

ITRA NEWSLETTER

International Toy Research Association

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PROLOGUE

International Toy Research Association members who have received ITRA Newsletters over the years will notice the inclusion of some of the old favourites and the introduction of a few new ideas. This ITRA Newsletter contains the usual issues, such as Members' Forum, conference previews and reviews, while attempting to increase internet-based content and navigation and enhanced graphic content. The Newsletter has been formatted to allow the document to be read in either printed form or as a soft copy.

Those of you who promised material that never arrived... send it again. For those who made contributions, without which there would be many more blank spaces, a massive thank you.

Enjoy the Newsletter.

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Greetings from the President of ITRA

Dear ITRA friends and colleagues,



I would like to thank our editors Mark Allen, Helena Kling and Suzanne Seriff for joining their efforts both in maintaining ITRA networks and in compiling the material presented in this issue. Make sure you don't miss the announcement of the 2011 ITRA_BTHA award competition for outstanding toy research!

Since our last communication I have been in close contact with the University of Uludag organizers of the 6th ITRA conference and it is my pleasure to announce that the 6th ITRA conference will take place at the Kervansaray Thermal Hotel in Bursa from 27th – 30th July 2011. The conference theme is "Toys and learning in different cultures." Professor Handan Asûd Basal and her team at the Preschool Education Program, Faculty of Education, are doing a great job in the preparation process and everything is progressing according to plan. You will find their welcome message in this issue, while more details will be available later in the *call for papers* and the conference web page to be set up by the organizers. Bursa is a historical city located 245 km from Istanbul and our conference hosts promise an exciting social program which includes a visit to the Toy Museum of Istanbul.

Information on the conference hosts (Faculty of Education, University of Uludag) can be found at <http://www.uludag.edu.tr/uludagunien.php?kat=1177>

You may also wish to visit the conference venue site at <http://www.kervansarayhotels.com/eng/termal/index.html>

We wish best of luck to the conference organizing team with the rest of the preparation. The ITRA Board will assist their hard work and will see that ITRA members remain up to date throughout this period.

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MEMBERS' FORUM

Please remember when you do send items for inclusion in the Newsletter to send them in a downloadable form.

ARGENTINA

Stela Maris Ferrarese Capettini is the researcher and director of the project *Rescuing and using the games of the Native Peoples and the Africans in Abya Yala or America*. Stela writes:

The project started in 1989 with the objective to rescue the ancestral games of the original peoples in Abya Yala (renamed *America* by the Europeans). During the invasion and the following centuries of dominance many games were prohibited and others have been lost. Only a few games remained in daily practice, with modifications resulting from the cultural, social and economic domination that begun with the invasion in 1492. Recovering these games involves recovering the larger cultural components of which the games and toys are part.

My investigation is carried out through the Humanities Faculty of the National University of Comahue in Argentina.

- Period 1: Approaching the ethnically differentiated original societies from Argentina's Patagonia. Survey and rescue work of ancestral games and toys and collaboration with these populations on other issues such as water, health, development.
- Period 2: Approaching other populations of Abya Yala or America. Fieldwork and literature review. Collaboration on other issues.
- Period 3: Continuation of the investigation with the people of African descent: Green Cape.
 - 3. 1. Developing proposals for using the research results for pedagogical, intercultural and community development purposes.
 - 3. 2. Presentation of the proposed intercultural physical education model to educational training institutions and ministries of education.
 - 3. 3. Summary of the results of the investigation and of the proposals in a series of books called 'The Sower': or 'Ngankongife' in Mapuche language: 2006: *Ethnic games of America and documents on intercultural physical education*, edition by the author, Neuquén, Argentina. CD, 204 pages, 16 color pictures and 12 drawings. The CD with this book is included in the printed booklet on intercultural physical education, edition by the author, 60 pages, 15 photos and 20 drawings. 2007: *Ethnic games of Africa with notes on intercultural education*, in co-authorship with Don Adriano Rocha, edition by the author, Neuquén, Argentina. 158 pages, 26 pictures and 14 drawings.

