

ARTISTIC IMPRESSIONS OF  
STREET CHILDREN

THESES SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING,  
SCULPTURE RURAL ART AND INDUSTRY IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS (M.F.A) DEGREE IN PAINTING

BY

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UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI GHANA

JULY, 1997

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
KUMASI

CERTIFICATION

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ARTISTIC IMPRESSION OF  
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REUBEN KWAME AGBELENGOR GLOVER

N. B. ATO DELAQUIS  
(SUPERVISOR)

JULY, 1997

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have come a long way as an artist. It has been through the encouragement, support, advice and assistance of a number of persons.

## CERTIFICATION

My first thanks go to the Almighty God for his guidance and protection.

My most sincere gratitude goes to the following lecturers at the painting

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS PROJECT REPORT IS THE  
CANDIDATE'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIS RESEARCH.

supervisory work and invaluable guidance and assistance. Mr. B. Ofei-Nyako.

Mr. P. A. Tawiah, Mr. G. A. D. Kwami, and Dr. R. T. Ackam. To Miss Diana Finteh

Pynn, I say you are more than a friend.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my colleagues for their constructive

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studio mate. Kwabena Poku, Osai Agyemang, Crabbo, Kelvi Amankwa, and

Kwami Zewide Adzaku.

Finally, I have to thank Miss Lucy Nelson of College of Art, KNUST, Miss

Kate Agbenowosi of FRANKY JAY for typing the script and Miss Juliana Quano

for her numerous assistance. To my parents, brothers and sisters for their love,

patience and fortitude. Without their help, I could not have accomplished anything, certainly

part of the credit is due to them.



.....  
**H. B. ATO DELAQUIS**  
**(SUPERVISOR)**

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**REUBEN KWAME AGBELEGOR GLOVER**

**JULY 1997**

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## **ABSTRACT**

REUBEN KWAME AGBELEGOR GLOVER, B.A. (ART) MFA (PAINTING)

JULY 1997

ARTISTIC IMPRESSIONS OF THE STREET CHILD

**SUPERVISOR: MR. H.B. ATO DELAQUIS**

Painting is regarded as a means of communication in which non-verbal messages are communicated through colour, shapes and other elements of art. In other words it is the conversion or putting together of one's anxieties and joy into a mode of communication. The mode of communication therefore becomes the responsibility of the artist. It therefore holds that the artist must stir up an urge of attention in the observer.

It is therefore this desire to translate my experiences and observation of the social problem of street children into artistic impressions, based on aesthetic principles, to the society, which basically prompted this project. In this respect, such a project is aimed at education society about the plight of these underprivileged children, through the artist's aesthetic impressions of the plight of the street child. This will also serve as the artist's contribution to an awareness drive of this social menace. The project is characterised by the dedicated exploration into the possibilities of different techniques in painting children.

References were made to well-known artists who are noted for treating this subject matter. This is to help in understanding what

others have done and what new ideas the project is projecting. The report follows this sequence; Introduction; which opens up the project report with identification of the problem; purpose of research; scope and experimental survey. The first chapter is a review of related literature and what others had accomplished on the subject matter. The second chapter talks about the paintings in the project, the concept, techniques and aesthetics of the works.

Recommendations are made at the end of this report in an effort to appraise and foster better understanding of the project and its importance to the society. This is intended to help enlighten the public and to involve the observer into asking questions as he observes the paintings.

It is a difficult problem as the number of kids who live on the streets and survive almost entirely on their wits in large cities keeps on increasing. This is one of the most disturbing social phenomena in Ghana today.

It is widely and erroneously assumed by many among the middle classes in modern Africa that street children are only to be found in nations affected by war or only where massive corruption exists on a scale that amounts to nothing less than the leadership's abdication of responsibility for national development.

A survey conducted by the artist revealed that street children between the ages of seven and twenty live in the streets because their families cannot provide for them properly due to poverty. Others take to the streets because they are abused at home or because of disharmony in the home. Another group were lured into the streets because of the superficial thrill of city life.

## INTRODUCTION

During the third quarter of 1992 the document "the child cannot wait", was launched in Accra amidst fanfare and hope for the destitute child. The document was based on a plan of action for implementing the world declaration of children on the survival, protection and development of children.

