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## **Circus Education is Circus and More**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Is it a bold statement to say that circus everything? The name itself (coming from Latin circus) means circle, which stands for completeness on its own. *What gives its unique completeness to circus, how is it different from other genres in the world of culture?*

Circus is art, science, sport, and eurhythmics at the same time; it is sensible reality, and soaring fantasy; alongside with enthralling view, fascinating sounding, and peerless forms of series of individual and communal movement between humans, animals, and objects. The live performances of circus artists provide messages, feelings, and stories, direct, and without words. In the meantime, the sensation of personal connection is given to all in every single unreproducible moment; should it be spent in the height or the depth of the round, as if spherical public area of the circus tent or building. **The artistic mission of circus, which at the same time is the base of its very own sustainability, is that it can evoke emotions: excitement, fear, surprise, admiration, catharsis...**

A circus act is often unbelievable, yet it is true – as artists may be seen from all the angles –, while the circus pays equal attention to its audience; plays with them, gets them involved, and pushes boundaries, for which momentarily illusion and dazzling trick are tools as well as absurd humour or the comic relief of clumsiness. Everyone can imagine themselves doing circus acts, as everyone is good, moreover, exceptional in one thing or another! The miracle lies in everyone, and to activate this miracle, the expression of ourselves, the cultivation of our skills, the overcome of our disadvantages, circus in education now is available. **The educational mission of circus, which at the same time is the base of its very own sustainability, is that it can trigger the change in people's knowledge, abilities, and attitude.**

If the circus is everything, circus in education is everything plus one: because its core – the physical activity, and the practice of the never-ending variety of forms of circus-related movements – is not simply physical education, but a complex experience that affects feelings and thoughts. Circus genres – should they be acrobatics, training animals, or making people laugh – make one experience the (most) basic human attitudes through exercising together, by pointing out the lack of trust between each other, or prejudices on top of developing affective, cognitive, and motoric areas. The circus builds on the view “everyone is good at something, and everyone is good at something different,” and anyone participating in circus in education can first-handedly experience this. This self- and community-awareness helps personal

empathy and tolerance to improve, to understand and accept differences of others, and, not in the least, inspires to help others in an active manner.

Although people with physical disabilities<sup>1</sup> were put on show and mocked a hundred years ago, today's circus does not only help its audience by providing accessible performances, but also treats the people, who take use of any kind of their disadvantages as a source of force and may even amaze the audience in the circus ring, as equal partners<sup>2</sup>. **The social mission of circus, which at the same time is the base of its very own sustainability, is that it is indeed for everyone.**

2



*'Lázár Ervin' Program for students in the Capital Circus of Budapest. Photo: Ádám Urbán*

### **Circus in education: there was, there is, there will be**

Circus in education, in a broad sense, is the social use of circus phenomena, ever existent in every culture and historical era. Motions, tricks, comedic reliefs, and successes in animal training have been known since archaic era cultures up until this day, alongside with their ritual, sacral, or simply entertaining, either militaristic, or sporting purposes. One might see, for example, ball-jugglers on ancient Egyptian representations, knights twirling maces in caudexes from the middle-ages, and people on stilts, tight-rope equilibrists, snake charmers,

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<sup>1</sup> Vö. Weigel, J. & Weigel, R. (rend.) (2009): *The Butterfly Circus* [A Pillangócirkusz]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUcVs09zFps> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>2</sup> Omnium Circus (2021): Omnium: A Bold New Circus. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bMPDpX1OEw&t=2s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

and other side-showers may be seen on different works of fine art<sup>3</sup>. Amazing the others with unmatched physical capabilities, skilful tricks, or the ability to communicate with animals – well, this has always been entertaining for both the artist and their admirers. The role of circus however has never been solely entertainment, as it was always educational as well: exotic animals in the ring, exciting acrobatic acts on stage, peoples and cultures from long distance, people with differences, technical and scientific innovations, and adaptations of historical events could all be seen. The sensation of the circus back then – consciously or unconsciously – formed the way of people’s thinking, and raised their interest in the behaviour of animals, or of the human body.

