

# The Wonder-Ful Hundred

*So, despite everything, it is permissible to think that creativity or rather learning and the wonder of learning... can serve as the strong point of our work. It is thus our continuing hope that creativity will become a normal travelling companion in our children's growth and development*

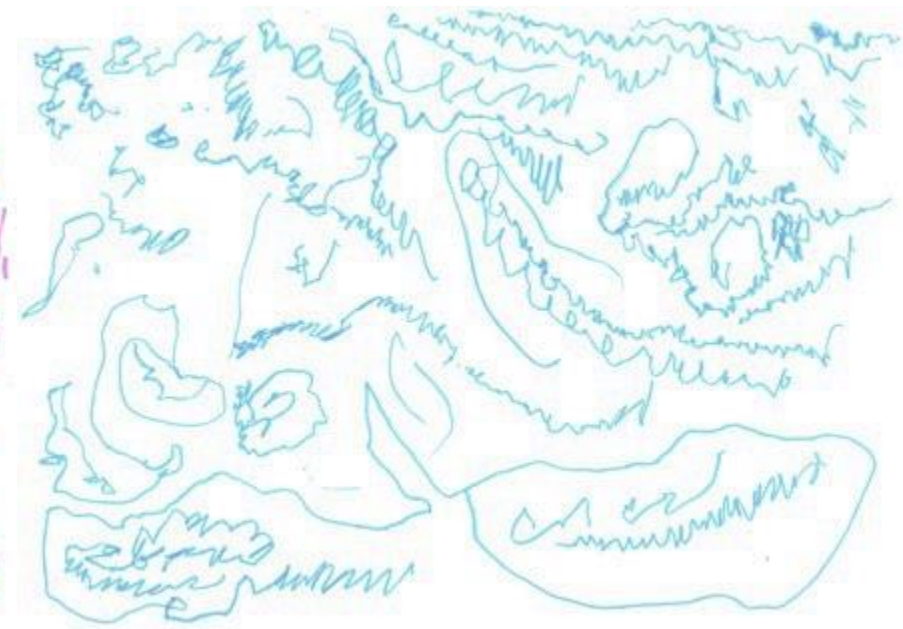
*– Loris Malaguzzi. The Wonder of Learning, Reggio Children, 2011.*



*Artwork by Maggie*



*Artwork by Sunny*



*Artwork by Kairo*





## What is the Hundred?

This project began with active listening, a form of listening that builds on the children's engagement of ideas and inquisitiveness of the here-and-now. When we ask ourselves as adults what the term *imagination* means; the response is somewhat irresolute. We as adults have progressively adapted to the social norms and accepted ways of thinking. When listening to the children voices it was apparent that their knowledge on imagination was strong. Young children, are encouraged to explore and express themselves through multiple pathways including expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, imaginative, and relational. They do so through experimenting with spoken language, gestures, drawing, painting, building, clay, shadow play, collage, dramatic play, music, and emergent writing.





# Where did this learning begin?

From the roots of the hundred languages, the beginning of this project developed from the children's voices and their emerging interest and connection with stories. The children marveled with delight when engaging with different forms of storytelling. The story, or illustrations in the story, were often a vehicle that transferred into a magical experience for the children's imagination. Evidence for investigation lied in the children's ongoing interest to engage and explore with the concept of storytelling through different languages. It is the nature of inquiry that is flexible and responsive to the children's motivations, interests, and contexts that makes this form of learning meaningful for the children. After uncovering this line of inquiry, we began unpacking and planning what concepts of connection the children were captivated by.





*What sparks children's imagination?*

*What inspires their ideas?*

*Can we discover what spurs their innovation and ingenuity?*

*And what can we do to nourish and support their creative thinking?*

Our starting point for seeking these answers is to listen to the voices of the children and document their ideas. To document, is to give the children a voice. It is a fundamental working tool and strategy for teachers to make visible and understand what takes place during pedagogical work.



