PAINTING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN:

THE CHILDLIKE ART OF PAUL KLEE AND PABLO PICASSO

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THESIS:  PAINTING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN: THE
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This thesis is dedicated to everyone who asked, “How’s your paper coming?”
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT PAGE ................................................................. ii
APPROVAL PAGE .................................................................. iii
DEDICATION ......................................................................... iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................... v
TABLE OF CONTENTS ........................................................... vi
LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................. vii
ABSTRACT ............................................................................ ix

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION: THE CHILDLIKE ART OF
PAUL KLEE AND PABLO PICASSO ...................................... 1

   Review of the Literature ................................................... 5
   Definition of Terms .......................................................... 11

2. IN RECOGNITION OF THE CHILD .................................. 16

3. THE RELEVANCE OF CHILD ART ................................. 34

4. A REJUVENATION OF CHILD ART ................................. 62

5. RECIPROCATION OF CHILD ART ................................. 76

6. CONCLUSION ................................................................. 88

WORKS CITED ..................................................................... 95
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pablo Picasso, <em>Child With a Dove</em> (1901)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Paul Klee, puppet theater (1923)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pablo Picasso, <em>Girl With a Toy Boat</em> (1939)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Felix Klee, <em>Tent City With Blue River and Black Zig-Zag Clouds</em> (1919)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Paul Klee, <em>Tent City in the Mountains</em> (1920)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Paul Klee, <em>Summer Landscape</em> (1890)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Pablo Picasso with <em>Marguerite</em> (photograph c. 1961)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Gabi, Self-portrait (2011)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Avery, Self-portrait (2011) ................................................................. 60
20. Pablo Picasso, (detail) The Butterfly Chaser (1938) ......................... 60
21. Pablo Picasso with Paloma (photograph 1957) ........................................ 63
22. Pablo Picasso with his children (photograph 1957) .............................. 63
23. Pablo Picasso, Baboon with Young (1951) ........................................... 65
24. Pablo Picasso, Bull’s Head (1943) .................................................... 66
25. Pablo Picasso, Guitar (1912) ............................................................. 66
26. Paul Klee, Hand Puppets (1916-1925) .................................................. 68
27. Paul Klee, Head of a Famous Robber (1921) ........................................ 70
28. Paul Klee, The Sultan (1919) ............................................................. 70
29. Paul Klee, Old Man (1924) ................................................................. 70
31. Evolution of Klee’s style (1903,1939) ................................................... 79
32. Pablo Picasso, The Young Painter (1972) ............................................. 82
33. Paul Klee, Biedermeier-Fraulein (1940) ................................................. 82
34. Paul Klee, By the Blue Bush (1939) .................................................... 92
35. Paul Klee, A Child and the Grotesque (1938) ...................................... 93
ABSTRACT

In keeping with their distinction for stellar innovation, legends of modern art Paul Klee (1879-1940) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) would each periodically use their talent to expound a rudimentary and unabashed style more typically attributed to children. While the results recall the whimsy of childhood, they also invoke a sophisticated inquiry that delves beyond the obvious visual similarities.

That Picasso and Klee gave sanction to the unrestrictive expression of childhood, even while breaking through such strong iconic phases as primitivism, abstraction, and expressionism, validates the exploration of the child’s influence and inspiration in modern art.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE CHILDLIKE ART OF PAUL KLEE
AND PABLO PICASSO

Art history has long suffered the lament of critics and lowbrow comics who would chide that much modern art appeared as if a child had painted it. That there is some truth in mockery bears consideration in this accusation, for then the underlying intention was justified, as there were indeed artists, many of them legends of twentieth-century modern art, who painted under the influence of children.

Paul Klee (1879-1940) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) had in common not only the talent given to a great artist, but they would each selectively use it to expound a rudimentary and unabashed style more typically attributed to children. The resulting works, canvases painted intermittently during various stages of their individual careers, bear one or more of the unmistakable elements that define child art: simplified composition, flat color and spatial arrangement, prominence of line, reliance on shape and color, often distorted or bold, and representation of an emotional and expressive mental image. For Klee and Picasso, the appeal of childhood was recognized as an instructive resource to use both mentally and visually in their artwork.

It was the striking visual evidence - some paintings of theirs do have childlike traits - that generated the original motivation for this paper, yet a more comprehensive
and reflective inquiry grew while exploring the likely catalyst or influential events that would impel both Picasso and Klee to selectively adopt the physicality of child art into their individual œuvres. To further validate the investigation, I maintain that the technique of incorporating childlike elements was not exclusive to Klee or Picasso; many notable artists of the early twentieth century also found a connection with the primeval charm of children’s art. Vasily Kandinsky, Gabriele Munter, Henri Matisse, Joan Miro, Jean Dubuffet, and Asger Jorn were all - in various degrees - attracted to child art and connected by the motives and influences that came with the appeal (Fineberg 20).

The modern child-art movement was to become a far-reaching and persuasive entity, conspicuous not only in the art world but also, as noted by Philip Meeson, “in styles of dress, manners of speech, comportment, and not least in changing attitudes to authority” (371). With the rise of Modernism came the rejection of academic methods and formulas in favor of spontaneity, individual creativity and self-expression (Meeson 371). Given their newfound freedom, the artists conceived a whirlwind of multifaceted and profound movements including Expressionism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Fauvism, Abstraction, Primitivism, and Cubism. Underneath them all, amidst a sophisticated and experimental society, came the simple influence of child art.

Although attributing a particular influence to any artist is speculative, it is important to note that the transforming circumstances surrounding Picasso and Klee at the peak of their respective childlike styles are discernible. That both artists were influential students of their surroundings is undeniable; Picasso openly declared that
his work was a visual documentation of his life. “Why do you think I date everything I do? Because it is not sufficient to know an artist’s works – it is also necessary to know when he did them, why, how, under what circumstances” (qtd. in Gedo 3). It was the “how,” the “circumstances,” that Picasso referred to which became in those moments not only influential to the artist but also did not go unnoticed by family and friends. In speaking of his father, Klee’s son Felix contends that the “incredible versatility of his art was based upon keen daily observation of his surroundings” (Klee 50). Observing the artists first hand speaks volumes of what might have influenced their friend, or father, or companion.

A MoMA article of 1987 states that when Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (Museum of Modern Art founding director) visited Klee at his home, he noted a table “littered with significant curiosities” including a few drawings by the neighbor’s children (1). Likewise for Picasso; after his friend Brassai brought a young artist to Picasso’s studio to seek his opinion of the child’s drawings, the French photojournalist had this recollection of Picasso’s reaction:

He looks at them as though he had never before seen a drawing. His eyes never leave them. He is totally absorbed by what he is looking at, and indifferent to everything else around him. (Fineberg 120)

Anyone who has ever witnessed a child’s concentration while occupied in play could liken it to the artists’ intense responses when presented with new and provocative stimuli.
Art, especially when displayed to the public, can be neither conceived nor received in a vacuum. The connection between the artist and the viewer becomes, if not impetuous, at least reciprocal. With a keen eye towards promotion and expression, both Picasso and Klee repeatedly allowed their successive and multi-dimensional influences to be revealed on canvas. In 1937 the politics of war gave us Guernica from Picasso; Klee’s musical background led to works of “psychic seismography, translating the musical vibrations into their visual equivalents” like the apt named Pastorale (Rhythms) of 1927 (Ferrier 34).

For Klee and Picasso, the adoption of child art was not only immensely personal to the artist but also culturally fascinating to the layman. It was an appeal that transcended time and space; after all, everyone was once a child – even a famous artist. We all have hidden, Jonathan Fineberg explained, the “child within,” which performs as a potent influence over our behaviors (23). The acceptance, or rejection, of child art exercised that sovereignty in the advancement of modern art.

Separately, yet on parallel paths, Klee and Picasso were to find inspiration in a threefold provocation of children’s art. The extent to which child art played influence to the artists was analyzed through three successive events:

1. The ever-increasing, early twentieth-century cultural and psychological interest in the child, in which the child acting as subject provoked inspiration.

2. The prevalent referencing of child art by multiple artists and modern art movements, in which the child acting as artist provoked inspiration.
3. The personal and emotional connection between the artist and his own child in which the child acts as an intimate provoked inspiration.

Further analysis will corroborate the significance of these three occurrences, which collectively have served as a defining influence over the artists' talents. Examples of relevant paintings and sculptures will attest to the documentation, with specific times and dates coinciding accordingly.

In utilizing the research, first as an iconic presentation and then as a comparative theoretical model for identifying childlike traits in Picasso's and Klee's works, it became clear to me that the concept of influence - from any source - could not take hold without the approval of the artist himself. The deliberate and conscience choice for its acceptance comes from the artist alone. Interpreting how these two concepts, the influence vs. the artists' will, coincided with the visual evidence brings a relevant contribution to the field of modern art history. That Picasso and Klee gave free will to unrestrictive expression, history might allow them the distinction of being not as much influenced, as they were influential.

Review of the Literature

Predictably, artists of the caliber of Klee and Picasso generate a major library of research and opinion. From coffee table tomes to the definitive scholarly and peer-reviewed examinations, the sources of information were varied and extensive.
Regrettably, material specifically addressing the association between child art and modern art was scant; I was able to consult entire volumes about the artists without reading one mention of what I found so outstanding. At times I felt as though this subject was the elephant in the room: everyone saw it, but no one would mention it. Periodically, an essay or paper would surface on Klee’s child-like imagery. Specifically pertinent was research conducted by Marcel Breuer and Ben Shahn in 1950, Ellen Marsh in 1957, O.K. Werckmeister in 1977, and Sandra Bell in 2008; yet it was Jonathan Fineberg who was to break the silence in 1997 with *The Innocent Eye*, his landmark breakthrough, which exposed what many thought, yet few could, or would, explain: a number of modern artists painted in a childlike manner. In addition to examining the effects and reasons for incorporating childlike elements, Finberg also revealed the original collections of child art that belonged to, and were influential to the artists. As Fineberg was able to provide specific evidence in the connection between child art and modern art, his work and research was paramount to my foundation of this thesis.

Nonetheless, in order to gain further confirmation of the duel interest Picasso and Klee shared in child art, exposure into an even wider realm of inquiry was necessary. Drawn from both primary and secondary sources - including books, journals, articles, interviews, documentary film, and works of the artists - I collected and categorized the data according to six main criteria that I developed:

1. Specific, critical analysis of the art and doctrines of the artists: Extensive background material substantiated cultural or professional patterns, change, or continuity

2. Experiential sources: Owing to the subject matter of this thesis, the artists’ own written word, first-person accounts, family recollections, interviews, eyewitness memories and observations, were considered valid sources in providing confirmation to the theory of this paper. Biographies by an abundance of family, lovers, critics, and acquaintances such as Roland Penrose and Jaime Sabartes, provided a more familiar interprétation of Picasso. *The Mystery of Picasso*, a documentary directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot in 1956, offers a rare glimpse into the artist’s intuitiveness and spontaneity as he paints picture after picture before the camera. *Picasso: Art as Autobiography* (1980), by Mary Mathews Gedo, expounds on both the influences of “partnerships” and “self-image” in Picasso’s work. Exposure of his vibrant sense of humor, along with evidence that Picasso opened his studio as a playground to his children, came from David Douglas Duncan, the photographer allowed to capture so much of the personal and private Picasso (48, 52, 53).

Klee, while creating some of these very works of interest, was simultaneously the primary caregiver to his young son, Felix (Klee 33). The compilation of *Paul Klee: 
Hand Puppets (2006) from the Zentrum Paul Klee revealed the private collection of puppets that Klee made for his son Felix. The years that Klee raised Felix were particularly fruitful for his characteristic traits of whimsy and story telling. Klee's son also contributed Paul Klee (1962) a volume in which both writings and the iconography of his father were included. Klee's own diaries (1898 – 1918) were a viable contribution as was his posthumously published treatise On Modern Art (1966), in which Klee addresses the legendary accusation of "childishness" in his work (55).

4. Sources referencing solely the analysis or criteria or status of child art: As the inquiry focused on children, affirmation was appropriately given to children and to their talents. Specifically cited are *Uncovering the History of Children’s Drawing and Art* (2004) as researched by Donna Kelly and the cultural and comparative analysis titled *Child Art in Context* (2002) by Claire Golomb. *Children’s Art* (2003) by Antje Tesche-Mentzen and Herlinde Koelbl was visually relevant as was Rhoda Kellogg’s 1967 classic *The Psychology of Children’s Art*. The journal *Studies in Art Education* yielded the articles “Peregrinations in Child Art” by Hilda Lewis and “The History of Attitudes Toward Children’s Art” by Jo Alice Leeds. Essays by Philip Meeson, Clive Bell, and Herbert Read offered additional perspectives of child art.

German Expressionism: Primitivism and Modernity of 1991 and the two volumes of “Primitivism” in 20th Century Art edited by William Rubin in 1984 provided extensive and reliable history to these movements.