### **Circus in education: a little bit of this, a little bit of that**

Circus in education is evolving at the same speed internationally, as well as in Hungary. Alongside the informal educational fields of circuses, there are more special, non-formal and formal disciplines of circus in education. These are circus in education methods specifically made and used for educational and pedagogical purposes. In every new discipline of circus in education, thus in every one of them, the once popular side-shows and new era circus artists play the key role, but physical activity serves to achieve a different educational aim.

*What are the different educational aims in the field of circus in education in leisure-time circus, social circus, therapy circus, and in classical circus in education?*

- The so-called **leisure-time circus** is a natural part of well-being, it aims to play and entertain through the movements of circus. While participants learn about the boundaries of their bodies, and their skills, they can evaluate their endurance and creativity, and practice how to learn from and work with each other.
- **Social circus** aims to solve social problems, contributes to the well-being of persons or groups of physical, or any other disability by improving their social and mobile skills, providing them positive feedback, and the experience of joy, and success.
- **Therapy circus** means an innovative approach in medicine, aims for cognitive, neural, and motoric improvement. Its environment, first, is psychiatric, and is used among persons of physical or mental disability, or as part of treatment for learning and behaviour problems<sup>4</sup>.
- **Classical circus in education** connects directly to the public education system. It maintains balance between theoretical and physical development and stays aware of the needs of circus and school education. Classical circus in education explains the

<sup>3</sup> Nemzeti Cirkuszművészeti Központ, Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2020): Magyar Cirkuszművészet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHrBPY2XDI8&t=10s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Gyarmathy Éva: Zsonglőrökés a 21. században. Magyar Zsonglőr Egyesület. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmqutK5mao> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

acts of circus art and makes learning materials more picturesque through the art of circus movements and detailed insight of circus phenomena. Similarly, to all the disciplines of circus in education, it helps us to learn of ourselves and our ambience, to discover our hidden abilities, and to unwrap our skills.

The different disciplines all share the **point of view of the “contemporary circus”** (the word is borrowed from the Hungarian Juggler Association [Magyar Zsonglőr Egyesület]), which carries a **radical way of opening to share circus knowledge, and to participate in the circus**. The openness of circus in education allows juggling, balance, acrobatics, or any circus genre to be taught, tried, practiced, and showcase based on cooperation and participation, either individually or in community, to cause joy and success to anyone.



*Circus in education program of the Capital Circus of Budapest at a Waldorf school. Photo: Ádám Urbán*

### **Circus in education here and there**

The spread of view and practice of circus in education can be seen since the mid-‘90s. Similar initiatives were present in the ‘60s in the Netherlands by the **Circus Elleboog**<sup>5</sup> company, and in Spain by the **Circo de Los Muchachos** company<sup>6</sup>, who organised circus in education

<sup>5</sup> Circus Elleboog (2013): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H70-ZDCQhJg> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>6</sup> Circo de Los Muchachos (2011): 25 años. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crpDfqtARqk> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

activities in which orphans, homeless, and other children and youngsters with different social disadvantages could participate. From the seventies onwards, the gradual social conquest of the circus, community forms based on participation, the determinability of leisure-time and social circuses became more apparent. **Mobile Mini Circus for Children**<sup>7</sup>, operating in war-torn Afghanistan affect children's lives coming from absolute poverty, and locked away from every possibility of consumption of culture. They develop self-esteem, and concentration, while raises attention, and discipline. **Cirkus Cirkör**<sup>8</sup>, located in Sweden, started their circus educational activity in 1995, who, in their programs offered entertaining ways to learn mathematics in detail, while success in development in self-determination, bravery, and risk-taking was also noted.

High-quality circus-educational activity in Hungary is provided by the **Hungarian Juggler Association**<sup>9</sup>, founded in 2000, which, as a civil organization, among juggling, is indeed active in raising awareness, publication, as well as in theoretical and practical education. Their program called *A cirkusz mindenké [Circus is for everyone]* is outstanding as social activity<sup>10</sup>. In their understanding, in social circus, circus arts may be used as tools on their events in order to move social integration forward, for example among youngsters of the Roma community<sup>11</sup>.

Specific shows of the **Hungarian National Circus**, which are connected to the public educational system, and are showcasing learning materials, can be brought up as domestic examples of classical circus in education. These shows, entitled *Tudomány a porondon*<sup>12</sup> [*Science in the ring*], run twice a year in Budapest and in Savaria.

