

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

European Master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation
Academic Year 2021/2021

**Human Rights Education – a study of the participant's
exposure to visual arts as a method**

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Abstract

Over the last few decades, human rights education (HRE) has been increasingly deemed as a necessary condition for ensuring the enforceability of human rights. This work seeks to understand whether the absence of a particular teaching/learning method should be maintained in the specialized HRE materials, or if this method should be there included. The method in question is the participant's exposure to visual arts. The hypothesis adopted by this thesis is that the specialized HRE materials, given the lack of formal or material restrictions, should consider such method in its contents. Based on bibliographic, documentary and empirical research, the initial hypothesis was confirmed. It was also noticed that the application of this method would activate the recognized dimensions of human rights education. This last conclusion could be reached through the analysis of several artistic works elaborated by visual artists, from different regions of the globe, that are still alive and in activity. Considering this entire panorama, new reflections and questions emerge.

Key Words

Human Rights. Human Rights Education. HRE. Human rights education methods. Visual Arts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my family for all the unconditional support that allowed me to carry out this project.

I am especially grateful to my father for teaching me the power of gentleness, affection, and care. To my mother for teaching me to fight for the ideal of a fairer and more solidary society. To my brothers for teaching me the meaning of complicity.

I thank Paula and Lupe for all their generosity, teachings and companionship during this academic journey. I thank my friends Luiz and Olívia for always being around, even being far away.

I thank my Masters' companions, especially Victoria, Dulce, Mafalda, Fabio and Andrea for all the affection.

Thanks to Hamid for so much caring company and learning.

I dedicate this work, quoting Paulo Freire, to “the ragged-trouserred of the world, and those who discover themselves in them and, by discovering themselves, suffer together with them, but who especially struggle together with them”.¹ I also dedicate this thesis to my newly arrived nephews, Nuno and Tomé.²

¹ PAULO FREIRE, **Pedagogia do Oprimido**, 17. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1987.

² Acknowledgements' translation to my native language, Portuguese: Agradeço à minha família por

² Acknowledgements' translation to my native language, Portuguese: Agradeço à minha família por todo o apoio incondicional que me permitiu realizar esse projeto.

Sou especialmente grata a meu pai por ter me ensinado o poder da gentileza, do afeto e do cuidado. À minha mãe, por me ensinar a lutar pelo ideal de uma sociedade mais justa e solidária. Aos meus irmãos, por me ensinarem o significado de cumplicidade.

Obrigada Paula e Lupe por toda a generosidade, ensinamentos e companheirismo durante essa jornada acadêmica. Agradeço aos meus amigos Luiz e Olívia por estarem sempre por perto, mesmo estando longe.

Agradeço aos meus companheiros de mestrado, principalmente Victoria, Dulce, Mafalda, Fabio e Andrea por todo o carinho.

Obrigada Hamid por toda a companhia atenciosa e aprendizado.

Dedico este trabalho, citando Paulo Freire, “aos esfarrapados do mundo e aos que neles se descobrem e, assim descobrindo-se, com eles sofrem, mas, sobretudo, com eles lutam”. Também dedico esta tese aos meus sobrinhos recém-chegados, Nuno e Tomé.

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the contemporary concept of Human Rights is deeply connected with the adoption, by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA), of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in December 1948.³

The referred document, as its name suggests, proclaims rights without defining obligations, not being then formally endowed with binding force.⁴ Such feature, however, shall never be seen as a reducer of the UDHR importance, which acts as a bastion signaling the countless atrocities committed during the World War II and the need to never repeat the past. Furthermore, for seventy-two years since its adoption, the UDHR has been working as a guide for the negotiation and drafting of numerous international legal instruments and domestic bills.

For the purposes of this thesis, it should be highlighted that the 1948 Declaration does not expressly mention the subject of Human Rights Education (HRE)⁵ - focus of this study, as will be later detailed. Nevertheless, its article 26.2., transcribed below, could already be understood as a precursor of the topic that has been shaped and improved since then.⁶

³ Worth mentioning that three years before, in 1945, the Charter of the United Nations proclaimed that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. More than this, “As is now well-known, the UN Charter contains more than a dozen references to human rights, from the Preamble to the end. The very purposes of the United Nations include cooperation in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. Many of the provisions were included due to pressure from non-governmental organizations and smaller states, especially those of Latin America”. In DINAH L. SHELTON, *An Introduction to the History of International Human Rights Law*, **W Law Faculty Publications & Other Works**, 2007. p. 14.

⁴ It shall be highlighted, however, that “It is widely accepted that some of the Declaration’s provisions are now rules of customary international law. Examples include the bans on torture and on racial discrimination. These are norms which, through the practice of States, have come to be seen as legally binding rules, well before their incorporation in specific treaties. Indeed, some commentators argue that the entire Declaration possesses this status”. In OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *The United Nations Human Rights Treaty System: OHCHR, Fact Sheet No. 30 (Rev. 1)*, 2012. p. 3.

⁵ The term “Human Rights Education” is also mentioned by authors and by the specialized technical materials as “Human Rights Education and Training”. In some cases the terms are used in an indistinct way and in other cases “Education” concerns students and “Training” concerns professionals. Notice that the UNGA Resolution 66/137 - Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training – does not differentiate “Education” from “Training”. The present research adopts the same approach of the Resolution 66/137.

⁶ In the words of Baxi, “The notions of HRE originated in the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. In UPENDRA BAXI, *Human Rights Education: The Promise of the Third Millennium?*, *in*: , [s.l.: s.n.], 1994. p. abstract.

Article 26.2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Thus, from 1948 on an enormous amount and variety of work on Human Rights Education has been, and is being, developed,⁷ as will be here opportunely explored. But in a very simplified and introductory way, one could suggest that the definition of HRE and the importance that the concept has been gaining over time is related with the following question: “How can people use and defend human rights if they have never learned about them?”⁸

Considering, therefore, the essential role that the HRE plays in the realization of human rights and in the creation of a “culture of human rights”,⁹ this thesis had as its starting point the decision to delve into the theme of HRE and its contemporary relevance.

The work began this immersion by briefly exploring the concept of the right to education demonstrating that HRE logically derives from this human right - section 1. The research, in the subsequent section, develops the analysis of HRE definitions, its key international legal milestones and its teaching and learning process/methods.

The study of the mentioned teaching and learning methods - subsection 2.3 – enabled us realizing that among the methods recognized by the scholars, self-expression is exhaustively mentioned¹⁰ - films/videos screenings were also indicated. On the other hand, the participant's¹¹ exposure to visual arts is not referred as a method by the specialized doctrine and technical materials.

This fact, in itself, already aroused our curiosity. But when we realized that the absence of this method is not object of academic research, we decided to devote special attention to this issue.

⁷ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, COMPASS: Manual For Human Rights Education With Young People, 2020. p. 17.

⁸ Ibid. p. 16.

⁹ Ibid. p. 16

¹⁰ For instance: dramatization, drawing, painting, collage and dance.

¹¹ The term “participant” was here chosen in view of the horizontal teaching logic of the HRE. The specialized literature does not usually refer to “students” and “teachers” in the context of HRE. Thus, “participants” is used “interchangeably with the terms learners or trainees”. On the other hand, “the term trainer is often used interchangeably with the terms educator or facilitator”. For that matter, see OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, A Manual On Human Rights Training Methodology, 2019. p. 8.

These observations automatically revealed our main research object: should the participant's exposure to visual arts be considered as a HRE teaching and learning method?¹² The hypothesis that guides the work is that it should be considered as a method for two main reasons: (i) the 2011 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training determines that: "The arts should be encouraged as a means of training and raising awareness in the field of human rights".¹³ The document does not specify by which techniques this should be implemented, what reinforces the possibility that the "participant's exposure to the visual arts" is considered a method; (ii) the field of visual arts has several artists/movements/associations that work with the motif of human rights,¹⁴ which could be easily used in the HRE teaching and learning process.

The methodology we have used to carry out our analysis was based on bibliographic, documentary and empirical research. Grounded on these pillars, the presented hypothesis was then confirmed.

This thesis ends up shedding light on the lack of attention that has been given - by academic works and by the specialized manuals - to the participant's exposure to visual arts as a HRE method.

As an additional contribution, this work brings a secondary reflection by pointing out one possible reason for the relatively little attention that has been given to this issue up to now. As a possible answer to the "why" of the absence of the studied method in manuals and specialized bibliography, the thesis considers a possible lack of critical pedagogy in the HRE field – section 2.4. This is an avenue that cannot be here fully explored, but it is, at least, indicated to be considered by the human rights community, being able to serve as a basis for future academic researches.

The present thesis aims exactly to unveil relevant aspects in order to encourage further academic investigations and, more than this, foster a change on the content of HRE materials in order to add a new teaching and learning method. Our final and main objective with this study is to potentially enhance the way HRE is taught/learned.

¹² At first glance this question might seem rhetorical to one. However, if the answer was obvious, wouldn't this method be present in, at least, some HRE manuals/specialized literature? Since we did not identify this presence, we understand that the answer is not obvious and that the subject deserves to be properly researched.

¹³ Article 6.2. of the document.

¹⁴ This argument will be detailed in due time during this thesis.

It shall be stressed that, naturally, we are not naïve or arrogant enough to believe that no one has ever considered or worked allying the exposure to visual arts and HRE. Obviously, pieces of visual arts are already being used in specific HRE teaching/learning processes. However, our aim is to guarantee an institutionalized form of this practice by including the HRE participant's exposure to visual arts as a method in the HRE traditional materials. This could make more HRE trainers and trainees aware that this can be a teaching/learning method and the presence of this method in official HRE materials gives it more credibility to be used.

Therefore, this thesis is divided as follows: after this introduction, we make brief considerations about the human right to education, field from which the concept of HRE emerges. Then, we address the theme of human rights education, its main concepts and historical milestones. In the aftermath, the research focuses on the HRE teaching and learning process and its methods; and on the possible lack of critical pedagogy on the HRE field. Therefore, the work reaches the section where we effectively test our hypothesis and it is evaluated the possibility of alliances between visual artists and the HRE arena. In other words, how the participant's exposure to visual arts can, in practice, activate HRE dimensions.¹⁵ It should be emphasized that our criterion for choosing some artistic works instead of others meant to privilege artists from different regions of the globe that are still alive and in activity. The reason behind this choice is to allow possible direct HRE partnerships around the world. Finally, we weave the conclusions that could be reached throughout this thesis, raising new questions about the researched topic.

1. THE HUMAN RIGHT TO EDUCATION

There is no way to study human rights education without first approaching the right to education. Even though the concept of HRE was not here yet defined for methodological reasons,¹⁶ it is easy to intuit that this concept, now autonomous, emerges from the right to education. Thus, the first section of this study presents the main aspects of the right to education and some of its International Human Rights

¹⁵ As it will be addressed in the subsection 2.1 of this work, human rights education involves three dimensions: learning **about** human rights, learning **through** human rights and learning **for** human rights.

¹⁶ HRE is a concept known for its multiple and extensive definitions, deserving, then, a subsection of this study just to explore this topic – subsection 2.1.

Law (IHRL) provisions in order to evince its intimate connection with HRE. In this sense, the excerpts from the devices that have been bolded by us deserve special attention ahead.

The right to education can be characterized as a “right to empowerment”.¹⁷ This means that the exercise of many other rights would depend on, at least, a basic level of education. More than that, the denial of education hurts the cause of democracy and social progress and, by extension, international peace and human security.¹⁸ Nowak mentions that “Katarina Tomasevski, the first Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, called it a "multiplier right," as it enhances the enjoyment of other rights”.¹⁹

In the words of Baxi, “"Education" is such a full development of human personality as to endow human beings with the power to resist the colonization of the mind by state, civil society, intergovernmental regimes and multinationals”.²⁰

Moreover, education simultaneously has the status of a social, economic and cultural human right.²¹ It can be seen as social right as it promotes, in a community level, the development of the human personality.²² It is also an economic right for the impacts it generates when facilitating financial independence through employment.²³ Lastly, the right to education enables the flourishing of cultural diversity and the cultural rights of each person.²⁴

All the presented findings, in our view, are the most appropriate way of highlighting the importance of pursuing, relentlessly, the realization of such a right.

¹⁷ “direito de empoderamento” in the original. MOREIRA, Vital; MARCELINO GOMES, Carla (Orgs.), **Compreender os Direitos Humanos: manual de educação para os direitos humanos**, Coimbra: IGC - Centro de Direitos Humanos da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Coimbra;, 2013. p. 277.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 277.

¹⁹ MANFRED NOWAK, **Human Rights or Global Capitalism: The Limits of Privatization**, [s.l.]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. p. 57.

²⁰ UPENDRA BAXI, Human Rights Education: The Promise of the Third Millennium?, *in*: , [s.l.: s.n.], 1994. p. 21.

²¹ RICHARD PIERRE CLAUDE, The right to education and human rights education, **Sur, Rev. int. direitos humanos**, v. 2, n. 2, 2005. p. 37.

²² Ibid. p. 37.

²³ Ibid. p. 37.

²⁴ In this sense, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education is elaborating her next thematic report on “**The cultural dimension of the right to education**” - to be presented at the 47th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2022.

However, almost one billion of people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their own names.²⁵ This data does not indicate the absence of instruments related to the right to education within the scope of IHRL, on the contrary, it expresses that there is still a lot of work to be done based, precisely, on the abundant instruments already in existence.²⁶

In the universal sphere, the human right to education is mentioned for the first time in Article 26 of the UDHR.²⁷⁻²⁸ According to Professor Reis Monteiro, several other provisions of the Universal Declaration are also applicable to education, directly or indirectly.²⁹ The Declaration recognizes, among other things, that everyone has the right to education and that its elementary level must be free and compulsory, since education fosters rights and freedoms.