Different documents on my play and toy research are available on the website www.juegosetnicos.com.ar

This research aims to:

- Report on the pre-contact play heritage of girls and boys of the Native Peoples living in Abya Yala and as it has been affected by today's globalized world.
- Create an interest in learning about and appreciating indigenous children's games and toys and in so doing eliminate Western prejudices about this play culture that has developed for centuries.
- Protect these games and toys as part of the play heritage of humanity because they are as valuable as the western games and toys that are dominating the play scene.
- Stimulate the use of these games by creating and implementing a truly intercultural physical education.
- Raise the awareness of this play and toy culture through the creation of the 'Museo Juegos Ancestrales' in Zonda (San Juan province, Argentina).

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BRAZIL

Professor Max Bono is carrying out research on the role of toys and play in the psycho-social development of young children. He is searching for material, preferably in Portuguese. He writes:

We are doing a research project in Brazil about the role of toys and play in the development of 4 and 5 year old children. We would like to learn more about both the theoretical and experiential literature in this field. What is the importance of toys vis-a-vis the TV, internet and other electronic tools which make children more passive? Why is parents' preference for tools which occupy children's time rather than their minds with the creativity of toys? We are interested in developing a concept for a school where children play with toys rather than electronic tools.

If you have any information that would be of interest or relevance to this project, please contact Professor Bono at:

E-mail: freethinking2004@yahoo.com



CANADA

Paul Carlucci, a freelance writer, is doing preliminary research for an article on toys for *The Walrus*, a national magazine. He writes:

I'm curious about the impacts toys have on the future. Over successive generations, can we predict what the character of a society will be like based on the toys of a few years previous? And if so, what kind of society will we see in the next ten or fifteen years? Are any of ITRA members doing research like this? Are there categories of toys made with this in mind? If you are inclined to help Paul in his effort then contact him at the following address:

E-mail: carlucci.paul0@gmail.com

ISRAEL

Gadi Kfir, an Israeli toy researcher is shown on the video available on the link below, talking about one of the games he is researching. Here is a picture of it. Maybe you know where there are copies?



Web: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKwiip3Q_O8

THE NETHERLANDS

Caroline Dusée wrote:

As a result of the worldwide AIDS epidemic the situation in many countries is getting worse. The WEB.foundation, based in The Netherlands aims to stimulate worldwide communication about HIV and AIDS. Therefore they developed the communication game - LOVE.check. In 2009, an independent evaluation research about this game has been carried out by Caroline Dusée, an anthropological expert. This research has been carried out in Tanzania, Mwanza region, to investigate the effects of this communication game.



The LOVE.check communication game:

LOVE.check, is a memory game, especially developed for children up to the age of 12, in countries with a high risk profile for HIV and AIDS. Together with local specialists, different versions of the game have been developed for individual countries or groups of countries. This tailoring allows for an optimal match to be achieved with the local cultures and their habits regarding sexuality. In the game, situations are pictured which stimulate the children to discuss matters such as friendship, love, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. It is considered extremely important that children get to know that they can protect themselves against AIDS. The game is distributed within the educational institutions as well as in other settings.

How to use the game

The game consists of 70 picture cards that tell a story about HIV/AIDS and related subjects. Every picture appears twice in the game. The purpose of the game is to collect identical pairs of pictures, as in a memory game. The game is played in two parts. The first part is meant as a “warming up” and to familiarize the children with the pictures on the cards. The second part focuses on the storylines and on the knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

After the game is played, the pictures are laid out in the right order and thus the storylines appear and a discussion about them can be held. The game needs to be facilitated by an adult.



The storylines of the game

The first storyline of the game is about HIV and AIDS in the family. The second storyline is about boys and girls falling in love and the risks connected with sex. The third one is about a girl who is at risk, for example regarding rape and teenage pregnancy. The last storyline is about myths, risks and awareness.

Execution of the field research

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the game. The main sub goals were: communication, information and stigma. The study groups were focused on different youth populations: children in urban and rural areas, children in school and out school, children in different age-groups, children in different gender combinations, children in different sizes of groups. The study population comprised children in the age of approximately 8 to 17 years. Each group consisted of about 20 pupils however, the research studied smaller groups and gender-differences as well; the sizes of groups varied from time to time.



Methodology

The methods used were basically qualitative and anthropological. Techniques of data- collection included: semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD's), in depth interviews and drawings. The drawing session was introduced to let the children draw new cards which they considered to be needed to be part of the game and which were not in it yet. To study the effect of the game related to communication, information and stigma, the research was divided in two stages: before and after the game.