Certain alternative schools – operating in the public education system – provide their own circus educational programs, which can be seen as an integrated solution in terms of formal and non-formal education. **Waldorf-schools** have been offering classes based on circuslike physical activity forms (project-weeks and summer camps) as fundamental parts of their educational program. Circus activities – juggling, plate-spinning, devil-sticks, diabolo, acrobatics etc... – indirectly develop students' learning abilities and social competences, which is presented to each other, their teachers, and their parents at the end of the school year<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> MMCC Global (2021): Back to Life: Mobile Mini Circus for Children. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x\\_XYhmis7js](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_XYhmis7js) (Letöltés: 2023.02.22.)

<sup>8</sup> Cirkus Cirkör: <https://cirkor.se/en> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>9</sup> Magyar Zsonglőr Egyesület: <https://www.youtube.com/@MZsonglorEgyesulet> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>10</sup> A Magyar Zsonglőr Egyesület szociális cirkuszi küldetése: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGD30V470mo> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>11</sup> Magyar Zsonglőr Egyesület: *Ethnocirkusz, Sajókaza*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFxDMR8BuS0> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>12</sup> Magyar Nemzeti Cirkusz (2020): *Tudomány a porondon a Magyar Nemzeti Cirkusszal*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHSZSBWtTxQ&t=838s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.27.)

<sup>13</sup> Waldorf Fészek Iskola (2017): WALDORF Fészek Iskola hatodikosok Cirkusz Előadása. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv3ixOsGctQ> (Letöltés: 2023.02.27.)



*External secondary school circus in education presentation: circus art, of the Capital circus of Budapest. Photo: Ádám Urbán*

## Circus in education in the public educational system

Domestic gifted and talented education (GATE) traces back to long past as it has been operating for more than 70 years. Its public and vocal education and training was renewed lately, the formal education and training program got more detailed. The **Baross Imre Artista- és Előadó-művészeti Akadémia Szakgimnázium, Gimnázium, Technikum és Alapfokú Művészeti Iskola**<sup>14</sup> welcomes gifted pupils wishing to become circus artists from the age of ten. Several other professions – that are connected to the circus – such as stage and ring technician, theatre technician, actor, and stage dancer are also taught here.

The Government of Hungary started the project called **Lázár Ervin Program** to make art, including circus art, available to every child in public education regardless of social status or physical location. The shows of the Capital Circus of Budapest welcome elementary and secondary school students. Classical circus in education events regarding the show are held afterwards in the schools. The **Department of Circus in Education** of The Capital Circus of Budapest provides task sheets, and online lectures<sup>15</sup> to help this effort. The materials – of

<sup>14</sup> Baross Imre Artistaképző Szakgimnázium: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oNbOPwhGc> (Letöltés: 2023.02.26.)

<sup>15</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2020): Lázár Ervin Program közvetítése. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51HTBDh49el&t=13s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.28.)

science subjects, which have already been, or will be taught to the students – come illustrated with pictures, figures, and animations connected to the circus performance, both in the shows and in the task sheets. Sixth graders, for example, are to solve an exercise of physics – connected to a trapeze act –, including questions about force, gravity, kinetic energy, and interactions, and are free to express opinions on questions such as responsible animal husbandry, or limits of the human body.

The Capital Circus of Budapest provides classical circus in education to children in need, in the **Elizabeth Camps** at Zánka. For them, the program's experience is complete by learning circus-related skills: juggling, equilibria, field acrobatics, and all the materials are available in the form of online lectures<sup>16</sup>.

Online circus in education lectures and task sheets available as appendix of circus magazines are for pedagogists, as well: which means **materials, side-tasks**, and new inspiration for educators.

### Circus in Education in Higher Education

National Circus Arts Centre offers circus in education – based on participation – in higher education for its cooperative partners, such as **the Department of Ethnology of the University of Debrecen**, and the **Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest**, both for educators and for students. Temporary courses of circus history and of circus theory are led by the scientific members of the study group of the **Museum, Library and Archives of Hungarian Circus Arts** (experts of history, ethnography, aesthetics, literature, and ethology), who inspire the critical way of thinking about circus, newest research, and creative development.

