stop. And if they stop and they look that’s great, right. So the role of a museum educator or someone on the visitor experience team is to ask them why shouldn’t this be in a museum? What are you seeing? What questions does this raise for you? And this is another routine that we use a lot with visitors, and this is from Harvard Project Zero. It’s: See – Think – Wonder. That’s what you see, what you think that this might be, and what does it make you wonder. Because if a work of art can make you pose questions that is a sort the ultimate for me because it gets your imagination going, it builds your curiosity. So I think there is a role for contents and I see this a lot of with a contemporary art, because a lot of times contemporary art is a reference to previous works and actually earlier forms of art also were often references to previous works but we don’t have the same historical distance. So there is a sort of storytelling piece of what can you learn from experts about a particular piece or a particular artist and then there is what can you unearth by just looking, and exploring it, which I think is really important.

### **How does a contemporary art correspond with the art of the past in your museum?**

This is a really interesting questions and because of the layout of our museum and what we have right now is a brand new wing of the museum that is full of only contemporary art. And then we have a 1931 building which I guess from the European perspective it is still pretty new, but it is an older part of our building that has the galleries that hold the Old Masters and the galleries that hold the early 20th century work, We have a lot of early 20th century social realist art in the museum, as well as some photolit. We can take a look upstairs if you want, but for the purpose of this what I say is: when we have tours we like to, or I like to, or our Learning Department staff likes to, I am not sure what with docents, sometimes they have a particular gallery they want to go to for a particular reason but I like to in a tour juxtapose looking at older works with looking at contemporary works because it helps to show contradictions it helps to raise up curiosity.

### **Does the contemporary art mean the art created after the second world war?**

Yes that’s how I use it which is maybe an old school now, but that’s how I use it. However I would say that we have a lot of art made after the 1960s, right now 1960s and later. And we have a big exhibition that is going to open in just a couple of days actually of Melvin Edwards sculptures and he is a contemporary, he is alive right now and he is still working. Sculptor whose works address slavery and there are somewhat representative and somewhat abstract. It is very provocative work. It will be also in a new wing. We have some thematic galleries

upstairs. We have thematic exhibitions down here in a Big Idea gallery which is all about playing. We have trompe-l'oeil painting from France from 100 years ago up next to photographs from a Columbus-based artist Anthony Mendoza of very funny and playful pictures of a cat. So in the thematic gallery like the Big Idea gallery you have both, and they are side by side. In the more traditional galleries we have gallery that is mostly Renaissance European paintings, some modern works, modern European works, Western European works, and then we have a social realist space that is called the Social Mirror. We don't have a lot of mixing, except for in a Center of Creativity

**I wrote a book in Polish on Visual Analogies in Art, and a book in Polish on Metaphors in Primary Education and two papers in English based on these books.**

I would love to see it. I would be very interested to see it.

**Is there a characteristic style of exhibition of art works in your museum?**

What I think is the most characteristic element of our exhibitions is what we call connectors. And connectors broadly speaking is anything in the museum that is not a work of art, but that's to connect the visitor to the art. So this can be furniture, it could be labels but what we have a lot of here in comparison to maybe to some other museums is hands-on connectors, so they invite participation, so some of them are like a join-in conversation station where we pose a question and ask people to put their input, and put it up. And the questions are designs to provoke reflection or deeper engagement with the works in an exhibition. We also have some that are puzzles and we did an evaluation on the puzzles because at first I think some of our curators were not on board with the idea of puzzles in the galleries because I think they thought it was diminishing the importance of the work to make a puzzle of it. So we had an external evaluation which showed that actually they were serving to boost visitors observation skills. They were noticing a lot more in the art as result of trying to put together a puzzle. So that's just one example of the style and direction proposed by Merilee Mostov our Chief Engagement Officer. What she is moving toward is collaborating more closely with the curators. She curates some of the exhibitions in the Center of Creativity but she is collaborating more closely with rest of our curatorial team to reimagine how the label text is written, so it is posing questions and inviting the visitors not to look to the label for the answers but to see that some amount of the content is in them, but a provocation to ask yourself something about the work. So I would say that's the most characteristic aspect of our exhibitions.