Conclusions and results about the game:

- It is clear the children know how to play the game;
- The storylines and the pictures are clear to them;
- There are no topics which should be removed from the game, however in some cases, it might be appropriate to add a card which expresses the children's points of view.
- It appeared that an age of 8 is too young to play the game, while on the other hand the game appeared suitable for children older than 12.
- The level of communication and information increased remarkably after playing the game and the level of stigma reduced.
- As an effect of the game the children start communicating about sex- and HIV-related topics in gender-combinations.
- In the rural groups the children were less familiar with sexual education and via the game they started communicating about these topics for the first time.
- In rural areas children were much more familiar with HIV-infected people. For them communication was the most important effect of the game. In urban areas children were less familiar with HIV-infected people. For them the reduction of the stigma of talking about HIV/AIDS was the most important effect of the game.

- The game is not only useful in schools, but showed to be very effective as well for out- of- school children like street children living in shelters.
- A culture of shame surrounding this topic inhibits the students' feeling of openness towards grown ups who are supposed to lead the game. Therefore it is very important that the facilitators have been well instructed in how to address this issue and that the children have a chance to play the game together without supervision.



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UNITED KINGDOM

The benefits and risks to children's wellbeing and learning associated with playing computer games have been highlighted as an area for urgent research by the Byron Review. At the same time, the Children's Plan and Becta's Harnessing Technology strategy have identified the importance of parents and families on children's learning and development. It is therefore important to understand the differing ways in which computer games are played and perceived in family settings, including parents' and children's attitudes towards gaming. It is also necessary to understand the type of games being played by families, and the benefits and concerns.

Web: <http://www.futurelab.org.uk/projects/gaming-in-families>

CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

This section has been spilt into two sections covering both up-coming and past conferences and exhibitions. Hopefully mentioning past events will not induce depression as to what you may have missed, while we trust previews of future events will whet your appetite to attend. Previews and reviews of conferences are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENT of 6th ITRA CONFERENCE

6th World Congress of the International Toy Researchers Association will be held 27th – 30th July 2011
Information on the conference hosts (Faculty of Education, University of Uludag) can be found at <http://www.uludag.edu.tr/uludagunien.php?kat=1177>
You may also wish to visit the conference venue site at <http://www.kervansarayhotels.com/eng/termal/index.html>

WELCOME MESSAGE from Prof. Dr. Handan Asûde Başal, chair of the 6th ITRA World Congress organizing committee

Bursa, Turkey welcomes people from around the world to *The 6th World Congress of the International Toy Research Association* in 27th – 30th July 2011. The theme of the conference is “*Toys and Learning in Different Cultures*”. The conference will be hosted by Uludag University in downtown Bursa, one of the largest and one Turkey’s historical cities. We are looking forward to meeting educators, researchers, toy designers and manufacturers, students, and other participants, interested in toys as means for learning. We are excited to host the conference which is a great opportunity to learn and share experiences with one another. The three day event offers lectures, poster presentations, cultural visits in downtown and in the surrounding area, and other social events. A visit to the Toy Museum in Istanbul is planned for the 30th July 2011.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

June 2010

Frode Svane is organising two more of his popular study trips in 2010:
June 17 -19 Nordic Studytrip - København/Malmö/Lund
June 23 - 26 Berlin Studytrip
Look here for more information.
Web: <http://www.barnaslandskap.blogspot.com/>

25th International Conference of ICCP (International Council of Children’s Play) – Children’s play: New goals for the future, will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, 17th -19th JUNE 2010
See <http://www..iccp-play.org/> for more details.

July 2010

6th Global Conference. Creative Engagements - Thinking with Children, will be held at the Mansfield College, Oxford, UK, 3rd - 5th July 2010
The conference is part of the 'At the Interface' series of research projects run by ID.Net. It aims to bring together people from different areas and interests to share ideas and explore various discussions which are innovative and challenging.
Web: <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/education/creative-engagements-thinking-with-children/>

August 2010

The theme of Great Britain's **Playday 2010** is **Our Place**, 4th August 2010
Our place puts children at the heart of our communities, and asks everyone, young and old, to help create better places for all of us to live and play.
Web: <http://www.playday.org.uk>

September 2010

Create Inspiring Playgrounds: IPA Sweden and IPA World Conference, will be held in Karlstad, Sweden, 29th September – 1st October 2010.