Cultural State Secretariat of the Ministry of Human Resources launched a new higher educational program in the academic year of 2020/21 called *A magyar kultúra felfedezése – Csontváry Program* [*The Discovery of Hungarian Culture – Csontváry Program*]. The program, as it consists of visiting cultural institute's shows, and participation-based arts in education events afterwards, can be chosen as elective courses. The aim of Csontváry Program is to educate people on the values of Hungarian cultural heritage – among which circus arts hold a place. The Capital Circus of Budapest hosts organised groups of students, who watch the show, then take part in a supplementary education in circus course according to their discipline given by a crew consisting of scientific, circus expert, and circus artist members.

Many are taken by surprise, or even doubt that every scientific field is present able to research at the circus. This triggered scientific members of the circus to share a scenic presentative

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<sup>16</sup> Erzsébet Táborok (2020): Gyakorlatozz a cirkusszal! 1–6. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ\\_rVfoF7Fw&list=PLHO7T-4NXJ3swxPlwFp6LW9hfpKWnJ2oC&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ_rVfoF7Fw&list=PLHO7T-4NXJ3swxPlwFp6LW9hfpKWnJ2oC&index=2) (Letöltés: 2023.02.27.)

video about the surprisingly rich constructive collaboration between circus and science, covering ethnography, physics, psychology, and ethology<sup>17</sup>.



*External secondary school circus in education presentation: humour, of the Capital circus of Budapest. Photo: Ádám Urbán*

A new chapter begins in circus arts and tertiary education in the autumn of 2023, when a new, epoch-making faculty will open. Circus Arts BA will open its doors at **Budapest Circus Art and Contemporary Dance College**, offers courses for students who desire to become clowns, horse-acrobats, or circus dancers. Previously, in January 2023, Budapest Circus Art and Contemporary Dance College launched its first **Education in Circus** continuous education course for educators and circus experts. High quality, formal circus faculties are hoped to become an important pillar of resources for developments of education in circus, and a place of scientific discussions.

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<sup>17</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2021): Tudomány és cirkusz. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iNSau2-CCs&ab\\_channel=FővárosiNagycirkusz](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iNSau2-CCs&ab_channel=FővárosiNagycirkusz) (Letöltés: 2023.02.25.)



## The initials of circus in education at the Capital Circus of Budapest

Circus in education program at the Capital Circus of Budapest kicked off on 21 October 2016, following the show entitled *Lúdas Matyi a cirkuszban [Mattie the Goose-Boy in the Circus]*, and appeared among domestic culture in education services. The first **irregular classes** were held by adventure-seeking physics, biology, chemistry, mathematics, Hungarian language and literature, history, and PE teachers, who succeeded at the ‘circus marketplace of ideas’ application<sup>18</sup>. Students participating in lectures were presented with interesting and surprising connections between performances of circus artists and the learning material: *What is the connection between the horses’ movement and the circumference of the ring? What does the speed of oscillation of the trapeze depend on? How does friction affect the spin of the acrobat? How strong is the force weighing down the shoulders of the artist at the bottom of the man tower? What helps the handstand artist maintaining his balance? How many balls can a juggler throw in the air at one time?*

To answer these questions, naturally, one must see the circus show, try the circus movements, to discover, and to reinterpret these in the confines of the learning material. This knowledge and these skills may be applied later in a wider environment. The educational process, which usually goes on smoothly, is done very differently depending on age, competence, and social background. Emerging needs and requirements affected the educational services of the Capital Circus of Budapest. The classical circus in education program, which started in 2016 with irregular classes, and school educators, has contributed to social diversity, and developed according to diverse learning needs and aims. The number of programs provided within the confines of circus in education has increased, the emphasis shifted from learning materials to skill-development, arts in education, gifted and talented education, and the creation of equity, professionals of the circus gained the majority among providers of this kind of interpretation, while several other fields and co-operational institutions of the circus joined in. The Capital Circus of Budapest created **complex circus in education**, which can open-mindedly, and flexibly react to the needs of circus arts, public education, and society, and develop its services accordingly.

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<sup>18</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2017): Cirkuszpedagógiai műhely a Fővárosi Nagycirkuszban. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kks5Vvxbhz4> (Letöltés: 2023.02.20.)