**Does your museum have long-lasting collaborations with local schools and perhaps with immigrants and people from other cultures?**

I'll split that question in half and talk about the collaboration we have with schools. So we have a very long lasting sixty year collaboration with the local

school district, and we do a program where all their fifth grade students come to the museum. And before they come they have a pre visit, so one of our docents will go out to the school and talk them about the experience they'll have in the museum, and do a ODIP – a thinking routine I referenced earlier: Observe-Describe-Interpret-Prove. The docents in school will introduce the students to that protocol, so they are prepared to engage and dive right end when they come. So when they come here for the facilitated tour and then in their own classroom they make a work of art that explores the theme. Every year has a theme: one year there was maps this year it's journeys. So they are going to be doing a project with a making a sort of the shoe that represents a journey. When they come here for their visit they will be exploring a theme of journeys, which as you can imagine is very broad and you can find ways to link many works of art to the theme of a journey. So that's our biggest and longest lasting partnership, but what have we done in the past for ten or fifteen years is to push ourselves to say what can we do that's going deeper. I am very fortunate to work on out Teaching for Creativity Teacher Institute and this was an experiment early on to say teacher professional development gets a pretty bad reputation, teachers don't like it a lot of times. And I grew up with teachers for parents, and they were always complaining about professional development. So what can quality teacher development look like? It's over a length of time, so you have time to put ideas into practice, and follow up on things. And what would it look like if it's linked to the big ideas what can creativity look like, feel like and sound like in learning, and how can we model it, foster it and assess it in learning, and what role would the museum play in supporting classroom teachers to do that. So we are coming to our sixth year of that, so that is four full days in the summer and three follow-up days throughout the year.

### **Is this Institute associated with the Museum or is this a part of the Museum?**

It doesn't have a physical presence in the Museum but it's program of the Center for Creativity here at the CMA. What we are looking to do, so we had 65 teachers in a current cohort which is much bigger than we had in the past. And it's very exciting and I can get highlights that this is a moment to capitalize on, where teachers are hungry for what they can do now that can support creativity in their classrooms, and also it is more than just doing a genius hour or a creativity challenge. But how can you build that into the conditions of the classroom? How do you foster a culture of creative thinking in schools? So this has been as I said the sixth year of that, and we are very excited about where we can go with that and I want to do is spin that off into an actual Institute where there are further courses that you can do. Because we have teachers who come back and do it two or three times, and each time they go deeper with it. But what we can build into it is pulling people up the ladder. So that's a different example of a collaboration that we have with local schools.

Your question about immigrants and students from other countries is an interesting one, because the Columbus area has really high number of immigrants, and nowadays in my understanding the biggest groups of immigrants are Spanish speaking, which is not surprising, but also Somali immigrants and Nepali immigrants, so they comprise the majority of immigrants in America. And what we are very excited to do is, so it is the second year that we are working with Columbus Global Academy which is a public program, in every way it's similar to school but it is not technically a school. Newcomers to the United States, immigrants and refugees until they reach a certain level of English language proficiency they go to Columbus Global Academy. We work with them on our program called Critical Works which is a partnership over the five school visits, and then the visits to the museum. And it's designed to engage middle school students, sixth, seventh and eighth graders, in exploring social topics of relevance to them and getting into complexity and then creating works of art that explore the social issues. So that's our primary current engagement that's specifically around immigrants and people from different cultures. Also say that from visitors engagement and visitors experience perspective we're putting a lot of energy now into asking how do we meaningfully engage members of different communities setting a lot of times museum's staff a tendency to think that engaging members of particular community means having a booth of their parade or having an exhibition of artists from a particular cultural group. I think that there is very important for people to see works of art that represent their culture. I think that genuine engagement has to go much deeper than that, it cannot be an exhibition once every five years but it's actually baked into the culture of the museum. I think this is a big, big question for the field. I don't have any good answers yet, but we are working on it.