6. Visual evidence in the selected works of Klee and Picasso: Compared to the extensive compilation they each left behind, perhaps not even a hundred pieces between the two artists would be authentically considered child-like. Yet even this number remains speculative. Jean-Louis Ferrier claims Klee produced 8,926 works of art in his lifetime (8). Christian Zervos, who held the rewarding and long term job of photographing and cataloging Picasso’s work, estimated that there could be well over 30,000 pieces, much of it retained in Picasso’s possession until the time of his death at the age of ninety-two (Otero 121). Unsubstantiated internet sources raise the total number of existing Picasso’s to a quarter of a million! Even then, for the most specific and accurate examples to document this thesis, I would allow not more than fifty signature pieces total to meet the multi-faceted criteria of child-art, and only those I deemed to be most correspondent illustrate this paper.

Finally, by attending to multiple divisions of source material, a cross-referenced foundation was created to support the idea that the artists’ catalyst for child art emerged from a combination of circumstances and successive events. Consequently, the realization came that without permission serendipity holds no influence.
Definition of Terms

In order to identify successfully the distinguishing patterns of child art within the works of Klee and Picasso, the characteristic visual elements that make up "child art" must be established and defined.

Undoubtedly, the telltale attribute of child-like art is prominence of line, produced in a way that generates simple and uncomplicated forms, irregular contours and disproportionate figures. I agree with Golomb that, in depicting an object, the omission of parts is commonplace (3), and flat spatial arrangement and a lack of perspective (127) are characteristics not based on choice but by limits of cognizance. Moreover, as noted by Marsh, spatial relationships are not just flat but typically nonexistent (144). Matters such as size, dimension, and perspective are based on the level of importance to the child, not on reality.

As expected, bright, unmixed color is a distinctive feature, yet so is the fortuitous blending of colors as they overlap each other. Children assign their colors by preference, not physical existence, resulting in a natural state of what the Fauves revered. In child art, as in modern art, representation is subjective and realism immaterial. Paul Klee, especially, adopted several of these techniques into his paintings and, as a result, earned his "childlike" reputation. In his dissertation, James Smith Pierce noted Klee's childlike features of "scribbled forms, diagrammatic simplicity of composition, and outline figures rendered in a primitive geometry" (Franciscono 95).

Later, art professor Marcel Franciscono expanded on Klee's use of the "unskilled" simplifications employed by children: figures comprised of crudely drawn circles,
triangles and rectangles topped off by scribbles for hair (115). Although any one of these trademarks may show up independently in a work of modern art, it was the composite of these factors that would exemplify the child-like quality.

In comparing a work of Klee’s to a young child’s, a visual example supports the premise. Figure 1 shows a portrait drawn by a four-year-old Prekindergarten girl and displays the typical crude line drawing that, in this case, resulted in the elongated neck and irregularly shaped head that resembles a light bulb. The facial features are comprised of flat circles and lines that lack dimension and proportion. Without a background, or any attempt at perspective, the simplicity of the one-dimensional plane is emphasized. Rendered with two different color eyes, a green nose, and matching shirt and crown, this little girl’s portrait is happy and self-confident.

Fig. 1. Untitled drawing by four-year-old girl. 2008. Crayon on paper. 8 1/2 x 11 in. Personal collection of the author.

The pencil drawing by Paul Klee in figure 2 is comically similar, boasting the same oddly shaped head and simple line features. Although Klee’s drawing holds more discernment, the character appears decidedly less confident than the girl in Figure 1. Details like the circular nostrils, the part line - part full lips, and lack of chin, ears, and pupils make both illustrations nearly alike in their child-like qualities. That these random works - one deliberate, the other guileless - can be linked by their similitude creates a credible model to build this thesis on.

Much has been written of the various stages that all children pass through as they develop their individual self-taught abilities, and although the process advances systematically, children still face the unfortunate prospect that they will begin to lose some of their artistic naïveté at just seven years of age (Hurwitz 54). The characteristic style that came naturally to children and was admired by the modern artists was uncontrived and effortless. Attempting to recapture that virtue placed adult artists at a distinct disadvantage; they not only had to lose their inhibitions but reenter a mindset that had long been left behind. Conveyed after viewing an exhibition of children’s drawings, Picasso’s oft repeated words were credible: “When I was their age I could draw like Raphael, but it took me a lifetime to learn to draw like them” (qtd. in Penrose 307).

As well as the physical elements that could be identified and accounted for, there was an additional factor that comprised much of what child art held true, and that was the expressive freedom - the spirit so to speak - that accompanied each creative act. In defining the concept of ‘child art,’ two distinct factors comprise this expression: one was
the physical product, the child's artwork; the other was the entity of the artist who also
happened to be a child (DiBlasio 73).

To an adult's mind, the world of child art was somewhat of an idyllic one, an
uninhibited exhibitionism, recovered from the early cycle of freedom, confidence, and
abandon, and reborn with proficiency and joy. It was precisely this admission of play that
Meeson addressed as an essential characteristic of art. He states: "If play in the form of
chance, accident or experiment can be identified as an ingredient of art it is a small step
to link art with childhood, essentially the age of playfulness" (365). Whether or not it was
founded, the modern artist bestowed upon children what Golomb identified as a "superior
perception of reality and a rich imagination able to penetrate the mysteries of nature."
The concept of "original vision," the freshness of seeing things for the first time, was a
much sought after trait, as the artists suffered the feeling that their own acquired
knowledge and skill was a significant hindrance in their art (120).

Substitute "artist" for "child," and the observation from The Psychology of
Children's Art could very well have been an interpretation of any number of modern art
movements from surrealism to symbolism to cubism to abstraction: "The child is not
drawing objects in the world as he sees them, rather he is striving for something new
within a set of forms which he already has learned" (Kellogg 17). While the artist appears
limited to a particular set of learned forms, the innovation of something new comes by
breaking those confines with an unlimited set of invented shapes, not unlike Miro's
surrealism, Klee's symbolism, Picasso's cubism, or Kandisnky's abstraction.
Simply stating what she knows of children making art, Kellogg inadvertently distinguished the link between objects in modern art and child art; each believes that changing its form does not change its reality.

Fineberg wrote that “the ability to see meaning in form or to manipulate form to create meaning” was not only an important component within child art but also lies at the “heart of what makes a great work of art.” Singling out Klee and Picasso as young artistic prodigies for “their unique way of using visual form to express their encounter with the world,” Fineberg found the same quality to be the nucleus of their careers (17).
CHAPTER 2

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CHILD

At the turn of the century, Picasso and Klee, a mere nineteen and twenty-one years old respectively, found themselves in an advancing world of progressive insight: exotic cultures, psychology, psychiatry, industry, science, medicine, theories of education, the mind of the child, dreams and the subconscious became topics of debatable social and cultural phenomenon.

Fauvism, Expressionism, Primitivism, Surrealism, Cubism, Dada: the artists of the early twentieth century exploded in the wild abandon of freedom. With its mélange of ideas and opinions, the new, avant-garde thought revolved around minds like Picasso’s and Klee’s; those who break rules and defy tradition tend to flow easily into progressive culture. Or, as Dan Franck more boldly states it, “The avant-garde always stirs up trouble” (xii). At the time there was no better place for that rebellion than Paris. “It was an artistic flowering of a richness and quality never to be rivaled . . . Painters, poets, sculptors, and musicians, from all countries, all cultures, classical and modern, met and mingled” (Franck xiii).

Although Paris in the twenties was the “capital of the world” (Franck xiii), the expansion of culture was far-reaching and invasive. All of Europe was under reconstruction and with it the artists turned further away from any past restraints. From Cubism rose Dada and German expressionism, Surrealism, the visual interpretation of
dreams and the exploration of inner consciousness. The language of art filled voids that one never before even knew existed.

Picasso, particularly, felt the attention to neoteric vision apropos to his liking; for the next twenty years "he was to move as a famous painter among musicians, poets, and social dilettantes" (Mee 41). As a member of the inner sanctum of Paris counterculture, Picasso frequented the Saturday evening soirees held in Gertrude and Leo Stein's salon. Described as a "Mecca for the modern-minded" by James Mellow, the apartment at 27 Rue de Fleurus was as interesting for its bulging collection of modern art as it was for its conversation (1-2). For years the brother-and-sister Steins were host to the drove of ardent writers, poets, painters, and musicians that had assembled in Paris.

Apparently more comfortable as an observer than as a vocal participant, Picasso's contributions came mainly by way of sagacious presence and command of eye contact. For a quiet man, and despite his compact stature, Picasso held an imposing lead. He was, Franck wrote, "the pivot around which all the others moved" (64). Jaime Sabartes, encouraged by Picasso to become a writer, was also friend and model to the artist. He made this observation in his 1948 biography *Picasso An Intimate Portrait*:

Picasso expounds his opinions but rarely, but whatever he withholds may be discovered in his work. Because of the sincerity of his new expression, we prefer these childlike stammerings to academic rhetoric and boisterous eloquence. (65)
To equate Picasso's art with the imperfect communication of a child, and to prefer it to the traditional and grandiose language of propriety, was to see beyond the surface, into the artist himself.

By this point Picasso had already turned his paintings over to the annals of personal experience. The melancholy influence of his early years in Paris abruptly gave way in 1904 to the lust and light he found in Fernande Olivier. Then changes and reinvention again, as he indulged in such unheard of styles as Cubism and Collage; Picasso was forever to open up his soul to the canvas.

Living in Munich, Klee's life was decidedly unlike the vagabond bohemian that was the fashion within the Paris art community. In 1906 Klee was twenty-seven years old, newly married and struggling to find his identity as a painter. Just a year later there was a child and, in a move a century ahead of its time, Klee was to become a stay-at-home father and caregiver to his young son while his wife, Lily, earned a salary by giving piano lessons. From infancy, Felix Klee was reared under the keen eye and influence of Paul Klee the artist, a responsibility taken seriously:

my father assumed charge of my upbringing. He took full responsibility for this complex task, for not only was he deeply concerned about my welfare but he found the processes of child development fascinating. My father also kept an affectionate watch over my artistic development. He saved every water color and every drawing I did, discussed the subject of each one with me, mounted many of the sheets with the same care he gave to his own, and put them away in a special folder. (33)
In the MoMA article, “Paul Klee: Toward the Heart of Creation”, the writer reiterates that although Klee’s work was recognized “for its apparently childlike quality, even fairy-tale manner”, in reality the man himself was “fastidious, a ‘bureaucrat’ and was well known for meticulously cataloging every one of his pieces (1-3).

Such personal discipline supports the dedication and seriousness of Klee not only as a father and an artist, but also as a man totally immersed in the betterment of himself. An accomplished violinist, Klee’s talent is well documented; for years he and Lily performed nightly sonatas in their home. Klee was able to equate music with painting and language to both the arts. He enjoyed literature and was well read; he frequented the theater, opera, and concerts. Science – particularly botany - was of extreme importance to Klee’s world and an influential muse. And, as if to confirm his humbleness, Klee continued with art lessons well into adulthood. “Klee was a complete European. His work ferreted around in innumerable crannies of culture, bringing back small trophies and emblems from botany, astronomy, physics, and psychology” (Hughes 304).

Despite his cultured reputation, Klee had years ago recognized the magic of childhood and the beauty of candid innocence. In 1902 Klee happened upon a cache of paintings he had made when he was a child. Whether related to the discovery or not is speculation, but indeed Klee wrote these words that same year:

To have to begin by what is smallest is as precarious as it is necessary.

I will be like a newborn child, knowing nothing about Europe, nothing at all. (To be ignorant of poets, wholly without nerve, almost primordial.)
Then I will do something very modest, think of something very, very small, totally formal. My pencil will be able to put it down, without any technique. All that is needed is an auspicious moment; the concise is easily represented. And soon it is done. It was a tiny, but real act, and from the repetition of acts that are small, but my own, eventually a work will come, on which I can build. (Marsh 137)

In his desire to strip bare any reliance on “outside logic”, and the natural representation of objects, Klee strove to regain for himself the “inner certainty” that children possess instinctively about their artistic endeavors (Marsh 136). For a child, there is no stumbling in representation; what goes into each painting or drawing is absolute and confident. Marsh concludes with this observation, “It is precisely this inner certainty that Klee wanted to recapture in formal terms, and he spent a lifetime in doing it” (136).

Remembering Picasso’s lament that it took him a lifetime to learn to draw like a child, it was Klee, however, who “drew like a self-absorbed child from the beginning to the end of his career, with a child’s idiosyncratic, innocent, impulsive vision, however much his idiosyncrasy and impulsiveness came to seem ritualistic, even stylized, and his innocence arch” (Kuspit 2). As the new century progressed, Picasso and Klee were not alone in determining that the influences of reality and the desire to alter them were not only in perpetual juxtaposition but also creatively dependent upon each other. New and revolutionary thoughts were prevalent and realities were changing quickly, not just for the artists but also for society in general.
In a world all about the future, suddenly there was no time to consider the past, a concept suited to those eager to break with tradition. Never-before imagined ideas were brought forth in a magnitude of early twentieth century “aha” moments. It was a time of looking inward for understanding while simultaneously looking beyond one’s earthly comforts for knowledge. Evidence confirming that everything within the universe is interconnected, left even the most doubtful open to the possibilities of alternatives outside of ourselves and within ourselves.

