

... *this is an ART*

*Which does not mend Nature, change it rather, but
The ART itself is NATURE*

William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* (Act IV, Sc. 4)

In William Shakespeare's vision Art and Nature are not just related, they are ONE thing altogether

Learners

High school students, adult educational programmes

Subjects

English, Art, Natural Sciences/Botany, ICT, Italian where necessary,

Premise

Shakespeare's line *The ART itself is NATURE* represents the subject matter and main lead to the development of the project and achievement of its targets.

Its interpretation turns around the following enquiries: What is nature to Shakespeare's art? How does he exploit it in his poems and plays? What does it add up to his works?

These questions can be answered by means of a research on and examination of his works, a walk along the Shakespearean pathways of the Botanical Garden of Trieste, an in-depth study about Shakespeare's use of language and imagery, a final product inspired to Shakespeare's artistic and naturalistic vision

Objectives

- to investigate and appreciate Shakespeare's love of Nature present all through his literary production in a relationship between Art and Nature as suggested by the lines from *The Winter's Tale*
- to extend one's knowledge of Shakespeare's art by pointing out some specific aspects of his genius
- to use English to communicate
- to learn the scientific data about species of flowers and plants
- to use imagination and creativity to understand and implement actions
- to be able to collaborate, share, exchange



- to widen cultural and scientific interests and foster critical thinking skills
- to engage subjects through interaction and inclusion

Competences

- to be aware of the task undertaken; to engage and collaborate responsibly
- to distinguish and use different types of sources: literary, artistic, scientific
- to collect and process information in view of the project's target/s
- to communicate convincingly using appropriate oral and written forms
- to enhance the use of creativity to explore and perform
- to learn scientific and logic methods of investigation
- to use (digital) tools and materials with an ethical and responsible approach
- learning to learn

Tools and materials

Digital devices, printed texts, tables, graphs

Duration

About two months

Development

- teachers meet and make up guidelines and schedules necessary to the development of the project
- outline and explanations to the students of how the activities will be carried out to achieve the targets and warm up to elicit some information about Shakespeare and his works
- outline of Shakespeare's production as a poet and playwright. Reflection on why he can also be considered a botanist
- reflection on the term imagery, its implications and connections with the natural world in Shakespeare's works
- in-depth study of some significant passages from *The Winter's Tale* to reflect and comment on the author's use of imagery and related use of language
- on the basis of the statement about Art and Nature, selection of some plays and poems where this 'duo' is present and inference on its impact on the significance of the text. Analysis, reflection and comment on the texts selected to answer the questions asked in the premise
- general class debate and written account or essay commenting on the outcomes of the research pointing out Shakespeare's genius and skill in his use of natural elements to describe

human nature

- swift outlook on Shakespeare's influence as Poet of Nature on subsequent currents of poets and artists
- virtual visit to Shakespeare's New Place's garden and survey on the characteristics of the Elizabethan/Renaissance gardens. Reflection on their aspect and fundamental elements
- online research and subsequent hypotheses on how Shakespeare was such an expert botanist
- visit to the Botanical Garden of Trieste to find and learn about the plants mentioned in his works. Photos and sketches of the plants
- categorization of the species, etc. according to Shakespeare's poetical view and use of imagery; creation of 'artistic' graphs
- writing an account of the research and sharing the information and hypotheses with the class
- research and application of scientific data and information on the plants: origin, growth, seasonal blooming, etc. Transcription on tables
- use of photos, images, drawings, graphs, etc. to create a real and a digital, colourful Shakespearean garden with 'poetical' inscriptions from Shakespeare's lines
- creations of digital tags and digital clouds with images and words from Shakespeare's works
- issue of (printed and) online fanzines including all the materials produced subdivided into different areas of competence

Products

(Printed and) online fanzine '*The Art itself is Nature*', *William Shakespeare*

A bibliography and a presentation from the teachers of each subject concerned with an account of the motivations and of the methodological pathways exploited will complete the production

Evaluation and validation

See introduction