



The depiction of the house in the free drawings of Haitian street children: Dreaming of and recreating a habitat.

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyse the spontaneous drawings of houses produced by 45 street children in Haiti after the earthquake of 12 January 2010. The drawings were made during workshops held in children's homes and child reception centres. Given that over half of the random sample free drawings (n= 270), depicted houses, questions were raised in our minds about the expressive and projective value of drawings of houses for children deprived of such homes. We also sought to explore the symbolic and creative value of the act of drawing itself. Based on the theories of Winnicott (1975, 1984) and Anzieu (1984), analysis of the 161 drawings produced revealed that these street children seek a sense of inclusivity and healing for the envelopes weakened by their experience on the streets, alongside a desire for familial bonds and support, and a narcissistic fragility. However, the analysis also revealed evidence of a set of potentially creative resources – a targeted and contextualised capacity for expression; a quest for socialisation and interpersonal skills; an ability to 'compensate' for failure through attempts to construct. Drawing as a creative activity and play area, thus appears to represent a model of artistic activity with the potential to be a resilience factor.

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