

ERIC BOURDON

## DRAWING - ECOLOGY PROJECT

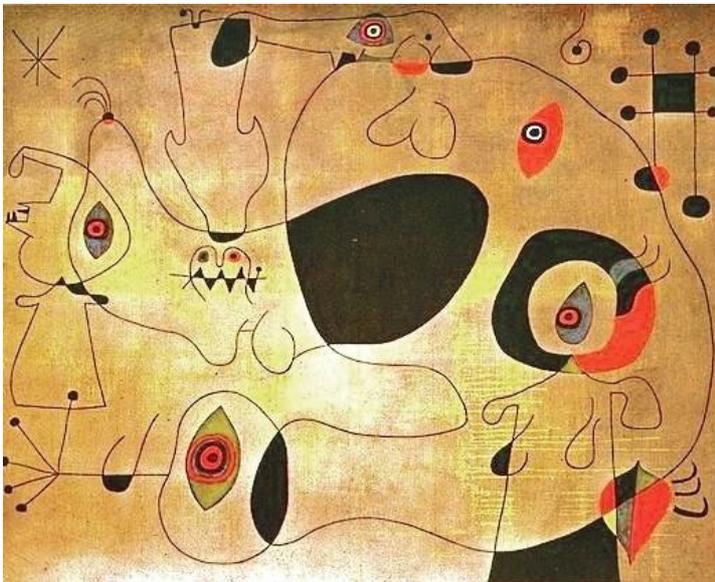
Pasteur School in Lesquin (France)  
2010-2011

vers. 1.7 - English



*Educational project combining art and ecology, realized by Lille artist painter Eric Bourdon at Pasteur School in Lesquin from 2010 to 2011. It is the development of a shorter project carried out in a single first grade class in Roubaix in 2007. This time it involved 3 first grade classes and 4 second grade classes (6-8 years), during 8 sessions of 1h40 per class, or 93 hours of interventions from November 2010 to May 2011.*

The discovery of a contemporary artist and his paintings by the pupils is initiated by returning to the technique of an ancient 'institutional' painter : Joan Miró.



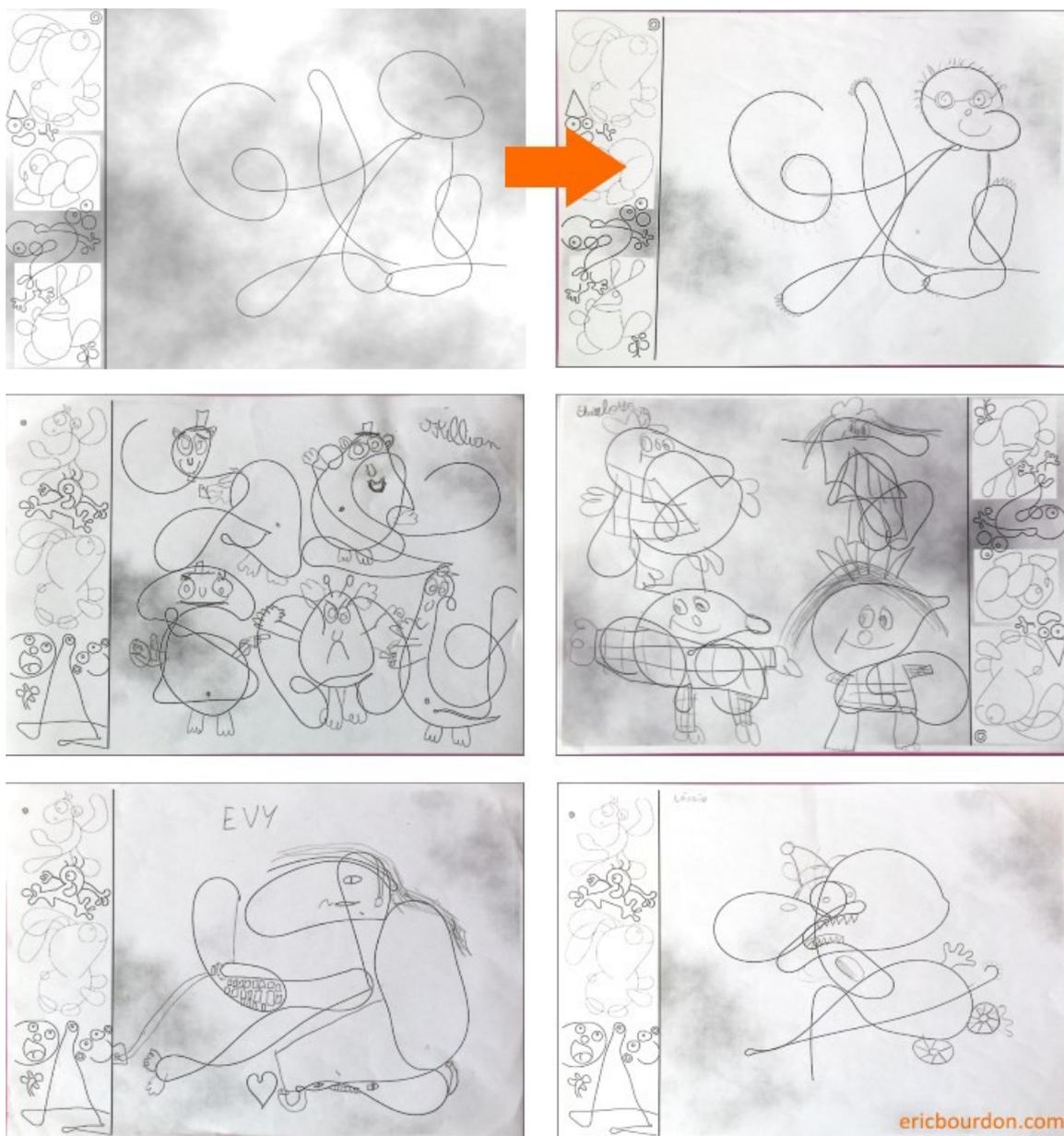
"The port" by Miró is one of his less colorful paintings, but it has the advantage of easily explaining the construction of the characters.