Two other documents form, together with the UDHR, what is conventionally called the International Bill of Human Rights: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights³⁰ (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights³¹ (ICESCR), both adopted in 1966 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The ICESCR recognizes the right to education in its articles 13³² and 14,³³ while the ICCPR, refers to the right to education in its article 18.4.³⁴ Below is the content of the article 13.1. of the ICESCR, relevant to this study:

²⁵ MOREIRA, Vital; MARCELINO GOMES, Carla (Orgs.), **Compreender os Direitos Humanos: manual de educação para os direitos humanos**, Coimbra: IGC - Centro de Direitos Humanos da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Coimbra, 2013. p. 277.

²⁶ Some of these instruments will be mentioned throughout this section.

²⁷ Article 26: 1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. 2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. 3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

²⁸ There are authors, such as Reis Monteiro, who consider that the landmark could be the mention of education or instruction in the Charter of the United Nations - 1945. REIS MONTEIRO, A. Introdução breve ao Direito Internacional da Educação, 2019. p. 8.

²⁹ REIS MONTEIRO, A., Introdução breve ao Direito Internacional da Educação, 2019. p. 9.

³⁰ And its two Optional Protocols.

³¹ And its Optional Protocol.

³² According to the General Comment No. 13 - Adopted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the Twenty-first Session, E/C.12/1999/10, 8 December 1999 – the “Article 13, the longest provision in the Covenant, is the most wide-ranging and comprehensive article on the right to education in international human rights law”.

³³ Article 14. Each State Party to the present Covenant which, at the time of becoming a Party, has not been able to secure in its metropolitan territory or other territories under its jurisdiction compulsory primary education, free of charge, undertakes, within two years, to work out and adopt a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation, within a reasonable number of years, to be fixed in the plan, of the principle of compulsory education free of charge for all.

Article 13.1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that **education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.** They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (not bold on the original).³⁵

Still at the universal level, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 10)³⁶ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (art. 28 and 29),³⁷ play an important role in defending the right to

³⁴ Article 18.4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

³⁵ Notice that the General Comment No. 13 - Adopted by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the Twenty-first Session, E/C.12/1999/10, 8 December 1999 – considers that: “Of those educational objectives which are common to article 26 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 13 (1) of the Covenant, perhaps the most fundamental is that “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality”.”

³⁶ Article 10. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training; (b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality; (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods; (d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants; (e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women; (f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely; (g) The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education; (h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

³⁷ Article 28. 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all; (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need; (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means; (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children; (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates. 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention. 3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

education. For the purposes of this study, an excerpt from article 29 of the 1989 Convention is highlighted:

Article 29.1 **States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:** (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; (b) **The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;** (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own; (d) **The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;** (e) **The development of respect for the natural environment.** (not bold on the original).

Following at the universal normative framework, as prescribed by Professor Reis Monteiro, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the main source of conventional universal norms specific to the right to education.³⁸⁻³⁹ In this aspect, the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) plays an important role.⁴⁰ UNESCO has also adopted a series of specific universal declaratory instruments on the topic, as well as provisions in other universal or regional, conventional or declaratory instruments on the right to education.⁴¹

It is also pertinent to mention, at the universal level, the figure of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education.⁴² The mandate was firstly established in 1998 and its main purpose is to consider the right of all persons to have

³⁸ REIS MONTEIRO, A., Introdução breve ao Direito Internacional da Educação, 2019. p. 9.

³⁹ Two conventions were adopted: Convention against discrimination in education (1960), with a Protocol establishing a Commission for conciliation and good offices (1962) and Convention on technical and vocational education (1989).

⁴⁰ Some of its main provisions are considered to be: Primary education free and compulsory; Secondary education in its different forms, generally available and accessible to all; Higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity; Equivalent standards of education in all public educational institutions of the same level and conditions in relation to quality; Opportunities for those who missed all or part of their primary education and their continuation of education; Training opportunities for the teaching profession without discrimination. In < <https://en.unesco.org/themes/right-to-education/convention-against-discrimination>> accessed May 2021.

⁴¹ In view of the large amount of materials produced by UNESCO on the right to education and considering that this theme is not closely related to the object of research, we chose not to delve into the analysis in question.

⁴² The Special Rapporteur addresses issues of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability of education, from pre-primary to tertiary levels, including in non-formal education systems or mechanisms. In < <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/sreducation/Pages/SREducationIndex.aspx>> accessed May 2021.

education of quality with no discrimination. The rapporteur provides recommendations on this topic to Governments and other stakeholders, being able to visit countries, receive individual complaints about alleged violations and to submit annual reports to the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly.

Finally, it should be mentioned, albeit very briefly, that the fourth of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, consists in ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.⁴³⁻⁴⁴ Once again, the relevance given to the human right to education is evident.

Moving to the regional level, when it comes to the right to education, the following instruments deserve to be mentioned: the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), of 1950 (Additional Protocol of 1952, art. 2),⁴⁵ the American Convention on Human Rights, of 1969 (Additional protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 13) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981 (art. 17).⁴⁶ Specifically for the purposes of this research, an excerpt from device 13⁴⁷ of the said Protocol of the Inter-American regional system is stressed:

⁴³ In this sense see the Resolution 70/1 adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. p. 14.

⁴⁴ Notice the content of the target 4.7 of the goal number 4: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

⁴⁵ Article 2. Right to education: No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

⁴⁶ Article 17. 1. Every individual shall have the right to education; 2. Every individual may freely take part in the cultural life of his community; 3. The promotion and protection of morals and traditional values recognized by the community shall be the duty of the State.

⁴⁷ Article 13 Right to Education 1. Everyone has the right to education. 2 (...) 3. The States Parties to this Protocol recognize that in order to achieve the full exercise of the right to education: a. Primary education should be compulsory and accessible to all without cost; b. Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, should be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education; c. Higher education should be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of individual capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education; d. Basic education should be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole cycle of primary instruction; e. Programs of special education should be established for the handicapped, so as to provide special instruction and training to persons with physical disabilities or mental deficiencies. 4. In conformity with the domestic legislation of the States Parties, parents should have the right to select the type of education to be given to their children, provided that it conforms to the principles set forth above. 5. Nothing in this Protocol shall be interpreted as a restriction of the freedom of individuals and entities to establish and direct educational institutions in accordance with the domestic legislation of the States Parties.

Article 13.2. The States Parties to this Protocol agree that **education should be directed towards the full development of the human personality and human dignity and should strengthen respect for human rights, ideological pluralism, fundamental freedoms, justice and peace**. They further agree that education ought to enable everyone to participate effectively in a democratic and pluralistic society and achieve a decent existence and should foster understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups and promote activities for the maintenance of peace. (not bold on the original).

Still at the regional level, it is necessary to refer to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU), of 2010, being, therefore, much more recent than the other regional documents mentioned above. The CFREU provides the right to education in its article 14,⁴⁸ which emphasizes that education is a right of all.

In view of what has been revealed so far, particularly through the bolded passages, we reinforce that the concept of HRE, now autonomous, emerges from the right to education. More than this, according to the content of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education - Plan of Action: “Human rights education is widely considered to be an integral part of the right to education”.⁴⁹

Thus, having already made a brief presentation of the right to education, we proceed to address the specific theme of HRE, its main concepts and historical milestones.

2. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Definitions

The concept of human rights education and training (HRE) is not endowed with a single definition. This is related to the fact that HRE is intrinsically connected to the ideas of (i) respect for plurality and (ii) horizontality of the teaching process.

In this sense, we emphasize that the United Nations World Program for Human Rights Education, for example, defines HRE as follows:

⁴⁸ Article 14. Right to education 1. Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training. 2. This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education. 3. The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right

⁴⁹ UNITED NATIONS, World Programme For Human Rights Education - second phase - Plan of Action, 2010. p. 17.

(...) human rights education can be defined as any learning, education, training and information efforts aimed at building a universal culture of human rights, including: (a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; (b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity; c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and minorities; (d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law; (e) The building and maintenance of peace; (f) The promotion of people-centred sustainable development and social justice.⁵⁰

The recognized organization Amnesty International, for its part, adds that HRE allows people to understand about human rights and how to demand them. HRE could be then all learning, education, training and information committed to build a universal culture of human rights.⁵¹

The Charter of the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education provides as follows:

“Human rights education” means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.⁵²

In any case, as suggested in the Manual on the theme elaborated within the scope of the Council of Europe (COMPASS), there is, however, an obvious consensus in the sense that the HRE involves three dimensions:

(...) different organisations, educational providers and actors in human rights education use different definitions according to their philosophy, purpose, target groups or membership. There is, nonetheless, an obvious consensus that human rights education involves three dimensions:

- Learning **about** human rights, knowledge about human rights, what they are, and how they are safeguarded or protected;
- Learning **through** human rights, recognising that the context and the way human rights learning is organised and imparted has to be consistent with human rights values (e.g. participation, freedom of thought and expression, etc.) and that in human rights education the process of learning is as important as the content of the learning;

⁵⁰ UNITED NATIONS, World Programme For Human Rights Education - second phase - Plan of Action, 2010. p. 12/13

⁵¹ AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, Write For Rights 2018 – A Human Rights Education Toolkit For Educators. p. 3.

⁵² COUNCIL OF EUROPE, Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. p. 6.

- Learning **for** human rights, by developing skills, attitudes and values for the learners to apply human rights values in their lives and to take action, alone or with others, for promoting and defending human rights.⁵³
(bold on the original).

Despite HRE being a living concept, which has been undergoing constant adaptations and incorporations, it remains clear that the theme encompasses theoretical learning about human rights standards and principles and their corresponding protection mechanisms (learning **about** human rights). HRE, however, does not end there, covering, likewise, the need for horizontal learning where exchanges between those involved and their profiles play a central role in the process (learning **through** human rights). Finally, HRE must be understood as a mechanism for individual and collective transformation, which allows those involved to make conscious and engaged choices (learning **for** human rights).

Having made this brief presentation on the concepts of HRE, now the study lists the main international and regional landmarks that address the subject.

2.2 Key milestones of Human Rights Education - International Human Rights Law

The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna, in 1993, can be understood as a historic cornerstone in the field of HRE, as from that Conference emerges the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action. The document deals with HRE in provisions 78/82 requiring all States and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and the rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all educational institutions in formal and non-formal settings - device 79.⁵⁴

The following year, 1994, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) adopted the Resolution 49/184, through which the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education was proclaimed. The Decade was implemented under the UN Decade Plan of Action for Human Rights Education 1995-2004.⁵⁵

As a result of the decade's assessment, the World Program for Human Rights

⁵³ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, COMPASS: Manual For Human Rights Education With Young People, 2020. p. 19.

⁵⁴ WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIENNA, Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

⁵⁵ MOREIRA, Vital; MARCELINO GOMES, Carla (Orgs.), **Compreender os Direitos Humanos: manual de educação para os direitos humanos**, Coimbra: IGC - Centro de Direitos Humanos da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Coimbra;, 2013. p. 45.

Education was created in 2004 through UNGA Resolution 59/113. The mentioned Program, still in force, has an Action Plan structured in consecutive phases. The Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, who serves as the Global Program Coordinator,⁵⁶ provides that the first phase of the project (2005-2009) would be focused on primary and secondary school education.⁵⁷ The second phase (2010-2014) would focus on higher education and the creation of HRE programs for teachers, civil servants, military personnel and other professionals. The third phase (2015-2019), on the other hand, would be focused on ensuring the implementation of the first two phases and promoting training in HRE for media professionals and journalists. The fourth phase (2020-2024),⁵⁸ now underway, targets youth, with an emphasis on education and training in the precepts of non-discrimination, inclusion and respect for diversity, being aligned with topic 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development.⁵⁹

With regard to regional systems for the protection of Human Rights, specifically within the sphere of the European system, in 2010, the Charter of the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education was adopted by the Committee of Ministers within the scope of Recommendation CM/Rec (2010).⁶⁰ One of the main points of the referred Charter is the definition of terms, including the modalities of education and training - formal, non-formal and informal⁶¹ - all having a role to play in the HRE.

Regarding formal education, the document asserts that the member states of the Council of Europe should include education for democratic citizenship and human

⁵⁶ UNITED NATIONS, **World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing)**. In <<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/Programme.aspx>> accessed March 2021

⁵⁷ In the course of the mentioned first phase, precisely in 2007, the UNGA adopted the Resolution 62/171, declaring 2009 as the International Year of Human Rights Learning. In MOREIRA, Vital; MARCELINO GOMES, Carla (Orgs.), **Compreender os Direitos Humanos: manual de educação para os direitos humanos**, Coimbra: IGC - Centro de Direitos Humanos da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Coimbra, 2013. p. 45

⁵⁸ UNITED NATIONS, **Fourth phase (2020-2024) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education**. In <<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/WPHRE/Fourthphase/Pages/FourthPhaseIndex.aspx>> accessed March 2021

⁵⁹ 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development". In <<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>> accessed March 2021

⁶⁰ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, COMPASS: Manual For Human Rights Education With Young People, 2020. p. 22.

⁶¹ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. p. 6.

rights education in the curriculum at pre-school, basic, secondary and higher education levels.⁶²

Returning to the scope of the universal system, in 2011 a relevant milestone in the field of HRE was adopted, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNGA Resolution 66/137). The existence of the aforementioned Declaration, although constituting soft law, allows the creation of mechanisms of action with greater authority, as well as requires greater commitment from HRE actors.