But one may ask, since the document was launched, what concrete action have we, as a nation and as individuals put in place to improve the condition, situation and welfare of children in this country. The issue of street children which reveals one aspect of poverty continues to be a difficult problem as the number of kids who live on the streets and survive almost entirely on their wits in large cities keeps on increasing. This is one of the most disturbing social phenomena in Ghana today.

It is widely, and erroneously, assumed by many among the middle classes in modern Africa, that street children are only to be found in nations affected by war or only where massive corruption exists on a scale that amounts to nothing less than the leaderships abdication of responsibility for national development.

A survey conducted by the artist revealed that street children between the ages of seven and twenty live in the streets because their families cannot provide for them properly due to poverty. Others take to the streets because they are abused at home or because of disharmony in the home. Another group were lured into the streets because of the superficial thrill of city life.

Most of these children are made to take destiny into their own hands as if they are not part of society. These under-privileged children are found loitering in areas like the markets, lorry parks, and beaches. They are mostly dirty looking and dressed in tattered clothes. Those above the ages of ten years are seen running after vehicles just to carry the luggage of travellers for a fee to feed themselves. The risk involved in these adventurous expeditions of these children could be imagined. Sometimes a number of ten year old boys are seen pushing truckloads of goods being directed by an adult. Most of these children have no homes. They sleep anywhere in the night and then set off in the morning to work in order to fend for themselves.

The girl child resorts to selling items like doughnuts, iced water, pepper, tomatoes or acts as a porter locally named 'Kayayo' at various lorry parks and markets at very high risks to herself. The phenomenon on of child labour has been on the ascendancy in this country and poses a social threat that is alarming. Child labour applies to children under fifteen years of age, engaged in income generating activities other than the obvious light domestic or agricultural work within the family. The United Nations, in the convention of the child states that:

*"the child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation which would endanger his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development".*

It is evident that the negative repercussions of child labour are numerous. Those who are orphaned and have to stay on the streets permanently are exposed to lots of dangers, which harden them. They eventually sink into crime. A study by a welfare agency in Accra in 1992 revealed that an astonishing 41 percent of child labourers interviewed, especially those engaged in difficult tasks like porters, are involved in drugs. This further exposed them to crime and violence. To meet the expenses of the habit, stealing and robbery become the norm.

The fact that the child misses out on formal education is in itself deleterious for them, their family and the nation. In fact formal education is a very important way of transforming the socio-economic status of people and also means of changing negative attitudes and behaviours. The child does not only miss formal education; he also misses traditional education, which is very important to his life. They lack basic norms like respect for adults, good morals etc.

When children are deprived of basic education it undermines a nation's existence because it becomes very difficult for simple national policies to be carried out and understood. For instance a parent needs basic understanding that it is a virus that causes polio in a child and not witchcraft.

In the midst of this alarming social menace, the excuse that is very often given to the neglect of children is the harsh economic conditions of the average Ghanaian parent. While it is true that times are hard, it is unacceptable for anybody to use the present socio-economic conditions as an excuse to neglect

his or her child. So if people think they do not have enough money to take proper care of their children, they should avoid bringing forth children because children need to be taken care of till they are grown enough to take care of themselves.

If an individual thinks he or she has no money to meet the basic requirement of a child, he or she must as well forget about having one. To bring a child to this world and allow him or her to suffer at such early age, as those we find on the streets everyday, is the greatest crime any adult can inflict on humanity. While individual parents are guilty of child neglect, the society generally cannot escape blame for the plight of street children in Ghana.

In a country where standard of living is very low, all resource need to be pooled, to support these innocent ones. It is very crucial for the society generally to take up this challenge because supporting the upbringing of children in a very good environment and offering them the necessary education means educating future adults for the betterment of society.

The worst aspect of neglecting children is that the children, as they grow in undisciplined and uncontrolled stages, adopt their own ways of life, attitudes and manners. Most of the times the manners are in contrast to acceptable social norms. The same society that looked on unconcerned when these innocent children were starving will turn around and shun them. This attitude hardens them more and they live in a world of their own. They abandon good manners, discipline, resort to drugs and become violent at the least provocation. Without any training or skills to meet the challenges of modern day labour market

conditions, they depend on their natural strength and the use of brute force to survive.