Those in science, medicine, and social circles were intrigued by Sigmund Freud’s theories of psychoanalysis and interpretation of dreams. Inspired, the Surrealist artists found their niche in the expression of the unconscious and the imagination revealed in dreams. In a different arena of science, Albert Einstein was pressed to explain a new reality: that nature was not only “ambiguous and unpredictable” but time and space “were interconnected and dependent upon each other” according to Donna Darling Kelly in her 2004 study, *Uncovering the History of Children’s Drawing and Art* (70).

At the turn of the twentieth century, not only were enormous strides taken in science, but also the world of art erupted in convulsions. With the discoveries of science, the positivist world of Newton was pushed aside for an ambiguous world of abstraction and uncertainty. (69)

The ideas of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche were only a generation old and still perceived as both controversial and influential. Apparently, Nietzsche’s “thought was particularly attractive to avant-garde artists who saw themselves on the periphery of
established social fashion and practice” (Wicks). And whether a believer or naysayer, it is entirely possible to surmise that the experimental and rebellious would conclude that: ‘If God were dead, would art not be close behind?’ Ironically and fortunately, the artists themselves were as philosophical as they were fickle; they would just attend to new gods. The artists were now challenged to make changes based on what has been brought to light from the deepest depths of man’s mind. Reaching inside for insight – analyzing, interpreting, breaking apart, returning to core truths - became au courant for modern culture . . . and for the artists. With the ability to succinctly capture an entire movement, Kelly writes this description:

The modernist movement was born out of the experimentation of form and expression to reflect relativity, internal feelings, and unconsciousness, as in Freudian psychoanalysis. This was a direct rebuke to the Renaissance discoveries of perspective, proportion and realism. Modernism sought to extol the imagination and inner subjective, creative feelings and thoughts. (71)

In the early years of the twentieth century, two simultaneous events entered into the cultural and societal mores of the day. One was the eye-opening recognition of the capabilities of children, especially their art. The other was also a discovery of ingenuity: primitive or tribal art. Although not connected, they touched and bounced off each other and where they met, new ideas in art were born.

The early acceptance and appreciation of children’s art, was an idea inspired in 1884 by Corrado Ricci when he declared the childish arcade graffiti on the streets of
Bologna to be “works of art” (Gruneisl 137). As if society for the first time realized the potential and impact of these small humans called children, the acclamation of children’s art grew, along with the mandatory assessment that balances out the sentimentality. Children, after all, are universally cute and their ways adorable; adults had to see beyond the abilities of a single child to determine the capabilities of every child.

“In the space of a dozen years before the turn of the century, and affected by the spirit of the time, psychologists, philosophers, educators and art educators had published an enormous amount of important studies on child art” (Kouvo 3). Not only was considerable appreciation given to children’s creative faculties and their subsequent artistic abilities (Fransicono 92) but also child art was to become the visual endorsement to what was a fashionable and multi-faceted scrutiny of children themselves. This “cult of childhood,” as it is often referred to, “reached its full impact on the artists of the twentieth century.” Believing that children were a source of inspiration, Claire Golomb extends her thought with this:

Given this preoccupation with childhood and its relationship to the adult’s mental and emotional life, it is not surprising that many modernist artists, at the beginning of the twentieth century, turned to their own childhood works and to the drawings of their children and those of their friends. (119)

Seemingly, this retrogression was a natural progression. The ideology of modernism, along with the intention of some modern artists, was the freedom of societal norms and conventional artistic rules (Kouvo 3). And who in the world has more of
these two freedoms than children? Turning to child art allowed the artists integration into free-hearted expression, as well as immunity from authoritative rules.

Concurrently, the second significant event, as identified by Gert Gruneisl and Albert Kapfhammer, was the discovery and acceptance of non-European art as a valid and inspiring genre (137). To the European painters, “primitive art” was to open up seemingly unconventional and unexplored lifestyles. Tempting to those disillusioned with the conventional world, yet disturbing to those clinging to it, this idea of exotic cultures was especially controversial.

In the years 1906 to 1908, primitive art, specifically tribal art, reached an unprecedented popularity in Paris and the shift from the perceptual to the conceptual crept upon the artists. The explosion came in 1907 when Picasso unveiled his Les Demoiselles d’Avignon and suddenly tribal art was to become “an urgent issue” among the advanced artists of the day (Rubin 13).

“Outsider art”, pieces created by those considered somehow culturally dysfunctional, such as the insane, psychiatric patients, primitive cultures, and young children, held new fascination “as these powerful works seemed to be spontaneous expressive outpourings from the well-springs of creativity, unmuddied by artistic training or received knowledge” (Rhodes 8). Children’s art particularly was enticing to many of the significant artists of the day: Vassily Kandinsky, Joan Miro, Henri Matisse, and Alexander Calder all outwardly expressed their interest in the innate talents children possess. Gruneisl and Kapfhammer provide this additional thought:
Above all the artists themselves found their way, through paintings and sculptures, to more original forms of expression that were far removed from of what the academic art world courted as ‘auratic’ art. Consequently, artists such as Paul Klee, Jean Dubuffet, and Pablo Picasso occupied themselves with the world of children’s pictures and were inspired to create a language of forms and a palette of colors from the trove of treasures embodied in children’s art. (137)

Yet even as the world was opening up to Europe, and cultural influences were abundant, Picasso and Klee keenly understood how to use their individual sources to their advantage. There was no doubt about their receptiveness of personal influence. Nothing was too complex, or mundane, or absurd; these men were the artistic innovators of their generation. Manifesting themselves in an unconventional give and take of talents, they were to originate their own iconic definitions of primitivism, expressionism, surrealism, and cubism. So creative and varied were their endemic works that any attempt to pigeonhole their artistic trends was a futile task; Klee never boasted allegiance to any specific modern art movement. Picasso effortlessly morphed from one creative inclination to the next. Habitually defying tradition, Klee and Picasso proved that, for their purposes, it was the means that justified the end, as the journey that took them back to childhood was as sophisticated and calculated as their artistic genius.

In 1901 Picasso produced what was perhaps his first publicly known work rendered in a quasi-childlike fashion. *Child with a Dove* (Fig. 3), feasibly the first entry into his Blue Period (Spies 21), was an uncharacteristic exposure of purity, simplicity and
innocence. Executed with an abbreviated use of line, the figure of the young girl is defined by a pronounced and crude outline, simplified, as if from a child’s coloring book.

![Image of Pablo Picasso's Child with a Dove](image_url)

Fig. 3. Pablo Picasso. *Child with a Dove*. 1901.
Oil on canvas. Rpt. americanpicturelinks.com

Her position, prominent and flat against the unadorned division of earth and sky, exemplifies the most basic of designs: the vertical line crossing the horizontal. Picasso, a master of balance and composition, allows the child to fill the space, then adding to the stillness, places an idle ball in counterpoise to her round head, round eyes, rounded hands and shoulders. His small shocks of color were not random, but strategically placed.

The simplicity was deceptively calculated, *Child with a Dove* held something that no child could accomplish or assume in a painting: prudent foresight. Rendered in a child’s hand, but with an artist’s eye, Picasso outwits his audience with sleight of hand
sentimentality. Its catching and tranquil presence did not allow the viewer to search deeper than the immediate image for approval. For the common man, it was easy to look past any symbolic iconology and see only what stopped at the eye. *Child with a Dove* was to become one of Picasso's most popular images, identified decades later as a modern symbol for peace and tranquility worldwide and reproduced thousands of times over. His future was to be a far cry from his reality at the time; Picasso was twenty-one years old and entering into the melancholy of his Blue Period. In contrast to the elongated and angular figures typical of the Blue Period paintings, the calm softness of this child tells a fleeting and sympathetic story.

The public was not to see another child inspired work by Picasso for over thirty years, while his influences were to drift in other directions. Only after 1937 when his daughter Maya was born and then again in the mid nineteen-fifties with his young children Claude (1947) and Paloma (1949) was Picasso to let loose in child-like abandon. As if some artistic version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Benjamin Button*, Picasso's style regressed in detail and perfection as he got older.

That they were artists or that they were of similar mindset, Picasso and Klee both found rich and varied inspiration in their personal environments as well as their cultural influences. For Picasso, his personal circumstances were legendary and every private passion of his life was accounted for in his work. Jaime Sabartes noted that his friend's compulsive productiveness was nonchalantly blamed on invasive stimuli: "I asked him why the sight of sea urchins interested him so much, he answered "Not much, not little. Like anything else. It isn't my fault that I saw them" . . ." (90). Assuming a child's logic,
Picasso would not take blame for his digressions; he was a victim of his own intuitiveness. In his biography of the artist, Sabartés writes this about Picasso:

Impressionable to the highest degree, he is receptive to everything — to a flower, to a scrap of paper which he finds on the floor. His sensibility is always open to contact. The rest drives from the endless energy, from his intelligence, from his senses, and from his recollections. (60)

Klee, also, allowed his personal connections full reign. “It is impossible to separate Klee’s life from his work. Nothing in his life was lost to his art — everything he ever saw would one day find a place in his work” (Di San Lazzaro 46-47). The validation is in the paintings created during these certain periods of personal significance.

For Paul Klee, one such time was a span of a few years in the early 1920’s and coincided with the collection of hand puppets he was making for his son at the same time. Klee’s Puppet Theater of 1923 (Fig. 4) could well have been an imaginative blueprint or stage play for the actual puppet theater Klee made the same year (Fig. 5).

The obvious connection, a painting of a puppet theater, is sufficient for consideration; what is of particular attention is the backdrop of the homemade theater, where the trademark Klee assemblage of invented shapes and pattern blend into a fanciful cityscape. One can only imagine the color palette Klee chose for the theater background, perhaps the same bright hues of the watercolor where his stage puppet appears to be living inside one of those fanciful buildings.

As noted in his introduction to *Paul Klee: his life and work*, Felix Klee reiterates his father's interest in his art:

He kept everything I ever produced, looked after it as if it were his own work, and wrote on it the captions I invented. Klee is quoted as having mentioned this fact in the following words: 'The pictures my little Felix has painted are better than those which often dribbled through my own brain.' (5)

So much of Klee's public work at this time was a reflection of those playful times, when Felix was a young boy, that from Gualtieri Di San Lazzaro comes this:

He made me wonderful toys with great skill – toy trains, a cardboard railway station, and a puppet theater. The heads were clay, the costumes cut and sewn, the scenery pasted and painted. (46)

Although in the mid nineteen-twenties Picasso posed his first child, Paulo, as his model, fourteen years later those touching and classical images were replaced by the playful and experimental approach used to represent his second child, Maya. *Girl with a Toy Boat* (Fig. 6) was painted in 1939, when Maya was about four years old and of the age when she would be capable of making a recognizable and representational drawing of a figure. Cubism was a well-established genre for the artist by this time, easy and comfortable to have fun with. The twist comes in the tongue-in-cheek wit of painting a picture of a child and making it look as if a child had painted it. With the exception of the
Fig. 6. Pablo Picasso. *Girl with a Toy Boat.* 1939. Oil on canvas. 

cubist face and the too-perfect squares of her dress, Picasso’s clumsy awkwardness and
flat, frontal openness are spot on for capturing a young child’s indicative style.

In his comparison of a woodcut by Miro to its childlike qualities, the way in
which Rudolf Arnheim describes the connection is not only realistic but fitting to this
example also:

the difference between the intentions of the artist and those of the child is
most evident where the similarity is greatest . . . Both (Miro and children)
reduce the human form to its simplest frontal symmetry, but the similarity
ends there. The difference between naiveté and sophistication begins with
the use of empty ground, which in the young child’s drawing would be the emptiness of uncultivated space, not yet included in the conception, which is limited to the exploration of single objects. (22)

By the 1930’s the world had caught up with European avant-garde art. “What had only a few short years before been speculative and outrageous now became standardized and respectable. What once seemed like an attack on tradition now became a tradition of its own” (Kuspit 3).

Ironically, while the rest of the world was now ready to deem modern art creditable and embrace its future, the Nazi party of Germany plotted its demise by pronouncing in 1933 the works of many modern artists, including Klee and Picasso, degenerate, meaning “spiritually diseased” (Kuspit 2). In the following years thousands of pieces of art were confiscated, culminating in the “Degenerate Art” exhibition of 1937. What was intended to ridicule the collection of avant-garde art as “symptoms and specimens of cultural degeneracy” reversely brought more favor to the avant-gardes. “If Klee’s gentle, coy, witty modern art – an art celebrated for its childlike, fey character – could be regarded as degenerate by the Nazis, nothing that had any hint of artistic difference could escape their clutches” (Kuspit 2). Although driven into exile, the artists were undaunted and unstoppable; in addition to the dubbing of degenerate art, 1937 was also the year that Picasso presented Guernica, the holy grail of impassioned protest.
From the massive, angry impression of Guernica to the small, lyrical paintings of Klee, each artist was developing his own modern language of symbolism, the most intimate manner of discourse. To assign meaning to our communications is an innate and primal reaction, progressing from the child to the man.