For further information see their website: <http://www.ipakarlstad.se>

Play Scotland Annual Conference, will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, 30th September 2010

For further information see their website: <http://www.playscotland.org>

October 2010

Primer Seminario Internacional "La infancia, el juego y los juguetes", will be held in Buenos Aires Argentina, 20th – 22nd October 2010

Daniela Pelegrinelli informs us that at this International Seminar on Childhood, Play and Toys, several of our members are key speakers.

Contact her at: danielapel@hotmail.com for more details regarding the conference.



December 2010

“Childhood and cultures: social and human sciences perspectives”, will be held in Paris, 15th – 17th December 2010

The Research Committee, Sociologie de l'enfance of the International Association of French-speaking sociologists in partnership with The Department for Research, Foresight and Statistics (French Ministry of Culture and Communication) are organizing a joint international colloquium, on the occasion of the annual meeting of sociology of childhood organised by the AISLF. The conference will last for 3 days (one day of plenary sessions, 2 days of working groups).

Web: <http://www.enfanceetcultures.culture.gouv.fr>

February 2011

The Value of Play, US Coalition for Play, will be held at Clemson University, USA, 6th – 9th February 2011

For further information see their website: <http://usplaycoalition.clemson.edu/index.php>

July 2011

Playing into the Future – surviving and thriving: the 50th anniversary world conference of the International Play Association (IPA), will be held in Cardiff, Wales, 4th – 7th July 2011

Deadline for abstract submission is the 10th November 2010.

For further information see their websites: <http://www.ipaworld.org> and <http://www.playwales.org.uk>

PAST CONFERENCES

November 2009

2nd International Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators Sydney, Australia, 4 -5 November 2009.

The theme for the ISCI Conference 2009 program was 'Counting Children In! Child Indicators: Research, Theory, Policy and Practice'.

Abstracts were invited under the following topics:

- Theoretical, conceptual and empirical issues in the development of child indicators
- Measurement issues at levels of individual, family, community and globally
- Diversity as a challenge to construction and implementation of indicators (taking account of age, gender, ability, culture, geography and socio economic status).

March 2010

8th National Playwork Conference, Eastbourne, UK, 2nd-3rd March 2010.

Web: <http://www.playworkconferences.org.uk/1.html>

Urban Play: IPA USA 25th Anniversary Conference and TASP 36th Annual International Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 10-13th March 2010.

Web: <http://www.ipausa.org>.

April 2010

The Board Game Studies Colloquium XIII, Paris, France, 14th.-17th. April 2010.

The study of board games is a quirky section of research into toys and games. Not the only quirky section but maybe the quirkiest. Your comments on this shall be savoured. Look at this page.

Web: <http://www.boardgamestudies.info/research/>

Isn't it a good way of exchanging information? Contact thierry.depaulis@free.fr to get on the list for further information regarding next year's Colloquium which is to be held in Belgium. Playing games, olden, old, new and absolutely new and not yet on the market, is always on the curriculum so let him know which game you would like to learn to play – this could be your chance to learn to play Hnefatafl.

May 2010

The 16th Interdisciplinary UNESCO Creativity Workshop in Germany took place in Wiehl/Oberbergischer Kreis (Nordrhein-Westfalen), Germany, 16-30th May 2010.

Their aim was to develop new toys for children and adults with special needs that increase the joy of playing and support motoric, sensoric and communicative skills. Contact Siegfried Zoels Managing Director for information about the next workshop.

E-mail: zoels@spielmittel.de

Web: www.spielmittel.de

20th International Play Therapy World Congress, 13th-24th May 2010

The theme of the conference was 'Making a difference – innovations in the use of creative arts and play therapies'. Speakers from all over the world presented their work.