If the present trend continues, the society generally will suffer in the long run because there would not be enough well trained people to take responsible positions in the various sectors of our economy for productivity and growth. If those who have so much today do not give out a little for the sake of the street child, the children of those who have are likely to suffer the anti-social criminal activities of deprived children of today in future.

The Ghanaian child is still waiting. There are helpless children out there crying for decent meals, clothing, shelter and education. To these children life is a struggle and their future they cannot tell.

Do not let us forget them, do not let us scorn them, they need the support of the society, they need love and care. They need to be comforted. Above all they need the warmth of society. It rests on society to turn these street children into school children. We all have a role to play. The time is now, let us get children off the streets. The question we have to ask ourselves is – looking at what goes on around us, do we have reason to ignore it? All living things will like to enjoy life to the fullest. Due to this, they fight for a place to enjoy life.

As artists when we express these unfortunate children in our paintings do we ever ask ourselves if these children need compensation from us as child models or we take them for granted.

Let us remember works of art are created to solve spiritual, psychological, sociological, aesthetic, and emotional problems of mankind.

Therefore an artwork in any environment from any environment, is created to help to raise the living standards of mankind. Artists have the special talent of reorganising things within the environment to the admiration of the general populace. The outdoor sculptures, the interior designs, etc. all play good roles. Why is it that the artist cannot reorganise these destitute children or bring society's attention to face the problem squarely? The artist can paint this subject matter in such a way that the observer will be attracted to the painting and this will then enlighten him on the plight of the children.

The children on the streets are not supposed to be there. God in his own wisdom has purpose for every creation of his. Jesus taught his disciples the need to care for children.

*In Mark 10:13-16*

13. *People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them but the disciples rebuked them. 14. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them: "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these ....."*
16. *And he took the children in his arms put his hands on them and blessed them.*

The vividly captured emotional and traumatic hardships of the Ghanaian economic situation in 1983 by painters in their works, has directly or indirectly influenced society the need for hard work to rectify the unbearable conditions.

A painting entitled "Innocent Victims" (Acrylic on canvas) by Mr. Henry Ato Delaquis in the National Art Gallery Accra is one example of a vividly captured human suffering in Ghana in 1983. This painting depicts children

looking bony and malnourished holding bowls in their hands as if waiting for manna from heaven. However, now that there is more to eat, this painting will now serve as 'historical document'. (Fig. 1a.)

Paintings are used in hospitals as posters to educate the masses on 'dos and 'don'ts'. A poster on Zentel drug is a typical example. This poster depicts a healthy and happy looking painted image of a boy who presumably after the use of Zentel has become free of worms. Even though educative in essence, the superbly painted figure is what instantly catches the eye, thus attracting people to the poster and the drug. This simply is the power of painting and how it can move emotions. (Fig. 2a and 2b)

In as much as painting can affect or conjure people's awareness about their environment and life around them, the artist in this project "Artistic Impression of Street Children" strives to draw public awareness to these underprivileged children through paintings of thought-provoking themes.

## PURPOSE

Works of art are created to reflect psychological, spiritual, emotional and sociological problems of mankind. Therefore art within any given environment is meant to help raise awareness or be part of solution to a problem through aesthetic means.

The issue of street children is a national problem, which must not be ignored. Everybody has role to play. The artist has a role too.



Fig. 1

TITLE: "INNOCENT VICTIMS"

ARTIST: H.B. Ato Delaquis

MEDIUM: Acrylic on Canvas

LOCATION: Ghana National Art Gallery, Accra.