Despite the fact that the aforementioned Declaration is not the direct subject of this study, given the importance of the document for the issue of HRE, some of its main points shall be highlighted below.

The document, in its first and fifth articles, states that everyone has the right to have access to human rights education and training, always considering the needs, challenges and profiles of those involved. The second article of the Declaration, in turn, conceptualizes the HRE in the following terms:

Article 2.1. Human rights education and training comprises all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights.

The Declaration provides, in its seventh provision, that Governments and, where appropriate, relevant governmental authorities, have the primary responsibility for promoting and ensuring Human Rights Education and Training. The Government must also guarantee a favourable and safe environment for the engagement of civil society, the private sector and others interested in the topic. Article ten complements that various actors in society, such as educational institutions, the media, families, local communities and NGOs, have an important role in promoting HRE.

Having made all the previous considerations, this study dedicates the next section to explore a nodal point of HRE: the teaching and learning process and its methods.

The following heading, therefore, aims to explore this matter that is

⁶² COUNCIL OF EUROPE, Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. p. 11.

inseparable from everything that has been exposed so far and seems priceless to the fulfillment of HRE.

2.3 The teaching and learning process and its methods

Human rights education encompasses a setting that reflects, among other things, the possibilities and characteristics of those involved in the learning process and the intentions of the respective educational approach. This is to say that there is no magic HRE framework that shall be used in every scenario.

One could then think that this must be problematic for its complexity, but, on the contrary, we share the idea that “the mutability and adaptability of human rights education are its strength”.⁶³

In any case, to have a basic understanding of HRE teaching and learning process is essential to reaffirm (i) the existence of the three dimensions of HRE – learning **about** human rights; learning **through** human rights; and learning **for** human rights – and (ii) the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal education settings.

For the sake of the present research, the mentioned three dimensions are considered to be sufficiently explored on the topic 2.1. However, the educational settings still deserve some further development. According to the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education:

c. “**Formal education**” means the structured education and training system that runs from pre-primary and primary through secondary school and on to university. It takes place, as a rule, at general or vocational educational institutions and leads to certification.

d. “**Non-formal education**” means any planned programme of education designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational setting.

e. “**Informal education**” means the lifelong process where by every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, peer group, neighbours, encounters, library, mass media, work, play, etc.).⁶⁴ (not highlighted in the original text).

When it comes to HRE, it must be clear that this one can be related to all three settings of education as stated by the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights

⁶³ MONISHA BAJAJ, Human Rights Education: Ideology, Location, and Approaches, **The Johns Hopkins University Press**, v. 33, n. 2, 2011, p. 481.

⁶⁴ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. p. 6/7

Education and Training:

3.2 **Human rights education and training concerns** all parts of society, at all levels, including preschool, primary, secondary and higher education, taking into account academic freedom where applicable, and all forms of education, training and learning, whether in a public or private, **formal, informal** or **non-formal** setting. It includes, inter alia, vocational training, particularly the training of trainers, teachers and State officials, continuing education, popular education, and public information and awareness activities.⁶⁵

Therefore, once again it is clear that the teaching and learning process of HRE is alive and organic, not being possible the adoption of a rigid form. In Bajaj words, “HRE may differ in approach, definition, and desired outcomes”.⁶⁶ Regarding its substance, it can be said that: “little agreement exists about what should be taught. In most cases, the purpose determines the content, but ideological and political positions also influence what educators think should be covered in human rights education”.⁶⁷

Bajaj describes the theme in a precise and succinct way, quoting other important names of the field:

(...) other scholars have distinguished HRE by location. For example, scholars have noted the types of societies to explain differences between HRE approaches. Norma Tarrow highlights how HRE content may be different in "first," "second/socialist," and "third" world contexts based on emphases on individual versus collective rights. Flowers *et al.* similarly note that different types of rights are emphasized based on context and the perspective of the institution offering HRE; emphases include "survival" or economic/social rights, civil and political rights, activist-oriented education, and moral education that views human rights as part of "natural law."⁶⁸

It is then evident that the process shall be adjusted according to countless factors, for instance, the educational setting. Will the practical activities take place on formal or non-formal environment? Likewise, the process will be adjusted according to the profile of those involved in the learning exchanges – who is the mediator? Who is the target audience, are they children, young adults, judges, police officers, media professionals? Similarly, which institution is promoting the learning/training process?

⁶⁵ (not bold in the original).

⁶⁶ MONISHA BAJAJ, Human Rights Education: Ideology, Location, and Approaches, **The Johns Hopkins University Press**, v. 33, n. 2, 2011, p. 489.

⁶⁷ NANCY FLOWERS ET AL, **The Human Rights Education Handbook - Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change**, [s.l.: s.n., s.d.]. p. 40.

⁶⁸ MONISHA BAJAJ, Human Rights Education: Ideology, Location, and Approaches, **The Johns Hopkins University Press**, v. 33, n. 2, 2011. p. 486.

Is it the National Government, a NGO, an international organization, or a private company? What are the reasons and interests of this institution when developing the process? What are the resources – intellectual, economic and material ones – available for the specific process? What is the social and political context of the region where the learning process will take place?

All of these questions and many others need to be answered every time a HRE activity is organized. This can indicate the versatility of the learning process, but also its strength for being highly customized to the needs and possibilities of the stakeholders.

Another relevant subject that deserves to be herein mentioned: HRE methods. After all, which, in practice, are the HRE methodologies? It is logical that if the whole teaching process is fluid and adapted on a case-by-case basis, this reality will be also reflected on its methods, which can always be adjusted and remodeled according to the reality of the learning process.

During this study some doctrine and technical materials that deal with HRE methods were found. Among these sources were identified: (i) A Manual On Human Rights Training Methodology - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;⁶⁹ (ii) Manual For Human Rights Education With Young People COMPASS - Council of Europe;⁷⁰ (iii) The Human Rights Education Handbook: Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change - Nancy Flowers *et al.*;⁷¹ (iv) First Steps: A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education - Amnesty International;⁷² (v) Teaching Human Rights: Practical activities for primary and secondary schools - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;⁷³ (vi) Methodologies For Human Rights Education - Richard Pierre Claude;⁷⁴ (vii) The Bells of Freedom - Action Professionals' Association for the People.⁷⁵

Firstly, all the mentioned materials have in common the fact that the suggested HRE methods are based on a participatory methodology. According to Flowers, the

⁶⁹ OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, A Manual On Human Rights Training Methodology, 2019.

⁷⁰ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, COMPASS: Manual For Human Rights Education With Young People, 2020.

⁷¹ NANCY FLOWERS ET AL, **The Human Rights Education Handbook: Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change**, [s.l.: s.n., s.d.].

⁷² AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, First Steps: A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education, 2001.

⁷³ OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, Teaching Human Rights: Practical activities for primary and secondary schools, 2004.

⁷⁴ RICHARD PIERRE CLAUDE, Methodologies For Human Rights Education.

⁷⁵ APAP - ACTION PROFESSIONALS' ASSOCIATION FOR THE PEOPLE, The Bells of Freedom, 1996.

involvement of the actors would have proved to be especially effective for human rights education.⁷⁶ Equally, COMPASS indicates that the methods presented on its pages are based on co-operative learning, participation and learning through experience.⁷⁷ Amnesty International, in turn, adds that participative methodology has been found by human rights educators to be the most effective and most powerful way to develop skills and attitudes, as well as knowledge, in both children and adults.⁷⁸ Similarly, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights elucidates that the pedagogical techniques presented on its material imply active engagement of all participants in ongoing learning.⁷⁹ This pattern is followed by the other analysed documents.

Specifically regarding the HRE methods, the situation is not much different: several of the methods indicated by one material find resonance on the others, e.g. brainstorming, role playing, case studies, debates and discussions. The majority of the studied materials extensively describe each method and while some provide examples of activities based on the methods (COMPASS, for instance, provides 58 activities based on the methods),⁸⁰ others, like Flowers *et al*, indicates additional bibliography for practical activities.⁸¹

What called our attention, for the purposes of this research, is the fact that none of the seven examined materials consider, at any time, the participant's exposure to visual arts as a method.

On the other hand, self-expression methods, such as dramatization, drawing, painting, collage and dance, were exhaustively mentioned. Films/videos screenings were also indicated. But, at no time, there is a proposal for the participants to have contact with visual artists work.

Some materials even suggest “Field Trips”⁸² and “Interpretation of Images”,⁸³

⁷⁶ NANCY FLOWERS ET AL, **The Human Rights Education Handbook - Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change**, [s.l.: s.n., s.d.]. p. 59.

⁷⁷ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, COMPASS: Manual For Human Rights Education With Young People, 2020. p. 35.

⁷⁸ AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, First Steps: A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education, 2001. p. 12.

⁷⁹ OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, Teaching Human Rights: Practical activities for primary and secondary schools, 2004. p. 25.

⁸⁰ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, COMPASS: Manual For Human Rights Education With Young People, 2020. p. 73/339.

⁸¹ The author calls “Examples of Method” in NANCY FLOWERS ET AL, **The Human Rights Education Handbook: Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change**, [s.l.: s.n., s.d.]. p. 59/75.

⁸² In this sense see “Method 10” in NANCY FLOWERS, **The Human Rights Education Handbook - Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change**, [s.l.: s.n., s.d.]. p. 66; OFFICE OF THE

but still without indicating visits to museums/galleries/exhibitions/*biennali*/performance presentations, or interpretation of images related to works of visual arts.

For the sake of the present thesis we highlight that the only one of the seven materials that comes close to indicate the participants' contact with visual artists work as a method is "A Manual On Human Rights Training Methodology" elaborated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The manual recommends two methods that caught our attention: (a) Demonstration: The trainer explains and performs an act, procedure, or process; (b) Dramatic presentation: A play performed by actors (not the learners) on the topic to be addressed.⁸⁴ In any case, although both methods described find some analogy with our object of study, neither of these two methods proposes directly the participant's exposure to visual arts.

Well, it is unexpected that the multiple stimuli that visual arts can guarantee are not considered an established HRE method. More than this, our surprise is based on two main factors: (i) the 2011 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training determines that: "The arts should be encouraged as a means of training and raising awareness in the field of human rights".⁸⁵ The document does not specify by what means this should be implemented, which reinforces the possibility that the "participant's exposure to the visual arts" is considered a method; (ii) the field of visual arts has several artists/movements/associations that work with the motif of human rights,⁸⁶ which could be easily used in the HRE teaching and learning process.

Incidentally, we refute the argument that one could present that the participant's exposure to the visual arts is not a participatory activity as a HRE method should be. It is evident that this practice itself can be participatory, or, if not, it can offer material to further HRE usual methods, such as discussions and debates.

Based on these preliminary observations, the following topic will be dedicated to understand a criticism of HRE – its alleged lack of critical pedagogy –, since our

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *Teaching Human Rights: Practical activities for primary and secondary schools*, 2004. p. 27; and OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *A Manual On Human Rights Training Methodology*, 2019. p. 28.

⁸³ In this sense see "Method 14" in NANCY FLOWERS, **The Human Rights Education Handbook - Effective Practices for Learning, Action, and Change**, [s.l.: s.n., s.d.], p. 68.

⁸⁴ OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *A Manual On Human Rights Training Methodology*, 2019. p. 28

⁸⁵ Article 6.2. of the document.

⁸⁶ This argument will be detailed in due time during this thesis.

findings may dialogue with this view.

2.4 Human Rights Education and the lack of critical pedagogy

Although human rights education is a relatively recent concept, persistent criticisms have been forged by the specialized doctrine. In Cargas words: “Academics have written about the need for a critical pedagogy, critical consciousness, thoughtful criticism, critical compassion, and critical reflection in HRE”.⁸⁷ Later on the author elucidates:

(...) here is what I mean by a critical pedagogy for HRE: it must include the hallmark practices of questioning, critiquing, and analyzing all ideas; it critiques relationships of power in the world at large and in the classroom; and it includes a constant emphasis on critical thinking and empowerment.⁸⁸

Thus, there are several scholars who affiliate themselves with the thought that HRE ended up to be distant from its purpose of emancipatory education. The main argument is that HRE is orchestrated by a system that undermines its transforming roots. Coysh argues that:

(...) the institutionalisation and centralisation of HRE discourse has gradually eroded diverse ways of knowing and interpreting human rights by regulating the production, distribution and consumption of HRE discourse as a means of social control; something that has been perpetuated by a lack of questioning and critique.⁸⁹

The degree of criticism of some authors can reach the level of Keet’s statement: “HRE does not exist, I concluded, neither in South Africa nor elsewhere in the world”.⁹⁰

In any case, the general idea of this critical theory is that the practice of HRE, with a few honorable exceptions,⁹¹ has strayed far from its original concept, which

⁸⁷ SARITA CARGAS, **Human Rights Education: Forging an Academic Discipline**, [s.l.]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. p. 22/23.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁸⁹ JOANNE COYSH, **Human Rights Education and the Politics of Knowledge**, [s.l.]: Taylor & Francis, 2017. p. 174.

⁹⁰ ANDRÉ KEET, Does Human Rights Education Exist?, **International Journal of Human Rights Education**, v. 1, n. 1, 2017. p. 6.

