

JANUARY NEWS FROM THE ATELIER

All the variety, all the charm, all the beauty of life is made up of light and shadow.”

-Leo Tolstoy

Light and darkness hold fascination and intrigue, as well as an element of risk and challenge and of being scared. Exploring light and shadow is one of the many languages children adopt to appreciate the awe and wonder of the world around them. Light provides the basis for much of our current technology and is largely responsible for the way we view our world. When children are offered the opportunity to discover the way light plays a vital role in our daily lives, they are empowered with knowledge.



The invitation of overhead lights being dim, flashlights, a light table and reading lights available beconning the children to explore the light or dark. As the children discovered, there was no place or object that did not escape their curiosity. This included shining the light on different surfaces, waving it around to try to follow it, attempting to illuminate darker spaces, etc. The wonder of light intrigues all who attempt to control its magic. Shadow, glow, luminosity, radiance, and silhouette are just a few of the concepts

children explore as they learn about the element of light. Also children are exploring a whole range of theories from reflection to perspective, size, transparency and colour to position, interplay and shapes.



In the children's stories, their curiosity about light comes through when they compare a discovery with something known to them. Like a popular reference to the circular shape of the light is the moon. This reference conjures up thoughts for children like J where he begins talking of "sleeping in my bed- the moon- the night." or Isabelle working with a clear stone and light and saying "the moon is shiney." Or the atmosphere of the light play illicites thoughts of our beloved Mud Monster. This character seems to be coming up quite frequently

in the Atelier. Here is an exchange between children of the Ladybug classroom after turning all the lights off in the Atelier.



Lily W.: Where's the Mud Monster?
Eloise H.: Maybe he's in his cave at Grant Park.
Ascher C.: There's no Mud Monster in the Atelier.
Eloise H.: I don't like Mud Monster's they get mud on me.
Ascher C.: He has claws and arms.
Eloise H. : He has clothes on.
Vincent C.: Turn on the light.
He's not here yet.

Experimenting with light and dark, with on and off, leads children to think about the ideas of the absence of light and the absence of dark. In art this is an important concept- that of empty space. Each day as we casually go between light and dark many times, the changes seem familiar. Some seldom stop to look at the appearances of light and shadows, or to wonder about what we see. In this way we are curious about children's interest in something so ordinary that we pass it by, but which contains so much to notice and think about?



Wishing you well,
Belinda

