

News LETTER

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*Soft islands in summer,
sharp questions in autumn*

Our Polish colleagues have had a busy summer. Between June and August, the Wrocław Institute of Culture handed an entire building over to children. In September, researchers from the University of Wrocław passed the EXPECT_Art

findings on to teachers and, in the room next door, put artificial intelligence on trial in front of an audience of teenagers.

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*Tuli Tuli Islands:
an exhibition you are
allowed to climb on*

From 16 June to 31 July, Klub pod Kolumnami hosted *Wyspy Tuli Tuli* (*Tuli Tuli Islands*), a polysensory exhibition for children aged 0–10 and their grown-ups. The installation, designed by a visual artist Patrycja Mastej, consisted of soft plush forms arranged as

an archipelago: objects to be caught, turned, climbed, listened to and, above all, lain upon. Multimedia work by Sebastian Sobótka and a sound layer by Konrad Gęca complemented the environment.

The premise was disarmingly simple and quietly radical. Everything a gallery normally forbids — touching, shouting, lying down, rearranging the exhibits — was here the point. For any visitor who has ever felt faintly unwelcome in an art institution, the exhibition offered a gentle corrective. Adults were not merely tolerated but provided for: a quiet corner allowed carers to watch, or simply to breathe.

Around the installation, the Wrocław Institute of Culture built a full programme. Choreographer Natalia Drozd, with dancers Joanna Gruntkowska and Justyna

Taborska, created a performance in which the professional first half gave way to a second half co-authored by the youngest members of the audience. Every Tuesday brought *Figle na Wyspach Tuli Tuli* (*Mischief on the Tuli Tuli Islands*), a themed creative session — building marble runs between the islands, inventing the archipelago's inhabitants from everyday objects, playing with light and shadow. Admission was free throughout; twenty visitors at a time, which is our polite way of saying that the islands were popular.

The production was financed by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. It illustrates the assumption paralelly running through EXPECT_Art: that aesthetic experience is not a reward for cultural competence, but the means of acquiring it.



Two events at the Lower Silesian Science Festival



The 29th Lower Silesian Science Festival took over Wrocław from 12 to 19 September under the motto *Poznaj, polub, pamiętaj* — roughly, „learn it, like it, remember it,” a mischievous inversion of the student’s traditional cram-pass-forget. Colleagues from the University of Wrocław contributed two EXPECT_Art events, running in parallel at the Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics.

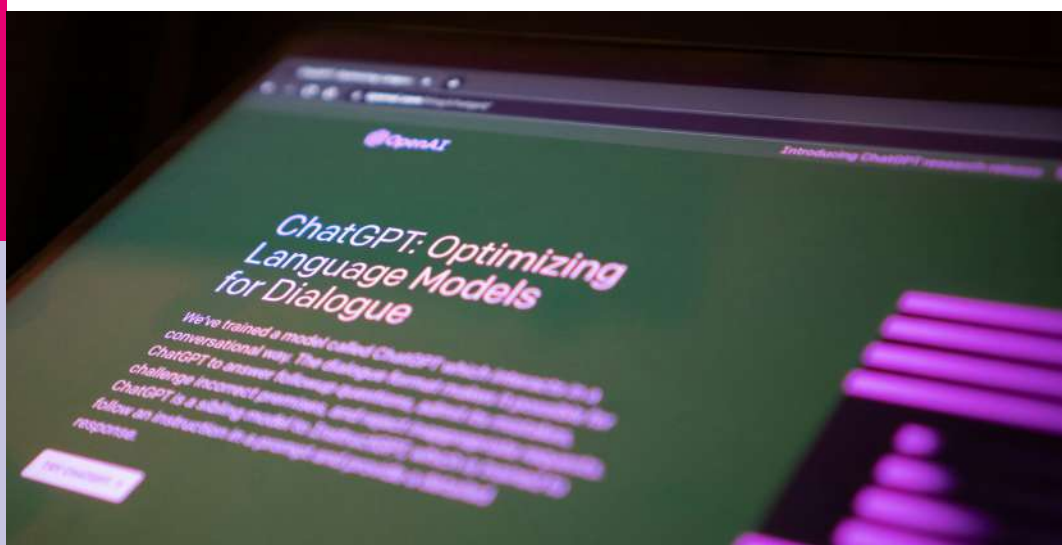
The first, **Innovative educational methods engaging art and knowledge about art**, was a lecture for teachers and educators built directly on project’s research results. It addressed the critical cultural awareness of young people and proposed art-based methods for culturally heterogeneous classrooms — settings in which art can serve as a bridge between children

arriving from very different countries and backgrounds. Participants also saw preliminary versions of the free teacher handbooks emerging from the project’s research strand.

The second, **AI under the microscope: can we trust it?**, was a creative workshop for young people led by Dr Barbara Jelonek-Zacha and Dr Agnieszka Sobieska. Through experiments and hands-on artistic work, participants confronted the ethics of AI, manipulation and cybersecurity — making things, making choices, and discovering first-hand how easily those choices can be nudged. Does AI always play fair? Is it manipulating us? The answers arrived not as a lecture but as an hour of making and second-guessing.

More about our project:
www.expectart.eu

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The Social Turn in The Arts in Spain

On the 4th and 5th of September, around 50 researchers, educators, artists, and activists attended the second symposium “El giro social de las artes y la Educación Cultural Crítica” — “The Social Turn in the Arts and Critical Cultural Literacy” in Barcelona, Spain. The event was organized by University of Barcelona’s Esbrina Research Group and Museu Tàpies. The main themes were the concepts and practices associated with critical cultural literacy (CCL), and how they are being translated, adapted, and adopted in both formal and informal educational settings in the Catalan and Spanish contexts. More than 20 contributions in different formats (oral presentations, posters, and artistic actions) were presented.

During the first day, keynote speakers Alfons Espinosa and Marta Comes presented two cases from their book “Quan les cançons de casa no sonen a l’escola” (“When the Songs From Home Aren’t Heard in School”), which draws on interviews with teachers and students to highlight the current climate in Catalan schools. The book explores how artistic interventions — especially artist residencies — try to deal with student diversity, their feeling of belonging, and the opportunity to rethink the curriculum and decolonize it with a special focus on anti-racism.

The program was enriched by two conversation panels. In the first one, Roser Sanjuan, director of La Panera art center in Lleida and head of public programs, Ariadna Rodríguez, artist, researcher, and teacher, and one of the driving forces behind Espai nyamnyam, and Àngela Palacios, artist, teacher, and a promoter of collaborative and cultural mediation projects, shared their experiences. Arts-based projects in different contexts were discussed: care and accompaniment at the end of life, organization of an alternative arts conference in a rural setting, and establishment of a local “no running race” in Barcelona. In the second panel, Arantza Meñaca, principal of Escola Drassanes in Barcelona, and Francesc Martín, principal of Escola Sant Jordi, Vilanova i la Geltrú, debated on ways to

introduce critical cultural thinking into formal education, and the challenges associated with it.

To complete the event, the Esbrina Research Group team introduced the EXPECT_Art project’s aims and main results, as well as the work that Esbrina and E:\ART have carried out in two schools in Barcelona. Four posters summarized the main findings, a video was playing on a nearby screen, and a table was filled with art artifacts produced by students. Participants were invited to reflect on the concept of CCL in education, the challenges it presents, how it can be introduced into schools and non-formal educational settings effectively, how to connect it with current practices, and how it can promote more inclusive education for our children.