Web: <http://www.playtherapy.org.uk/WorldCongress/WorldCongress2010home.htm>

ITRA-BTHA PRIZES

The 2011 ITRA-BTHA Prize

The ITRA – BTHA Prize was established with generous support from the British Toy and Hobby Association www.btha.co.uk. ITRA expects to give two awards at each ITRA World Congress, the next one in Bursa, Turkey, July 2011. One award of £500 will be given for the best student research on toys and one award of £1,000 to a senior scholar or practitioner on the uses, design and effects of toys. Recipients also receive a travel stipend of £500 toward the ITRA congress to present their research.

Purpose

The purpose of the ITRA – BTHA Prize is to recognise outstanding research in the field of toy research. To qualify for the prize, the work must have been conducted or published since the previous ITRA World Congress (July 2008) and be submitted by the researcher or nominated by a member of ITRA.

Eligibility

Papers, either published or unpublished, in any area of toy research are eligible. Research on the uses, design, and effects of toys in child development, education, science, and medicine will be considered for the awards. Theoretical and historical papers will also be considered so long as these are linked to potential research.

Submissions to: cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr. The Awards Committee consists of Gilles Brougere (France), Jeffrey Goldstein (Netherlands), Cleo Gougoulis (Greece), Sudarshan Khanna (India), and Stephen Kline (Canada).

The deadline for submissions is December 6, 2010.

Evaluation

The Awards Committee of ITRA will evaluate applications on the basis of originality, the significance of the work, creativity, methodology, clarity of presentation, and importance.

The 2011 prizes will be awarded during the 2011 ITRA meeting, in Bursa Turkey, 27th – 30th July 2011.

The 2008 ITRA-BTHA Awards

The ITRA - BTHA PRIZES FOR OUTSTANDING TOY RESEARCH were awarded for the first time during the 2008 World Congress of ITRA, in Nafplion, Greece. The ITRA – BTHA Prize is given in recognition of outstanding research in the field of toy research. Applications are judged on the basis of the significance of the work, creativity, methodology, and clarity of presentation. The Awards Committee, consisting of Gilles Brougere (France), Jeffrey Goldstein (Netherlands), Cleo Gougoulis (Greece), Sudarshan Khanna (India), and Stephen Kline (Canada), bestowed the senior research prize upon Jan Phillips for her article, ‘Accomplishing family through toy consumption.’ The student prize went to Hyun-Jung Oh for her work, ‘The phenomenon of dolls’ houses: Putting together memories and fantasies’, (MA thesis in Anthropology, Material & Visual Culture at University College London).

The prize-winning research is summarized below.

Jan Phillips. Accomplishing family through toy consumption. In Karin M. Ekstrom & Birgitte Tufte (eds.). (2007). Children, media and consumption. Goteborg, Sweden: NORDICOM. Pp. 287-300.

Jan Phillips holds an M.A. in Sociology from Brown University. She is currently Associate Dean for Outreach at the University of Southern Maine’s Lewiston-Auburn College (U.S.A.).

Phillips explores the ways family members, including children, negotiate the purchase uses, and meanings of toys, arguing that this form of interaction helps define and construct not just family members as consumers – the “deserving” child, say, or “generous” parent – but, more importantly, the social essence of family. Her study draws on current literature as well as recollections of childhood memories.

Rather than treat children as incompletely socialized “others” still preparing for life, Phillips argues that children deserve to be studied as competent social actors, capable of helping to construct their own lives and family trajectories with worthwhile desires, abilities, and contributions.

Phillips explores the ways we accomplish family through toy consumption. Her work features qualitative content analysis of 141 retrospective childhood memory texts gathered over 6 years, written by a group of both traditional-aged (18-22 years old) and older, “non-traditional” aged college students in the United States.

Students in sociology classes were asked to relate childhood to the activities and material objects that constitute everyday consumption. Students did so in an intensely personal way through several assignments, one of which asks them to write a prose or poetry ode to a favourite childhood toy. Other assignments ask them to interview someone older than 65 about their remembered childhood play and work. In the toy ode, students note why it was their favourite toy, how they acquired it, what it meant to play with the toy, and what it permitted them to do

or do better. They also commented on the role toys play in social life. The resulting odes, up to six pages in length, recollect not only the material artefacts themselves but also issues of selfhood, intention, desire, and their relationship to these objects. Profound attachments and emotions thus get reflected in astonishingly creative odes, which sometimes have been accompanied by in-class visits from the toys themselves.