**Do you exhibit art from different cultures or mostly the Western culture?**

I think mostly Western cultures, our collection is mostly Western but we currently have an exhibition that is a partnership with the Israel Antiquities Authority so it is really glass juxtaposed with more contemporary glass. So it is an interesting idea that the creation of glass has been basically the same for thousands of years, but looking at what people were making with glass in the Middle East thousands of years ago and looking what contemporary artists are doing with glass is really interesting juxtaposition. Our collection is very strongly United States art, which I think is great in some ways but it also prisms the opportunity to bring in partners. Yes, it is a Western for sure.

**Is art showing us a common ground for agreement or rather articulates the differences?**

It is an interesting question. I want to hear your answer to this question. These are hard questions. I think it is all about how you frame an experience. I don't think that it is a bad thing to look at differences, celebrating what makes people

distinctive, whether you are celebrating a particular person's distinctive eye or you are celebrating the differences between cultural approaches to textiles or to glass. There is a lot to be learned and explored there but I think it is all about what one chooses to focus on. I think you can create common ground out of difference. Probably one of biggest challenges of the 21st century is that every day we are more connected to people in other parts of the world we ever have been before, but it is a question of what we do out of that, and I think the civil discourse now is in a very bad place. There is a very meager reaction and you see it very obviously on social media, not that social media is bad, but you see that it becomes a platform for people to narrow the focus of what they are hearing and seeing and you can curate your own information. You get this echo chamber, right, you choose only hear things from people who you agree with, and when you encounter an idea that you think you disagree with you immediately shut it down or you shoot off some response. So I think the question that museum educators have a responsibility to pursue is how do we support people in slowing down, resisting their assumptions, questioning their assumptions and entertaining viewpoints that are different from their own. And what I see the museum have responsibility to do this is because we can give ourselves permission to do it. Every public institution should be doing this, but we can only start with ourselves, and art I think provides an opportunity to build that kind of critical thinking, slowing down, resisting assumptions, looking at different viewpoints, global competencies in general. When we look at what we think are the big purposes and value, of learning into the arts there is a lot of overlap with people talking about global competencies but to move forward we have got to be able to empathize more deeply. I think the empathy is simultaneously the most natural thing and the most challenging thing at a certain point. These are the questions that stick with me most these days is how can you cultivate empathy with different people at different points of their lives, and how can you cultivate curiosity. I think there is a strong connection there. Did I answer your question well?

### **Do you use performative methods in museum education?**

Do mean do we use the principles of acting or performing? In a way. So we have some programs here, that especially with teens where we look at, or a social practice art making in a broad sense. So it is not just visual arts. So we follow the learners thinking and ideas wherever they lead us. So an example of this might be with project Kidit which is one of our high school programs we had a whole theme for this semester was the economy as the art: buying, selling, giving and trading. For a gift section what the teams did was to identify something that they could give to someone else and then mount some sort of experience. We do a lot of things that are sort of interventions in the museum's space and going out to the community and staging some sort of intervention. Our teenagers and art lab last year created a park in a parking lot near here. So on a Sunday, they have some-

thing called Social Sundays that our lab does, and they transformed the parking lot. They were working in five groups, there were five groups and each of them took this idea, I forget the name of the artist but we borrowed this from a contemporary artist who does this I think in San Francisco where he takes parking lots and turns them into parks. So they did that. So we do performance in that sort of way. Did I answer your question more or less?

### **Do you exhibit performance art like in MoMA (Museum of Modern Art in New York)?**

Like Marina Abramovic? She is amazing. She is very hypnotic. I saw her do something similar at a gallery in Chelsea when I was in college. I went to NYU and we went to this gallery in Chelsea where she was living for like three weeks. And it was very weird. She is fascinating. We don't do a lot of performance, we don't collaborate a lot with performance artists but we do have something monthly that we do with creatives, so not necessarily with people who identify as artists but with people who are working in creative industries. And it is called our Connector Series, so one example is had an artist come in and stage a protest. So he invited visitors to the museum to create the protest sign to protest something that they didn't like, and they marched around the museum protesting whatever that was so there was a whole range from "Culture should be free" to "Don't wear any or burn your underpants" so that was all over a place. We brought a tattoo artist about a year ago and there was a rubber arm that you could tattoo on it and practice using a tattoo gun. And actually a woman on our staff got a real tattoo from her while people were watching. So the Connector Series is one of the ways that we engage with living Columbus-based artists and creative types. Because we think that the whole idea behind thinking like an artist rubric is that artists are models that create critical thinking, so how can we bring them into the life of the museum.