From strokes first made almost at random, the characters are created gradually. They are not *designed before* to be drawn.

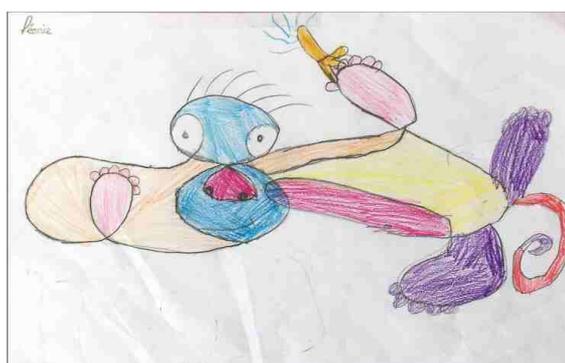
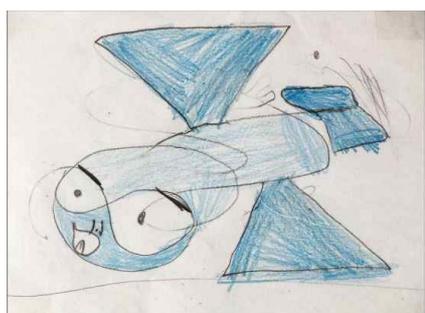


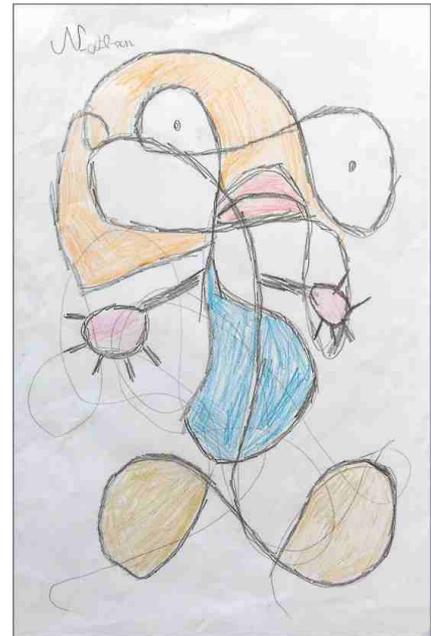
Lines are made, in all directions, on the blackboard. In accordance with this concept, the pupils come to complete the drawings and make improvised characters appear.

Drawings on 21x29.7cm sheets are then distributed to each child. Based on the lines already drawn, they will add to the most appropriate locations the elements that identify the characters (eyes, mouth, hands, feet, hair...), following the model of the examples in the left margin.