Repeatedly, notes Phillips, we witness children using their desire to make claims and position themselves within their family, to solidify age cohorts and culture, to steer and appropriate adult indulgence, and to resist the powerful adults they live with. Many of the 141 toy odes talk openly, poignantly about childhood desire and material possession. Nearly a third (44 odes) use the explicit language of desire, with such phrases as had to have it, anticipated, wanted, desired, waited for, begged for or craved. For instance, a first-year female student (about 19 years old), writes of her stuffed animal, 'Since the time I first saw you alone up on the shelf/ I knew I had to have you all for myself'. As this memory reveals, the familiar refrain of childhood longing easily morphs into possession, wherein the sense that a toy is theirs alone marks it as all the more cherished.

As Mergen (1992) notes, '*Toys are gifts meant to form bonds between adults and children, especially at family-centered rituals such as Christmas and birthdays.*' Birth itself is another opportunity for ritualized, family-centred toy gifting, and 40% (58) of the toys described in the 141 odes are acknowledged as originating in such rituals.

Children are masterful learners, capable of managing their social and emotional resources well enough to ensure that gifts are not entirely a surprise.

'What I really wanted, though, was the McDonald's play-set. Not only could I pretend I was a cashier, but I could cook food as well! My mother must have refused to buy it for me on ten different occasions before I was finally given it. On that tenth trip my grandmother had come to the store with us. I asked for the McDonald's play-set and was denied again. However, instead of moving on I threw a temper tantrum! And it worked. My grandmother bought the play-set that day.' [19-year-old female]

'My sister was the eldest in the family (13 years older) and I had very limited interaction time with her. I worshipped my sister; I wanted her attention in the worst way. With Barbie, I was able to gain that attention from her. My sister was an excellent sewer (so I thought) and I would ask her to sew Barbie clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, etc. She loved to do it. This was the avenue I took advantage of to form a bonding relationship with my sister.... [Later, when the sister began dating and was less available] I missed the attention of my sister, and through this style of fantasy play I imagined she was still with me. My "Blonde to Brunette" Barbie became my surrogate sister. I could switch her head and pretend that she was my sister speaking, then switch it to blonde and pretend it was me answering.' [33-year-old female]

Similarly, another respondent says,

'If my mother had told me that I couldn't do or have something, then in my play [with a Cabbage Patch doll] I would make sure that my child was able to do or have it. I used situations as those to challenge the authority of my parents and assert control over my life.' [female, 20 years old]

Interestingly, one final way of using toys to help construct family appears in these odes: children frequently and insistently attribute life, if not family membership, to their playthings.

'I even made Bear [a stuffed gorilla] an official green card with his picture on it. We all had green cards, Immigration and Naturalization cards stating we were legal to be in this country. We would frequently take family trips to Canada and I was always very insistent the Border Patrol check out Bear's card to make sure he was accepted in Canada and then again on the return to the United States.' [32-year-old female]

Personifying a toy and making it fictive kin stands as perhaps the most literal way children turn consumption practices to constructing family. And they may do so in ways that overtly resist other family members, as in the case of one female [age not known] and her "talking Teddy":

'Not only did she speak but also she spoke Bear language. This was a language that only I understood... so I could make her say anything I wanted. I could tell my sister she was ugly, or my brother that he was a pain and then I would tell my mom that Kaitlin [the bear] said it and I just repeated it!'

What toy memories tell us

Adults recollecting their childhoods remember toy play for what a child might gain: fun, power and control over something, a way to let out frustration or aggression, responsibility, the ability to become a collector, comfort, a sense of adulthood, and social acceptance. They also remember what toys permitted them to do, or do better, toward accomplishing family.

'Toys are unique belongings; they are played with for only a few years, but the memory of our love for them stays with us for the rest of our lives. I imagine myself as a real-life Citizen Kane, on my death bed muttering "Mickey" [her Mickey Mouse toy]. My Mickey is like Rosebud; he represents a time all adults wish to return to, no matter what they become in the future.'

Hyun-Jung Oh. The phenomenon of dolls' houses: Putting together memories and fantasies. MA thesis, Anthropology, material & visual culture, at University College London.