*Skill-development in the ring at the Capital Circus of Budapest. Photo: Ádám Urbán*

## Complex boundaries of education in circus at The Capital Circus of Budapest

As an institute of performing arts of **National Circus Arts Centre**, the **Capital Circus of Budapest** provides the most prominent issues and fundamental field for education in circus. The **Section of Education in Circus** operates under the unit of scientific methods of the National Circus Arts Centre, and its main task is to develop complex education in circus programs, to organise and lead group projects, to generate and coordinate certain education in circus initiatives in different disciplines of the circus, and to manage external education in circus programs<sup>19</sup>.

The Section of Education in Circus' work, among others, is aided by the **Museum, Library and Archives of Hungarian Circus Arts** (part of the unit of scientific methods of the National Circus Arts Centre), whose aim is to enrich the public collection<sup>20</sup>, and to conduct research, but also to create exhibitions which are to be used for the sake of education in circus<sup>21</sup>, to make interpretational developments<sup>22</sup>, to organise programs for education in

<sup>19</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2023): Cirkusz Kommandó. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qbtFO1Jvo0> (Letöltés: 2023. 02.20.)

<sup>20</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2023): 1000 könyv. Tudomány világnapja és könyvünnep a Fővárosi Nagycirkuszban. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pd2RRYPtaeo> (Letöltés: 2023.02.20.)

<sup>21</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2023): Circus Museum Flash N.001. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwL5yYgr3JI> (Letöltés: 2023.02.23.)

<sup>22</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2023): Életre kelt képek. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTBek9KWYg8> (Letöltés: 2023.02.23.)

museum<sup>23</sup>, and last, but not least, to provide support and an adaptational base for development in methods of education in circus.



*Interactive, museum in education tableau at the permanent exhibition of the Capital Circus of Budapest. Photo: Emese Joó*

The method-developmental, managerial, and coordinational work of the Section of Education in Circus to the **complex education in circus program** of the Capital Circus of Budapest develops and co-ordinates the following types of practices:

1. **Irregular class**<sup>24</sup> – classical education in circus program, made for elementary and secondary school students, consisting of interconnected material connected equally to circus arts and public education inside the ring of the circus before or after the show.
2. **Learn Circus!**<sup>25</sup> – travelling education in circus workshop, aiming at skill-development for elementary and secondary school students. Basic forms of movement used in the circus (juggling, equilibria, human tower, etc...) are introduced to and practiced by students in schools, according to the school's needs.

<sup>23</sup> Múzeumjáró (2020): *Múzeumjáró* 115. Cirkuszmúzeum, cirkuszpedagógia. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEaJaaD7aMA&t=389s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.23.)

<sup>24</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2019): Rendhagyó énekóra a manézspan! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULo6WtpguBE> (Letöltés: 2023.02.24.)

<sup>25</sup> Fészek Waldorf Iskola (2021): Tanulj cirkuszt! A Fészek Waldorf Iskola 7. osztálya 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSKGvAj-OgM&t=50s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.24.)

3. **Audio narration** – an integrated circus program of compensation and of equal opportunity, limitless of age. The program is created for blind and visually impaired persons and their accompanying personnel. The aim of the program is let blind and visually impaired people to “watch” the show, while listening to audio narration, after providing tactile detection in the ring in an hour’s span beforehand.
4. **Responsible animal husbandry** – sensitising ethologic class with animals participating – can be held before or after the show – made for elementary and secondary school students.
5. **Education in museum** – interactive, interpretative, and analytic, museum education class held for elementary and secondary school students on artifacts connected to the circus, at the circus exhibitions before the show.
6. **Movie-aesthetics** – interactive, interpretative class held at schools for secondary school students, consisting of showcasing excerpts of movies connected to the world of circus.
7. **Humour** – humorous, interactive, role-playing program connected to the world of circus held by circus artists for secondary school students at schools.
8. **Path-orientation** – made for secondary school students, to present the universality of the circus, and the possible professions and life-path through the presentation of available secondary and tertiary educational choices, at schools.



*Responsible animal husbandry program in the shared area of Capital Circus of Budapest.  
Photo: Ádám Urbán*

**Complex circus in education as such**

The Capital Circus of Budapest provides the newest service of all in terms of domestic cultural and circus fields. Its typical characteristic is that it is **free** for participants, has **no limits of age**, and it is **flexible** regarding of time and place.