### **How can art education enhance skills in other areas?**

It is so interesting. So just last week I went to Otterbein University to give a lecture in a Chemistry class, and it's an Art and Chemistry class and this is the third time that someone from our museum has gone there to give a lecture, and I that was the first time that I had done it. So I was asking myself: I haven't taken a chemistry class since probably 1999, what can I say to this group that is going to be relevant, and I was thinking about what does it look like to think like a scientist. And I was thinking as an artist framework, curiosity and questioning are the foundations of science. The way that we teach science is about memorizing formulas and plugging things in, but that is not the work of science. If you are a professional scientist you must be constantly curious and wondering about the world around you and you have to be able to generate and explore questions. That is the very most basic foundation of art and very most basic foundation of sci-

ences. And so my talk was really about looking how artists experiment like scientists, and how messing about process being an artist is similar to that of a scientist. And this term “messing about” I am borrowing from David Hawkins, so I didn’t invent that but he has an article, he has a great book with a chapter called “Messing About in Science”. And I go back and reread it every few years, because that is what every discipline is about. It is to mess around with ideas and be curious.

**In natural sciences you need to create hypotheses and then verify them.**

Right. But if you don’t even wonder about the world then you will never come even to hypotheses. You never will be curious, and it is so incredible to me how quickly young people lose their curiosity in an American school system. Because so quickly everything becomes about a search for a right answer. And this is where art education win and is done well, and that’s important. When it is done well can push back on that, because when it’s done well it is not about building skills and drawing, and getting to correct interpretation of the work of art. It is about open endedness, it is about the process of thinking. And drawing is really important skill, but it is only one skill, but is used in the process of making manifest creative thinking. So I think that arts – my husband is a Math Professor so we talk about it a lot – because arts and math and science in general, and actually every discipline had a kind of perception problem. Because when you learn a discipline in school you learn it as a set of skills to be mastered, as opposed to a way of thinking. And what is really missing in the majority of schools is transdisciplinary thinking, following your curiosity to not interdisciplinary, but transdisciplinary. In a lot of times when I use the term transdisciplinary people think interdisciplinary, but not about collaborations between fields it is about looking at what are the questions that can drive genuine thinking and learning. So I think with any field you can present it in a way that boils it down to mastery of skills, so if you are not skilled in drawing when you are in the third grade then you are labelled as not an art kid. Or if you are bored and not very good at balancing equations then you are labelled as not a science kid. And think how many more thinkers we would be cultivating if we moved to the truly transdisciplinary model for thinking. So I think that arts education helps to develop the skills that are needed in other armuse when it presents itself as being about thinking like an artist. When it presents itself as being about imagination and critical thinking.

**Does your museum conduct scientific research or other forms of exploration?**

We do a lot of evaluation of our programs. It forces us to identify the outcomes in the beginning, which most of the people skip past that because they have an inner sense what the value is that they produce. By articulating outcomes we have to say what is actually going to be happening that we are willing to be ac-

countable for. And by having an external evaluation that can be really expensive and most cultural organizations cannot afford to do formal evaluations, which I understand. So we don't do it for all of our programs but when we do it we try to be in very close communication with our evaluators so we are learning also about the process of evaluation. One example of this is in a Wonder Room over here we have these GoPro cameras on monopods, and so every third person who came in we have them evaluator who follow them and discretely video with the permission what they are doing, how they are interacting with the space, what are they looking at what are they seeing into one another. And we looked all of that to see what kinds of thinking and what aspects of creativity are being cultivated in this space. We do a lot of documentation and the style of Project Zero is visible learning. So that is a crux of what we do in terms of evaluation. We have a documentation specialist who is a part time employee who works on initiative called Making Creativity Visible – it is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and we are very fortunate to have this funding to this because it is an exciting opportunity to explore and make visible what that creativity look like, feel like and sound like at a given moment in our programs and in classrooms that are chosen. And how can we identify the conditions in which the creativity thrives, the dispositions that support the creative process, and teachers work and actions, the things that we can start doing, stop doing or do differently to support the conditions and the dispositions. It is so exciting and a lot of fun because it is not a research grant, but a grant that allows us to do what we consider to be research in a really meaningful way, because we are just looking to see what is happening in these classrooms and honor things that teachers may not even be aware that they are doing that is contributing to a culture of creativity or not, because sometimes the lessons are what is inhibiting creativity. So it is very fortunate to have funding from the IMLS to do that. So we look already what is the next phase of this grant going to be. So we do that kind of research.

