



2013 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
ARTS, HUMANITIES, & SOCIAL SCIENCES
JANUARY 6TH TO JANUARY 8TH
ALA MOANA HOTEL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

AYITI CHERIE:
CHILDREN'S ART AFTER THE
EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI

JENNY PAUCKNE
ART AND ART HISTORY
MARIAN UNIVERSITY



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ABSTRACT

Ayiti Cherie: Children's Art After the Earthquake in Haiti

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On January 12, 2010 a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, and over 3,000,000 people were affected. Although the earthquake had devastating health effects (musculoskeletal injuries, lacerations, fractures and soft-tissue contusions or sprains among other injuries), the psychological effects were often just as severe. Emotional trauma was so extreme that as many as one in five Haitian earthquake victims needs professional help to cope. Although that professional help has often not been available, art has emerged as a primary source for understanding and healing in the nonprofit organization, Art Creation Foundation for Children, located in Jacmel, Haiti.

During my time in Haiti at the foundation I noted that the children's artwork reveals not only the devastation from the earthquake and a country that was and still is in political and economic unrest but also the hope that they hold despite these events and conditions. My research and documentation of artwork, culture, and the individual artists enhance the analysis of the dynamic yet still under-explored area of Haitian art, specifically the artwork of children and young adults in Jacmel.



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During this study a number of questions arose about whether art is craft, how one should teach art to a group of artists who have been recognized primarily for their naivety, and how cultural gender roles affect art production. However, one of the most powerful discoveries revealed that regardless of whether or not these children and adolescents want to become professional artists as they mature into adulthood, they use art as an essential way of expressing themselves. It serves to give them a voice when they otherwise would have none. Therefore the transformative power of art in these children's lives and in the lives of the people who view their art becomes a vital contribution to the human condition.