One of the main conditions of complex circus in education is **watching the circus show, the circus experience**, for which the reason and the goal is to understand and progress it. Performances of circus artists, which can be seen on the stage, are analysed on programs provided by the Capital Circus of Budapest, by the audience and by our organised groups. This is done through direct conversation in the wide historic system of domestic and international web of nexus of circus phenomena but approached from the present. We offer the experience of learning about the circus with a differentiated, chance-creating approach through theoretical and practical knowledge for everyone, this way we can see how well prepared our audience is about the circus.

The centre of complex education in circus is **circus exercise**. Conventional circus arts turn from view into action in classical education in circus. Circus opens for everyone, and does not only allow, but also encourages others to participate: to try to learn and present more forms of circus movements. In circus in education, conscious development of motoric skills is prioritised, which, of course, brings the improvement of affective and cognitive skills, while affects personal and social traits, such as working together, teamwork, measurement, precision, bravery, risk-taking, balance, trust, and creativity, all of which is necessary in- and outside of the circus world. Circus in education is not a hidden way to train future circus artists, but anyone participating could find a set of skills in themselves that can eventually lead to formal circus in education.

Alongside with physical education, knowledge and personal experience of **special circus activities** based on participation is important, for example, sensitising educational class with domesticated animals kept in the circus held by circus ethologists, interactive role-play with circus comics and clowns, organising circus requisites or analysing circus related pieces of art with circus museologists, musical or dance rehearsals with the circus orchestra and the ballet, light and sound testing with technicians, costume try-outs with circus designers, communicational course with circus marketing experts, etc...

Complex circus in education includes classical circus in education, whose main profile is its **connection to public education**: circus phenomena are used to present and deepen school materials and are embedded into subjects to better understand them – this can be, if needed, connected to fields of education and competence accordingly. Theoretical and practical material (such as educational videos, quizzes, additional task sheets, etc...) is made to help the work of fellow educators, and to give students tasks they can work effectively on together and individually<sup>26</sup>.

Complex circus in education is a **non-formal pedagogy** form that connects directly or indirectly to public education, whose practice is not school pedagogical, but – similarly to museum in education – is a form of **art in education**. Spontaneous efforts to create forms of

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26 Erzsébet Táborok (2020): Gyakorlatozz a cirkusszal! 1–6. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ\\_rVfoF7Fw&list=PLHO7T-4NXJ3swxPlwFp6LW9hfpKWnJ2oC&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ_rVfoF7Fw&list=PLHO7T-4NXJ3swxPlwFp6LW9hfpKWnJ2oC&index=2) (Letöltés: 2023.02.27.)

art in education is prevalent on circus in education events in both the Capital Circus of Budapest and in external public education locations. Those fellow circus workers, who work on such events are usually not practiced in non-formal educational environment, while museum-educators are usually not familiar with the circus, the following techniques of art in education may be instructive from both points of view:

1. **changing points of view:** let us choose a present day, contemporary circus topic that affects the life of participants, or that may be important to them (an issue or an activity), and build the process on their reactions, progress accordingly to their questions.
2. **preparation:** use concrete examples, interesting stories, entertaining anecdotes in the form of objects, photographs, billboards, or films, rather than general ones. Also, preferably, involve circus artists or experienced circus experts.
3. **less is more:** meeting is for once and is short. To create a better personal experience, have one well-defined topic, action, or issue – and reduce elements of no importance.
4. **neutrality:** avoid expressing our subjective opinions and feelings that can influence participants' expressions, moreover, at times, we may even stop them from forming their own opinions.
5. **multiplied intelligence:** students start their circus in education program with a “clean sheet,” which means that none of their previous studies mean neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. The program brings forward the fields of intelligence that are not that prevalent in public education, thus not only the best students can achieve their goals.
6. **breaking the ice:** initially, start with a game, activity, or opening question to get informed about their preliminary knowledge and experience: we can build on this knowledge later and refer to it during the program.
7. **partnership:** avoid the frontal way of classical school education, hierarchic gestures, and maintaining discipline. Replace these factors by conversation and the offer to see students as fellow professionals of the field. It is also important to change the program element when students look uninterested in it.
8. **open questions:** ask open questions instead of claims, and always connect to topics that brought up.
9. **in the language of the circus:** use the specific language of the circus, but in an understandable way, explain and repeat technical terms to let participants understand and learn them.
10. **obscurity:** do not ask questions we cannot be sure they know the answer to.
11. **provocation:** ask questions we know the participants will have an answer to, a prejudice about, or an opinion on.
12. **humour:** let all of us make mistakes misunderstandings, and the fact that one may not know everything, deal these situations with humour and kindness.
13. **concluding punchline:** keep an interesting fact, surprise that participants are not ready for that can make them face a challenge or cheer up – a magic trick or a giant artistic requisite they can try as well.