**Do you have collaboration with The Ohio State University, especially with the Department of Art and Education, for example Museum staff lecturing or having Adjunct Professor appointments at OSU?**

Our executive director Nannette Maciejunes is teaching a class at OSU right now, and periodically we'll partner with them to teach a class but in general we have much tighter collaborations with the Columbus State Community College which is just near here. They have a phenomenal professor over there, her name is Melanie Adams, she leads the early childhood and she is very steep into this Reggio Emilia style of learning which is very exciting for us, because we are trying to bring those lessons into our programming. We have a program Young Child Studio which is very reggy over this. So we collaborate with their early childhood students to do some of our summer art workshops and to consult on some of very young child programming. We don't have a very strong relationship with OSU.

**It is a little bit pity that they don't use your resources.**

It is a little bit political. It is something that we want to circle back to and we find that there are some professors at the university with whom we work a lot, but in terms of working with departments on formal collaborations not so much. We collaborate with the Wexner Center for the Arts on SURGE programming. So SURGE is the six institution collaboration here in the city of Columbus between the Columbus Metropolitan Library, the Wexner Center for the Arts, the Columbus Museum of Art, WOSU which is a Public Media station and COSI – the Science Museum. And now with added transit arts which is a hip hop dance and performance group, which is phenomenal they do a lot of community-based here on the east side of town to provide free dropping programming for teenagers in the city. So on Thursday evenings when you come to this room, and also a studio across the hall it is completely transformed. And it is based on the research from Mimi Ito – she a researcher at University of California, Irvine. It is called HOMAGO it is an acronym created from the words Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out. So looking out how young people engage in autonomous learning in a digital environment but also projecting it on the physical environment. So we have teams that come and they spend the whole time hanging out with their friends and they come back the next week and they mess around with the spray painting booth and they come back the next week and they might be messing around with our digital illustration tablets. So it is the whole range, and some teams, we have one guy who comes every single week and usually he works in our sound booth we have our music recording booth in here, constructing music on a computer. But recently he started working on fashion, so for year he is going every day to the sound booth mixing music and now he started designing shoes, and he made a funky necktie. So it is really about having mentors in the space but having a space that is really team-driven. So anyway that is a long tangent but we do partner with WOSU which is a part of the Ohio State University and the Wexner on that, but we don't collaborate with their departments. We recently had a conversation actually with some professors from the engineering department because they work on the research grant right now to look at kids who are identified as art types and kids identified as engineer types. They wanted to talk with us about a work that they are doing as transdisciplinary in creativity, But it is a shame that our relationship isn't tighter.

**Is there anything else that you would like to add which is important and was not included?**

I would like to say that I really appreciate the rigor of these questions. These are tough questions and I think that they point to some of the key challenges in the field. And we talk in the United States a lot about what we call 21st Century Learning. What we are really talking about thinking dispositions that we need all along. We need collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, em-

pathy all of these things. We are in a moment where for some people we feel a strong sense of urgency around things that we know take a long time. And that is a difficult place to be in. There are few ways you can response to that idea of having a feeling of urgency and knowing changes are slow. You can either shut down because it is paralyzing or you can say: OK what can I do now that is going to contribute to short term change but do it in a way that is bringing about that long term shift. That is where we are in the museums. I don't really have a background in the museums. This is the first museum that I worked in full time. Prior to this my museum education experience was at the International Center for Photography in New York where I taught lab-based classes and then we go across the street to check exhibitions and I would tour kids around and I would come up with the ways to engage them in the work but beyond that the only experience I have with museums is as a visitor. And I visited the Louvre, I visited Uffizi, the National Gallery in London, the MAD (Museum of Arts and Design), the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) some of the world most prestigious institutions. I am a perfect museum visitor because behold anything painting and I'll look at it and and look at it and I wonder about it. I am not a typical museum visitor. And so how can we zoom out and take account of where the field is, where different institutions are, and ask ourselves how do we engage people in substantive ways in having quality experiences in a museum. What is does look like is and how can we foster it? So the big idea for us is creativity, for another museum it might be – I know there is one in London it is called Museum of Happiness and their big idea is happiness. How can museum foster happiness? I mean your big idea doesn't need to be creativity but you have to have a big idea. Thank you. It was really a fun, and thank you for a book.