Dolls' houses and miniatures have emerged as a popular hobby among Western adults in the past three decades. Originating in the sixteenth century mercantile region of Southern Germany, dolls' houses flourished in the



Netherlands, England and America in line with the development of modern capitalism over four centuries. Throughout their long history, dolls' houses served as a symbol of wealth and taste in the aristocracy and middle classes. In addition, their educational function for girls should not be ruled out. The revival of dolls' houses as a grown-up's hobby tends to reflect the socially imbued longing for nostalgia. Particularly, adult women are likely to miniaturize an ideal residence as an objectification of childhood memory or fantasized history.

Dolls' house activities, such as collecting and crafting, allow adult women to employ their knowledge of social history, creativity and lifetime's skills in putting together memories and fantasies. Moreover, as children play with small objects such as toy cars and toy tea sets according to their body size, some elderly people who are physically challenged tend to satisfy their love of homebuilding in a miniaturised artefactual world.

In the modern day, dolls' houses are enjoyed by many people regardless of age and gender, though older women dominate the miniature hobby scene. Different from their predecessors, women in their later life are likely to objectify the memory or imagination of childhood or ancestry. Thus, Tudor, Victorian or 1940s styles are favoured.

Today's hobbyists show diverse patterns in engaging with dolls' houses as collectors, makers or players. While some wealthy people collect expensive miniature pieces, others make them by employing their lifetimes' craft skills. However, the underlying premise of hobbyists of different categories is the activity of putting together an idyllic residential scene comprising a number of objects. In old-fashioned objects older women feel the warmth of the past, contrary to the coldness of contemporary things. Given most elderly people live apart from their children, the warmth of home is well presented in the presence of dolls and objects conjuring up the sense of interactivity.

Handling small objects tends to require great attention to objects and consequently bodily movement and senses. This might detach one from the surrounding world and its troubles. People in hardship would find something to lose themselves in, and they gain the sense of control over the world of objects which is manipulable and protected from the outside world.

PUBLICATIONS & BOOKS

Gougoulis, Cleo & Despoina Karakatsani (eds) (2008), *Greek Toys: Historical Trajectories* (*To elliniko paichnidi. Diadromes stin istoria tou*), Athens: MIET/ELIA. ISBN: 978-960-250-405-5 (in Greek). A collective interdisciplinary volume which highlights some of the social and cultural aspects of toys in Greece during selected historical periods (classical antiquity, Byzantine era and Modern Greece from the 18th century onwards).

Contents:

Introduction

Cleo Gougoulis and Despina Karakatsani, The Greek toy: Historical trajectories of a cultural object.

Christos Boulotis, Selections from the world of Ancient Greek toys.

Elias Anagnostakis and Anna Lambropoulou, Toys during the Byzantine era: Informational sources and Early Byzantine finds.

Despoina Karakatsani, Toys in Greek educational theory and practice

Maria Argyriadi, Greek commercial toys during the 20th century. From cottage industries to industrial production.

Cleo Gougoulis, Commercial toys as gifts. Cultural aspects of the Greek toy market.

Vicky Patsiou, Memory, autobiography and the experience of play.

Christos Boulotis, One begins to grow old when one stops playing.

Manos Haritatos and Spyros Kypriotis, Collecting toys.

Appendix: Illustrations of Greek manufactured toys from the collection of Manos Haritatos 1950-1990.

Gielen, Mathieu. Following the symposium on 'toy design education' at the ITRA 2008 conference, I was invited to be the guest editor of a special issue on this theme for the International Journal of Arts and Technology (IJART). This special issue was published this spring (Volume 3, No. 1, 2010) and is entitled 'Toy Design Education - Teaching How To Design The Tools For Play'. It has become a nice blend of theoretic contributions, reflections on practice and cases. It is worthwhile for toy design educators and researchers as well as toy design practitioners (for whom it contains some inspiring working methods) and anyone who wonders how tomorrow's toy designers are being educated on toys and play. The table of contents is below.

IJART Vol 3:1, ISSN: 1754-8853 (Print) and 1754-8861 (Online). More information is available through www.inderscience.com

Contents:

Mathieu A. Gielen, Editorial

Mathieu A. Gielen, Essential concepts in toy design education: aimlessness, empathy and play value

Tilde Bekker, Caroline Hummels, Sam Nemeth and Philip Mendels, Redefining toys, games and entertainment products by teaching about playful interactions

Barry M. Kudrowitz and David R. Wallace, The play pyramid: a play classification and ideation tool for toy design

Lieselotte van Leeuwen and Diane Westwood, If Winnicott could make toys...