The development of circus in education at The Capital Circus of Budapest has become an **extraordinarily complex and versatile discipline**, in a noticeably brief period, only six

years. Different professions, audience correspondence, and professional programs, talent-mentoring and equal treatment of persons of disabilities are equally important, and run on an exceptional level – as the following examples and the usual online videos available in footnotes present:

**Talent-mentoring** is an integral part of complex circus in education, in which youngsters that are enthusiastic about the circus are given the opportunity to debut<sup>27</sup>, and to develop their circus competences within the confines of the School Community Service.



*Audio narrated show of the Capital Circus of Budapest. Photo: Ádám Urbán*

The most prominent of the activities of complex circus in education of The Capital Circus of Budapest is its **complex program of accessibility and equal opportunity**, which treats persons with different physical and/or social disadvantages equally. The newest, and fastest developing one among these is the method of audio narration<sup>28</sup>, in the confines of which, blind and visually impaired persons can enjoy circus shows accompanied by audio narration. *“Its purpose is that, with the help of a narrator, the view and the visual messages are given, and given to help visually impaired people have a more entire experience. The visually impaired viewer listens to the sounds of the show with one ear, while the narrator helps them following the show in the other.”* (Péter Fekete 2023.) The audio narration starts after a unique

<sup>27</sup> Tehetséggondozás: Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2022): Túri Ádám – Cirkuszok Éjszakája 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmgGGwwUnlo> (Letöltés: 2023.02.20.)

<sup>28</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2022): Audionarráció a Fővárosi Nagycirkuszban (Kossuth Rádió: Napközben. [riport]). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2w94ITZ-BAE> (Letöltés: 2023.02.21.)

tactile sensitising event, the so-called *Tapi (Touchy)* program held for participants and circus contributors: “*The circus, as it is a nonverbal artistic field, has no storyline, no words, no provided information based on sound between performers (actors, circus artists) and the audience. This is why previous information is strongly needed to understand the show, to experience the atmosphere, and to feel its emotional charge. [...] The centre of the circus dome has special acoustic echo. Trying and experiencing it is exciting and helps the viewer to understand the space around them. We must let the visitors in one by one to enter the centre of the space and let them find the centremost point of the ring using only the echo of their own voice.*” (Péter Fekete 2023.) The internationally unique complex audio narrational program of the Capital Circus of Budapest provides a lifelong experience for participants according to feedback<sup>29</sup>.



*Touchy program in progress connected to an audio narrated show of the Capital Circus of Budapest. Photo: Attila Nagy*

There are **extra circus in education activities** within the confines of complex circus in education as well, which, similarly to the ones mentioned above – including but not limited to – are presented by the online videos<sup>30</sup>.

29 Vakok és Gyengénlátók Békés Megyei Egyesülete (2022): Látogatás a Fővárosi Nagycirkuszban. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KibQV1jVwIA&t=9s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.21.)

30 „Vigyázat, csalog!” (Rodolfó). Az egyik videó ugyanis félrevezető, mivel csupán a címe egyezik meg az extra cirkuszpedagógiai program címével, a tartalma másról szól...



These are, for example, the management of certain **circus applications**, such as the creative application entitled *A cylinder titka* [*The Secret of the Cylinder*]<sup>31</sup>, which was connected to the exhibition called *Nincs máásik! 130 éves a Fővárosi Nagycirkusz* [*There's no oother! 130 years of the Capital Circus of Budapest*], or the creative application *Micsoda cirkusz!* [*What a Circus!*]<sup>32</sup> of the National Secondary School Academic Competition, or the *Múzeumi karantén pályázat* [*Quarantine Museum Application*]<sup>33</sup> created by the Hungarian National Museum during the time of the pandemic, in which circus in education was present with a mysterious story of a fakir and could hand out four special awards. It was also a very exciting circus in education program to participate in the **30<sup>th</sup> Valley of Arts Festival** and to entertain audience in MANK Porta leisure-time art in education program with circus skill development, interactive clown show, acrobatic acts, requisite presentations, creative art exhibitions, and art and circus history quizzes<sup>34</sup>. Last but not least, within the confines of Budapest Circus Festival, an extravagant circus in education program, the **Circus in Education Conference** is held biannually, in the presence of national and international educators<sup>35</sup>.