### **Summary of the interview:**

The main goals of the Center for Creativity at CMA are:

1. The design of the “ecosystem” (the term used by Jennifer Lehe), such as tasks, which correspond to the complex creative process of the artist. Creation of situations involving game, curiosity, experimenting and an imagination that generates ever new questions, changing the way of thinking on the subject of reality (including social reality). Tasks are designed for the same participants – children and young people of American descent and local immigrants, as well as teachers who learn creative design.

Development of the teacher's creativity depends on meticulous design of the teaching process in which opportunities are created for observing, describing, interpreting and proving. Museum educator can indicate the reference of the work of art to previous art works, and thus teach looking at the art work as a story. Experience then becomes the basis for development of reflection. It creates the

research context, which can be a starting point for various types of implementation of concepts related to creativity, according to the Deweyan theory of Art as Experience.

2. Collection of data from conducted research on determination of conditions of creativity, and development of dispositions based on Making Creativity Visible program.
3. Collaboration with teachers from the local school district and from the Ohio State University.
4. Transformation of the Center of Creativity into the Teacher Training Institute.
5. Cooperation with Columbus Global Academy in the field of development of global competencies such as critical thinking, abilities to perceive differences, and various points of view.
6. Further improvement of projects in the field of transdisciplinary teaching, which may result in better determination of individual predispositions for specific artistic or technical activities.

## Conclusions

The Creativity Center builds its projects on the basis of scientific concepts. Diversity and creativity form the basis for better understanding of multicultural world, its similarities and differences. The Center provides also the basis for building the predisposition of the discoverer – scientist, who strives to describe new components of creativity, while investigating this process. It creates the ecosystem with community consisting of children, young people, immigrants, scientists representing various disciplines, artists, animators as well as creative but unrelated to art people. Connected elements of this ecosystem form a complementary whole, which is launched towards development of creativity. It constitutes a significant point of reference for Polish educators and for Polish museums developing their own creativity enhancement educational programs.

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## **Rozwijanie kreatywności – amerykańskie doświadczenia na podstawie wywiadu z Jennifer Lehe, menedżerem ds. strategii współpracy w Centrum Kreatywności w Muzeum Sztuki w Columbus**

### **Streszczenie**

W lutym 2016 roku spotkałam się w Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, Ohio, USA) z Jennifer Lehe – magistrem sztuki i edukacji, która udzieliła mi wywiadu na temat realizacji projektów związanych z kreatywnym myśleniem i działaniem dzieci i młodzieży uczęszczających na zajęcia muzealne. Głównym celem działalności Centrum Kreatywności w CMA jest projektowanie „całego ekosystemu” (określenie J. Lehe), czyli takich zadań, które są zbliżone do złożonego procesu twórczego artysty. Centrum Kreatywności buduje swoje projekty na podstawie koncepcji naukowych z zakresu różnorodnej i złożonej kreatywności, która jest podstawą do rozumienia wielokulturowego świata, jego różnic, a także daje podstawy do zbudowania predyspozycji odkrywcy – naukowca, dąży do opisywania nowych komponentów twórczości. Stwarza ekosystem, na który składa się społeczność dzieci, młodzieży, imigrantów, animatorów, naukowców różnych dyscyplin oraz innych osób kreatywnych i niezwiązanych ze sztuką. Tak sprzęgnięte elementy „ekosystemu” kreatywności tworzą komplementarną całość, która jest uruchomiona ku rozwojowi. I tym charakteryzuje się działalność CMA.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kreatywność, ekosystem, rozwój, nauczanie transdyscyplinarne.