As with all artists, every reality must be challenged; no matter how advantageous it may be, the desire to change any status quo is irresistible. From Marcel Franciscono comes this perception:

The symbolist movement freed artists to use whatever distortion might serve their purposes, including the distortions of children’s art. By the same token, however, it also let them free to use children’s art without any implications of naïveté at all. (97)

As Klee and Picasso aged and grew in their productive careers, they were each to demonstrate that the dialogue with their inner child was becoming visibly stronger. Whether it was an easy interplay can only be surmised, but Picasso’s telling words have been immortalized thousands of times over: “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up” (Brown 128).

The history of art is also the history of influence. That a child’s naïveté held some sway in the world of modern art was decidedly worthy of investigation. Both believers and skeptics alike substantiated the relevancy of child art to modern art in that it echoed the raw essence of artistic freedom, for better or for worse.
CHAPTER 3

THE RELEVANCE OF CHILD ART

Of those who were able to see that the connectedness between child art and modern art was not an accusation of impropriety but one of innovative transformation, Jonathan Fineberg paved the way to pedagogic enlightenment on the subject. In the mid 1980’s, his friend and teacher Rudolf Arnheim delegated Fineberg to curate a museum retrospective comparing children’s art with some of the great works of modern art. Admittedly, his initial reaction was skepticism (Fineberg Preface), yet, in his research, Fineberg was to unearth the extraordinary and the results culminated in the 1995 exhibition shown in both Munich and Bern. The companion book, The Innocent Eye: Children’s Art and the Modern Artist published in 1997, not only documented the importance of child art to many of the modern avant-garde but also uncovered the original collections of children’s art belonging to them. Along with Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso, Fineberg chronicled the ways in which the art of children influenced Vasily Kandinsky and Gabrielle Munter, Joan Miro, Jean Dubuffet, Mikhail Larionov, the artists of the Cobra movement, and even Henri Matisse.

What Fineberg did was to be the first to unite visually this diverse group of talent through the common denominator of children’s art. By showing to what extent each artist determined the scope and depth of his or her own individual direction, Fineberg also documents the personal past of each artist and the influence of that connectedness as it
appears in their work. The prevalence of any child like-traits in an artist’s style was
dependent, in varying degrees, upon their own work as children, their children’s work, or
the general appeal of child art, along with the personal feeling associated with each of
those criteria.

That any one of these artists found something viable in a child’s drawing was a
remarkable association; that there were so many to find the same muse at much the same
time, is what I determined to be a key curiosity to interpret. Fineberg opened a door that I
was just standing behind, revealing open access to further inquiry and leading me to seek
out the validity of my interpretation. In fact, it is the personal aspect of Fineberg’s
research that is most emphatic. His inclusion of paintings and photographs belonging to
the artists speaks not only of the bond between artist and child, but also of the
relationships between their art.

Although some artists resorted to gathering paintings and drawings from children
of friends and acquaintances, those who were commonly close with a child had the
advantage of witnessing the creation of something both serious and humorous at the same
time. A child painting is a visual process of memory, interpretation, and imagination
leading up to the goal of a meaningful picture. Even though valued in its own right for its
visual appeal, the finished piece could not retell the story and running commentary that
children often give while painting. Nor would it ever mirror the expression on the young
artist’s face as forms take shape and a picture emerges and the child falls silent, lost in the
vision on the paper. “When a child draws, he tells a story even if it is not legible in his
drawing, it exists for him” (Vallier 205).
Thus, it is necessary to consider the impact absorbed by the artists in witnessing their child’s overt creative process from its conception. Any future transference between the child and the adult mental and creative mindset is authenticated in the reality of that shared experience. Additionally, as every child exhibits an instinctive, creative freedom, the artist was readily able to recognize and recapture that passion.

As fathers, both Klee and Picasso had exposure to these milestones of talent, as Fineberg documents so well. Their personal recovery of childhood came through the interaction with their offspring, be it fleeting as with Picasso, or consistent as with Klee. Delving into family moments that were, while Klee and Picasso were alive, kept at home, art historians like Fineberg could not just not share the discovery. The relevance of child art to modern art is legitimatized in a language no one could dispute: the evidence of actual pictures. Of particular interest is the side-by-side comparison of a painting made by twelve-year-old Felix Klee in 1919 (Fig. 7), with one of Klee’s painted just a year later (Fig. 8). Fineberg makes this reference to the paintings:

The pair makes evident the depth of Klee’s commitment to recreating for himself the world of the child’s mind by whatever means! . . . A good painting by a child has a freshness and vitality that we all feel immediately; here is a great artist probing that experience by attempting to re-create it in his own hand. (100)

The “zig-zag clouds” that Felix created above his tent city were to show up again, reincarnated as part of a mountainous range, in the version that his father painted soon afterward. The two tent cities, aside from their cluster of triangle-topped tents, bear a
noticeably similar background. Unlikely a coincidence, Fineberg characterizes Klee's liberal borrowing as "research"; the paintings were never intended to be seen - or compared - by the public (100).

Although such deliberate examples are seldom met with, the one pertaining to Klee and his son vouches for the connection between the two artists, child and man, Klee clearly the student of his young son.

Fig. 8. Paul Klee. Untitled (Tent City in the Mountains). 1920. Oil on cardboard.

Ever open to the opportunities of learning, Klee did not hide his admiration for his child’s work. When Felix was just five years old, seven years before the “Tent City” paintings, Klee wrote this assertion in his diary:

Children also have artistic ability, and there is wisdom in their having it!
The more helpless they are, the more instructive are the examples they furnish us; and they must be preserved free of corruption from an early age. (Klee 266)

Art historian O.K. Werckmeister provided another ostensible example of Klee’s “copying”, this time with two of the artist’s fantasized watercolors; one, painted in 1918 with the revealing title of Landscape of the Past (Fig. 9), is compared to Summer
Landscape (Fig. 10), a watercolor painted by Klee when he was perhaps ten or eleven years old and before his training in realistic rendering was learned (117).

All the elementary motifs of the fairy-tale landscapes of 1918 – little trees made up of vertical and diagonal strokes, gabled houses, little towers, the big sun and stars, blotted flying clouds – were already assembled in those landscapes of Klee’s childhood. (Werckmeister 117)

That Klee returned to his childhood was not lost on his critics or admirers. It was again 1918 when Theodor Daubler, art critic and poet, dubbed Klee “a painter who in his adult age perceives like a child” (Werckmeister 116).

For Klee, children provided an example of “uncorrupted expressive capability”, an attribute Marcel Franciscono identified with Klee’s artistic desire (Franciscono 98).
“He was not the first artist to borrow from children’s art, but he is the first to acknowledge it as a source of inspiration . . .” (Franciscono 97).

Between 1905 and 1930 some of the most innovative and influential art movements of the twentieth-century took place. Within them, the associations with children’s art showed up, again and again, documented with the most likely indicators: bright, unnatural color, distortion or exaggeration of line, distortion or lack of proportion, flat arrangement, unbridled expression and freedom of learned restraints. A secession of “isms” danced across the modern art timeline - Symbolism, Fauvism, Primitivism, Expressionism and German Expressionism, Surrealism, Abstraction - each one carrying its own impetus for adopting a link to child art.

It is feasible to believe that while no one artist defines a movement, no one movement confines an artist. Movements and styles often shift and evolve and overlap, and Klee and Picasso, naggingly difficult to categorize, looked at each one of them, not as a dictate to follow, but as a means of exploring, expanding, learning, and self-examining. Modern art movements reflected not only current ideology but also deviation from any previous thought or manner, as Picasso and Klee both demonstrated.

The shift in thinking associated with Modernism expanded worldwide. From America came the literary and philosophical doctrine of Transcendentalism. Perhaps an early exercise in ‘thinking outside the box’, the message from founder Ralph Waldo Emerson encouraged a desire to be different, distinct. It was a pursuit to put more credence into emotions and instincts and to believe in the power of the natural world and internal inspiration.
To the European artists, Emerson’s recommendation to “build your own world” (Goodman) was particularly apropos. And so it came that, in the late nineteenth century, Symbolism grew from those enfold ing influences of psychological discovery, interpretation of dreams, cultural awareness, and freedom of expression born of Transcendentalism. Although there was no well-defined connection to child art, in subject matter or execution, the art of the Symbolists facilitated the transition to an art that moved on to make the alliance.

Historically, Symbolism was perhaps more construed as an affirmation to the psyche than a style; yet unreservedly, visionary symbolism became a major component of modern art in its role as a catalyst to change. Within the mandates of Symbolism, color was synonymous with words, capable of expressing every emotion and every feeling (Hughes 132).

Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), brandishing vivid colors and wry simplification of form, captured the imagination of city-worn Europeans with his exotic images and lifestyle. Correlating Primitivism in modern art, William Rubin attests, begins with Gauguin (7) “who took the first important step toward a conceptual and thus more ‘synthetic’, more highly stylized art” (12). His efforts were not without some reputable critics: “Cezanne loathed the stylization of Gauguin, his sinuous and decorative flatness, because it was too simple . . .” (Hughes 125).

In the chapter “Gauguin” for the two-volume set Primitivism, Kirk Varnedoe writes this anecdote:
Gauguin told a journalist that he was leaving France to make ‘simple, very simple art . . . to immerse myself in virgin nature, see no one but savages, live their life, with no other thought in mind but to render, the way a child would, the concepts formed in my brain, and to do this with nothing but the primitive means of art, the only means that are good and true.’ (187)

Stemming from the Symbolists, the Fauves (c. 1905-09), short-lived yet defiant and bold, understood the emotion of color. It was their daring palette that first sparked early criticism of the modern movement with its characteristics of “bright, dissonant colour, crude urgency of surface, distorted drawing, and love of brisk, raw-looking sensation” (Hughes 132). This comparison comes from Fauvism in Paris: “Like the symbolists, the Fauves believed that art would speak for itself in its own language and that this visual and poetic language could invoke a response from the viewer” (Willette 1).

Perhaps that because they were willing to advance color more than the Symbolists, the Fauves were actually accused of childlike distortion. In response to the 1905 Paris Salon d’Automne, legendary French art critic Marcel Nicolle characterized the Fauvist works as “the barbaric and naïve sport of a child who plays with a box of colours he has just got as a Christmas present” (Perry 46). Yet despite Nicolle’s complaints, his suspicions were actually in accordance.

Henri Matisse (1869-1954), one of the more renowned Fauvist painters, for much of his career held a close attraction to the artwork of children. In The Innocent Eye, Fineberg chronicles the accusations of critics and their litany of negative quotes including terms like “child-man” and “infantile” (14) in reference to what were to become some of
Matisse's most important works of the early twentieth century. Fineberg acknowledges that these particular paintings were, "deeply engaged with the simplifications of child art" (18).

One such example, *Portrait of Marguerite*, is of particular interest as it is the one Picasso chose for himself when he first exchanged paintings with Matisse (Fig 11).


As described by Jack Flam, Matisse's painting was a "flat, childlike image of his thirteen-year-old daughter, in which her name is printed awkwardly at the upper left, in
imitation of the printing in children’s drawings” (55). Suspected of making that choice to mock Matisse, Picasso defends his decision:

At the time people thought I had deliberately chosen a bad example of Matisse’s work out of malice. This is quite untrue. I thought it a key picture then, and still do. Critics are always talking about this and that influence on Matisse’s work. Well, the influence on Matisse when he painted this work was his children, who had just started to draw. Their naïve drawings fascinated him and completely changed his style. Nobody realizes this, and yet it’s one of the keys to Matisse. (164)

Eager to participate in the growing rebellion of renouncing tradition, the modern artists once again spread beyond their boundaries to other, unexpected, sources. Fauvism melded into Primitivism and ironically, the advancement of modern art was boosted by a regression leading back to the origins of artistry. Offering more than the curiosity of an odd and crude product, the carvings and masks that arrived in Europe held the illusory ability to envision down to the very core of man, to search out the inner drive that exists in primordial beings: the innate desire for similitude found in both children and remote archaic cultures. “Primitivism offered a purgative for Western’s culture’s materialism and for the rigor mortis of its cultural hierarchies; in this regard the attraction to child art was a subspecies of primitivism” (Fineberg 11).

In a separate viewpoint, Gill Perry, writing on “Primitivism and the Modern” explained the association thusly:
The idea of the 'barbarian', then, with its connotations of untamed, direct expression, was frequently associated with the 'child-like' or the naïve. Both sets of associations could certainly have been read into the idea of the artist as a 'wild beast.' (47)

"Directness of expression" comes up again as Colin Rhodes explains that this idea, along with a desire for unhindered experimentation, is what modern artists were looking for in the 'primitive'. "Nowhere was this directness more evidently perceived than in the art of children", Rhodes concludes, noting, "the child is the primitive par excellence in all evolutionist models of cultural development; the younger the child the further he or she lies outside the complex social structures that govern the lives of most adults" (26). Matisse and Picasso were to happen upon Primitive art at roughly the same time in 1906. To Andre Malraux, Picasso recalled his reaction:

The masks weren't like other kinds of sculpture. Not at all. They were magical things." "I understood something very important: something was happening to me, wasn't it? ... The spirits, the unconscious (which wasn't yet much spoken of then), emotion, it's the same thing. I understood why I was a painter. (Picasso 33)

This was also the year, William Rubin claims, that Picasso repainted from memory the face on Gertrude Stein's portrait, making history, and making the move from a perceptual to conceptual mode of working (247).