⁹¹ According to Cargas: “This is not to say criticism isn’t already being taught and written about”. In SARITA CARGAS, **Human Rights Education: Forging an Academic Discipline**, [s.l.]: University

was heavily influenced by Paulo Freire's revolutionary ideals.⁹²

It cannot be said, however, that this critical theory proposes the abolition of the HRE for its argued flaws. The authors, on the contrary, offer the construction of a truly critical HRE, consistent with its groundbreaking principles:

We, as HRE practitioners, would do well to align our work with the real purposes of education. In doing so, a critical HRE will, intuitively, be called into existence.⁹³

This shift is not one that can emerge quickly or without complications; developing any radical pedagogy that attacks the global knowledge apparatus and power structure is susceptible to being labelled dangerous, subversive and political. Perhaps it is, but for individuals and organisations that believe in and are committed to the transformative potential of HRE discourse, it is a challenge *we* need to face.⁹⁴

In short, I am advocating for critical pedagogy.⁹⁵

For the purposes of the present thesis, this specific scenario of critics is described since it is a plausible answer for “why the exposure of the participant to visual arts is not being used as a HRE teaching method?”. The absence of a HRE critical pedagogy is a possible reason for the relatively little attention that has been given to this issue up to now.

This is an avenue that cannot be here fully explored, being just a secondary contribution of the present research. But it is, at least, indicated in order to be considered by the human rights community, being able to serve as a basis for future academic researches.

Thereby, the next topic is intended to elucidate how the participant's exposure to visual arts can be adopted as a HRE method.

of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. p. 24. Keet, in turn, adds: “except for a few university programs, the idea of a *critical* HRE with *critical* content is much further away from what we are seeing at present. (...) But, there are welcoming developments taking shape. The growth of human rights critiques in the general polity and critical human rights studies in the university space is one. The other relates to the enlargement of the pool of scholar practitioners that tarry with the critical transformative promise of HRE”. In ANDRÉ KEET, Does Human Rights Education Exist?, **International Journal of Human Rights Education**, v. 1, n. 1, 2017. p. 6 and 10.

⁹² Freire was opposed to the traditional idea of education, what he called “banking education” – *educação bancária*. According to him, in that system the student fixes, memorizes and repeats, without realizing the meanings. That education was an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositaries and the educator is the depositor.

⁹³ ANDRÉ KEET, Does Human Rights Education Exist?, **International Journal of Human Rights Education**, v. 1, n. 1, 2017. p. 12.

⁹⁴ JOANNE COYSH, **Human Rights Education and the Politics of Knowledge**, [s.l.]: Taylor & Francis, 2017. p. 174.

⁹⁵ SARITA CARGAS, **Human Rights Education: Forging an Academic Discipline**, [s.l.]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. p. 24.

3. POTENTIAL ALLIANCES BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND VISUAL ARTS PRACTICES

The 2011 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training – Resolution 66/13 – determines, on its article 6.2, that: “The arts should be encouraged as a means of training and raising awareness in the field of human rights”. The document, however, does not specify or limit which artistic experiences should be used as “means of training and raising awareness in the field of human rights”.

Nonetheless, as exhaustively mentioned throughout this thesis, HRE manuals and the specialized literature do not make reference to the participant's exposure to visual arts as a HRE method. Academic papers also do not address the absence of this method. Thus, at this section, the work intends to answer our main research question: should the participant's exposure to visual arts be considered as a HRE teaching and learning method?

As could be seen from the study of HRE bibliography, specifically from chapters on HRE methods, the only arts-related methods there mentioned are (a) films/videos screenings; and (b) those of self-expression - such as dramatization, drawing, painting, collage and dance.⁹⁶ But, at no time, we reinforce, there is a proposal for the participants to have contact with visual artists work.⁹⁷

The content of the article 6.2 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training should be then here retaken. It is clear that the device does not prioritize any artistic experience in particular. Equally, no artistic experience is, *a priori*, discarded, being, all of them, HRE potential allies. Therefore, in this first moment it can be seen that the absence of the method in reference is not a consequence of any normative prohibition. In other words, there is no **formal** restriction to the participant's exposure to visual arts be considered a HRE method.

⁹⁶ For detailed information regarding this topic, please notice section 2.3 of the present thesis.

⁹⁷ Here we resume the observation made on the section “2.3 The teaching and learning process and its methods”: the only one of the seven materials studied that comes close to indicate the participants' contact with visual artists work as a method is “A Manual On Human Rights Training Methodology” elaborated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The manual recommends two methods that caught our attention: (a) Demonstration: The trainer explains and performs an act, procedure, or process; (b) Dramatic presentation: A play performed by actors (not the learners) on the topic to be addressed. In any case, although both methods described find some analogy with our object of study, neither of these two methods proposes directly the participant's exposure to visual arts.

Based on this first observation, we pass to a second level of analysis: are there **material** obstacles to the adoption of the proposed HRE method? That is to say, are there practical impossibilities that prevent the adoption of this method?⁹⁸ The greatest practical impossibility would be the lack of movements/visual artists who could participate in the HRE teaching/learning process. As will be here proven, however, this is not the case, since the field of visual arts has several artists/movements/associations that work with the motif of human rights. Even if it were not, this could be just an immediate obstacle, since, at any moment, movements and visual artists could engage with the theme of human rights and cooperate with the HRE process.

In the following titles, we proceed to the study and analysis of existing visual arts' practices that could function as allies in the HRE teaching/learning process. It will be possible to notice that these practices/schools/movements are not hermetic, on the contrary, they permeate and intermingle with each other, but even so they are recognized by the specialized literature and have their own and separate nomenclatures.

It should be also emphasized that the initiatives mentioned are not the only ones that can function as HRE allies. The list below is, therefore, illustrative rather than exhaustive. It should be also emphasized that our criterion for choosing some works instead of others was also meant to privilege artists from different regions of the globe that are still alive and in activity. The reason behind this choice is to signalize the possibility of direct pragmatic HRE partnerships around the world.⁹⁹

We seek, through the following subsections, to briefly explore the main characteristics of these movements/schools/associations and artists, to present which human rights are involved in the artistic practices¹⁰⁰ and also which dimensions of the HRE would be activated by the participants contact with the artistic works described. In this regard, retaking the concept of the three dimensions of HRE discussed in the

⁹⁸ It must be clear that we are not considering practical difficulties in adopting the method, but practical impossibilities. Difficulties and challenges exist in the adoption of any HRE method, such as the lack/scarcity of financial and human resources or logistical issues. But our analysis is restricted to assessing the possible existence of insurmountable practical obstacles.

⁹⁹ Therefore, we are not going to delve into an art history timeline in this thesis. We recognize that the movements/initiatives listed in this work are not the pioneers in social criticism; political/social engagement, but we seek to highlight artists/initiatives still in activity as a way to indicate the possibility of concrete current partnerships between visual artists and HRE.

¹⁰⁰ In general, we cite rights that are present in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), considering that its character of rule of customary international law is commonly accepted. When this is not possible, we list other instruments of the universal system and not of regional systems, due, obviously, to their greater scope and recognition.

section 2 – subsection 2.1, we will demonstrate whether the practices analyzed could strengthen: learning **about** human rights (first dimension); learning **through** human rights (second dimension); and learning **for** human rights (third dimension).

Finally, before entering the artistic practices themselves, it shall be stressed that we do not assume that no one has ever considered or worked allying the exposure to visual arts and HRE. Obviously, visual artworks were already used and are being used at the present moment in specific HRE teaching/learning processes.¹⁰¹ However, our aim is to guarantee a recognized approach of this practice by including the HRE participant's exposure to visual arts as a method in the HRE traditional materials. This would make more HRE facilitators and learners aware that this can be a teaching/learning method. Its adoption would be technically safeguarded.

3.1 Useful Art¹⁰²

The concept of Useful Art was designed by the artist Tania Bruguera.¹⁰³ Bruguera's defines the notion of useful art as a way to practice social art.¹⁰⁴ According to her, artists doing social art are similar to teachers and negotiators; they would help to build behaviours and social structures.¹⁰⁵ Useful Art promotes, then, the construction of a different society.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Some of the artists that will be mentioned in this research even have works commissioned by institutions and international organizations that work with the human rights agenda. In this sense see the “untitled”, Weiwei - topic 3.2.1.2 - and the “Even walls have ears”, Alketa Xhafa Mripa – topic 3.2.2.2.

¹⁰² Originally in Spanish: “Arte Útil”.

¹⁰³ “Tania Bruguera (born in 1968) is a Cuban installation and performance artist. She lives and works between New York and Havana, and has participated in numerous international exhibitions. Her work is also in the permanent collections of many institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art and Bronx Museum of the Arts and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana. Bruguera's work pivots around issues of power and control, and several of her works interrogate and re-present events in Cuban history. As a result of her art actions and activism, Bruguera has been arrested and jailed several times”. In < <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/tania-bruguera-11982> > accessed May 2021.

¹⁰⁴ In the original: “Arte Útil é uma forma de praticar arte social”. TANIA BRUGUERA, Reflexões sobre Arte Útil O que pode ser mais gratificante do que ver sua ideia incorporada na vida cotidiana das pessoas?, n. 42, 2019.

¹⁰⁵ In the original: “Artistas fazendo arte social (...) estão mais próximos de professores, negociadores, do construtor de comportamento e estruturas sociais”. Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ In the original: “Arte Útil tem uma sociedade diferente em mente”. Ibid.

The idea behind the concept is that art is a rehearsal that introduces the conditions to create a final real presentation; art as a power to show that a different existence is possible.¹⁰⁷ In Bruguera's words:

Arte útil roughly translates into English as "useful art," but it goes further, suggesting art as a tool or device. Arte útil draws on artistic thinking to imagine, create, and implement tactics that change how we act in society. This work methodology transforms social affect into political effectiveness through realizable utopias. Instead of focusing on production, arte útil generates a process of social implementation.¹⁰⁸

It is unquestionable that the Cuban artist did not coin the theme of art with a social purpose. Countless other influences, some even addressed in this thesis, already existed before. Tania herself claims that "*Useful Art* is not something new. It may have not be called that, it may not have had been mainstream in the art world, but it is a practice that somehow has become a natural path for artists dealing with political art and social issues".¹⁰⁹ But it is crucial to understand that Bruguera differentiates Useful Art from other types of socially engaged art in terms of intention, not impact: "Every work of art is potentially useful, but Arte Útil is specifically researching how art can be a tool for social change".¹¹⁰ In this regard, within the logic of Useful Art, the artistic practice would be meant to modify social structures and patterns, that is its reason for existence.

In any case, it is still a challenge to differentiate the concept of Useful Art from the concept of Activist Art,¹¹¹ for instance, being even possible to defend the idea that Useful Art integrates Activist Art. In concrete terms, then, it can be said that the great innovation and signature brought by Bruguera may not be the concept of Useful Art, but the creation of (i) the School of Useful Art¹¹² and (ii) the Useful Art Association.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ JONATHAN WALLIS, Interview with Tania Bruguera, *Art & the Public Sphere*, v. 4, n. 1 + 2, p. 31–38, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ TANIA BRUGUERA, *Glossary - Arte útil*. In <<http://www.taniabriguera.com/cms/609-0-.htm>> accessed May 2021.

¹⁰⁹ TANIA BRUGUERA, *Introduction on Useful Art*, In <<https://www.taniabriguera.com/cms/528-0-Introduction+on+Useful+Art.htm>> accessed May 2021.

¹¹⁰ MONICA WESTIN, *Escuela de Arte Útil: A Proto-Institution Implementing Performance as Usefulness*. In: <<https://www.artandeducation.net/schoolwatch/158874/escuela-de-arte-til-a-proto-institution-implementing-performance-as-usefulness>> accessed June 2021.

¹¹¹ The term is explored ahead in this thesis.

¹¹² Originally in Spanish: "Escuela de Arte Útil".

¹¹³ Originally in Spanish: "Asociación de Arte Útil".

3.1.1 School of Useful Art¹¹⁴

The School of Useful Art is a project that aims to critique the history of art and the institutions responsible for creating it through classes and debates that take place within the institutional spaces of art.¹¹⁵

The School of Useful Art was first activated in 2018 at a Bruguera's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (New York) - MoMA. On the aftermath, there were other editions of the project, for instance, at the California College of the Art – CCA and at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo.¹¹⁶

The school consists in “both a living performance within Bruguera's practice and a model of Arte Útil's tenets as a real, functional school challenging dominant forms of art-education institutions”.¹¹⁷ It is important to understand that the School of Useful Art, in practice, consists in workshops and seminars conducted by Bruguera and other professionals from the visual arts field. Visual arts students and artists are usually the ones to participate in the dynamics by a previous formal enrolment in the School project. That is to say that the proposal of the School of Useful Art is not to be an open space for the visitors of the museum/gallery where the school is provisory settled.¹¹⁸ The idea is to promote training in Useful Art, training that does not follow a traditional pedagogical concept, being somehow also a performance. “Every class function as both an educational experience and a performance”.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ This project was preceded by Bruguera's work *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* (2002–2009) “an art school conceived as a work of art. Based at her home in Havana Vieja and run with the help of two staff, it was dedicated to providing a training in political and contextual art for art students in Cuba”. In CLAIRE BISHOP, **Artificial hells: participatory art and the politics of spectatorship**, 1st. ed. [s.l.]: Verso, 2012. p. 246.

¹¹⁵ For instance, Museums and Art Schools.

¹¹⁶ PINACOTECA DE SÃO PAULO, *Escola de Arte Útil*. In: <<http://pinacoteca.org.br/artistas/tania-bruguera/>> accessed June 2021.

¹¹⁷ MONICA WESTIN, *Escuela de Arte Útil: A Proto-Institution Implementing Performance as Usefulness*. In: <<https://www.artandeducation.net/schoolwatch/158874/escuela-de-arte-til-a-proto-institution-implementing-performance-as-usefulness>> accessed June 2021.