Pupils then make their own work, freely inspired. They draw their own lines randomly on a white sheet, and they complete them to make characters.





Meanwhile, a few pupils take turns coming to draw lines with back paint on a vertical wooden support, a recovered 'door' (1mx2m).

In the following session, the children work individually on a recycled canvas type medium (mainly cotton : shirts, curtains, cut out t-shirts...) preferably in a still recognizable form, in order for them to be aware of reusing an object which had a different function.

The drawing always proceeds in two steps :

- 1) drawing the lines : black or white paint only (in order to focus on the drawing).
- 2) adding the elements to identify the characters, and repeating the process on several supports, while imposing a common rhythm if necessary.



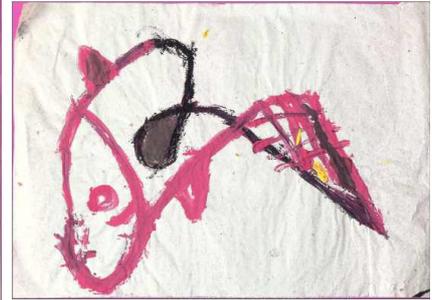
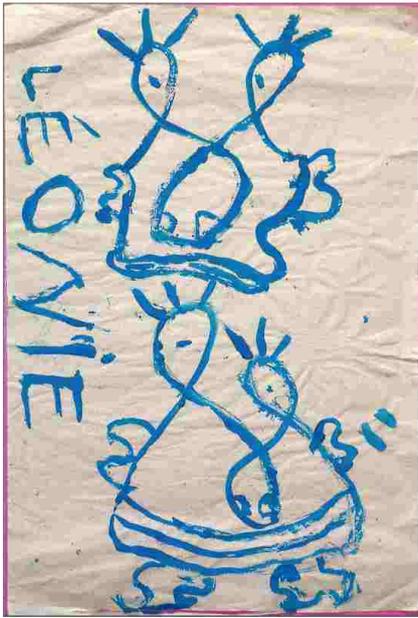


One after another, and using the same method, they continue the collective drawing on the recovered door.

The following sessions will be an opportunity to work on a wide range of recycled materials, while gradually introducing color.

The use of recycled paper, which contains visible traces of the different papers used to make it, is the occasion to further consider the cycle of papermaking, from the tree to the landfill or incineration (return to nature), and to clarify the concept of re-cycling.

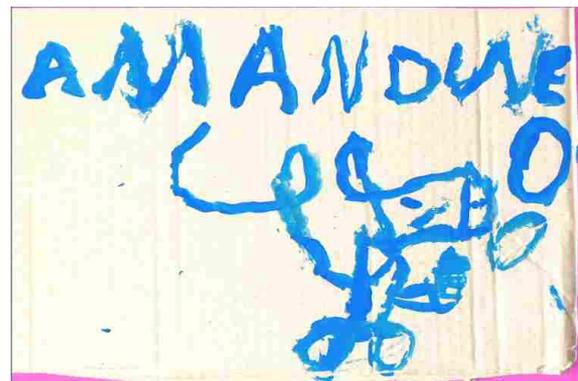




The paper is called "recycled", because the paper has been recreated as a consumer product. But the action of **reusing** a useless material is also by itself a re-cycling, regardless of whether this material has been industrially reconditioned or not.

Next to the so-called recycled paper, we'll also use (we'll re-cycle) materials having already been utilized and therefore intended to be discarded before we decided to use them again.

Example with packaging cartons :



Throughout the sessions, the pupils will therefore apply the same two steps drawing technique (lines/characters), on various recycled materials : fabrics, recycled papers and cardboard already mentioned, but also...