Art as idea: whereas the concept of the object prevails over its physical reality. The abstraction of the image is immensely personal both for artist and viewer, and the art
triggers opinion and judgment from both sides. In Primitive art, the conceptual was
infused with the possibility of belief, or conjecture, giving the art another dimension of
appeal. All in all, the angular simplicity of the images the artists admired and
occasionally purchased, allowed them another way of looking at what was right before
them and yet seeing something entirely novel. Coincidently, these traits mimic the way in
which a child approaches painting.

Picasso was particularly smitten with the new muse of the “Primitive”, as William
Rubin explains in this passage:

More important, however, than any visible borrowing was Picasso’s sense
of tribal objects as charged with intense emotion, with a magical force
capable of deeply affecting us. This went hand in hand with his
understanding of the reductive conceptual principles that underlie African
representation. (268)

In regards to primitive carvings, “Picasso,” noted Rubin, “was less a collector
than an accumulator of objects, and he devoted more passion than care to their
acquisition” (14). The sculptures he did buy, selected not for quality but for amusement,
were described by Rubin:

distributed around the studio more or less on a par with other objects he
found visually interesting, ranging from paintings, sculptures, and textiles
to musical instruments (both tribal and modern), bibelots, souvenirs, and
toys. Picasso held on to this material with fetishistic devotion throughout
his life. (14)
For art historian and critic Roger Fry (1866-1934), the comparison of child art to primitive art was supported in the idea that “both set out to represent an emotionally expressive mental image” (Shiff 175). Their intentions have long roots; “The art of young children” said Rhoda Kellogg, “comes from the same beginnings and uses the same shapes found in primitive art (105).

Emotion and expression proved to be the cornerstone of modern art. The Expressionist movement began its ascent in 1905, gained strength by the intense sentiment of WWI and its aftermath, peaked in the 1920s with bold statements of survival, defiance and rejuvenation, then earned its legacy by prevailing over the Nazi regime’s vilification. Continuing with no definitive end, Expressionism has never faded and will live on in those who garner an emotional experience based on personal perceptions. Francisco recounts that in late 1911 Klee entered the circle of avant-garde artists in Munich (103). Finding a similar bond and vision in their spiritual aspect of art, Klee became close friends with Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, and August Macke, and by 1912 was loosely associated with these founding painters of the Expressionist group ‘Blaue Reiter’ (Blue Rider). “Members of the Blauer Reiter continued the experiments of Fauve and Brucke artists with the simplification of form and the employment of heightened or non-naturalistic colour in order to achieve greater expressive immediacy” (Gaiger 49). Werner Haftmann, an art historian and critic, affirms that the Blaue Reiter “meant freedom for Klee; he had reached the point from which he could look deep into the domain of free form and free colour” (54). It was during this time that Klee once again turned to the art of the child for personal inspiration, aspiring to reach, as his
colleagues did, the "primitive origins of art" (Haftmann 52). That Klee recognized the inherent formation and manipulation of undeveloped shapes and the flippant use of color that children employ was in keeping with the foundations of a movement based on emotional experience rather than physical reality. As Marcel Franciscono argues:

These encounters with radical modernism turned Klee’s attention to the more schematic aspects of children’s art. No doubt he could draw his own comparisons between modern abstraction and the symbolic work of children, but his awareness of their similarities was certainly heightened by the active interest in children’s drawings taken by Kandinsky and Munter, who collected them avidly, requesting examples from friends and family alike. (103)

German Expressionism, the Expressionist root also committed to defying academic conventions, found its way to modernity by way of Primitivism, a connection made by art historian Jill Lloyd. In 1912, the time when the Blaue Reiter went public with their interest in child art, German artist Emil Nolde (1867-1956) went through his phase of drawing with a "distinctly child-like quality" (Lloyd 180). With that, and his extremely simple and colorful painting style, Lloyd writes of Nolde:

Presumably his understanding of tribal art as ‘expressive’ objects, encouraged him to adopt a child-like style associated with authenticity and spontaneity. Nolde described children’s drawings as revealing ‘unbelievable talent and full of sparkling life’ and spoke of the necessity for mature artists to retain a child-like vision. (180-1)
The "child-like" epithet bounced its way through the modern art movements even entering into areas where children did not tread. For example, the fantastic, dream-like images of Surrealism (1920s-1960s) were the expression of the subconscious, and it was here where science and art once again merged.

For all its provocative imagery, the Surrealists were able to recognize in child art an outlet for the "uncensored, polymorphous self" (Hughes 231) and they embraced it along with the art of the primitive and the mad. It was Joan Miro (1893-1983) who singularly brought out this declaration of the Surrealists. Fineberg writes of Miro: "Miro had a lifelong interest in the expressive freedom of childhood; a vivacious expressivity that recalls child art is the very trademark of Miro's mature work, and those who knew him also remarked on his childlike personality" (138). Miro's fanciful images and anecdotal titles captured not only the heart of surrealism but also the freedom that children experience without ever planning a minute of it.

Yet, as Dora Vallier describes, for Miro, achieving that childlike effect was a mindful and time-consuming process, learning to hold his spontaneity under control and waiting for the "spark" or the "trigger" (204). Vallier provides this further comparison among Miro's style, Klee's style, and the style of a child:

Miro could work with just about anything: he could even dip his fingers into the color and paint. But he never lost sight of a painting as a totality that must cohere, a concept that the young child misses completely. In a word, Miro did not forget for a single moment that he was a painter, and if he returned in his own way to the creative activity of the child, it was for
the purpose of reaching profound sources and bending them to his own
purposes without ever imitating the child’s creative process. The child’s
drawing never served as a model for him (as it happens to have done for
Paul Klee), but a signal that creation in its pure form exists and that it is a
necessary goal. (205, 206)

The French poet André Breton (1896-1966), who is responsible for Surrealism as
a literary and visual art movement, may well have had Miro in mind when he wrote: “The
mind which plunges into Surrealism relives with burning excitement the best part of
childhood. Childhood comes closest to one’s real life – childhood, where everything
conspires to bring about the effective, risk-free possession of oneself” (Hughes 231-2).
So child art managed to infiltrate the metamorphic world of Modern Art, giving a face as
well as a name to an often times complicated and sophisticated genre. The trouble with
attaching a name to a movement is that words, by nature, conjure up a particular image
and consequent meaning, but also will readily symbolize a feeling or emotion. Art
movements with identifiers such as “Symbolism” or “Expressionism” in actuality extend
far beyond their art history time-lines. Since painters first recognized themselves as
Expressionist, there has not been an artist since who does not have roots in the
nomenclature. Symbolism, surrealism, primitivism: they all carry on in the prevalent art
movements since those time frames.

When Picasso and Klee, for whatever reason, turned to child-like imagery, it was
deliberate and calculated. Although they were able to find again the simple joy of shapes
and colors, each artist approached his task with mindful consideration of the perceived
image. Picasso gave the illusion of spontaneity with measured intent; Klee’s output contained the spirit of a man evincing final freedom. That their works echoed strands of childhood was not totally dependent upon current circumstances but also upon past circumstance reclaimed.

From *Outsider Art*, Colin Rhodes contends that any allusions to childhood in modern art come from the paradox of equating adult technique with a child’s impulse:

Unenlightened criticism of modern western art often focuses on perceived similarities with children’s drawings. Yet, the economy of means and apparent spontaneity achieved in the work of trained professionals does not signal a continuation of childhood, but a ‘recovery’ at a highly sophisticated level of certain childlike features. (33)

In 1938 and 1939, the sway of the two artists happened to align in the dual acknowledgement of certain idiosyncrasies of child art. As evident in the output of work from these years, each artist’s now characteristic child-like and identifiable hand was featured in several important works. Klee was turning sixty and nearing the end of his life, yet still producing a large number of canvases. He now presented a new, yet somehow familiar, style featuring bold black lines that often interacted in a figurative manner. Sometimes the lines alone were the composition; other times the thick stroke was made to outline the shapes and figures, giving the appearance of a cartoon or coloring book page.

Stick figures and sprite-like characters, common elements in Klee’s work, were epitomized in *Mit Grünem Strumpfen* of 1939 (Fig. 12). Just-off primary colors highlight
the thin lines and play off the pastel smudges Klee included as ground and sky. An unintentional byproduct of a child’s technique, Klee’s deliberate use of fingerprint-like marks evinces his authenticated aptitude, especially when used to decorate the dress. The frugal and scratchy lines define the child as intended: simplified and symbolic. Save for her upturned face, an angle most young children would not consider or attempt, Klee’s painting is one of his most child-like.

While Klee disregarded his proportions, Picasso distorted them. In 1938 Picasso’s second child, his daughter Maya, turned three years old, and the artist celebrated a short yet exuberant outpouring of her youthful manner in works featuring the little girl with various toys or outfits.

Fig. 12. Paul Klee Mit Grünen Strumpfen 1939.
Watercolor, pen, pencil on paper
One such painting, (Fig. 13), is a classic example of Picasso’s homage to the childlike. As Picasso did not concern himself with titling his work, this painting, depending on the source, as been identified as *The Butterfly Chaser*, *Maya in a Sailor Suit*, and *Boy in Sailor Suit with Butterfly Net*. Nevertheless, here his proportions are both exaggerated and purposely inaccurate; short arms and small hands, having nothing to do with perspective, lie on the same plane as the heavy and stout legs. The pronounced shapes of the body touch together as if a tangram puzzle. The child’s massive head gives insight to the belief that, in their pictures, children often emphasize what or who is important in their lives. Perhaps for that scintilla, or perhaps for the typically childhood trait of printing one’s name across the picture, it has been suggested that this painting may be a
self-portrait (Gedo 187). Yet the subject, like the title, is immaterial; painted just a year after Guernica, and at a time when Dora Maar and Marie-Thérèse Walter were simultaneously vying for the artist's attention, there were few such examples of this extreme simplicity in Picasso's art. Although the paintings of Maya followed suit, noteworthy were the portraits of the two women, wrote Christine Piot, to "present the face both in profile and head on, so that the two eyes and the bridge of the nose can be seen at the same time" (329). Recognizably a trait attributed to Picasso, annotated in reference to his paintings, the observation becomes both ironic and relevant set against the child's portrait in Figure 14.

Fig. 14 Gabrielle age 5 Self-Portrait in profile. 2010.
Crayon on manila paper. Collection of the author

All in all, the analysis of the child-like in the works of Klee and Picasso is remunerative and provides a valuable basis for this thesis; yet one statement from Picasso researcher Werner Spies raise a concern in its partiality. The passage comes from his book Picasso's World of Children:
For unlike Klee, Picasso rarely concerned himself with the direct imitation of childish drawing and painting. Apart from the occasional sudden abbreviations of motifs to simple contours or graphic symbols, Picasso’s work displays almost no sign of a direct influence of children’s art. For example, the naïve symbols children use to represent heads or hands rarely echo in his imagery.” (96)

Inasmuch as Spies uses the qualifier “rarely” to define Picasso’s use of child-like imagery, this is correct considering the proliferation of the artist. Of the estimated 50,000 works attributed to Picasso very few public pieces represent that influence of his children. As Picasso’s themes and subjects read as a visual journal of his life, the direct impact of children in his life shows up in those years when his children were very young: for the first time from 1938-1939, when Maya was three and four years old, followed by those works of 1948-1952 when his children Claude and Paloma were young, and then continually and increasingly as he aged, particularly in the paintings of his last ten years. That there was such a heavy concentration of child oriented paintings during these times reveals itself as much more than a coincidence.

To state that Picasso’s paintings held “almost no sign of a direct influence of children’s art” (Spies 96) is mistaken. The one certainty learned in studying Picasso is the unwavering documentation within his artwork of whatever his current passion might be at the time. Year after year, muse after muse, Picasso flew through both unreservedly, capturing the fleeting moments of self-interest for posterity – including those of his children.
Surely, Picasso's stages of child-like representations did not include mirror images of children's art; they incorporated only pieces of what Picasso took away in his mind. Spies mentions the "naïve symbols" used by children to represent a person and claims that Picasso did not echo this technique (96). Considering that children use their own unique symbols to represent people, there are varied, yet typically repetitive, methods of conveying body parts. For children, rigid, stick figures are common, as are rubbery, ballooned, or oversized limbs, or bodies and facial features crafted from basic shapes. Even without the strong image of Picasso's *The Butterfly Chaser* (fig. 13) for testimony, I contend that Picasso did utilize child-like imagery; not to the extent of copying a child's painting, but in understanding how a child paints and the universality of children's images. Picasso was able to mimic those attributes he felt apropos to his vision. Child-like influences in modern art are recognized by much the same criteria that children are rated by as they progress in their artistic development. Stereotypical technique, as identified and discussed in chapter one, appears consistently through the history of child development; they also appear in a scattering of Picasso's paintings.