¹¹⁸ We could not find reliable information to understand if the School of Useful Art in practice functioned as the *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* (see footnote 112). Regarding the project based in Havana, Bruguera argues that: “The symbolic structure is the one where I'm reproducing the recognizable elements of an educational program, one that I install but do not respect. For example to enter the project one has to go through a selection process in front of an international jury who chooses the ‘best’ candidates. But once the workshops start I let in anybody who wants to attend even if they didn't make it through the selection committee.” In CLAIRE BISHOP, **Artificial hells: participatory art and the politics of spectatorship**, 1st. ed. [s.l.]: Verso, 2012. p. 247.

¹¹⁹ MONICA WESTIN, *Escuela de Arte Útil: A Proto-Institution Implementing Performance as Usefulness*. In: <<https://www.artandeducation.net/schoolwatch/158874/escuela-de-arte-til-a-proto-institution-implementing-performance-as-usefulness>> accessed June 2021.

In the specific case of the edition of the School of Useful Art that happened at the California College of the Art – CCA, e.g., the scope and scale of the project consisted in:

(...) eight weeks of three four-hour classes per week, with readings, discussions, and a final project, which took the form of a group proposal for an Arte Útil work. Bruguera taught the first and last two weeks of the program; in between, a range of ambitious and influential artists and curators working in the field of social practice were guests each week.¹²⁰

3.1.2 Useful Art Association

The association was established in January 2011 to offer a forum “on how to deal with the issues of implementing the merger of art into society”.¹²¹

The organisation is an “international group”¹²² that aims to foster and execute Useful Art. The association, that has physical offices in the United Kingdom, prepares and distributes newsletters and administers a group on social media – Facebook.¹²³ Additionally, according to the association's digital platform, the group would be quite organized, providing, for instance:

A growing social, political and active network of members
 A communication forum for the Asociación's activity at www.arte-util.org
 Regular email updates, on activities of the Asociación
 A database of case studies and resources that exemplify the different working methodologies used in Arte Útil at www.arte-util.org
 Opportunities to develop, support and contribute to new Arte Útil projects
 Opportunities to participate in special events such as work parties, field trips and education seminars including the Annual John Ruskin Memorial Lecture
 Invitations to an annual Asociación de Arte Útil convention
 Opportunities, as part of the user group, to shape the future and direction of the Asociación¹²⁴

¹²⁰ MONICA WESTIN, *Escuela de Arte Útil: A Proto-Institution Implementing Performance as Usefulness*. In: <<https://www.artandeducation.net/schoolwatch/158874/escuela-de-arte-til-a-proto-institution-implementing-performance-as-usefulness>> accessed June 2021.

¹²¹ TANIA BRUGUERA, *Glossary - Arte útil*. In <<http://www.taniabruguera.com/cms/609-0-.htm>> accessed May 2021.

¹²² *Arte Útil*. In <<https://www.arte-util.org/about/activities/>> accessed May 2021.

¹²³ *Asociación de Arte Útil*. In: <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1407098282938815/>> accessed May 2021.

¹²⁴ *Arte Útil*. In <<https://www.arte-util.org/about/activities/>> accessed May 2021.

The association's website is also relevant for listing, quite objectively, the requirements of a Useful Art project:

Arte Útil projects should:

- 1) Purpose new uses for art within society
- 2) Use artistic thinking to challenge the field within which it operates
- 3) Respond to current urgencies
- 4) Operate on a 1:1 scale
- 5) Replace authors with initiators and spectators with users
- 6) Have a practical, beneficial outcomes for its users
- 7) Pursue sustainability
- 8) Re-establish aesthetics as a system of transformation¹²⁵

The organization's website has an archive of Useful Art projects. Each project specifies: its initiator(s); description; location; goals; beneficial outcomes; by whom is maintained and its users. Every project is classified under the following categories: Urban development; Scientific; Pedagogical; Politics; Economy; Environment and Social.¹²⁶

Thus, in order not to stay only in the theoretical field, some projects listed in the association's archive are remarked below.¹²⁷

3.1.2.1 Palas por Pistolas¹²⁸⁻¹²⁹

This project was conducted by the artist Pedro Reyes. The work was realized in Culiacán, a city in western Mexico with a high rate of deaths by gunshot. Reyes, with the support of local groups, organized a campaign for voluntary donation of weapons. 1527 weapons were collected. 40% of them were high power automatic weapons of exclusive military use. These weapons were then crushed by a steamroller in a public act and the remain pieces were melted. In the aftermath the metal was used to produce the same number of 1527 shovels. The tools were made under specifications such as a handle with a legend telling the story. These shovels have been distributed to a number of art institutions and public schools where adults and children engage in the

¹²⁵ **Arte Útil.** In <<https://www.arte-util.org/about/colophon/>> accessed May 2021.

¹²⁶ **Arte Útil – Archive.** In: <<https://www.arte-util.org/projects/>> accessed May 2021.

¹²⁷ Images regarding the mentioned art projects are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

¹²⁸ PEDRO REYES, **Arte Útil - palas por pistolas.** In: <<https://www.arte-util.org/projects/palas-por-pistolas/>> accessed May 2021.

¹²⁹ PEDRO REYES, **Palas por pistolas.** In: <<http://www.pedroreyes.net/08.php?szLang=en&Area=work&SubArea=08>> accessed May 2021.

action of planting 1527 trees. Reyes defines the process as a ritual with the pedagogical purpose of showing how an agent of death can become an agent of life.

3.1.2.2 Cesme¹³⁰⁻¹³¹

This work, lead by the artist Matei Bejenaru, consisted in a public intervention in the capital of Albania, Tirana. When the project was realized, a substantial part of the city's population did not have access to potable water. Taking this fact into account, Bejenaru obtained authorization from the competent authorities to organise a distribution of free water in the centre of the Tirana, by temporarily using the city water main. Residents or anyone interested could then take bottles and gallons and personally fill it with public and drinking water at the station created by the artist.

3.1.2.3 Acceso a lo denegado¹³²⁻¹³³

Núria Güel is the artist that conceived this project. The starting point of this work was a Cuban law that allowed resident foreigners to access the Internet, but prohibited it for nationals (by forbidding telecom companies to provide the service to Cuban citizens).

Güel's project set up a service that offered Internet access to Cubans in their homes. The offer was based on a barter system. In exchange for the Internet, Cuban nationals shared their local knowledge with the artist. Güel's intention was to operate more easily in the Cuban context.

The artist explained that "the service became a platform for exchange: I met their demand for external information through Internet access and they met my demand for internal information".¹³⁴

¹³⁰ MATEI BEJENARU, *Arte Útil – Cesme*. In: <<https://www.arte-util.org/projects/cezme/>> accessed May 2021.

¹³¹ MATEI BEJENARU, *Cesme*. In: <<https://www.mateibejenaru.net/cesme.html>> accessed May 2021.

¹³² NURIA GÜELL, *Arte Útil - acceso a lo denegado*. In: <<https://www.arte-util.org/projects/acceso-a-lo-denegado-2/>> accessed May 2021.

¹³³ NURIA GÜELL, *Acceso a lo denegado*. In: <<https://www.nuriaguell.com/portfolio/acceso-a-lo-denegado/>> accessed May 2021.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

3.1.2.4 New Walk Ways in New Bell¹³⁵⁻¹³⁶

The project “New Walk Ways in New Bell” was conducted by the Dutch artist Kamiel Verschuren in the city of Douala, Cameroon.

In New Bell, a neighbourhood of Douala, the sewers alongside the streets are completely open and therefore filled with garbage from the streets. The original covers of the sewers, made from wooden or concrete, have often been taken away, burned as fuel wood, or are just damaged, not ever being replaced or fixed.

In the rainy season, the absence of a proper draining system often causes big floods and affects public health. During this period of the year, it is not uncommon that the water from the sewers spread into the streets and into the houses.

Considering this situation, Verschuren’s project consisted in covering approximately 2km of open-air gutters in the New Bell neighbourhood. The artist used long boards on which he wrote texts and words associated with water. Small holes were made on the boards preventing garbage to enter in the sewers, but allowing the draining of the rainwater.

Regarding the texts elaborated by the artist, they referred to the water, reflecting, for instance, its different dimensions, qualities, movement, its ability to have the shape of where it is contained and its huge force.

Worth mentioning that the work was realized with the help of four young people living in New Bell. It is said that many people from the area expressed their appreciation for the project. On the other hand, during the implementation of the boards there were still people throwing garbage in common areas. Nevertheless, on the project's page on the website of the Useful Art Association it is said that local leaders have committed in raising awareness about the importance of this action for improving the community living conditions.

3.1.2.5 Superquadra casa-armário¹³⁷⁻¹³⁸

¹³⁵ KAMIEL VERSCHUREN, **New Walk Ways in New Bell**. In: <<https://www.arte-util.org/projects/new-walk-ways-in-new-bell/>> accessed June 2021.

¹³⁶ KAMIEL VERSCHUREN, **New Walk Ways for New Bell – Faces of Water**. In: <<http://sud-2010.blogspot.com/2010/12/new-walk-ways-for-new-bell-faces-of.html>> accessed June 2021.

¹³⁷ DOMÈNEC, **Superquadra casa-armário**. In: <<https://www.arte-util.org/projects/superquadra-casa-armario/>> accessed June 2021.

¹³⁸ DOMÈNEC, **Superquadra casa-armário**. In: <<https://www.domenec.net/superquadra-casa-armario/>> accessed June 2021.

The Project, designed by the artist Domènec, is inspired in two famous buildings called “superquadras” located in a residential area in Brasília, the capital of Brazil. Domènec built prototypes based on the architecture of these buildings to serve as provisory individual shelters for homeless people. The prototypes comprehend a blanket, a pillow and some shelves to store personal objects.

3.1.3 Considerations regarding Useful Art

The Useful Art works stressed in this section seem to allow HRE participants to be exposed to some relevant issues. Just to mention some of them: (i) right to life;¹³⁹ right to security;¹⁴⁰ right to a healthy and sustainable environment¹⁴¹ (“Palas por Pistolas”); (ii) right to water¹⁴² (“Cesme”); (iii) right to be treated without discrimination;¹⁴³ right to freedom of opinion and expression – this right includes being able to receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers¹⁴⁴ (“Acceso a lo denegado”); (iv) right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing;¹⁴⁵ duties to the community¹⁴⁶⁻¹⁴⁷ (“New Walk Ways in New Bell”); (v) right to housing¹⁴⁸ (“Superquadra casa-armário”).

Regarding the HRE dimensions, it can be said that the artistic works here presented do not act in the level of sharing human rights technical matters, such as the existence of international treaties and declarations. Still, the works communicate and open space to discussions related to the existence of rights. Thus, we verify a possible activation of the first HRE dimension: learning **about** human rights.

On the other hand, these artistic works could reach the audience in the fundamental level of empathy and commitment with the human rights cause, acting as

¹³⁹ Article 3 of the UDHR.

¹⁴⁰ Article 3 of the UDHR.

¹⁴¹ UN Special Procedures mandate on human rights and the environment; Right to a healthy and sustainable environment report (UN A/73/188).

¹⁴² UN Resolution 64/292; General Comment n. 15 – UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

¹⁴³ Article 7 of the UDHR.

¹⁴⁴ Article 19 of the UDHR.

¹⁴⁵ Article 25.1 of the UDHR.

¹⁴⁶ Article 29.1 of the UDHR.

¹⁴⁷ The fact that there are individual and collective obligations related to HR, not just rights, is commonly not mentioned. In this sense, we highlight, for instance, the Article 29.1. of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible”.

¹⁴⁸ Article 25.1 of the UDHR.

a trigger to guarantee individual and collective transformation. Thus, a possible activation of the second dimension could be argued: learning **for** human rights.

3.2 Activist Art

“Activist art is a term used to describe art that is grounded in the act of ‘doing’ and addresses political or social issues”.¹⁴⁹

It can be said that art activists are not interested solely in produce critics regarding the art system. More than this, these artists want to change broader political and social conditions by means of its artistic work:

Art activists try to change living conditions in economically underdeveloped areas, raise ecological concerns, offer access to culture and education for the populations of poor countries and regions, attract attention to the plight of illegal immigrants, improve the conditions of people working in art institutions, and so forth.¹⁵⁰

Activist art can be understood as a tool to empower individuals and groups, being often situated in the public sphere with artists working closely to communities in the process of producing artistic work.

The Tate Guide to Modern Art Terms elucidates that artists concerned with activist art can be involved in direct actions, like the Women On Waves Foundation, a feminist art collective that runs a floating abortion clinic, carrying out abortions in regions where the practice is illegal.¹⁵¹

Art activists can also be seen as reaction to the “increasing collapse of the modern social state”.¹⁵² They would then try to replace the state that, for different reasons, cannot or will not fulfil its traditional roles. Art activists do want to change the world, to make it a better place, but at the same time, they do not want to cease being artists.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ TATE MODERN, **Art Term ACTIVIST ART**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/activist-art>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁵⁰ BORIS GROYS, On Art Activism, **e-Flux**, Journal #56. 2014.