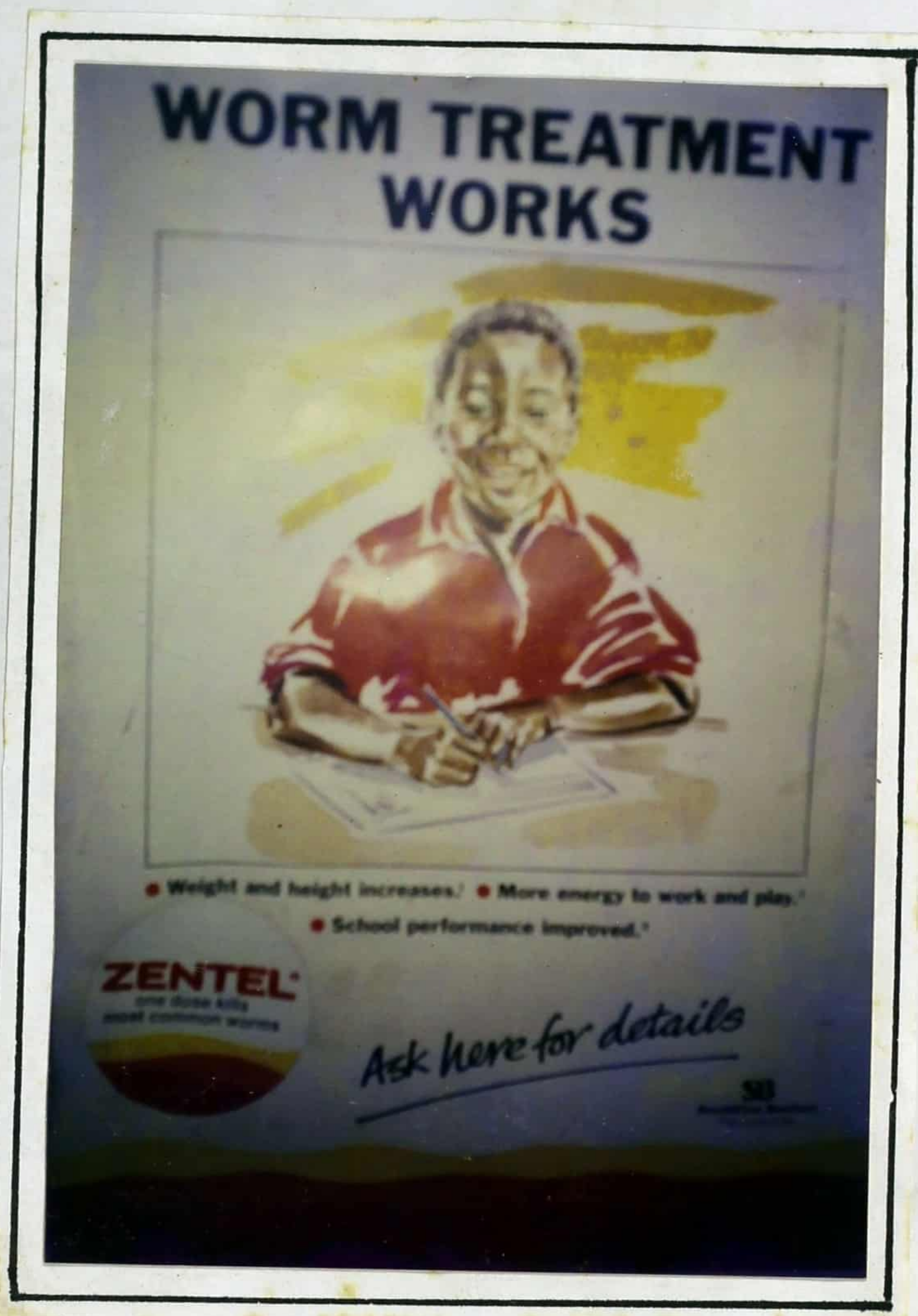


Fig. 2a  
A poster advertising a drug.  
Simple watercolour drawing was  
used in conveying the message to  
the public.