Yet, considering that Picasso painted from memory, his images were most likely to be the composite of familiar traits among children. As children have only their limited and familiar environment to draw from, their representations are authentically assimilated from object to concept. Representation for features such as eyes, a nose, the mouth, fingers and hands are put forth as simplified symbols. Eyes may range from large,
irregular circles to small dots; a hand may be depicted as two simple crossed lines, or a round shape with any number of stick, triangle, or ovoid fingers, depending on the age and level of the child.

These observations lead to a subjective hypothesis: if Picasso’s child-like elements did indeed reflect a child’s style, would not those particular characteristics that he recognized and employed be evident in any typical child’s work? I have already recognized the visual connection between modern art and child art; teaching Prekindergarten children for over twenty years has exposed me to thousands of pieces of children’s art. Yet, unless it were a deliberate copy, I never before compared a child’s painting one on one with a particular artist. In the most unscientific of studies, I would use children’s art as a basis of comparison against Picasso. I wanted to find out just how accurate it would be to surmise that if Picasso drew like a child, then could a child’s drawing unintentionally resemble anything Picasso did. It would be interesting to see, in the simple act of comparing pictures, how closely any of Picasso’s child-like images would match those of a small child.

The Prekindergarten children of Seacrest Country Day School, where I teach, draw a self-portrait four times a year for their portfolios. With their most current attempt, I set out to see if any specific likenesses existed between this random selection of drawings and any of Picasso’s more obvious child-oriented works. Armed with just over twenty pictures, one or more from sixteen children ages four and five, and anticipating the skills typical of their developing fine motor abilities (many at the time were still at the
'stick-figure' stage), I was nonetheless able to isolate a few similarities shared between the children's renderings and three different Picasso paintings.

A detail from Picasso's 1960 painting *Luncheon on the Grass* (fig 16) shows the man's outstretched arm, tapered at the shoulder and spreading out to a large, flat hand with three notched fingers. The entire figure is flattened against the background, the clothes a solid mass of singular color. A remarkable comparison comes from a five-year-old girl, because although Gabi places her arm vertically in her portrait (Fig. 15), it is,

![Image of Gabi's self-portrait and Picasso's detail](image-url)

Fig. 15. Gabi. age 5. Self-portrait. 2011
Crayon on paper, 8 1/2 x 11 in.
Collection of the author.


essentially, the same arm Picasso painted. Another child's portrait (Fig. 17) displays a nose that resembles the rectangular one given to Jacqueline in this 1960 painting (Fig. 18). Yet, save for the corresponding noses, additional analogies end there, as Picasso
returns to his much earlier trend of angular and mask-like features resulting in an image much more sophisticated than that of my student Conrad. It is almost certain that Picasso was not attempting a child-like appearance in his portrait of Jacqueline, but the similar nose brings the proximity between child and primitive art to light. By reducing the lines of the nose to a hard edge shape and adding two circles for nostrils, Picasso consciously painted the feature as one who was untrained yet observant. Coincidentally, Conrad made his nose similar not by choice, but by the only way he knew how, as his eye repeated it to him.

In the final example, the comparison comes not as much in a single feature but the composite sense of the childhood abandon that the two faces share. In Avery's attempt at drawing a profile (Fig. 19), she inadvertently arrives at her two eyes askew, resulting in the very implicative Picasso trait of viewing one eye straight on, the other in profile.
Again, looking at a detail from *The Butterfly Chaser* (Fig. 20), side-by-side with the portrait of Avery, the same sense of motion exists in the cockeyed features.

![Fig. 19 Avery. Age 5. Self-portrait](image1)

Crayon on paper. 8 ½ x 11 in.
Collection of the author.

![Fig. 20 Pablo Picasso. 1938](image2)

Detail of *The Butterfly Chaser*. Oil on canvas. Rpt. in *The Ultimate Picasso*.
Leal, Piot, Bernadac. (Harry N. Abrams: NY 2003) 326.

The examples discussed are by no means meant to culminate this analysis; I intend them solely as a personal effort. Just the same, to chance upon synonymous attributes in just a few unplanned samplings does give credence to the argument against Werner Spies’ declaration. The “ naïve symbols” Spies dismisses, were found rectified in the happenstance drawings of three young children and echoed in three paintings Picasso made over fifty years ago.

To be realistic, Picasso exhibits a sophistication that no child would be cognizant or capable of, yet the manner in which Picasso includes the obvious traits of children’s artwork provides a juxtaposition between childlike and like a child. Sometimes
deliberately, sometimes covertly, Picasso's childlike precision was calculated and masterful. Picasso has never denied his stealing; yet again I cannot help but be reminded of, and somehow connected to, the statement he made about the sea urchins: it wasn't his fault he saw them.

The responsibility had to fall somewhere. If the modern artist could not resist the allure of children's art, the viewer could offer no exception. It came through the eyes of the child to realize that seeing the obvious was the same thing as seeing the magic.
CHAPTER 4

A REJUVENATION OF CHILD ART

The personal life of Picasso piques the interest of more than one mind. Photographer David Douglas Duncan finds Picasso worthy of no less than seven volumes on the “Maestro” as Duncan refers to him. Yet it is not in words that Duncan completely explains Picasso; his photographs tell the most interesting stories. Perhaps mugging for the camera, perhaps just caught au naturel, Picasso reveals to Duncan a playful, boyish imp fond of spontaneous costumes, dance, and merriment. A single photograph may not explain the whole story but it never lies. The image of Picasso (Fig. 21) lost in thought at the hands of his daughter as she draws picture after picture at the family table is a valuable document to authenticate her influence. The observations of the witness complete the picture:

Paloma stayed at the table after lunch. She was copying her father’s paintings lining the walls. Then she drew Spanish galleons and clusters of wild flowers and portraits of everyone in the house. . . . While Picasso gouged out linoleum for lithographs, she continued working right beside him. They treated each other as equals – without questions, advice or criticism. (Duncan, Private World, 159)

Although what Paloma experienced was priceless, I believe the benefactor here is none other than Picasso. He is the one learning.
Fig. 21. David Douglas Duncan. b/w Photograph. 1957.

Fig. 22. David Douglas Duncan. b/w Photograph. 1957.
Perhaps because Picasso's studio was wherever he felt fit, it could also serve him as stage and playground (Fig. 22). Although Duncan confessed with certainty that "The studio had always been the holiest place in Picasso's world. No outsider had ever stayed there when he lifted his brushes," (85) the exception was for his children as they cavorted in their father's world. According to Duncan, soon after they arrived for their visit, the artist moved a huge, in-progress canvas into the room; and, whether calculated or of whim, the painting of the bathers at Garoupe became a fine backdrop to the play (160). With picture after picture in Duncan's book, *The Private World of Pablo Picasso* documents a life lived in childhood spontaneity.

Years later, in a 1997 television interview with Charlie Rose, Claude Picasso was to recall playfully the consequences of having Picasso as a father. Here, taken from that interview and accompanied with much laughter, he recounts the theft of his toys in the name of art:

> He happened to paint and he happened to make sculptures, and do things like that, which were very amusing and sometimes it involved me in the strangest ways because I used to, as many boys would, bang up my toys and destroy them, and he always liked to keep everything. So he collected my toys and took them to the studio, and then, you know the famous sculpture of the Baboon and Young (sic), which includes two of my cars and I thought that was really outrageous! I thought that was disgusting! How dare you steal my cars and turn them into a monkey!

(Charlie Rose "An interview with Claude Picasso" June 11, 1997 PBS)
The perceived ruination of his cars when he was five was rectified by the hindsight of the adult son. Claude Picasso concluded: “it was much more interesting what he had done with the cars than what I had done” Rose corroborated: “Of course, Baboon with Young” (Fig. 23).

Fig. 23. Pablo Picasso. *Baboon with Young*. 1951. Bronze, with two metal toy cars (head), cup handles (ears), ceramic jug (body), car crank (tail), plaster.

William Rubin’s earlier observations concerning Picasso’s obsession with collecting may now be backed up by Jaime Sabartes, who noted that he keeps “everything he has ever laid his hands upon for however brief a moment” (110).
As a small boy might fill his pockets with found treasures, Picasso had the luxury of filling every room of his house with an odd and checkered assortment of objects including fish bones, shells, matchboxes, cigars, chunks of bread, Spanish cigarettes, Negro sculptures, and his first drawings and paintings (Sabartes 110). Junk piles and castoffs made for an unexpected stimulant as Picasso could see the possibilities in the most mundane of objects; his famous *Bull’s Head* from 1942 (Fig. 24), crafted from only two discarded bicycle parts, proves the point.

Fig. 24. Pablo Picasso. *Bull’s Head.* 1942
Seat and handle bars of discarded bicycle.
Rpt. in *Oooh! Picasso.* Niepold, Verdu.
(Tricycle Press 2009) 44.

Fig. 25. Pablo Picasso. *Guitar.* 1912.
Cardboard, canvas, string. Rpt. in *The Ultimate Picasso.* Leal, Piot, Bernadac
In *Bull's Head*, there is a natural attraction between children and art, drawing, painting, sculpting, cutting and gluing, mind and hand creating something worth keeping and worth sharing. Art is fun. It would be a rare child of a certain generation who did not create some version of Picasso’s *Guitar* (Fig. 25), be it an instrument, a vehicle, or a robot.

Here emerges Picasso’s “genius of childhood” in a single assemblage. Everything about *Guitar* was imaginary and imperfect. The process was imagination allowed to run free: the golden ring of childhood lived out as an adult. Jonathan Fineberg adds this to what Picasso called a “period of marvelous vision” (122).

In a child’s imagination an andiron can become the tail of an animal, a bowl of water can be a lagoon; children do not feel as constrained as adults to see an object in terms of its conventional uses. It is precisely this objectivity of vision . . . that fascinated Picasso in the art of children. (128)

Many versions of this guitar surfaced, in sheet metal and wire, along with those in the collages and cubist paintings of the same year, and where a more complicated and sophisticated technique was employed. Picasso was thirty-one years old, with no children and single, yet he still knew how to, and enjoyed, play.

Yet, as Picasso was yet to find out, it was only natural that the firsthand playfulness that the artists were able to tap into and ultimately transfer into their psyches and onto their canvasses was enriched during those years when Picasso and Klee became involved in the every day pastimes of their children.
Klee, not surprisingly, was particularly drawn into the interests of his young son. As an adult, Felix Klee shared with the world his collection of hand puppets (Fig. 26) that his father had made for him in the years from 1916 to 1925. The project started when Felix was nine; each year new characters were added. Felix Klee recalls, "As time passed the characters became more and more fantastic and their numbers grew until by 1925 there were close to fifty of them" (46).

The puppets were made with plaster heads and fabric bodies. The artist would hand-paint each face, giving them each their own unique character that would fulfill their role on the homemade stage, as described in chapter two (Fig. 5).

Felix, in writing the introduction to *Paul Klee His Life and Work*, included these memories from that time:

Klee made most of the heads out of plaster of Paris; later on he used a variety of materials like matchboxes, plugs, wood, cattle bones and paper mache (5). Klee would often sit as the only spectator in front of my puppet theater, smoking his pipe, with Fritzi, the tom-cat, on his lap, delighting in each scene of broad comedy in this popular entertainment. I made his works come to life in performance. Apart from the puppets, he also made the scenery, as for instance a beautiful village, a collage with a striking church spire. I often think even today of these leisure hours of my father and of how they reverberated in his superb work. (6)

The story behind the puppets could be misconstrued as an amusing diversion for Klee, yet in a classic case of “which came first?” the puppets share with the paintings of the same era a remarkable influence. Consider Klee’s painting titled *Head of a Famous Robber* (Fig. 27) from 1921. The wide, heavily exaggerated eyes and mask-like features also adorned several of the puppets created both before and after this example. Two years earlier, Klee made the Sultan figure (Fig. 28) with the eyes that were to become a signature feature. The puppet known as Old Man (Fig. 29) came in 1924 and still the prominent, lashed eyes are a Klee characteristic. To bring the argument full-circle, for correlation is a self-portrait by an eight-year-old boy (Fig. 30). Typical of a child’s style, the eyes - flat, over-sized, and wide - bear the identical, encompassing lines used to signify eyelashes, and, although much less ominous, parallel the eyes Klee chose.
Fig. 27  Paul Klee. *Head of a Famous Robber.*
1921. Oil on paper on cardboard.
(Hatje Cantz, 2008) 78.

Fig. 28. Paul Klee. *The Sultan.*
(Hatje Cantz, 2006) 65.

Fig. 29. Paul Klee. *Old Man.* Hand puppet.
(Hatje Cantz, 2006) 93.