¹⁵¹ TATE MODERN, **Art Term ACTIVIST ART**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/activist-art>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁵² BORIS GROYS, On Art Activism, **e-Flux**, Journal #56. 2014.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

3.2.1 Ai Weiwei

The Chinese artist Ai Weiwei can be considered one of the exponents of Activist Art. Weiwei is recognized worldwide for criticizing the Chinese regime, more specifically with regard to human rights violations and non-compliance with democratic precepts. The artist was persecuted and even imprisoned for 81 days by the Chinese government in 2011. Ai, when narrates the day he was arrested at Beijing Capital International Airport, says that:

I was waiting in line to go through customs, and they stopped me and told me to go to another place to have a talk. They were wearing plain clothes, so I knew they were secret police. What I wasn't prepared for was when they led me to a van, put a black hood over my head, and started to drive. In about two hours, we arrived. I could sense that we'd arrived somewhere because the car kept stopping, meaning there was a gate.¹⁵⁴

The artist would have been arrested on charges of tax fraud, but in the numerous interrogations he underwent during the almost three months detained in an unidentified place, it is said that he was rarely asked about tax issues.¹⁵⁵ It should also be noted that the arrest occurred “during a government crackdown that targeted dozens of bloggers, human rights lawyers, and writers”.¹⁵⁶ Some of Ai Weiwei's works are presented below.

3.2.1.1 S.A.C.R.E.D¹⁵⁷⁻¹⁵⁸

In 2013, already free from jail for almost two years, but with his passport still held by the Chinese authorities and forbidden to leave the country, Weiwei realized the installation “S.A.C.R.E.D” at a church - Chiesa di Sant'Antonin - during the Venice Biennale.

¹⁵⁴ ARTSPACE EDITORS, Chinese Artist Ai Weiwei Describes His 81 Days in Prison—And the Extreme Surveillance, Censorship, and “Soft Detention”, **Artspace**, 2018.

¹⁵⁵ DAMIAN GRAMMATICAS, Details emerge of Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's detention, **BBC News**, 2011.

¹⁵⁶ ARTSPACE EDITORS, Chinese Artist Ai Weiwei Describes His 81 Days in Prison—And the Extreme Surveillance, Censorship, and “Soft Detention”, **Artspace**, 2018.

¹⁵⁷ ANDREA CHIN I DESIGNBOOM, **ai weiwei's S.A.C.R.E.D. depicts scenes from his incarceration**. In: <<https://www.designboom.com/art/ai-weiweis-s-a-c-r-e-d-depicts-scenes-from-his-incarceration/>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁵⁸ Images regarding the mentioned art project are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

The piece is a work composed of six iron boxes, each measuring 377 x 198 x 153 cm. The boxes, representing his cell, contain scenes of his routine in incarceration back in 2011. Weiwei positioned realist models of himself and his captors, documenting moments of that period of his life in detail: sleeping, shower, meals, interrogations.¹⁵⁹

According to the artist, the six components are divided in: (i) Supper, (ii) Accusers, (iii) Cleansing, (iv) Ritual, (v) Entropy, and (vi) Doubt. Each unit has small apertures, similar to those found on a prison cell door, allowing the viewers to observe the dynamics assembled by Ai.¹⁶⁰

It is worth mentioning that, in the following year, 2014, the artist made another work (untitled) also referring to his period of incarceration. The work, “a white bedroom with foam-covered walls and surveillance cameras”¹⁶¹ was exhibited in Wei's solo exhibition “Evidence”, at the Martin-Gropius-Bau museum in Berlin.¹⁶²⁻¹⁶³

3.2.1.2 Untitled¹⁶⁴⁻¹⁶⁵⁻¹⁶⁶

Weiwei does not only address issues related to his home country in his works. Recently the artist designed a flag to raise awareness about the importance of human rights.

The ensign was created to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and it is a blue flag that has, at its centre, a footprint made up of white dots. The design was inspired by the time Weiwei spent with refugees in Bangladesh. This group of people was forced to flee attacks in the

¹⁵⁹ ANDREA CHIN I DESIGNBOOM, **ai weiwei's S.A.C.R.E.D. depicts scenes from his incarceration**. In: <<https://www.designboom.com/art/ai-weiweis-s-a-c-r-e-d-depicts-scenes-from-his-incarceration/>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ SARAH MARSH, Berlin unveils new Ai Weiwei exhibition, but artist can't attend, **Reuters**.

¹⁶² CARMEN ANSALDO, Ai Weiwei “Evidence” At The Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, **Ocula Magazine**, 2014.

¹⁶³ Ai Weiwei was unable to attend both exhibitions, in Venice and Berlin, given that his passport was still retained by the Chinese authorities. In 2015 the artist moved to Europe where he currently lives.

¹⁶⁴ NATASHAH HITTI, Ai Weiwei designs footprint flag as a symbol for human rights, **De Zeen Magazine**, 2018.

¹⁶⁵ Images regarding the mentioned art project are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

¹⁶⁶ Commissioned work. It was commissioned as part of a campaign called Fly The Flag. This grassroots campaign was established by a host of arts organisations and charities, including Fuel, Amnesty International, Donmar Warehouse, Human Rights Watch, Liberty, National Theatre, Sadler's Wells and Tate Galleries.

Southeast Asian region of Burma. During the time of his visit, Ai noticed that almost everyone was barefooted. “He sees the bare footprint as a symbol that relates to anyone who has ever been forced to flee. He took 100 muddy footprints of people young and old in various locations, and combined them in his design”.¹⁶⁷

3.2.1.3 Safe Passage¹⁶⁸

The Chinese artist also dialogues with the refugee crisis in his recent piece "Safe Passage" (2020).

The work, installed on the neoclassical facade of the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), consisted in “2,400 blue, orange and red life vests worn by Syrian refugees who made the perilous journey from Turkey to the Aegean islands”.¹⁶⁹ During the height of the Syrian Civil War, about one million people landed on the island of Lesbos, Greece.¹⁷⁰ The discarded lifejackets were recovered and donated to Ai Weiwei by the mayor of Lesbos, Spyros Galinos, in 2016.¹⁷¹

3.2.2 Alketa Xhafa Mripa

Another artist that can be brought by this section is Alketa Xhafa Mripa. “Born and raised in Kosovo, Alketa moved to London in 1997 to study Fine Art at Central Saint Martins. Arriving as a student, Alketa became a refugee when the 1998-1999 Kosovo war broke out”.¹⁷² Through various mixed media installations, painting, video and photography, her works, e.g., deal with human rights, identity, memory, gender and, migration.¹⁷³ On her official webpage, Mripa describes herself as a

¹⁶⁷ NATASHAH HITTI, Ai Weiwei designs footprint flag as a symbol for human rights, **De Zeen Magazine**, 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Images regarding the mentioned art project are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

¹⁶⁹ NEW TACTICS IN HUMAN RIGHTS, **Artist & Activist: Ai Weiwei**, In: <<https://www.newtactics.org/blog/artist-activist-ai-weiwei>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ ARTFIXDAILY ARTWIRE, **Ai Weiwei’s “Safe Passage” Debuts in U.S. With ‘When Home Won’t Let You Stay: Art and Migration’ Group Exhibition and a Postcommodity Commission at Minneapolis Institute of Art**. In: <<https://www.artfixdaily.com/artwire/release/123-ai-weiweis-safe-passage-debuts-in-us-with-%E2%80%98when-home-won%E2%80%99t-let-you>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁷² **ALKETA XHAFAMRIPA**. In: <<https://www.alketaxhafamripa.com/>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

“passionate advocate of the truth and human rights”.¹⁷⁴ Some of her artworks are presented below.

3.2.2.1 Thinking of You¹⁷⁵⁻¹⁷⁶

“Thinking of you” is an art installation of big proportions in a football stadium in Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. The piece was opened to public in June 2005, precisely on the day of the 16th anniversary of Nato forces entering the city after a three-month bombing campaign.¹⁷⁷

The artwork consists in “thousands of dresses hung on washing lines in a powerful and poignant tribute to survivors of sexual violence”.¹⁷⁸ Mripa had explained that the starting point for the installation was when she listened to interviews of Kosovo sexual violence survivors who pointed out that their voices were rarely heard.¹⁷⁹

Estimates vary, but some sources have calculated that 20,000 Albanian women – and some men – were victims of sexual violence during the 1998-99 Kosovo war as Albanian separatists fought against the Yugoslav regime led by Serb strongman Slobodan Milosevic.¹⁸⁰

As in the Bosnian war, Serb forces used rape to terrorise and humiliate the civilian population, according to Human Rights Watch. The rapes – often perpetrated in front of victim’s families – were carried out mainly by paramilitary forces. Kosovar militants were also accused of rape, but the number of such cases is believed to be far lower.¹⁸¹

The work had a relevant collaborative character as women and men were encouraged to donate clothes and to go to the stadium to help with the work assembly. The symbolism of this gesture is related to the idea of involving society in the discussion of sexual violence during war times. Remove the stigma from victims and hold the culprits accountable.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ ALKETA XHAFA MRIPA. In: <<https://www.alketaxhafamripa.com/art-work-2>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁷⁶ Images regarding the mentioned art project are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

¹⁷⁷ MARK TRAN, Dresses on washing lines pay tribute to Kosovo survivors of sexual violence, *The Guardian*, 2015.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

To date, there has been only one conviction at the international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia based partly on sexual assaults. In Kosovo itself, there have been only two rape case prosecutions – by the war crimes unit of Eulex, the EU rule of law mission in Kosovo.¹⁸²

3.2.2.2 Even Walls Have Ears¹⁸³⁻¹⁸⁴⁻¹⁸⁵

This artwork, launched in 2018, is dedicated to sharing personal testimonies regarding Albanian's dictatorship (1944/1991). To collect and document the stories presented in the installation, Mripa has travelled across Albania for almost one month. The final piece is composed of a series of six light installations projecting the statements in public walls of several cities of the country.¹⁸⁶ Until the present moment, more than 50 survivors have contributed to the piece.¹⁸⁷ The project elicits a brutal reality:

During the Albanian dictatorship, thousands were executed and perished due to disease and malnutrition, at least 50,000 people were sent to political prisons, and internment camps. In 1991, more than 800,000 Albanians left the country, settling mostly in Greece, Italy, USA, either permanently or as temporary workers. Today, Albania's diaspora is larger than country's population of 2.8 million.¹⁸⁸

The official website of the project explains that the intention of “Even Walls Have Ears” is to guarantee that these memories, that are marked by poverty; suppression of freedom of expression; political involvement and movement, live on

¹⁸² MARK TRAN, Dresses on washing lines pay tribute to Kosovo survivors of sexual violence, *The Guardian*, 2015.

¹⁸³ ALKETA XHAFA MRIPA. In: <<https://www.alketaxhafamripa.com/art-work-2>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁸⁴ This artwork “is part of the “Remembrance to Heal and Prevent” project. The project supports the work of the Authority on Access to Information on the Former State Security Service (the Authority) to inform the Albanian public on communist crimes and promote democratic values of justice, truth and reconciliation. The project is supported by UNDP and the Government of Italy. The projection of the installation is also supported by the European Union Delegation in Albania, U.S Embassy in Albania and Municipality of Tirana”. UNDP ALBANIA, **Testimonies of the survivors of past communist crimes projected in historical monuments and public buildings in six cities of Albania**. In: <<https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/presscenter/articles/2018/05/09/testimonies-of-the-survivors-of-past-communist-crimes-projected-in-historic-al-monuments-and-public-buildings-in-six-cities-of-albania.html#:~:text=This%20was%20done%20through%20an,communist%20dictatorship%20prisons%20and%20camps.>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁸⁵ Images regarding the mentioned art project are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

¹⁸⁶ **Even Walls have ears**. In: <<http://evenwallshaveears.org/en/about/>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ **Even Walls have ears**. In: <<http://evenwallshaveears.org/en/about/>> accessed June 2021.

and are told on the storytellers terms.¹⁸⁹ The project would also aim to dialogue with the country's "misinformed generation of millennials".¹⁹⁰

Our research could not find reliable translations of the passages projected by this artwork. The artist says that "the stories she has gathered will one day be translated into English and turned into a book".¹⁹¹ Some of the interviewees' stories are, however, documented in English on the project's official website,¹⁹² but we could not identify which exact excerpts were projected by the installation. In any case, one of the testimonies that is not on the project's official page is one that the artist says that touched her the most.

"We were so fortunate to have met Neim Pasha, one of the last of the eight survivors of the Spaç prison revolution that took place in 1973." Spaç was the site of a notorious forced labor camp built for mining pyrite and copper. (...) "Just two weeks ago we interviewed Neim, who was diabetic. As he struggled through deep emotion, he worked up his remaining strength to sit at the edge of his bed and share with us his most heartbreaking memories. He spent 25 years in prison for his political opinions; for eight of those years, he was kept in solitary confinement." "Mr. Pasha gave his final interview to us," Xhafa says. Pasha passed away in March 2018, following his interview with Xhafa's project. "This affected us deeply, but it made his story even more precious to us."¹⁹³

3.2.2.3 Refugees Welcome¹⁹⁴⁻¹⁹⁵

This is a mobile installation held in 2016. It consists of a small white truck where a living room has been set up. Thus, the truck body received some vintage chairs, a table, a rug and some decorations on its walls that suggest the motto of the artwork: the welcome of refugees in the United Kingdom.

The installation only operates with the artist's presence, being, therefore, also a performance. The proposed dynamic is that Alketa welcomes the public for a tea in this truck/living room. The truck is a clear reference to one of the main means of

¹⁸⁹ **History - Even Walls have ears.** In: <<http://evenwallshaveears.org/en/history-2/>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ BRIGGS BURTON, **Redeeming history from the dungeons of the past: an interview with Alketa Xhafa Mripa.** In: <<https://www.reneepfister-consultancy.com/news/the-dungeons-of-the-past--alketa-xhafa-mripa---artist-in-focus---june-2018>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁹² **The Alphabet of Stories - Even Walls have ears.** In: <<http://evenwallshaveears.org/en/about/>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁹³ BRIGGS BURTON, **Redeeming history from the dungeons of the past: an interview with Alketa Xhafa Mripa.** In: <<https://www.reneepfister-consultancy.com/news/the-dungeons-of-the-past--alketa-xhafa-mripa---artist-in-focus---june-2018>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁹⁴ Images regarding the mentioned art project are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

¹⁹⁵ Piece commissioned by Counterpoints Arts.

transport used by refugees to enter England and the living room/tea allude to the country.