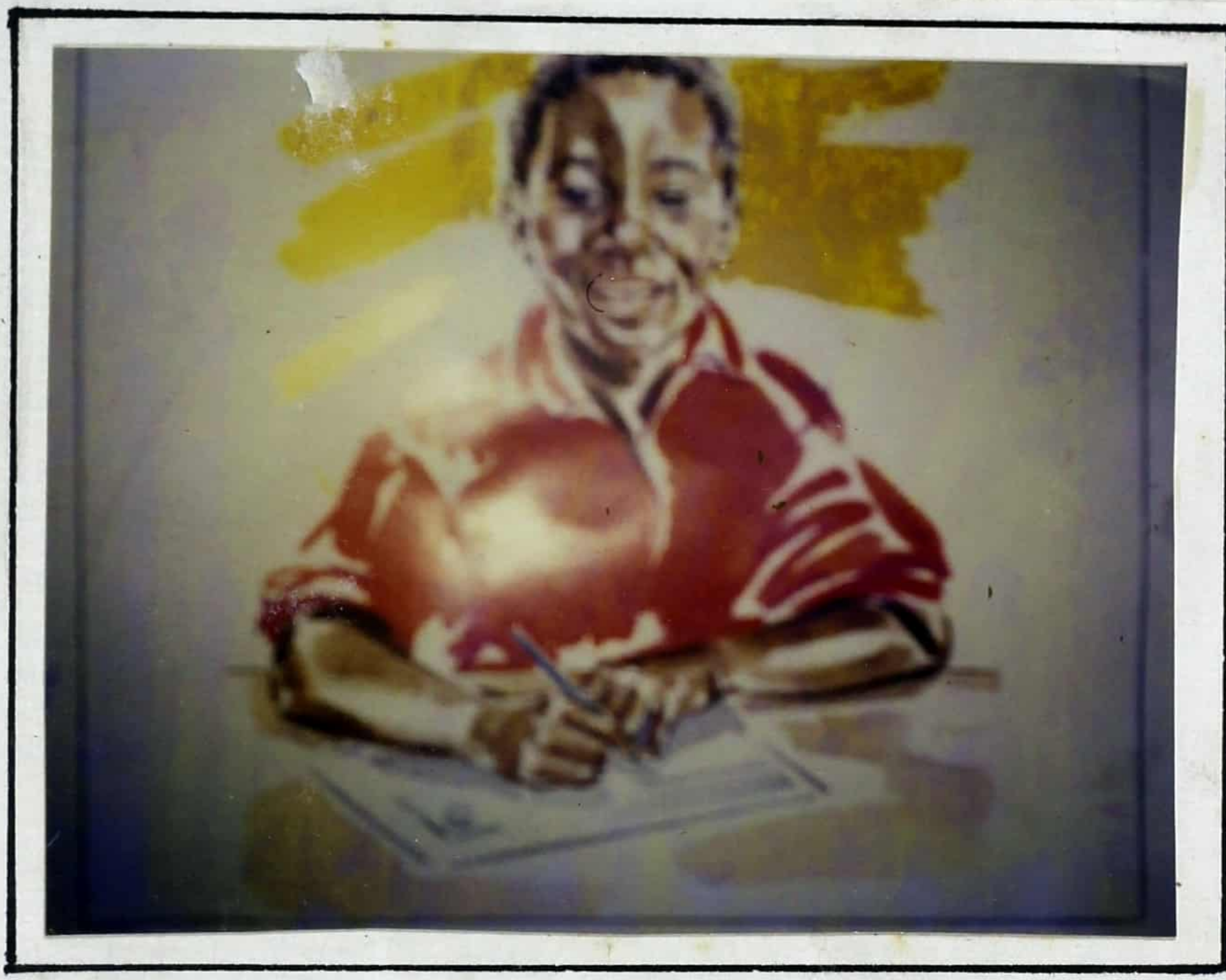


Fig. 2b

Detail of the watercolour washes

Questionnaires will also be given out as well field trips undertake and personal observations and interaction with street children will be done purposely for information and sketches. Secondly information will be derived from documentary sources, including both published and unpublished works such as thesis, books, photographs, magazines and publications.

### EXPERIMENTAL SURVEY

Art can be defined as the physical and emotional shape of man. It is his emotions, ideas, sorrows, anxieties and many more. It is the conversation of or putting one's experiences into a mode of communication.

Art can also be explained as a universal language in which one expresses one's inner feelings in relationship to his immediate environment and the larger society. It comprises one's observations about life, his thoughts and feelings. Therefore any form of art tries to stir up some emotions or draws one to be aware of his environment.

The artist therefore tries to stir up an urge in society to realise the pain, sorrow, and tribulations these little creations of God go through day in day out on the streets. Are the lives of these children not worth living? Are they not gifts from God? What future is there for these children? Is there any hope for them? Because the present predicts the future. This is the mental state the artist goes through anytime he tries to find solutions to his personal questions about these unfortunate children.

If an artist can capture people's attention and cause them to ask themselves questions, then solutions to this problem of children on the street is not far from us.

This project is an attempt:

1. To know more about the children and their needs and expectations in order to be able to depict that in my paintings.
2. To draw public awareness to the plight of these unfortunate children through my paintings.
3. For the artist "to get into the shoes" of these unfortunate children feel for them, and apply their plight as basis for artistic expression.

### SCOPE

This project seeks to find out how best children can be painted effectively in different moods.