Fig. 30. Daniel. Age 8. *Self-portrait.*
2011. Tempera paint on paper.
Rpt. with permission of the artist.
Puppetry was not an unusual hobby for Klee to contrive and excel at. A useful resource, the book *Paul Klee: Theater Everywhere*, explains the artist in a more intimate manner. In the book, Christine Hopfengart writes about Klee’s interests in the chapter titled “Theater: Everywhere You Look”:

He loved the classic genres – opera, operetta, and theater – as well as popular forms including cabaret, puppet and marionette acts, the circus, variety shows, fairs, and festivals such as carnival. Even though closer observation reveals considerable differences within his individual preferences, the performing arts in general, role-playing, and the world of figures exercised a considerably fascination over him through his life. (8)

All of Klee’s passions were based on story telling, a talent he held even when identifying his pictures. A painting in a gallery is silent, yet given a fanciful and graphic title, the viewer is let in on the behind-the-scenes narrative. Klee’s titles accompanied his paintings in rich and mysterious tones, capable of influencing the viewer. The title *Twittering Machine* is just as memorable as the painting, and one cannot exist without the other. In a child’s painting, the title may help identify the content of the painting, yet again it may just as well have little, or no, relation to what one actually sees. The creative illusion of imagining the suggested is particularly keen in Klee’s work. Consider, just by the title alone, the poetry involved with such names as *Dance You Monster to My Gentle Song* (1922), *Moonplay* (1923), or *Childhood of the Chosen One* (1930).
Klee’s process of naming a painting, as described by Werner Haftmann, was referred to by the artist as “christening his pictures,” (133) and seems to be much like the way in which a child would title his or her painting if asked.

It was a sort of lyrical process running parallel to the creative process. Klee discovered his picture, but it was not until the end that he identified its content, and then he added a descriptive title. The title, the description, was the last thing to be added. So we must remember that he did not have it in mind beforehand. Klee had no pre-conceived intention.

(Haftmann 129)

Children also tend to “discover” their identity within their picture as they paint. The story develops with the image, and the image is enhanced by imagination. Picasso has often said, in some quotable version or another, that “a painting is not thought out and fixed beforehand; while one is painting it, it follows the mobility of one’s thoughts” (Aston 29).

“But”, counters Franciscono, “Klee’s pictorial allusions to children’s art also have a more evident expressive purpose: they serve, with the aide of his titles, to condense complex relationships and to display the fatefulness of his themes in a particularly naked and direct form” (109). In an exhibition catalog from 1977, an inscription notes “Klee’s titles often contain puns and allusions to everyday language. Some defy translation, and their meaning can only be approximated” (Sabarsky 24). In a Klee painting, as with most everything in life, there is more than meets the eye. And in most everything, and especially a Klee painting, it is not as simple as it looks.
Robert Hughes provides this poetic, yet worthwhile explanation of Klee’s work:

Indeed, many of his paintings are a form of writing: they pullulate with signs, arrows, floating letters, misplaced directions, commas, and clefs; their code for any object, from the veins of a leaf to the grid pattern of Tunisian irrigation ditches, makes no attempt at sensuous description, but instead declares itself to be a purely mental image, a hieroglyph existing in emblematic space. (306)

Hughes, in expounding upon his own argument, goes on to quote art historian Robert Rosenblum, as will I:

Klee’s particular genus [was] to be able to take any number of the principal Romantic motifs and ambitions that, by the early twentieth century, had often swollen into grotesquely Wagnerian dimensions, and translate them into a language appropriate to the diminutive scale of a child’s enchanted world. (306)

Likewise, from the article “Art, Images, Communications and Children, by Susan Dickenson and Marilyn Schaffer comes this consideration: “To children, art is the language of thought and comes naturally as a means of expression” (189). To be in command of one’s own language of thought is manifest for expression, especially so before the craft of writing is mastered. To paraphrase art and psychology theoretician Rudolf Arnheim (first introduced as passing the museum retrospective to Jonathan Fineberg), for a child, the lines themselves are not about “representation, but presentation”, a word of several connotations (Marsh 138). Ascending at a higher level,
at Klee’s level, the lines become writing, as articulated by Ellen Marsh in her article, ‘Paul Klee and the Art of Children: A Comparison of Their Creative Processes’. “Here is,” Marsh explains, “perhaps the most complete difference between what children do and what Paul Klee does with line. As soon as the lines have formed images for Klee, they do become writing. They can be “read” by him and given titles in terms of words, and it is owing to his immense control of the medium, and his will to form significant images, that they can also be read by others” (138).

The interchange of thought, “reading” the message intended, sent from one to another by way of a picture . . . or dance, or music, is the connectedness of two beings that are touched by the other’s intention. I found Marsh’s analogy to be strikingly pertinent as I reread her article in which she includes two telling and important quotes. The first, from Rudolf Arnheim, the second a passage attributed to Paul Klee from Werner Haftmann. Marsh has these two thoughts separated by half a page, yet I find them purposefully connected and present them here, together. As previously noted, Marsh wrote, “Arnheim states that the first scribbles of children “are not intended as representation, but rather as presentation – that is, they involve the exciting experience of bringing about something visible that was not there before” (138). Klee, of course, has long believed that painting makes visible, in 1918 he wrote in his diary, “In art, vision is not so essential as making visible” (Klee 410). The following quote from Haftmann is one also relevant. According to Haftmann:

    to Klee his images were “like writing something which strives to become visible. We do not always know at once what flows into us from the
elemental realm of Nature, what comes up from the depths and goes through us in order to become manifest in images. (138)

There is a connectedness shared by bringing about something visible, and there is benefit in realizing the arrival. The flow continues: from artist to painting to viewer, and then back again, after generations, after a million viewers, after twice that many opinions. Klee and Picasso were lucky enough to carry that flow with them until the very end. They chose to make it visible, even bold, but always honest. What they found in children and what they left to children was not in vain. Years after their deaths, new generations of children were to reciprocate, yet perhaps unwittingly. Be it society’s need or culture’s duty, children are somehow intrinsically connected to the modern artists of the previous century. An outpouring of books about modern art, geared specifically to children, hit the mass market, and, in a reverse sort of way, Klee and Picasso were once again linked to child art. The final analysis: as Picasso and Klee once painted images that appear childlike, perhaps it would follow that the childlike would embrace those images.
CHAPTER 5

RECIPROCATION OF CHILD ART

In the last years of their lives, Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee each confronted their own imminent deaths by producing a small museum’s worth of paintings. Their productivity, if not their purpose, was an astounding feat, although for very different circumstances.

In 1935, Klee was diagnosed with the malignant tissue disease scleroderma, and found himself in a justifiable race against time. In a letter to his son, Felix, Klee tellingly refers to his growing number of works as “children”:

Production is increasing at a greater tempo, and I can’t quite keep up with these children. They dart off. A degree of adjustment takes place in that drawings predominate. Twelve hundred numbers in 1939 is definitely a record, though. (Doschka 214)

According to Serge Sabarsky, Klee, “in the last twelve months of his life he created twice as many works as in any other previous year” (5). Klee died in 1940 at the age of sixty with the knowledge and the means to say what he had to say on canvas, just not enough time to do so.

On the other hand, Picasso, obsessed with death his entire life, played a game with fate and superstition and managed to see out ninety-one productive and relatively healthy years. Yet, his urgency was just as strong as Klee’s. Marie-Laure Bernadac writes
in *The Ultimate Picasso*, “Vitality is the most striking feature of Picasso’s late period, reflected in the enormous quantity and speed of his production and the fervor of its execution” (464).

Carsten-Peter Warncke agrees that “he remained tirelessly active till the very end of his life. So it was that his work came to be seen as infinite in extent” (674). That the two artists had similar productive energy notwithstanding, the difference, according to Marcel Franciscono, was that Klee, because of his illness, was forced to come to terms with death; Picasso “feared death in old age and tried to exorcise it by depicting love instead” (312). In a near reversal of artistic roles, Klee became the bold artist, confrontational, putting forth with images that were simple in execution, complicated in meaning, deeply honest and slightly sad.

Picasso, living thirty years past Klee, was not going to pay the devil his due. His last paintings and drawings possessed a simplified and intrinsic message, somewhat mocking and, like Klee’s, confrontational. A more expressive style of painting, explains Kerstin Thomas, “his late art is the product of seclusion and absolute concentration on his work, which determined the rhythm of his life more than ever before” (268). From these last works might come the opinion that “great age, in fact, offers the possibility of resurrection, of a second wind” (Bernadac 466).

Not everyone was to receive Picasso’s prolific ambition as worthy of admiration. While the 1956 film *Le mystère Picasso* sets out to highlight the artist’s swift assuredness as the camera captures Picasso painting images on a specially designed transparent canvas, Marie-Noelle Delorme counters with this opinion of Picasso’s documentary:
Clouzot’s film Le mystere Picasso . . . did the painter’s reputation more harm than good, giving the impression of a virtuoso whose most striking attribute was sheer speed: a few brushstrokes and lo! You had a fish or a goat – and one worth millions, what’s more . . . a lot of people went to see a film that gave the impression of an artist whose strength was his glibness - mere child’s play. (259)

Perhaps, it was not the speed of production that became the issue. The works that Klee and Picasso completed in those last fruitful years were decidedly more rudimental than what the public was used to seeing. Yet change is the very cornerstone not only of modern art, but especially of Klee’s and Picasso’s art. The progression did not happen overnight, but through a lifetime of experimentation and confidence.

To illustrate Klee’s evolution of bare-bones simplification, Sabarsky makes a uniquely perceptive comparison between two works completed thirty-six years apart (Fig. 31). Klee’s famous 1903 etching, identified here as Encounter of two men, each believing the other to be of higher status (alternately known as Two Men Meet, Each Believing the Other to Be of Higher Rank), is placed side-by-side to the 1939 painting titled Ein Oberkriecher (A Super Sycophant). Seeing them together brings understanding to the comparison of Klee’s art to language; using less material, he has merely found another way to say the same thing. Whereas etching with acid onto a zinc plate painstakingly produced the earlier piece, his later version was simply drawn with colored crayon.
Fig. 31. Illustration comparing the evolution of Klee's style.

Top: *Encounter of two men, each believing the other to be of higher status*. 1903
Rpt. in *Paul Klee: The Late Years*. Exhibition catalog. Serge Sabarsky Gallery.
(Colorcraft Offset, Inc 1977) 7.

Although there is a vast difference in the skills needed to manipulate the techniques
involved, it is not the medium used that deviates, but the graphic forms that have been
pared down to simple lines and shapes. The message of the sycophant continues in the most abstract and honest of ways.

In Sabarsky’s example, after thirty years Klee’s theme is congruent, yet his execution greatly modified. “After a lifetime in which he created an outstanding oeuvre - works of miraculous imagination - Klee finally arrived at his mature ‘shorthand’ ” (Sabarsky 6). “A concise language of linear forms” is how Josef Helfenstein describes Klee’s late style (149).

Picasso, too, developed a newfound abbreviation of line that he had experimented with for many years. Bernadac confirms this with Picasso’s comment made in reference to his 1964 series depicting the Painter and His Model, “A dot for the breast, a line for the painter, five spots of color for the foot, a few strokes of pink and green. . . . That’s enough isn’t it? What else do I need to do? What can I add to that? It has all been said” (464). Bernadac also contributes a description of Picasso’s late work that sounds more characteristic of Klee’s style:

This need to go to the very essence, to simplify, is undoubtedly one of the characteristics of the later work. This unrestricted painting, which obeys no rule, has no outlines, shows itself in whirls, arabesques, flames, deletions, and squirts is the expression of the enormous energy that still drove the aged Picasso. (Bernadac 466)

The final obsession with returning to the elemental basis of line took hold as Klee and Picasso pondered the fundamental reality of their lives. Their dual concept of childlike clarity hit them as recourse to the complications of reality. Picasso lived the last ten years of his life isolated in his own world, a prisoner of his fame (Beardsley 83).
As Picasso withdrew into himself through painting, Klee spread further out into the world of the unknown. Now his canvasses were much larger and he began to look at his materials as a child might: he mixed everything together. "He mixed gum and chalk as he prepared the canvas, alternating smooth and rough surfaces by sticking on pieces of packing paper, gauze or newspaper; when he painted he mixed all techniques – oil, tempera, and water-colour" (Di San Lazzaro 204-205).

Considering their histories, each artist earned the right to respond to both the future and the past in the most internal and meaningful of methods. Apparently, part of the method included a return to the childlike image. Thirty years separate the two final portraits painted by the artists. Having converged on the same intention under dissimilar circumstance, they are remarkably alike in their purity of childlike methodology.

