Danish Medical Doctors' Arts Association

HANS PERRILD

Every day many doctors face events and decisions that are emotionally demanding as they are inevitably concerned with the intimate aspects of people's lives. By controlling their own feelings doctors are expected to help and comfort others. So, not surprisingly, many doctors participate in the creative arts, which they find a rewarding and therapeutic alternative to their demanding and stressful professional lives.

Some years ago we realised that many Danish doctors shared this view and we founded the Danish Medical Doctors' Arts Association with the idea of gathering together doctors with a common interest in the arts and spreading this interest among our colleagues.

Above—Gudrun Boysen, graduated 1966, MD 1973. Senior consultant, department of neurology, State Hospital, Copenhagen. She has been painting since childhood, and her inspiration has always been nature and the things around us. Only lately has she included people in the paintings. This painting is called "Girls at the sandbox" (oil, 1977) and shows her two daughters, Sakina and Sukuri. One of her sources of inspiration is Henri Rousseau.

Above right—Vagn Schønecker, born 1937, graduated 1966. Psychiatrist in general practice. He has been painting in oils, acrylics, and watercolours for some years, and has not yet chosen his definite way of expression. He has often chosen the intuitive and spontaneous mode of expression. This painting is called "Circus" (acrylic, 1985).

Bottom right—Grete Krag Jacobsen, born 1943, graduated 1971, MD 1985. Senior consultant, department of pathology, Gentofte County Hospital. She has been painting and drawing since early childhood but has only lately made collages. She aims to make collages that unite the beautiful forms and colours from our synthetic daily life with the joy and variety of nature. The collage is called "Paper-clip" (1985).

Membership of the association includes students to retired consultants and we organise regular meetings mainly on arts subjects. In 1985 we ventured on our first exhibition of paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, etc, most of which had never been on show in public before. All contributors found it inspiring to share and discuss their experiences with others and at present we are organising our next exhibition, which will go on show in different parts of Denmark.

We also realised that there are many talented musicians in our profession and regularly include a musical session in our meetings. Recently some of them gathered in the beautiful setting of the Copenhagen Renoir collection (Ordrupgaardsamlingen), where they performed music composed by five other members. In the future we will cover other aspects such as poetry and architecture and we plan to run courses in, for example, drawing and painting.

Our association has been an inspiration for those concerned as both a recreational pastime and a rewarding extension to our professional lives. We are still in the process of developing our ideas and would very much like to contact similar organisations abroad. Otherwise we hope that our experience will inspire others to form associations with which we can arrange future exhibitions and concerts.

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Babies, bottles, and boobs

C CLOSE

In tropical developing countries great emphasis is placed on the advantages of breast milk over non-breast milk substitutes. This gospel is spread by professionals in the health services and the media—especially local radio and newspaper articles—and is often official government policy with restrictions on the sale and promotion of infant formulae. You would therefore expect children in the West Indies to be aware of breast feeding as the natural choice. And because of the less obvious promotion and education about breast feeding in the United Kingdom, especially by the media, you would expect children to consider bottle feeding of infants natural.

Breast feeding drawn by an 8 year old West Indian girl.

Breast feeding drawn by a 7 year old Redditch boy.

Subjects, methods, and results

School children living on the island of Dominica in the eastern Caribbean and children attending school in Redditch, England, were included in the study. The class teacher instructed them to draw a picture of a mother feeding her young infant. Eighty six West Indian children and 184 English children completed a picture. Ages ranged from 6 to 10 years. Analysis of the results in each cultural group showed no important differences between different age groups in the numbers showing breast feeding as opposed to bottle feeding. There was also no difference between the type of feeding drawn by boys and girls. Comparing the two cultural groups,