🌀 plastics :



🌀 colored papers :



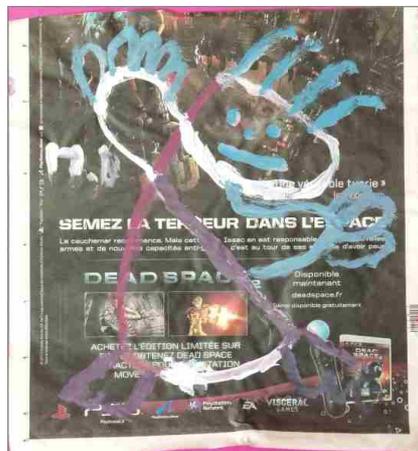
(anonymous)



🌀 aluminum foils :



🌀 or newsprint :





*the miller and her great windmill :  
an example of engaged art ?*

At the beginning of each session, the best drawings of the previous session are shown as examples, they will also be used to build another focus of the project : the creation of horizontal cardboard decors, 2,4m long and 1,2m high, using the characters that we just stick to and that are connected to each other in order to create links, a story, or a situation that makes sense. The meaning of this story will also be re-examined with the whole class at the beginning of each session ; we will wonder in particular what would bring to the global meaning of the picture (and at what place ?) the addition of a specific character.

In order to give pupils an idea of the kind of decor to achieve, they are presented with Picasso's work "Guernica".



*Guernica (1937)*



At the same occasion, they'll also understand in what way Picasso drew as Miró, while we've deliberately put aside the heavy figurative 'load' which, for its part, has always distinguished the two painters.

The way of drawing of Picasso will be even more clearly understood by children, when at the beginning of a later session they'll see a series of selected scenes from the documentary 'The Mystery of Picasso' (a film by Clouzot). Although Picasso is a little further from the core subject than Miró, 'The Mystery of Picasso' presents him in the very act of his creation, filmed in real time, and shows us a truly present and accessible painter, which stimulates the pupils.

The 3 decors realized by the school pupils are collective works on each of which 2 or 3 classes work.



*Look out, I'm going to go off the route!* (2,4x1,2m) made by 2 second grade classes.

Man against nature : a Formula 1 car is traveling at high speed on a road that is not finished, knocking over everyone in its path. Implicitly, the decor showcases man's excesses on nature and himself.



*Attack on the titans by dragons (2,4x1,2m) realized by 2 second grade classes.*

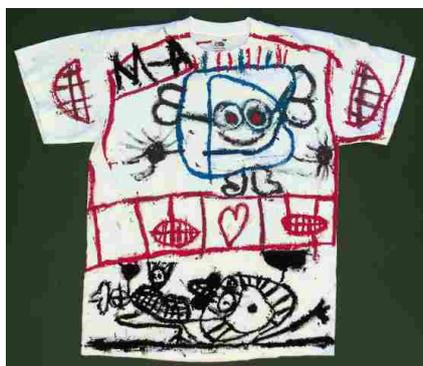
Nature against nature : 3 dragons, with some accomplices, attack other characters called 'titans'.  
This time, the scene is that of a war of nature against itself.



*Police gives back freedom to prisoners returning to the small town (2,4x1,2m)  
made by 3 first grade classes.*

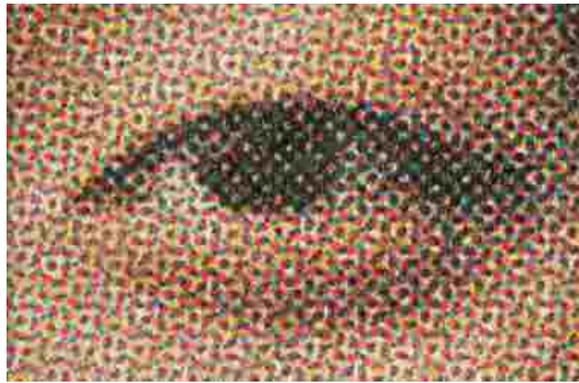
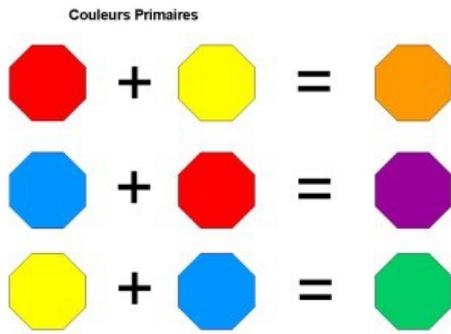
Man for man : the police brings out the prisoners from the prison, so they can return to live in the society. What is called 'recycling' and is related to material objects and natural resources, is part of a much broader vision than ecology. This amounts in each case to avoiding sticking too quickly the labels 'useless' or 'harmful' on what we are simply not able to integrate into our existence. This spirit of re-valuation, which is reflected in part in recycling, also comes through what is called, this time on a human level : 'reintegration'.