The painting (later made into a poster) chosen to advertise Picasso's posthumous exhibit in Avignon was a mirror image self-portrait of the artist himself (Duncan 284). *The Young Painter* (Fig. 32) brings back a memory, or puts forward a desire, of a very different Picasso. Brought back to youth, and brought back to using the most basic of components, Picasso pays homage to the power of what he has learned in ninety years. The reduction of line unmistakably parallels a child's universal representation of a face: a circle for the head, two flat dots for eyes, another two for nostrils, and a horizontal line for a mouth. The absence of ears is a typical omission for young children, one imitated by Picasso.
And although Picasso’s innocent reflection holds so much more history and symbolic recognition, the exact same components are found in Klee’s Biedermeier-Fraulein (Fig. 33) from 1940. If even more exaggerated to the childlike extreme, Klee’s face-on stature, the heavy outline, and detached hair are other traits indicative to the child artist. The two paintings demonstrate the extent to which Picasso and Klee were willing to recover the inherent magic of childhood. “The more Picasso aged, the closer he drew to his childhood” (Bernadac 458). In approaching age and death, taking stock of one’s past would be expected, Klee and Picasso not only surpassed that commitment, but they also managed to work towards the future.
Their similarities as they aged only seemed to widen the artistic differences that made them famous. “If Picasso with his immediate reactions is one pole of modern art, Paul Klee undoubtedly represents the opposite pole” declared Gualtieri Di San Lazzaro in 1957 (48). Roland Doschka explains the difference this way: “Klee is the lyric poet, the gardener in his own enchanted garden, a paradise of Modernism. Picasso takes on the dramatic lead, he is Zeus in a heathen Arcadia.” Doschka goes on to include the words of Alfred H. Barr taken from his forward to the 1941 Paul Klee exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York: “Not even Picasso can match his sheer power of invention. And his powers of imagination are easily equal to Picasso’s: naturally, Picasso is much more forceful. Picasso’s paintings scream or stamp or kick: Klee’s paintings are engaged in whispered soliloquy – lyrically intimate, unfathomably sensitive” (20).

It takes time to get to know Klee, one has to pay attention, listen, and observe. What Ben Shahn wrote in 1950 is still applicable: “Whoever knows his work well, knows him; knows what he thought and felt about life” (6). No one had to guess about Picasso. He laid out the obvious without discretion or embarrassment.

In the final analysis, Both Klee and Picasso were true to their own inner passions. That they occasionally drew from the same source shows their respect and honor, and perhaps even anger, for the past of what came before, be it the artists who preceded them or the child within them. That they were able to spark the magic each time they crossed this threshold was what earned them a legacy of painting under the influence of children.
If, perhaps, theirs were occasional works of reciprocation, an acknowledgement of the unarranged influence of another, then the message sent was an admission of the inner child, experienced always within both Picasso and Klee and sometimes experienced through their own children. Laid bare in their final years, the final acts of giving back were yet to come. The deaths of Klee and Picasso brought about their immortality, and, in a complementary act of total willfulness from their admirers, the works and legends of Picasso and Klee soon belonged to everyone, including children.

In all probability, neither Klee nor Picasso had the intention of any children (other than their own) being cognizant of their artwork. They never painted for children. Even their own most child-like works were cast with adult knowledge and perception. Yet, ironically, it is by the way of children that the art of Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee is never to be forgotten, but rediscovered, recognized, and admired by new generations.

As early as 1962, ten years before he died, one of the first books about Picasso, written specifically for children, was published. Picasso for children, written by Harry Harmon presents a series of esoteric fables featuring Picasso as a child and told through what Hamon calls the first “nine tell-tale years” (24).

Since that time at least twenty-five more titles have been added to the growing compilation covering everything from abbreviated explanations of Picasso’s life and art, to his creativity and innovation, to his pets and his friends and family. Most are non-fiction, works that offer a filtered version of Picasso’s joys and personal life. Some are stories where the characters are real yet the situation perhaps invented. Paris in the Spring with Picasso (2010) casts real-life acquaintances like Gertrude Stein and the poet
Apollinaire. *Picasso and the Girl with a Pony-Tail* (1998) is based on his paintings of model Sylvette David. *Picasso and Mootisse* (1998) centers on the friendship and rivalry between Picasso and Henri Matisse, albeit they are portrayed as a pig and a bull in this book written for children ages four to eight. In 1965 came *Henri’s Hands for Pablo Picasso*, a semi-fictional account of Picasso’s time making pottery in the French town of Vallauris. These are just a sampling. There are drawing books and coloring books and art activity packets, board books for infants, finger puppets, and jigsaw puzzles. Online there are countless sites offering countless ideas for bringing his art alive whether at home or in the classroom. Picasso for children has become a big business.

A recent, and amusingly relevant, entry is *The Boy Who Bit Picasso* (2011) written by Anthony Penrose, the son of Lee Miller (photographer) and Sir Roland Penrose (painter, writer, and personal friend of Picasso). From his memories of when he was a child, Tony Penrose recalls his friendship with Picasso, bringing time full circle, and offering a rare perspective of the artist through the eyes of a child.

Klee, too, had his life and work interpreted for children. In addition to a dozen or so abridged biographies, are books with titles *Dreaming Pictures* (1997) and *Animal Tricks* (2002) that match his paintings ideally with poignant and intriguing verse. To accompany the painting *Angel, Still Groping*, in *Dreaming Pictures* comes this: “But angels are like our fantasies and dreams: we can never grab hold of them – and, as here, it was the things that only exist in our thoughts and dreams that Klee loved to paint” (von Schemm 27).
The ‘Art For Children’ series by Ernest Raboff was published in the late nineteen-sixties with the Paul Klee title appearing in 1968, Picasso’s a year later. As creativity became a sizable goal for every child’s growth, Klee’s organic and geometric shapes were perfect for working into sticker activities and, inspired from of selections of Klee’s work, inter-active coloring books came about with suggestions like ‘draw a figure with only one, continuous line’ or invent a “Twittering Machine” (Roeder).

Through an outpouring of information and interest, the legacy of Picasso and Klee continues still. Released in late 2011 came two more books of particular notice. By authors Michael Baumgartner, Jonathan Fineberg, Rudi Fuchs, and Paul Klee comes Klee and Cobra: A Child’s Play (2011), a volume that undoubtedly would have augmented this thesis. The second book, Paul Klee for Children (2011) written by Silke Vry, appears also to be of consequence because, as if on cue, the mere product description offered by Amazon.com expounds the benefits of Klee to children everywhere: “Loved by young people across the globe, Paul Klee’s playful paintings are a natural introduction for children to the world of creativity and art. It’s no wonder that young people are drawn to the work of Paul Klee. The German artist was fascinated by children’s drawings, and incorporated their energy and simplicity into his own work”

Turned into mass-market heroes, (along, for the record, with the other popular child-friendly artists of interest: Van Gogh, Matisse, and Monet) Picasso and Klee led the way to unexpected connections, not only between children and modern art but also to each other.
In 2010, the exhibition “Klee meets Picasso” opened at the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland. In a review of the historic exhibition, Stefan Geizer explains that the works by Picasso and Klee were placed side-by-side in order to highlight not only the similarities and differences between the two artists, but also Klee’s analysis of Picasso. In addition, and not surprisingly, “simultaneously, the children’s museum Creaviva is using this encounter as a platform for playful interaction with Paul and Pablo” (Geizer).

It could be that this will be the generation to know Klee and Picasso on a first name basis. To a child, the works of their friends “Paul and Pablo” may feel comfortable and familiar or, just as well, amusing or silly. Perhaps children are able to sense the “aura” painted into the canvas or silently hear the possibility of many stories from a single picture. Yet, apparently the connection exists. An adult will never see what the child sees; the child lacks the experience to see or express beyond his or her own consciousness. As was once thought at the turn of the twentieth-century: the past will never be the same. Imagine now, that children are growing up under the influence of Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

It has now been ascertained that, in certain paintings, on certain occasions, Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso appeared to have been influenced by children’s art. It is in those pieces alone that one recognizes the scope of that inspiration, measured in quality not in quantity. In their lifetimes, Klee and Picasso have each created more than ten thousand works of art. In this research, hundreds of their pieces were reviewed; yet, for the catalog of items available, perhaps close to only fifty works between them would constitute what I determined to be even somewhat a “child-like” painting. Many of those works incorporated a child’s technique in some slight or obvious way and there proved a sufficient amount to choose from for comparative examples; because this thesis is heavily supported by visuals, editing what to exclude was difficult.

In the end, it was the pure exceptions of total immersion that stunned with childlike accuracy. Two of Klee’s late works, *By the Blue Bush* (Fig. 34) and *A Child and the Grotesque* (Fig. 35), stand out with their uncanny emulation to children’s art.

*By the Blue Bush* is the sum of this thesis in one painting; the finger-paint technique, flat and disproportionate figure, dappled and smeared areas of color, and writing across the painting are all typical predispositions of young children. According to Fineberg, the writing “is a child’s imperfect, phonetic spelling of ‘Stellt sich ein, bleibt
allein,' meaning that he - the artist - asserts a position and thus remains alone” (114).

The message, while too cerebral for a child, fits just right for Klee.

Fig. 34. Paul Klee. *By the Blue Bush*. 1939.


It is not just the use of colored crayon in Klee’s drawing that makes *A Child and the Grotesque* exceptionally child-like; it is a familiar composition of disconnected shapes, doodles with faces, and scratched-in areas of color that give it authenticity to the style of young children (Fig. 36) as seen in this version made with markers by a four-year old.

Fig. 35. Paul Klee *A Child and the Grotesque*. 1938
That there were few true child-like images was not surprising; both Picasso and Klee had reputations for technical innovation. Much of Klee’s work, including pieces created subsequent to the puppets, was mathematically conceived, illustrating linear progressions, symmetry, and arithmetical operations (Franciscono 256). Klee’s art, especially those child-like paintings and drawings, was deceptively innocent. Behind all the labels of whimsical, or magical, or amusing was the underlying web of color theory, natural science, music, poetry, spiritualism, and philosophy.
Picasso’s Cubism, with its foundation based upon an advanced visual breakdown of science, geometry, philosophy, and reality, was as far from what a child was capable of as it could be. Of his signature style, the artist once described Cubism as a “work of patience, and a very complicated work too” (Ashton 63). Additionally, in what became almost a trademark, much of Picasso’s work was fraught with both obvious and suggestive eroticism. To his credit, Picasso was able to separate that fixation; it was a genre that would never appear in any work of his involving children (Spies 76). Among his peers, the distinction was ascertained. “Child art became a source of inspiration for these artists who could maintain the duality of living in two worlds while aware of the distance that exists between the adult and the child” (Golomb 121).

Still, beyond the sophistication that they proved repeatedly, Picasso and Klee were able to adopt and incorporate the techniques of child art. Amongst the breadth and depth of their works it is the rarity of these childlike images that deserved recognition not only for the insight into the two artists but also for their contributions to modern art. There remains the undisputed appeal of children’s art to those contemporaries of Picasso and Klee: artists like Joan Miro, Vassily Kandinsky, Jean Dubuffet, Henri Matisse, and Alexander Calder, who were to simultaneously find the same inspiration and unknowingly pave the way for another generation to rediscover childhood in the art of Keith Haring (1958-1990) and Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988).

The rapport between modern art and child art that began with Klee and Picasso a hundred years ago has expanded to include the newest generation of children in the
twenty-first century. Modern art for children is now both a prevailing topic and activity. I would encourage further analysis of the child’s perception of these reflective works of art: would a child recognize a modern art image as child-like? Would a child prefer a child-like image to a more realistic one? How does learning at an early age about Picasso and Klee redirect the child’s path? Certainly, the artists live immortal when some one new finds their work.

Additionally, I was fascinated by the imagery I happened upon in the prekindergarten children’s artwork and how closely it echoed those techniques adopted by Klee and Picasso. Unquestionably, I will forever more look at the children’s drawings with more insight, interest, and enthusiasm.

Childhood is very much an inner world of distorted and egotistical imagery. Picasso, in his private world, and Klee in his make-believe world, were able to go there at will, recover that time, embellish it, and return it for the better. What made it magic is that what appeared to be turning back to the past was really a new beginning, advancing forward. It is magical indeed that Klee and Picasso are still able to make it come alive.

In a fitting reminder of Klee’s legacy, Sabarsky writes that his fellow artists referred to Klee as “The Miracle Man”, “Sorcerer”, “The Great Inventor”, and “Magician”. “As his late works show, Klee continued to practice his sorcery to the end” (Sabarsky 5).
Bernadac also offers a fitting summary: “Picasso lived to the fullest, loved to the fullest, created to the fullest, setting the example of having achieved art’s return to childhood, to that moment when everything is ready to begin” (478).

_Gabi’s Self-Portrait._ 2011.
Painting collection of the author.

_Pablo Picasso. Head (Self-Portrait)_ 1972.
Rpt. in _Picasso Painting Against Time._
Ed. Werner Spies. (Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007)
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http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/18/arts/design/18camhi.html Online.


Milestone Film & Video. DVD 75 min. Documentary.


Daniel N. Self-Portrait. 2010. Used with permission from the artist. Painting.


- - -. Photograph of Picasso with Henri Matisse's painting of Marguerite. c. 1961.


Print.


- - -. *Mit Gruenen Strumpfen (With Green Stockings).* 1939. Felix Klee Collection, Berne.


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