Each conversation between the artist and the visitors is recorded and the public is also asked to leave their ideas written in a comment book. The stories were said to be then shared in radio and social media.¹⁹⁶

One cannot forget that this work is, in reality, a conversation between the public and a refugee. Mripa is herself a refugee on English soil:

Upon receiving refugee status she feels that her Kosovan community received an exemplary welcome and the opportunity of education and integration. Alketa aims to now dig deep into how the British public currently feels about welcoming refugees, past and present and post-Brexit.¹⁹⁷

3.2.3 Considerations regarding Activist Art

Based in what was presented so far in this subsection, it seems quite evident that alliances could easily be established between Activist Art initiatives and human rights education.

Weiwei's first work here mentioned could then open up, for instance, discussions on: right to liberty;¹⁹⁸ right to freedom of expression;¹⁹⁹ right not to be arbitrary arrested;²⁰⁰ right to a fair trial.²⁰¹ Here the dimensions of HRE would mostly involve “learning **about** human rights” and “learning **for** human rights”. In this sense, the participants would be presented to the existence of certain universal rights and would be able to understand in which ways these rights can be violated. They could notice how violations happens in practice and so build skills, attitudes and values to apply human rights in their lives to take action, alone or with others, for promoting and defending human rights.

Secondly, the blue flag designed by Ai could clearly foster the dimension of “learning **about** human rights”, as the piece makes express reference to an

¹⁹⁶ COUNTERPOINTS., **ALKETA XHAFI-MRIPA** Kosovan-born Alketa Xhafa-Mripa is an artist and activist whose most recent work ‘Refugees Welcome’ was commissioned by Counterpoints Arts in early 2016. In: <<https://counterpointsarts.org.uk/artist/alketa/>> accessed June 2021.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Article 3 of the UDHR.

¹⁹⁹ Article 19 of the UDHR.

²⁰⁰ Article 9 of the UDHR.

²⁰¹ Article 10 of the UDHR.

international human rights instrument, the UDHR. However, it also makes reference to the refugee crisis, also resonating the dimension of "learning **for** human rights" since the participants could develop human rights values and apply them in their own daily lives, for example being more sensitive with the refugee issues.

The installation "Safe Passage", on its turn, opens up space for discussions regarding, for instance: right to life;²⁰² freedom of movement and residence;²⁰³ right to leave its own country;²⁰⁴ right to enjoy asylum;²⁰⁵ right to equal treatment/non discrimination.²⁰⁶ Here the first and third dimensions of HRE seem to be activated since rights are presented and concomitantly emerges the possibility of raising commitment to the human rights cause, understanding the suffering to which refugees are submitted.

Conversely, the work carried out by the collective Women On Waves Foundation, also briefly mentioned above, could serve as a basis for dynamics related to women's rights;²⁰⁷ right to health;²⁰⁸ reproductive rights.²⁰⁹ Here the dimensions of "learning **about** human rights" and "learning **for** human rights" could be also activated in a similar way to what was said about the works of Ai Weiwei.

Regarding the first work of Alketa Xhafa Mripa mentioned on this thesis, "Thinking of You", it is possible to support the argument that this piece could foster, for instance, discussions about: women's rights²¹⁰ and war crimes.²¹¹ Equally, it is possible to say that the dimensions of "learning **about** human rights" and "learning **for** human rights" could be also activated through the contact of the HRE participant with this work. In other words, the contact could allow the knowledge of rights, the understanding of how they are violated and could raise empathy and commitment to changing brutal realities.

In relation to "Even Walls Have Ears", HRE exchanges could emerge about:

²⁰² Article 3 of the UDHR.

²⁰³ Article 13.1 of the UDHR.

²⁰⁴ Article 13.2 of the UDHR.

²⁰⁵ Article 14.1 of the UDHR.

²⁰⁶ Article 7 of the UDHR.

²⁰⁷ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

²⁰⁸ Article 25.1 of the UDHR.

²⁰⁹ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

²¹⁰ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

²¹¹ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

right to life;²¹² right to liberty;²¹³ right to freedom of expression;²¹⁴ right not to be arbitrary arrested;²¹⁵ right to a fair trial;²¹⁶ prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;²¹⁷ prohibition of slavery/forced labour;²¹⁸ right to food.²¹⁹ Once more, both first and second dimensions could be triggered since the existence of rights is presented and how violations occur in real world, what can lead to personal and collective engagement to the human rights cause.

Lastly, “Refugees Welcome”, analogously to what was described regarding Weiwei’s “Safe Passage”, could serve as an entrance door to discuss, in a HRE teaching/learning dynamics: freedom of movement and residence;²²⁰ right to leave its own country;²²¹ right to enjoy asylum;²²² right to equal treatment/non discrimination.²²³ Once again, “learning **about** human rights” and “learning **for** human rights” could be powered as explained through the artworks already presented.

3.3 Artists who openly argue not fitting into artistic movements

This thesis could not fail to mention the existence of visual artists with notorious works related to human rights that do not recognize themselves as belonging to any artistic movement/school.

Regina José Galindo²²⁴ is one of these artists.²²⁵ Galindo is a visual artist and poet whose main medium is performance. Regina José, who was born and currently lives in Guatemala, uses her own personal context as a powerful starting point to

²¹² Article 3 of the UDHR.

²¹³ Article 3 of the UDHR.

²¹⁴ Article 19 of the UDHR.

²¹⁵ Article 9 of the UDHR.

²¹⁶ Article 10 of the UDHR.

²¹⁷ Article 5 of the UDHR.

²¹⁸ Article 4 of the UDHR.

²¹⁹ Article 25.1 of the UDHR.

²²⁰ Article 13.1 of the UDHR.

²²¹ Article 13.2 of the UDHR.

²²² Article 14.1 of the UDHR.

²²³ Article 7 of the UDHR.

²²⁴ **Regina José Galindo**. In: <<https://www.reginajosegalindo.com/en/home-en/>> accessed June 2021.

²²⁵ In an email correspondence exchanged between the author of this thesis and the artist on 06/17/2021, Galindo states: “Hi Maria nice to meet you. I do not identify myself with any label or movement. I don't make useful art. This is Bruguera's work and I don't work with her. I'm not an activist. I consider myself an artist. I don't think art is political. the artist has political or social interests. I don't like all those categorizations”. The original message was in Spanish: “Hola María mucho gusto. no me identifico con ninguna etiqueta o movimiento. no hago arte útil esto es el trabajo de Bruguera y yo no trabajo con ella. no soy activista me considero una artista. no creo que el arte sea político. el artista tiene intereses político o sociales. a mi me hacen ruido todas esas categorizaciones no me gustan”. In MARIA RUFINO, Tesis de maestría.

“explore and accuse the ethical implication of social violence and injustices related to gender and racial discrimination, as well as human rights abuses arising from the endemic inequalities in power relations of contemporary societies”.²²⁶

Galindo received some relevant awards for pieces of her work that critique Guatemalan gender violence²²⁷ and for her ability to transform brutality and injustice into powerful art works that call for concrete response measures.²²⁸ Her works often demand the restitution of the memory and humanity of gender violence to its victims.

Regina has a significant annual amount of work since 1999.²²⁹ Below we highlight some of them.

3.3.1 La Verdad²³⁰

This is a performance conducted by Regina José in 2013 at the Centro de Cultura de España in Guatemala City. The work consists in the artist, while seated in a chair in front of a table, reading, for one hour, real testimonies of survivors of the armed conflict in Guatemala. While Galindo reads the statements, a dentist anesthetizes her mouth from time to time. The artist tries to continue reading the texts again and again, but the process turns out to be harder and harder due to the anaesthesia. A process of silencing.

The panorama behind the performance is brutal. On her page Galindo explains that:

For thirty-six years Guatemala lived through one of the bloodiest wars in recent history, a genocide that left more than 200,000 people dead. The army that fought against the guerrilla insurgency considered the indigenous people of Guatemala to be internal enemies that sympathized with the guerrilla. For thirty-six bloody years, the army fervently persecuted the indigenous population. The rape of women and girls, the torture, the scorched earth strategy, the violence and persecution, and other inhumane tactics were all common practices of the army. In 1996, the State and the guerrilla signed peace accords. The agreement arranged for amnesty for the majority of the crimes with the exception of crimes against

²²⁶ **Regina José Galindo.** In: <<https://www.reginajosegalindo.com/en/home-en/>> accessed June 2021.

²²⁷ The artist received the Golden Lion for Best Young Artist in the 51st Biennial of Venice (2005) for her work “¿Quién pude borrar las huellas?” and “Himenoplastia”. In this sense, see **Regina José Galindo.** In: <<https://www.reginajosegalindo.com/en/home-en/>> accessed June 2021.

²²⁸ In 2011 she was awarded with the Prince Claus Award from the Netherlands for the exposed reasons. In this sense, see **Regina José Galindo.** In: <<https://www.reginajosegalindo.com/en/home-en/>> accessed June 2021.

²²⁹ **Regina José Galindo.** In: <<https://www.reginajosegalindo.com/en/home-en/>> accessed June 2021.

²³⁰ The video of the performance can be found here: BEA GALLARDO, **La verdad** © **Regina José Galindo.** In: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNMjcPVgXZM>> accessed June 2021.

humanity.

Years later, indigenous Ixiles who were surviving victims of the massacres managed to bring two of the most important militants, General Efraín Ríos Montt and his chief of intelligence Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez, to trial for committing genocide and crimes against humanity. The most important trial in Guatemala's history began in the *Palacio de Justicia* in April 2013. Two weeks after its start, and after hearing many heart-breaking testimonies and expert opinions proving that genocide did occur in Guatemala, the trial started to have setbacks. The defense was suspended for various schemes and protections, and later for the intervention of the president of Guatemala, General Otto Pérez Molina. He was identified by a witness as having participated in wartime tortures and assassinations, during which time he was known as "Coronel Tito".

The trial managed to resume, and the court brought a historic sentence of eighty years in prison against Efraín Ríos Montt for committing crimes against humanity and genocide. Fatefully, the trial and the sentence were annulled just weeks later.²³¹

3.3.2 Sirena de guerra²³²

This work consisted in an intervention realized in 2018 by the artist in Montevideo, capital of Uruguay. A siren was placed in a public area of the city sounding every fourteen minutes.

The piece is a reference to episodes of violence against women in the South-American country. Every fourteen minutes a complaint is received for gender violence in Uruguay.

3.3.3 Desierto²³³⁻²³⁴

Desierto is a performance held in 2015 inside an art gallery in Santiago, Chile's capital. According to the artist, the interior of the gallery was transformed into a desert. Galindo stayed buried in the dunes, only with her head out. A huge amount of sawdust was used in this work making reference to the "spoils that result from the earth's overexploitation and subsequent desertification".²³⁵

The work was also a direct reference to the profiteering of pine trees in Chile. This would be a relevant source of income for a small portion of people. "There are

²³¹ Regina José Galindo. In: <<https://www.reginajosegalindo.com/en/home-en/>> accessed June 2021.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Images regarding the mentioned art projects are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

²³⁵ Regina José Galindo. In: <<https://www.reginajosegalindo.com/en/home-en/>> accessed June 2021.

grave consequences caused by this elite group regarding various indigenous Chilean communities and severe damage to the ecosystem”.²³⁶

3.3.4 Quédade²³⁷⁻²³⁸

This is a performance realized in 2016 in Hamburg, Germany. Galindo is driving a car when a group of young German men approach her in a busy area of the city. “They begin to shake and hit the car until the alarm is activated. The alarm was previously manipulated to sound like a war alarm”.²³⁹ The car is wrecked with Regina inside of it.

The intervention dialogues with the refugee crisis in Europe. The artist elucidates that:

For many refugees coming to Europe, Germany is an expected destination. For decades, thousands of people have arrived on German soil demanding asylum, but recently the situation has begun to change. Some people think that it is all too much (too many immigrants, too many refugees). Many regulations are making it increasingly difficult for non-citizens to stay in Germany, creating many tense situations.²⁴⁰

3.3.5 Considerations regarding Regina José Galindo’s work

As mentioned above, Regina herself describes her work as dialoguing with human rights issues. This argument seems a strong one to defend the viability of a partnership through which the HRE teaching/learning process could incorporate the artist's work.

Galindo’s works highlighted in this section seem to allow HRE participants to be exposed to some relevant issues. Just to mention some of them: (i) women's rights;²⁴¹ native peoples’ rights;²⁴² war crimes²⁴³ (“La verdad”); (ii) women's rights;²⁴⁴

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Images regarding the mentioned art projects are provided in the Annex of this thesis.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

²⁴² The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

²⁴³ Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

²⁴⁴ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

gender inequality²⁴⁵ (“Sirena de guerra”); (iii) right to a healthy and sustainable environment;²⁴⁶ right to water;²⁴⁷ right to food;²⁴⁸ native peoples’ rights²⁴⁹ (“Desierto”); (iv) right to equal treatment/non discrimination;²⁵⁰ freedom of movement and residence;²⁵¹ right to leave its own country;²⁵² right to enjoy asylum²⁵³ (“Quédate”).

Regarding the HRE dimensions, it can be said that the artist's works act not in the level of sharing human rights’ technical matters as the existence of international treaties and declarations. Alternatively, Galindo’s art could reach the audience in the fundamental level of empathy and commitment with the human rights’ cause. Still, in any case, the work also communicates the existence of rights. Consequently, we conceive that the contact of HRE participants with Galindo's art could activate, at least, the first and second dimensions of HRE - learning **about** human rights and learning **for** human rights.