# The Story of the Magazine

The work of Matisse has been on display in the Preschool Room for quite some time. As the children and educators began reconstructing their knowledge and understanding of the purpose of an atelier, educators began noticing the children glance, engage, and flick through the documentation of Matisse. What we didn't realise in this moment was that the children had taken their first steps in exploring a new form of art. One afternoon the children discovered some old magazines in the atelier. It is the nature of how the magazine presented itself that inspired the children to investigate, research, and experiment with the motivations and theories they could explore when creating art much like Matisse. The children gradually learnt that the material could be used in many ways; searching for ways that they could make meaning from the media they were being present with through experimentation. This form of thinking required the children to analyse, to engage with creative thinking, to reflect, and construct new ideas. The children began to realise the possibilities for this new opportunity to creatively expressing their ideas.

**“I’m going to make a magic beach”** Sunny expressed.

**“Yeah, I’m going to make a beach”** Ella W followed in response.



**“What are those,  
Bree?”**

Ella W inquired with  
interest.







# The Magic Beach

Before engaging in the intended experience of creating a *Magic Beach* Ella and Sunny noticed that **“we don’t have much colours”** when searching through the magazines.

This prompted an excursion into our local community to visit

Trish and Millie at the Elder Street Newsagency to see if they had any old magazines that they were willing to recycle to the centre.

When we returned to the preschool room, Ella began setting up her learning environment in the atelier. **“Going to need some scissors and glue and to find all the blue bits”** Ella expressed. We know from Ella’s socio-cultural environment that she spends a great amount of time at the beach with her family. This learning experience supported Ella’s vision for expressing curiosity in her world through collage. Over the course of three hours, Ella spent time meticulously searching, designing, cutting, shaping, and pasting her *Magic Beach* into one final piece of art.

The Magic Beach created  
by Ella Walton





# Puppets with Parents

Our families and community play an important role in the children's learning. We acknowledge our families as the first teachers to our children in the preschool room and value the strong partnerships we hold with our families. When Florence arrived this morning, she noticed the table was set out with some resources to



create. **“What are those? Mum, can you do it with me?”** Florence inquired. Florence inviting her mum to join this experience, is recognised as an opportunity for the exchanging of ideas, shared reflection, and engagement in the project vision. Florence's Mum, Amy, shared that **“I used to love making puppets when I was a little girl”**.



This form of learning in the educational project is creating a culture of participation. Throughout this experience Amy offered the children valuable knowledge and insights on how to create paper puppets, including jellyfish with long tentacles, a dinosaur and a starfish.





*Once upon a time there was a turtle named Tommy. Tommy was swimming in the water and was looking for some friends. Possy the Possum joined Tommy. Together they went down slides and then they got hungry. “I want some sausages” said Possy. “Maybe our friend Molly the meerkat will cook some sausages on the barbeque for us” Tommy said.*

# Shadow Encounters

Shadows are a significant presence in each child's life, however, intentionally interacting with the science of shadows presents possibilities for creative expression through social storytelling and imaginative ideas. Educators engaged the children in a provoking experience of discovery, inspired listening and stimulation of children's dialogue, and co-construction of knowledge (Edwards et al., 2012). The children collectively collaborated on a progressive story.







# A Wallaby Wedding

One morning the children were searching through the costumes and resources in the theatre space.

**“I know, we need to get married”** Florence suggested.

**“I’ll make a wedding”** Harry said.

The children and educators worked together to establish the perfect atmosphere for a *Wallaby Wedding*. The children identified key elements of the wedding to be the bride needing a bouquet of flowers and a long veil, a wedding arbour, some **“marry music”** (Eve) and family members in the audience. Rinaldi (1981) describes this act of listening to be at the heart of education where the children are strong, competent and share deep images of their learning in the environment.