The project would make use of different child models to project the character, environment and sentiments of street children.

Different ages would be used. The ages would be between eight to seventeen.

Techniques and colour schemes would be based on the artist's interpretation of the child's mood and state of mind.

Descriptive method will be employed in reviewing and appreciating and individual works, whilst account will be taken of the aesthetic values of the works.

From canvas to canvas, I underwent new experiences through my efforts to express my ideas about these little street children in the paintings; my expressions as an artist keep strengthening because I continually question their validity. I am therefore in constant dialogue with each work I do. However, without experimentation and absolute freedom of expression, an artist and his thoughts will vanish without been heard. So my experimentation's with child models offered me the opportunity to explore issues of child anatomy in relationship to form, shape, structure, colour and implied movement. I did all these, not losing sight of aesthetic principles.

In most of the experimental works, emotional content is expressed, but always within the conventions of form. Which I believe will always challenge the viewer to extract psychological meaning from the painting, and by so doing I believe I have been able to awaken the spiritual affection in him to think about these unfortunate street children.

My second experimental work was characterised by humanistic tendencies. I aimed at stimulating the viewer to look around himself and the people and objects around him. I tried to capture the rhythm, heartbeat and passion of a child with a basket on her head.



Fig. 3a  
Experimental work,  
watercolour wash.



Fig. 3b  
A sketch of a little boy with a basket  
covering her head.

## **REFERENCE**

1. Eliot Owusu Ansah, Get Children off the Streets,  
Daily Graphic, Thursday June 5, 1997 page 9.
2. Kwesi Biney, The Child is still waiting,  
The Ghanaian Chronicle, Wednesday June 11 – Thursday  
June 12, 1997 page 11.
3. Devotional Bible – Mark 10:13-16
4. Catholic Messenger, A Friend of street children  
September 1996 page 16.

## CHAPTER ONE

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Painting of children has been a very cumbersome subject matter for many artists over the years. Many painters have consciously or deliberately ignored this subject.

However there are some few painters who have excelled in painting children. Surprisingly, this subject is treated perfectly by women. Maybe because they carry babies in their wombs during pregnancy. Names like Mary Cassatt, of United States of America and Eva Campbell of Ghana are some of the women artists, to be treated in this thesis. Nevertheless, men like Edgar Degas, Donald Zolan, Leo Sakkisian etc. (who also did a lot on children in their paintings) will also be discussed in this project report.

An internationally acclaimed artist Donald Zolan is rightly praised around the world as one of the finest painters of children. He captures the wonder, joy and tribulations of a child's early years. The artist is noted for his lovely painting entitled "The Thinker". (Fig. 4.).

This painting is carefully and skilfully painted. It represents a little boy struggling with some very big thoughts. His tiny hands are clenched. Fist, determined mouth, firm jaw and legs apart, elbows on knees ('thinkers stance') all connote great emotional stress.



Fig. 4:

"THE THINKER",  
Donald Zolan

The painting has so much life and charm in it that at any moment, you may think the child will draw himself up and decide what to do. Donald Zolan's use of ochres as the dominant colour may be to show the calmness, and the quiet moment the child is going through. The horizontal car tyre the 'thinker' is sitting on has balanced the almost vertical painting. The painting has achieved rhythm and movement from the child's pose. The head resting on the fist, the fist resting on the knee create harmonic balance of dynamic equilibrium which indicates a high level of creativity and mastering of skills in child painting by Zolan.

Leo Sarkisian is an artist with many talents. He is described by his African friends as "America's goodwill ambassador to Africa". His American colleagues described him as "A Renaissance man; artist, musician, scholar and humanist".

Leo travelled extensively across Africa and he has been sketching portraits of Africans wherever he goes. He is noted for his fascinating sketches of innocent children. Leo admits only to a fatal fascination for faces.

*"I try to show people as they are; most of my portraits of Africans are drawn very simple".*

FIG 5  
Leo Sarkisian - Dossou, Niger



FIG. 5.  
Leo Sarkisian – Dosso, Niger

Fig. 6.