*Interactive, museum in education program, within the confines of a leisure-time program provided by the Capital Circus of Budapest, at Valley of Arts Festival. Photo: Nikol Fuszka.*

<sup>31</sup> Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2019): *A cylinder titka* c. alkotópályázat. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxlGh4SjYuc&t=20s> (Letöltés: 2023.02.21.)

<sup>32</sup> *Micsoda cirkusz!* (részlet az 1974-es felvétélből. Közzétette: Fővárosi Nagycirkusz) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QGw4tivuP4> (Letöltés: 2023.02.21.)

<sup>33</sup> Nemzeti Cirkuszművészeti Központ, Fővárosi Nagycirkusz (2020): *Múzeumi karantén-pályázat. Különdíjak.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykljvl93d7l> (Letöltés: 2023.02.20.)

<sup>34</sup> Alkotóművészet MANK (2021): MANK ArtPorta a 30. Művészetek Völgye fesztiválon. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zX-BQA1WhiM> (Letöltés: 2023.02.21.)

<sup>35</sup> Cirkuszpedagógiai konferencia: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ3goWc8\\_Ro](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ3goWc8_Ro) (Letöltés: 2023.02.21.)

## Circus in education brought to a square: mission and sustainability

This large-scale resume may be enough to support the claim “circus (in) education is everything plus one,” and to fill the phrase with meaning. One debt, however, is yet to be paid: what is the mission of circus in education, and how is it going to be sustainable? Especially now that we know that the artistic mission of circus, which at the same time is the base of its very own sustainability, is that it can evoke emotions; the educational mission of circus, which at the same time is the base of its very own sustainability, is that it can trigger the change in people’s knowledge, abilities, and attitude; the social mission of circus, which at the same time is the base of its very own sustainability, is that it is indeed for everyone. *Then what can be the mission and the base of its very own sustainability of complex circus in education, one of the newest disciplines of domestic cultural education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?*

In my **opinion the mission of complex circus in education is to connect, and make people participate in the circus, thus, to teach about the real world of the circus, and how to appreciate the unique values of circus arts.** The field of circus in education may be easier to sustain because it is free, flexible on age, time, and location, but primarily because it highlights the importance of physical education, which can balance the three basic functions of humans: cognitive, affective, and motoric fields. This sustainability is backed by another balancing factor: **the institute of circus and people learn from each other.** Circus in education is an open, and indeed not a one-way process. People’s feedback, honest opinions, and needs mean a significant amount of help to develop circus arts and circus services, and to widen the social base of circus. If circus in education learns at least the amount it teaches, then its educational success is indeed worth double. Thus, circus in education is everything, brought to a square.

## Conclusion

On the field of non-formal cultural education, the unique trait of circus in education is that it can cover and motivate all fields of intelligence, temperament, learning-style, competence, gift, and disadvantage: it is for everyone. Knowledge, feeling, moving, participating, source of motivation and joy: it can be all. It can be connected to the public education directly or loosely, entertaining, learning, and equal chances – on all fields of life – can be successful and effective. The circus in education program of the Capital Circus of Budapest, running since 2016, in its current complex form and versatile methods, is unmatched both domestically and internationally, even if seen in historical context. Precedents and parallels known in the circus and education are valuable sources that is rethought, applied to, and further improved for contemporary cultural and social expectations by circus in education, in any environment. The continuous development and safe sustainability of circus in education relies in conversation with different disciplines of art in education, participants, and the audience, which is backed

up by intense interaction in between. As of a new discipline – either in circus and in education – the purpose of this large-scale summary is to determine the concept of complex circus in education, the presentation of connections between its schools (tendencies), analysis of its wide range of actions and cooperations, and showing of practical examples and adaptive art in education techniques. This is presented through references to audiovisual sources that can certify and vivify 40.499 character (spaces included).

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