# Educational Reflections

This children's learning throughout this project is rich, meaningful, and intentional. As the children experience with different forms of storytelling, they have been developing their knowledge on the interactive art of using words and

actions, while engaging with their imagination. It was important at this point to refer to the children's ideas and inquiry to determine a connection and direction this project will take. Two key elements that the children identified as an important aspect of storytelling is the environment and imagination.

Perhaps exploring the structure, role, and purpose of a theatre would support the children in deepening their connection with the dramatic arts.



Multimodal learning enables children to utilise their creativity as a means to explore new ideas and concepts. To gather the children's ideas and understanding of what a theatre is and what it looks like, we presented the children with some coloured textas and plain paper. Throughout this experience the children identified that it was important for a theatre to have red curtains on either side of the stage.

Olive explained that this was important "**because it hides the people so it's a big surprise**". She also utilised some screw hooks that were nearby to demonstrate how she thought the lights for the stage will hang down. In Sunny's drawing she spend a great amount of time focusing on some circular marks in the top left corner of her page. She identified this to be a "**butterfly**" and said, "**I like butterflies it will look very amazing on the stage**".







## And So... Our Work Began!

It was evident from the children's drawings that red curtains were a key element that they believed were important in a theatre. A group of children visited the fabric container only to discover we didn't have any red fabric. **"I know, we can paint one of these"** Eve suggested, using innovation to problem solve. The children painted some sheer white fabric with red paint and let it dry overnight. The next morning, they returned to the dry curtains and were immediately ready to dive in to constructing a theatre. Claire and Eve sourced a stick from the garden to use as a rod for the curtains. Olive demonstrated her fine motor skills to snip and weave the curtain onto the rod and then determined that it was too long on the ground and needed to be trimmed.







# Lighting the Theatre

The children's first idea to light the theatre was to use the screws that Olive originally drew inspiration from in the planning process. They experimented covering the screws with yellow texta, pencil, and paint. **"It's all sliding off"** Olive expressed with sadness.

**"Why don't we try and wrap it in sticky tape, and we can colour that in"** Isla suggested. **"Yeah, and we can wrap it around and it will stay because it's sticky"** Claire added.

The group of children achieved this idea, however, were still unsatisfied with the outcome. **"This isn't going to light it up, we need real lights"** Olive insisted.







# Cyclorama Curtain

The next day the children gathered around the rainbow theatre that was on the atelier shelf. Bree provoked the children to think about what their next step would be. **“We need to make it look more pretty”** Sunny suggested. “How would you like to do that?” Bree asked. **“More rainbows”** Sunny said with a smile. Ella, Frankie, and Eli joined Sunny in this experience, and it was agreed that they were going to create a rainbow for the backdrop, also known as the cyclorama curtain in the theatre. This idea required the children to work together to collect, identify, and organise rainbow colours into different containers. Ella and Sunny then worked together to collage the rainbow together piece by piece.





# What about *our* Characters?

The voices of the children are the principal framework of this emerging project. In moments where educators didn't know what the next step was, the children were confident in expressing where they believed it should go next. **"What about our characters?"** Eve asked. **"I want to make my own"** Nicholas expressed.

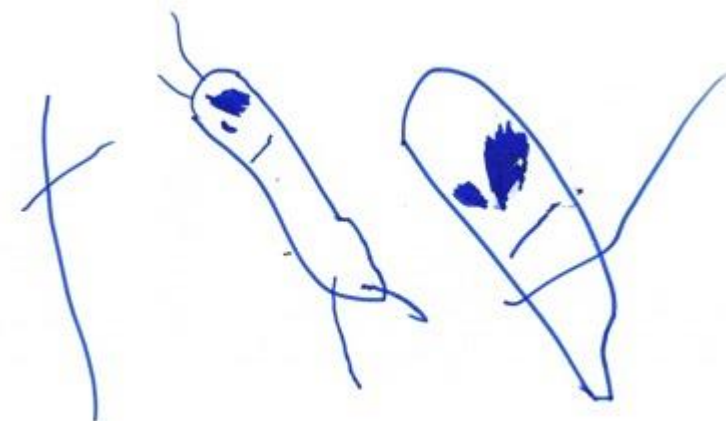
"This is me being Dorothy with my dog Macey" - Eve



Nicholas described one of his drawings to be a dinosaur. He identified that dinosaurs were from a long time ago by drawing a pre-historic fossil in the form of a shell above the dinosaurs' head.