Leo Sarkisian – Lomé Togo

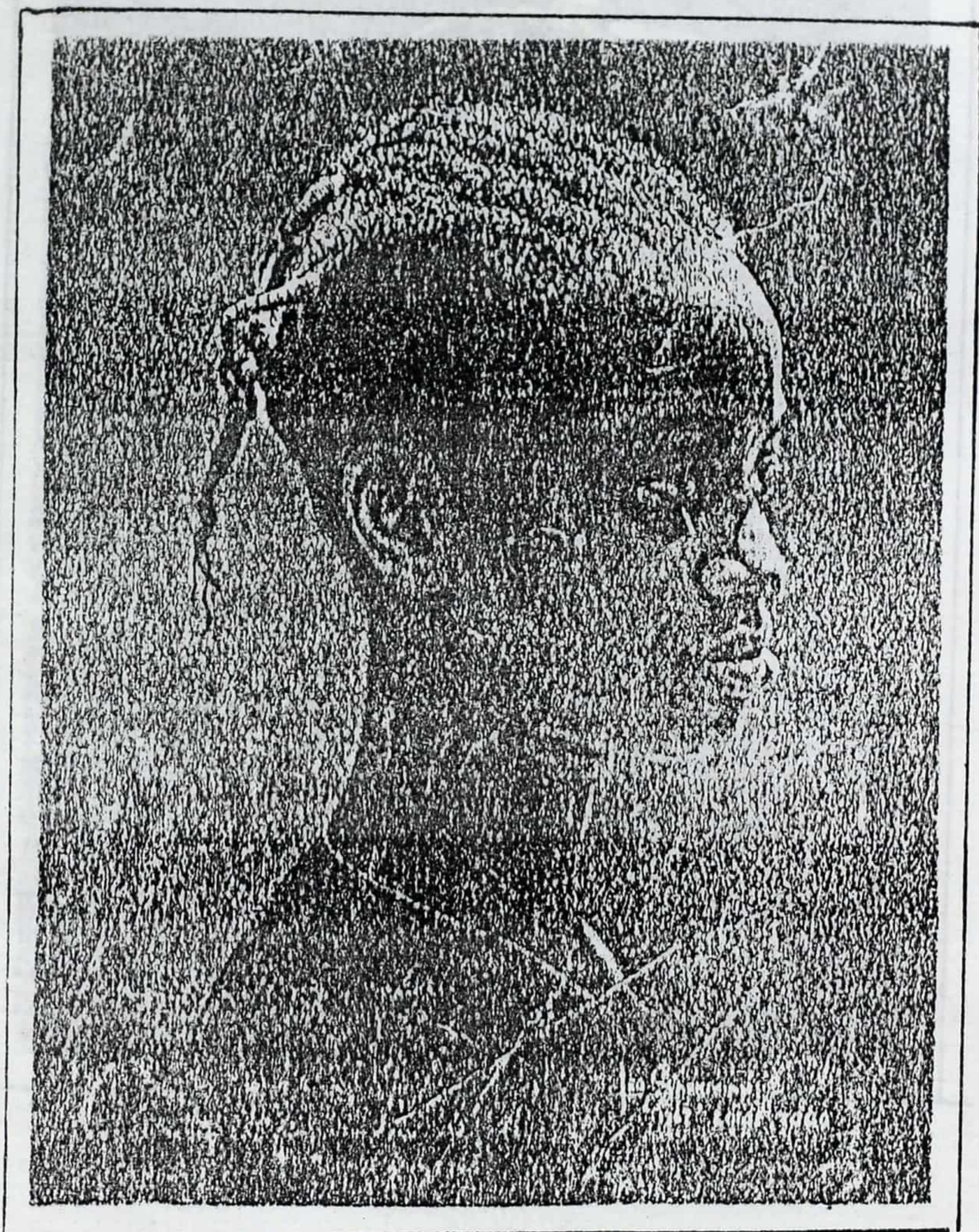


Fig. 6.