3.4 Final reflections on potential alliances between Human Rights Education and visual arts practices

The main purpose of this section was to effectively answer our main research question: should the participant's exposure to visual arts be considered as a HRE teaching and learning method? Consequently, the answer came from testing our hypothesis that “yes, it should be considered a method”.

The hypothesis was confirmed by verifying that there is no **formal** or **material** restrictions to the participant's exposure to visual arts be considered a HRE method. The absence of formal restrictions occurs by the lack of normative prohibition and the absence of material obstacles comes from the existence of artistic movements/associations and visual artists that work with the human rights motif.

It was not hard to prove the absence of normative impediments and that is why

²⁴⁵ The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

²⁴⁶ UN Special Procedures mandate on human rights and the environment; Right to a healthy and sustainable environment report (UN A/73/188).

²⁴⁷ UN Resolution 64/292; General Comment n. 15 – UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

²⁴⁸ Article 25.1 of the UDHR.

²⁴⁹ The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

²⁵⁰ Article 7 of the UDHR.

²⁵¹ Article 13.1 of the UDHR.

²⁵² Article 13.2 of the UDHR.

²⁵³ Article 14.1 of the UDHR.

we dedicate more time and space to explore projects of artists, from different parts of the world, that are still alive and in activity. The idea behind this is to demonstrate the feasibility of contact and possible partnerships between HRE processes and these artists. If we had chosen to explore works by dead artists or from just one region of the globe, the possibilities for exchanges and partnerships would be much more limited.

Thus, as already mentioned, the list of artistic practices exposed here is merely illustrative and never exhaustive, there being a huge amount of works/artists/movements that can be associated with the theme of human rights and consequently explored by human rights education dynamics. What was done in this research was then just a cutout - living, active artists from different regions of the world - that would facilitate a concrete approximation between visual arts and HRE. This could then make it easier to understand that the participant's exposure to visual arts should be considered as an HRE teaching and learning method, guaranteeing, finally, the inclusion of this method in HRE traditional materials (e.g. manuals and handbooks).

In the proceeded analysis, we sought to assess which dimensions of the HRE - learning **about/through/for** human rights - could be activated when the participant is exposed to each artwork. It was verified that all the analyzed works can open the way for presenting the existence of rights (learning **about** human rights) and that it is equally possible to develop empathy, raise awareness and commitment to the cause of human rights fostering individual and collective transformations (learning **for** human rights).

It was a methodological option not to evaluate the activation of the second dimension (learning **through** human rights), since this one is intrinsically linked to the dynamics carried out in each learning process, that is, how the process is carried between trainers and trainees. This is difficult to assess in the abstract, depending on each concrete case and on how the dynamic develops between those involved. But there is no inherent obstacle for this dimension also to operate in potential during the participants' contact with visual arts.

Just not to go unnoticed, we can briefly mention other movements that could also render eventual interesting partnerships between HRE and visual arts: Socially

Engaged Practice;²⁵⁴ New Genre Public Art;²⁵⁵ Community Art;²⁵⁶ Social turn;²⁵⁷ Public Art;²⁵⁸ Feminist Art.²⁵⁹ These practices were not mentioned in depth, as explained above, for the sake of research cutout and in order to ensure that the reading did not become too repetitive and tiring. But all these schools, and others, have traits of engagement in social and political issues and can always be used as mechanisms for discussing rights and guarantees, their consequent violations and potential changes of brutal realities.

One last observation deserves to be made still in this section, albeit very briefly. Some respected academics warn about the “potentially abusive appropriation of the community for the consolidation and advancement of the artist’s personal agenda”.²⁶⁰ In this regard, Grant Kester stresses that

(...) artists who address social problems or engage economically, politically, and culturally marginalized groups in their work overemphasize the primacy of individual transformation as a measure of their project’s (artistic) success.²⁶¹

Some, on the other hand, refute this criticism by stating that it simplifies and

²⁵⁴ “Socially engaged practice can be associated with activism because it often deals with political issues. Artists who work within this field will often spend much time integrating into the specific community which they wish to help, educate or simply share with (...) The artists’ aim could be to help this community work towards a common goal, raise awareness and encourage conversation around issues, or perhaps to improve their physical or psychological conditions”. TATE MODERN, **Art Term SOCIALLY ENGAGED PRACTICE**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/socially-engaged-practice>> accessed June 2021.

²⁵⁵ “art as being activist, often created outside the institutional structure which brought the artist into direct engagement with the audience, while addressing social and political issues”. TATE MODERN, **Art Term NEW GENRE PUBLIC ART**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/n/new-genre-public-art>> accessed June 2021.

²⁵⁶ “it was not until the late 1940s that the concept of community art emerged and began to be seen as a way of empowering people. (...) In the 1960s, when social change was seen as possible, community art was seen as a way of giving a voice to society’s disenfranchised”. TATE MODERN, **Art Term COMMUNITY ART**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/community-art>> accessed June 2021.

²⁵⁷ “Art that operates under the umbrella of social turn tends to happen outside museums or galleries, although this is not always the case. Because much of the art is collaborative and focuses on constructive social change, it is rarely commercial or object based – two things that are seen as elitist and consumerist”. TATE MODERN, **Art Term SOCIAL TURN**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/social-turn>> accessed June 2021.

²⁵⁸ “Public art can often be used as a political tool (...) Public art can also be a form of civic protest”. TATE MODERN, **Art Term PUBLIC ART**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/public-art>> accessed June 2021.

²⁵⁹ “Feminist art is art by artists made consciously in the light of developments in feminist art theory in the early 1970s” TATE MODERN, **Art Term FEMINIST ART**. In: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/f/feminist-art>> accessed June 2021.

²⁶⁰ MIWON KWON, **One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity**, [s.l.]: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002. p. 139.

²⁶¹ Ibid. p. 142.

impoverishes a practice as complex as that carried out by artists who work with social and political dynamics. This would exclude “the hesitancy and doubt experienced by many artists working in this field”.²⁶²

This thesis is not intended to delve into such a challenging and nuanced avenue. Nevertheless, this topic is mentioned as a vigilance alert. It does not seem that it is an easy task to identify whether an artist is taking advantage of certain social and political agendas to promote her or himself. However, HRE partnerships with this kind of artist would go against the whole human rights program for obvious reasons. Thus, it is necessary to remain critical, vigilant and get to know well the artist and the artistic work before establishing any partnerships.

CONCLUSIONS

The real effectiveness of the human rights agenda seems to involve a basic formula that includes: promoting knowledge about the human rights; fostering the appropriation of the condition of subject of rights; and encouraging the comprehension of the path to be followed to demand rights. Such formula is taught and, more than that, shared, in the teaching/learning processes of human rights education (HRE). This essential role that the HRE plays in the realization of human rights demonstrates the character of priority that this topic should receive.

Taking this into account, this thesis had as its starting point the intention to minimally contribute to the HRE cause and, consequently, to the concrete realization of human rights.

The path then chosen by this research was to explore how HRE is taught and learned, with a focus on the methods traditionally used and recognized by the specialized bibliography. During the study, however, the absence of a potentially useful and powerful HRE teaching/learning method was noticed: the participant's exposure to visual arts.

The thesis therefore sought to understand if this method should be included in the HRE teaching/learning process, or if there were reasons that justified its absence.

²⁶² MIWON KWON, **One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity**, [s.l.]: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002. (apud Martha Fleming, letter to the editor, *Afterimage*, June 1995). p. 143.

Throughout the research it was evident that there is no formal or material objections to the inclusion of this method in the HRE dynamics. It could also be noticed that its adoption would activate the recognized dimensions of human rights education. This last conclusion could be reached through the analysis of several artistic works elaborated by visual artists, from different regions of the globe, that are still alive and in activity. The reason behind this choice is to suggest the possibility of direct HRE partnerships around the world.

A secondary reflection also ended up emerging during the study. What would be the reason for the described absence of this method? The thesis considers the lack of critical pedagogy in the HRE field as a possible cause. This work did not seek to categorically answer this question, aiming to raise instead a possible track that could be followed or discarded by future academic works and by the human rights community.

The higher contribution that this thesis offers is shedding light on the lack of attention that has been given - by academic works and by the specialized manuals - to the participant's exposure to visual arts as a HRE teaching/learning method, consequently suggesting that this reality has no reason to be preserved.

It must be highlighted that, naturally, we are not naïve or arrogant enough to assume that no one has ever considered or worked allying the exposure to visual arts and HRE. Obviously, pieces of visual arts are already being used in specific HRE teaching/learning processes. However, our aim is to guarantee an institutionalized approach of the practice by including this method in the HRE traditional materials. This could make more HRE trainers and trainees aware that this can be a teaching/learning method and the presence of this method in official HRE materials would give it more credibility to be used.

This research unveils relevant aspects encouraging further investigations and, more than this, foster a change on the content of HRE materials in order to guarantee the recognition of a new teaching and learning method. This thesis can then potentially enhance the way human rights education is taught and learned, thus being able to generate possible positive impact on building a global human rights culture.

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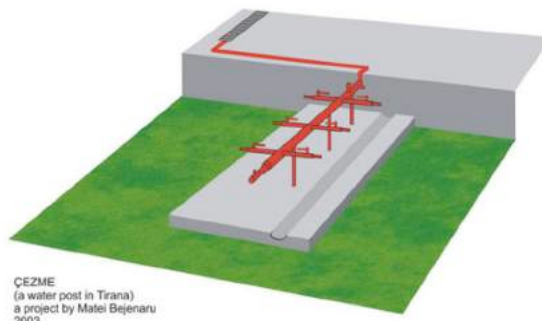
ANNEX

Images of the artistic works listed during the thesis²⁶³

Palas por Pistolas (3.1.2.1):



²⁶³ The images used in this annex are contained in materials/web pages already referenced throughout this thesis at the time of the description of the artistic works.

Cesme (3.1.2.2):

Acceso a lo denegado (3.1.2.3):

-INFORMACIÓN -COMUNICACIÓN

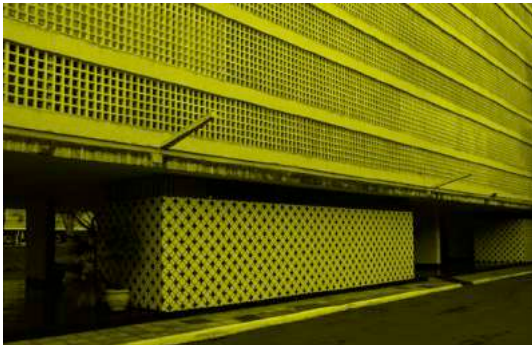
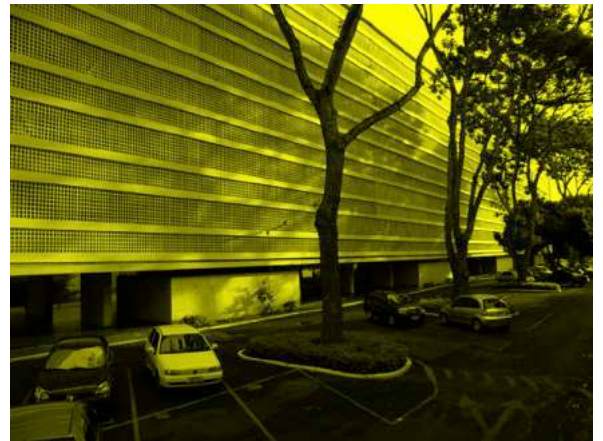
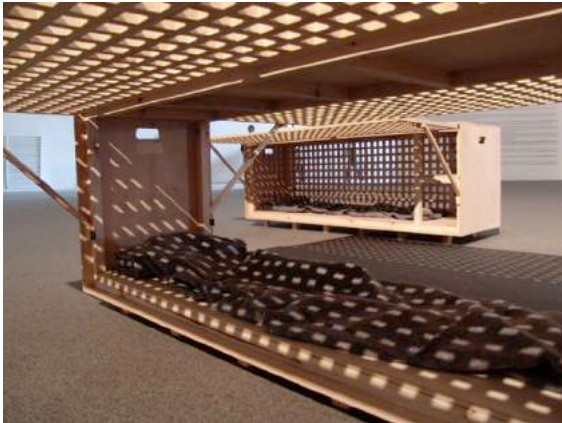
más información al 2623563
(de martes a sábado de 9 a 19h.)
servicio.d.info@gmail.com

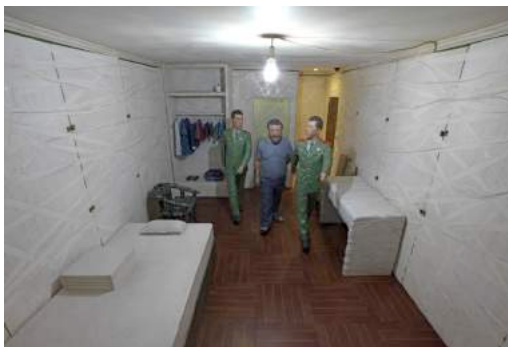


New Walk Ways in New Bell (3.1.2.4):



Superquadra casa-armário (3.1.2.5):



S.A.C.R.E.D (3.2.1.1):

Untitled (3.2.1.2):

Safe Passage (3.2.1.3):



Thinking of You (3.2.2.1):

Even Walls Have Ears (3.2.2.2):



Refugees Welcome (3.2.2.3):

La Verdad (3.3.1):

Sirena de guerra (3.3.2):



Desierto (3.3.3):

Quédate (3.3.4):