"This is a mummy and a daddy and they are friends" - Isla







A Baby Kangaroo by Eve

My Family by Frankie



The Castle by Florence

Minnie Mouse by Claire



The children were eager to explore their characters and story ideas through different mediums. Educators introduced clay for the children to produce long lasting shapes and figures for them to bring their creative expressions to life.





# “We can just close our eyes and use our minds”

Earlier in the project Eve shared her experience of closing her eyes to use her imagination. One evening Bree asked the children to try and remember what they dream about throughout the night to share the following morning. The children spent time in small groups sharing their imaginative dreams through drawing and discussions.

**I had a  
dream about  
Batman -**

Kairo

**A fairy that could  
go under the  
water - Harriet**



**My dream last  
night was about  
a princess on a  
magic carpet  
going really high**

- Eve



**There was a fire in the cave one  
time - Harry**



**A unicorn a  
white and  
rainbow one  
and I was riding  
on it - Maggie**



**Anna and Elsa  
and Kristoff  
and Sven was  
there too-**  
Frankie

**Ahh grapes and  
apple too. Yeah,  
and a banana**

- Neo





# A Story Comes True Into a Real One

The children gathered to create and illustrate their very own story they unanimously named 'A Story Comes True Into a Real One'. This story was created through a progressive experience where one person began the story and each child then added onto it, using their imagination as a guide to communicate what will happen next.



*Once upon a time there was a fairy in the garden. The fairy saw a tiger and watched it go into the water. The tiger splashed around and around; until the fairy jumped on the tigers back to go for a walk. The tiger saw his house and went inside. He walked to his bed and made a pizza. There were baby lions and a big scary monster inside the house. The big scary monster scared the babies and then walked outside to see its mum. The monster and tiger went to the markets and saw a princess. Suddenly, a big dinosaur came and ate the princess. The fairy was scared of all of these monsters and ran away to her little home. She found a unicorn and said, "do you want to play with me?" They all played together.*



# All theatres need comfy seats...

Sunny approached educators throughout the morning and explained her theory on **“all theatres need comfy seats, and a door so the rain doesn’t come in”**. She selected some orange paint from the atelier and explained that the seats **“need to look like normal ones”**. While painting her seats, Sunny demonstrated her understanding of inclusion for all members of the audience by creating seats of different sizes. Afterwards, she sourced different forms of fabric and came to the decision that cotton would be the perfect seating option for this theatre. Sunny explained **“it’s just like clouds, so the people enjoy the show”**.





# Storytelling Connections

After recent discussions about the classroom's hanging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, Educators began seeking ways to share with the children their knowledge of the connections between the land, storytelling, and culture. Bree shared with the children the story of 'The Lost Joey' through digital media, which portrayed a strong connection between the red earth and representation of this in the Aboriginal flag. She then utilised natural interactive materials to demonstrate how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people shared the dreaming story of how the earth was created by The Rainbow Serpent.

*Long, long ago in the Dreamtime, the Earth lay flat and still. Nothing moved and nothing grew. One day, a beautiful snake awoke from her slumber and came out of the ground. This snake was known as the Rainbow Serpent. She travelled for a very long time, far and wide. As she made her way across the land, her body formed mountains, valleys, and rivers.*

*After another short rest, the Rainbow Serpent awoke and called out to the frogs, "come out". The frogs woke up very slowly because their bodies were full of water. The Rainbow Serpent tickled their bellies, and water began to fill the tracks that the Rainbow Serpent had left. This is the story told by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of how the lakes and rivers were formed (Connolly, 2014).*