Throughout the sessions, t-shirts that are 'recovered', but still in one piece, are given in dribs and drabs to the pupils who demonstrate at that time the most creativity in their individual paintings, either by complex and very well done characters or by sometimes extremely simple but expressive ones.



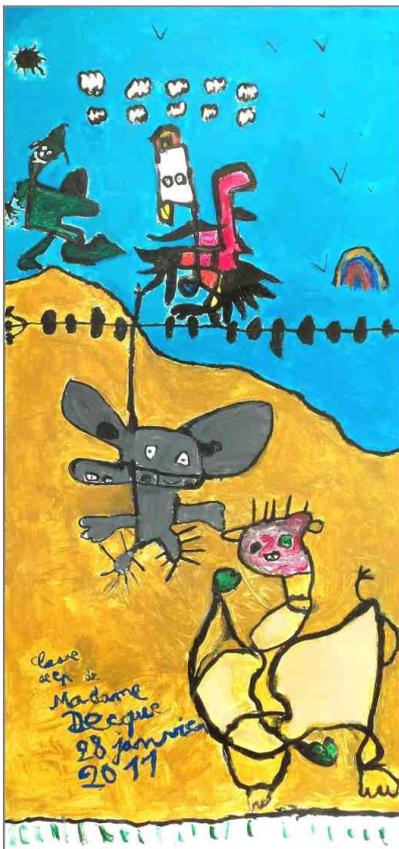
The differences between Miró and Picasso will also be addressed, in order to bring a solution to children who have less success in finding good characters. Through the study of *Guernica*, it is easy to identify Picasso's favorite personages : horses, bulls, and women. The characters of Miró are much less easily identifiable, much more abstract. However, as we saw on the video excerpts about Picasso, the two painters draw apparently in the same manner, starting with lines that seem made at random. If Picasso, then, regularly ends up with the same 'library' of characters this is because, at least in his case, the improvisation which seems to inspire his drawing is, eventually, perhaps not so improvised...

We also observe in each session, when the drawings are shown to the class, that even while the pupils play the game not to decide, a priori, what they would draw, the first lines they trace do not seem done in a fully chaotic way. Some tend to draw 'at random' mostly geometric shapes, some draw curved lines, others straight lines, lines that intersect to form recurring angles, at regular frequencies, or with the same density from one drawing to another, for each pupil... The remedy will be, when it's hard to find a character, to change the kind of lines one claims to do 'randomly' at the beginning, in order to unlock the imagination by freeing it of a lines style in which it persists without results. Starting with a little 'trick' (sometimes unpopular!) which consists in getting the starting lines drawn, as usual, by each kid, before asking them to pass their drawings to their neighbors on the right to continue them, forcing everyone to draw at least once on lines they really didn't choose.



Throughout the sessions the pupils will assimilate by practice what are the 'primary colors', and how by mixing those colors they can obtain all the others. Both while doing small mixtures in their seats to do their individual drawings with new colors at each lesson, and during the more massive use of paint on the cardboard decors and the wooden doors.

As well as for the decors, we have to find with the children a title to give to the painted doors. The title punctuates the creation of a meaning, while remaining sufficiently abstract to be open to the imagination. It is more than a specific message or a particular story, and must be able to speak to people outside the classroom (for example pupils from another class, siblings or parents).

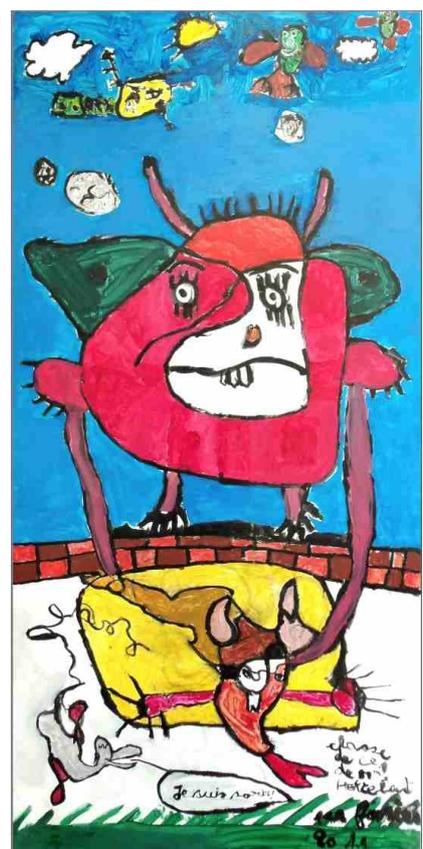


*The bird saves the mouse from the cat's claws.*  
(2x1m)  
First grade class



*An Eskimo dog catches a strange fish.*  
(2x1m)

