



**MANIPOLARE  
E INTERAGIRE**

## **Gradations (31 august - 26 september 2021)**

In the view of Maria Montessori and Bruno Munari, a child's knowledge of the world is of a multisensory kind. Of all the senses, touch is the most important for a small child and it contributes to the development of his or her intelligence.

In a child's earliest years, the experience of touching revolves around the sensation of strong contrasts such as soft-hard, cold-hot, smooth-rough and so on.

The image of the world that a child builds in terms of contrasts, of opposites and of the rhythmic structures that make them up is schematic in nature.

A perception is naturally easier even for an inexperienced child to recognise when it contrasts with a perception of the same quality but of an opposite kind (maximum-minimum).

Over time the child gradually discovers that there are nuances that make it possible to identify gradations between two opposite extremes such as maximum and minimum.

This refinement of the senses expands the child's field of perception and becomes a rich and solid basis for the development of his or her intelligence.

To that end, Maria Montessori developed sensory material "comprising a system of objects which are grouped together according to some definite quality which they possess, such as colour, shape, dimension, sound, surface texture, weight, temperature, etc. Examples of these are: a set of bells which reproduce musical tones; a collection of tablets which present different colours in a graduated scale; a group of solids which have the same shape but graduated dimensions and others which differ among themselves in geometrical form; things of different weight but of the same size etc."

(Maria Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*, 1950)

Objects of every single group represent the same quality, isolated and presented in different degree; it is then a question of gradation in which the difference between object and object varies regularly and is, when possible, fixed mathematically.

The important thing in Bruno Munari's view is to "know the world by touch, to appreciate minimal differences, to distinguish without looking between two almost identical values".

The tactile tablet, in particular, works on this principle: it is a wooden tablet on which various materials such as fabrics, fur, paper, ribbons and even foam rubber are applied. "The child absolutely needs to touch, to manipulate, to feel the materials, thus discovering their differences to the touch, their different textures, the different ways in which these objects present themselves".

(Bruno Munari, *Tactile Workshops*, 1977)

Next tactile selection **Drawing (28 september - 24 october )**