Your brain on art

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It is a privilege to serve as guest editor of the Arts + Mind edition of ChildArt Magazine. For more than 20 years the International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) has been an essential organization recognizing and valuing the power and dignity of the arts for children around the world.

This issue of ChildArt shares the marriage of the arts and brain research, a newly emerging field of study called neuroaesthetics. Neuroaesthetics explores the impact of the arts, architecture and music on the human brain and behavior. The applications for neuroaesthetics research are limitless. While there is so much about the brain we don’t understand, it is an exciting time to be thinking about what is going on at the intersection of the arts and brain research. I hope the stories in health, wellbeing and learning will open your mind to the possibilities for the arts, architecture and design as solutions for intractable problems, approaches to enhance your life and answers to questions long asked.

We are all makers, designers and creators regardless of our age, interests or career paths. The evolution of the human species revolves around the stories we create and share, the ways we communicate, environments we build and language we use.

Understanding how our brains work and how they are sculpted and changed through art making and aesthetic experiences enables us to build a better world. When we decide to create a new product, design a shopping center, home or park, paint a room, or a million other actions, we have the ability to use what we know about how the brain works to create smarter, more productive, creative, healing and learning solutions. The benefits to people are everywhere, transcending class, gender, race and culture.

The arts, in all forms, are not just “nice to have” but are who we are. The field of neuroaesthetics is at the heart of unleashing humanity’s greatest potential.

Susan Magsamen
Executive Director
International Arts + Mind Lab
Brain Science Institute
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Published since 1997, ChildArt is a commercial-free arts learning, self-discovery, and global education periodical expressly written for 8 to 12 year-olds, but useful as a teaching tool for early educators and inspirational for creative individuals of all ages. Subscribe to ChildArt online at www.icaf.org.

When a child’s creativity is ignored, it could be lost forever. Tax-deductible donations support children’s creative and empathic development. You can donate online at www.icaf.org or make your check to ICAF and mail it to: ICAF, P. O. Box 58133, Washington, DC 20037.

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