Rémi Leclerc, Hong Kong Hackshops! Creative instant toy design workshops

Yiu Cheung Shiu, C.Y. Chan and Melissa Morgan, Multi-disciplinary toy design and engineering education for Hong Kong

Philip Tan, Iterative game design in education

Oren Zuckerman, Designing digital objects for learning: lessons from Froebel and Montessori

Stevanne Auerbach (a.k.a. Dr.Toy) recommends this article.

http://www.cleveland.com/living/index.ssf/2010/02/trendy_toys_come_and_go_but_cl.html

Stevanne is a member of the Advisory Committee (experts interested in making "greener" toys available for children) for the EcoLogo Toy Standard. The first draft of this standard will be released in March 2010 for public comment. A comment report has been compiled from the discussion document and is now available on the EcoLogo website: www.ecologo.org, under Standards in Development or Review.

The 2009 BRIO PRIZE

The BRIO prize for the year 2009 was awarded on February 5, 2010 in Nürnberg, Germany to **Gisela Wegener-Spöhring** “for her lifelong research on gender stereotyped toy play, war toys and childhood aggression as well as her contributions to the International Toy Research Association (ITRA)”. A more detailed report can be found at BRIO’s website www.brio.net with a picture of Gisela receiving the prize from Dag Ivarsson, chairman of the Lennart Ivarsson Scholarship Fund.

ITRA’s president sent the following greeting for Gisela’s award ceremony:

“On behalf of ITRA’s Board I would like to warmly congratulate our dear colleague, friend and former ITRA president, Prof. Dr. Gisela Wegener-Spöhring, for winning the 2009 BRIO prize. The award is a timely recognition of Gisela’s multifarious and longstanding contribution to international toy research. Three cheers for Gisela!”

Cleo Gougoulis
International Toy Research Association
President

TREASURER'S REPORT

Cleo Gougoulis, ITRA president and currently ITRA's temporary treasurer, wishes to thank Gisela Wegener-Spöhring, on behalf of the ITRA Board, for her kind donation to the ITRA account. Gisela donated part of the money she received with the BRIO prize to the ITRA account. The ITRA Board decided to use this money for student travel grants that will help a selected number of graduate students travel to Bursa for the 2011 ITRA world conference.

ITRA 2009 Fees Notice

Please note that according to the ITRA Board's decision in Alicante, August 8, 2005, conference fees cover ITRA membership fees for three years. This means that conference participants who paid full registration fees for the 5th ITRA conference in Nafplion Greece 2008 have been exempted from paying ITRA dues for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Annual membership: 50 EUROS/ US Dollars
Retiree// Student membership: 25 EUROS/ US Dollars

Payments may be made;

a) through bank transfer to the following account number

International Toy Research Association,
National Bank of Greece, Pal. Phaliro branch 175
Account number: 175/480074.53
IBAN Number: GR16 0110 1750 0000 1754 8007 453
SWIFT: ETHNGRAA

b) by sending an International Money Order, payable to ITRA, to the treasurer at the following address:

Cleo Gougoulis
54 Ag. Alexandrou St.
P. Phaleron, 175 61
Athens
Greece

Please notify me by sending an e-mail to: cleogou@yahoo.gr
when you send your fees to the bank. It is important to mention what amount and in which currency you paid.

Regards from,
Cleo Gougoulis
ITRA president and treasurer
cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr

EPILOGUE

The editors of the newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed, and especially all those who will be contributing in the future - as editors we are the eternal optimists. We are planning to release another Newsletter in November 2010, so if you have attended any conferences this year, read a book - toy related preferably - have anything to say, whether about yourself, publications, events, research or just anything, do not hesitate to contact either Helena, Suzy or Mark, via itranewsletter@gmail.com.

Hopefully the fact that another ITRA newsletter has appeared in your e-mail inbox, will start your inspirational juices flowing and we will receive articles which we can share with the rest of the members of the International Toy Research Association.

Regards
Helena, Suzy & Mark

We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.
Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)