Second grade class



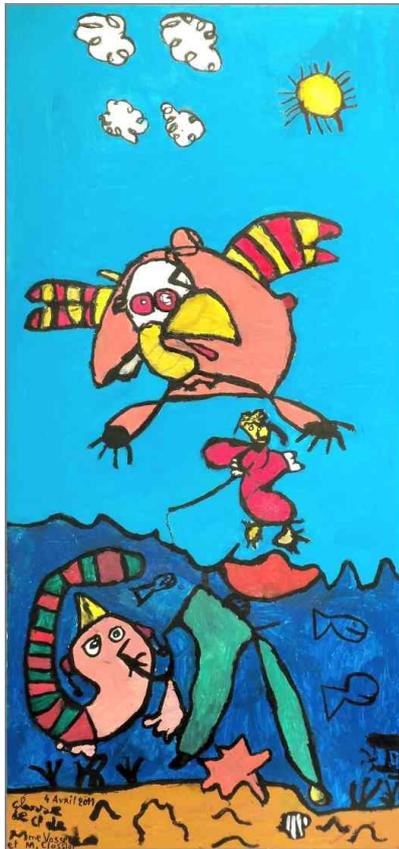
*Bon appétit, dragon eater !*  
(2x1m)  
Second grade class



Frimousse, the dog of Karachie the bat, wakes up the sleeping dragon. (2x1m) Second grade class



Waiter, a coffee, a cake, and a monster ! (2x1m) Second grade class



Me too I want some fish ! (2x1m) First grade class



Hey you monkey, who has the best balance ? (2x1m) First grade class

The selection of titles was the preparatory step to the exhibition, it is the last step of each collective creation : the inter-class creations (the decors, made of a mosaic of individual creations that have been integrated together), and the creations by class (the doors). The exhibition of the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 presented to the parents all the creations by category :



The 7 wooden doors 2m high, linked together in the covered playground of the school.



Parents could come to retrieve the t-shirts the same day.



In the school yard, the 3 decors are attached along the walls.



At the end of the yard, a tiny fraction of individual drawings on all media are stuck on the windows of the library.





Use of a photo of the still unfinished doors, to illustrate the word 'chantier' ('worksite') in the 'Schoolchildren's dictionary', an online dictionary created in 2010-2011 by the Ministry of Education and the National Center of Educational Documentation (CNDP).




# Dictionnaire des écoliers

Des milliers de mots pour réussir à l'école

## chantier

CP - CE1

**Genre**  
masculin

**Définition**  
C'est un endroit où l'on construit quelque chose, où il y a des travaux commencés (dans une maison, à l'école, sur une route...).

**Phrase d'exemple**  
Pour notre spectacle de fin d'année, nous fabriquons notre décor, il est encore en chantier.

mot précédent  
← chanter

mot suivant  
→ chantonner

Je recherche un mot précis

Historique de tes recherches



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The word 'bazar' ('shambles'), defined using a photo of the shirts used to paint.

ministère  
Éducation  
supérieure  
jeunesse  
et sport

SCÉRÉN  
CNDP-CRDP

# Dictionnaire des écoliers

Des milliers de mots pour réussir à l'école

## bazar

CP - CE1

**Genre**  
masculin

**Définition**  
C'est un endroit où les objets sont en désordre, ils ne sont pas rangés à la même place que d'habitude.

**Phrase d'exemple**  
Quel bazar dans la salle d'arts plastiques ! Toutes nos blouses sont en désordre !

**Synonymes**

- désordre



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**Définitions des autres cycles**

➤ [Définition des grandes sections](#)

mot précédent  
bavardage

mot suivant  
beaufort



Assemblage and fixing of the doors, by the Lesquin municipality, in the covered playground of the school :

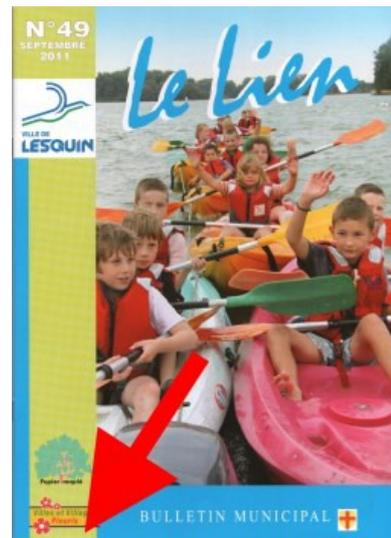


**PRESS**



'La Voix du Nord' (Villeneuve d'Ascq)  
June 29, 2011

'Le Lien' #49, Lesquin, September 2011



**Pasteur, Une fin d'année chargée en évènements comme en récompenses !**

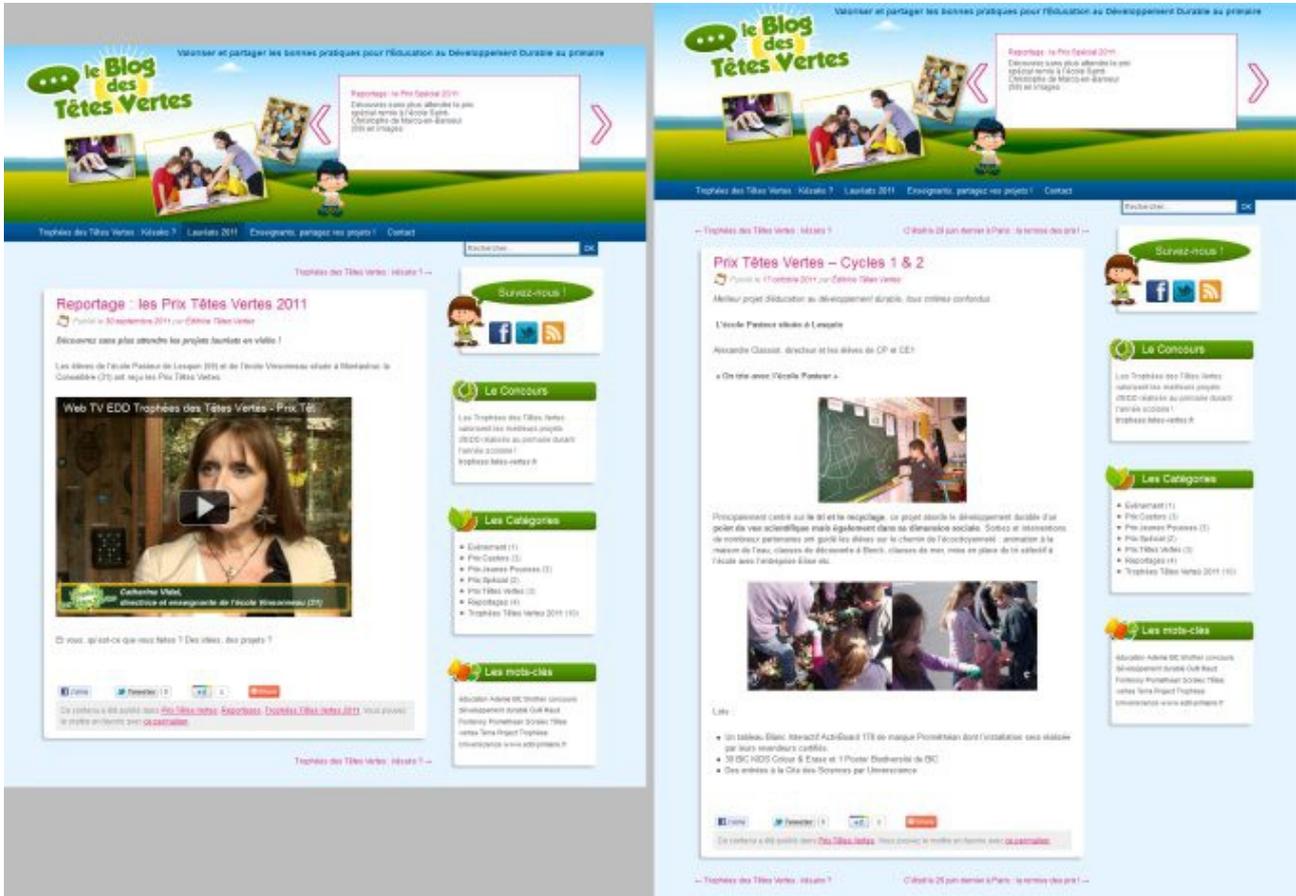


Le mois de juin aura été très chargé pour les élèves de l'école Pasteur : une comédie musicale sur le thème de la protection de l'environnement, une exposition d'Arts Plastiques sur divers supports recyclés, avec la collaboration du peintre lillois Eric BOURDON. Dans sa démarche d'enseignement du respect de l'environnement et la sensibilisation des élèves au tri des déchets et au recyclage, l'école a aussi reçu deux

récompenses : 1<sup>ère</sup> : le label "Eco-Ecole", il s'agit d'un label décerné aux écoles élémentaires, collèges et lycées qui s'engagent vers un fonctionnement éco-responsable et intègrent l'Education au Développement Durable dans leurs enseignements.  
2<sup>ème</sup> : Toujours pour son projet environnemental, l'école a remporté le Trophée des "Têtes Vertes". Elle a obtenu le 1<sup>er</sup> prix dans sa catégorie. Il s'agit d'un tableau numérique interactif qui sera installé dans la salle informatique de l'école.



► 2 posts on “the Green Heads' Blog” of the agency for education to sustainable development 'Terra Project' ([www.terra-project.fr](http://www.terra-project.fr)):



**Reportage : the 2011 Green Heads' Awards**

(Sept 2011)

Discover right now the winning projects in video !

and

**Green Heads' Awards - 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grades**

(Oct 2011)

Best project of education to sustainable development, on all criteria.

The Pasteur school in Lesquin



Drawing courses mentioned in the video reportage of the agency 'Terra Project' :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZZP1WJERX0>

" The Lille painter Eric Bourdon has come to work on artistic techniques, making references to some painters of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, as Miró, or Picasso. Recycled materials have been given the place of honor through the elaboration of frescoes and collaborative works. "

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### Project

Creation of collective and individual pictorial works using recycled materials :

- individual works on fabric, recycled paper, cardboard, aluminum, plastic, newspaper, recovered t-shirts...
- a collective work per class (the 'doors'), on wooden vertical recovered support, one by two meters. 7 doors in total.
- a collective work for 2 or 3 classes (the 'decors') on horizontal cardboard 2.40m on 1.20m. 3 decors in total.

Exhibition of all the creations at the end of the year.

### The objectives

Through the analysis and practice of an artistic approach, to get pupils to take an interest in pictorial art, developed in the ecological spirit of *recycling*, both through the recycled materials used to paint, and the drawing technique itself (which reveals detailed portraits from a mess of a priori meaningless lines).

### Link with the school project

To learn to respect each other and build with him, in a collective and ecological art project.

### The skills we wish the children to acquire

- to establish relations between the approaches and processes identified in the works and their own productions.
- to recognize and name some of the works by Joan Miró and Picasso and to relate the works to each other.
- to realize their own creations with an 'ecological' mindset fully coordinated with the artistic concept. The artistic intent of the project is not to create a painting "from scratch", but to observe the presence of already existing forms on which we will gradually work in order to give them meaning and identity. The ecological spirit of the project is also to take over existing objects, that were not originally designed for the project, and recreating a new meaning by working them, changing their order and meaning.
- to be able to draw characters with a little more advanced structure than one typically draws between 6 and 8 years old.
- to transmit, through practice, the idea that the process of artistic creation is not rational and doesn't require to decide what we *want* to draw, before starting to draw it. Creativity starts by a direct, natural, and a bit chancy contact with the tool and the creative media, which one

tries to control gradually, through improvisation. Children will thereby gain the notion of the specificity of artistic creation, and especially a notion that instead of defining and freeze their creativity in this area, will open a whole path of development, a world of possible choices and freedom.

- in relation to the above, and on a more general level than art, delaying the process of decision, not putting the decision *before* the creation, letting creation come and acting on it only in a progressive, measured way, in relation to what appears, invites to confront situations and problems as they occur, to reduce or play with prejudice, and finally to acknowledge that we see in the forms what we ourselves project into them, and that we are the ones who give meaning to things. From an ecological point of view, it empowers us by showing that it is only up to us to give back sense to the objects that are no longer used.