Leo Sarkisian – Larae Togo

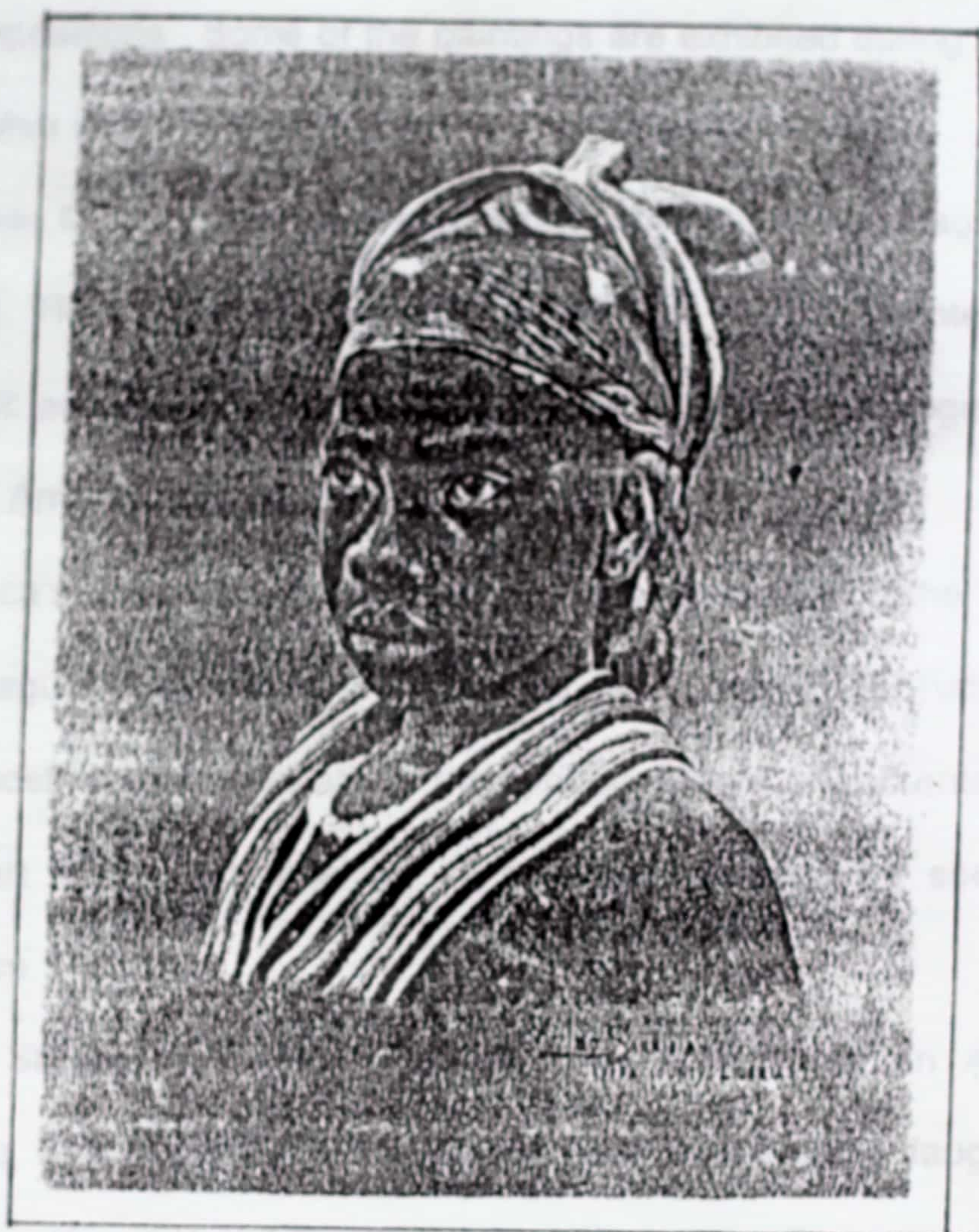


Fig. 7.

Leo Sarkisin – Loffa County, Liberia

"Here in Africa", he says, "you clearly have your own ways, your own road to the future. This independent spirit is one of the things I want to convey in my drawings". In his travels, he sketches in pencil, which are later on transferred into real compositions. Some of the paintings are exhibited during his trips under the sponsorship of the United States Information Service (USIS).

Leo was born in Massachusetts eighty something years ago. He studied art in Boston. He later became a musician. He has an intense interest in African art and music and has recorded much of it for African musicologists and for his own voice of America library.

America's foremost woman painter, Mary Cassatt won the respect of her French colleagues long before she received recognition in her native land. At a time when most women were still in the kitchen, Mary Cassatt entered the male-dominated art world and received its approval for her own special brand of impressionism.

Mary Stevenson Cassatt was born May 22, 1844, in Allegheny city, Pennsylvania. She was the fourth surviving child, and second daughter of Robert Simpson Cassatt and Katherine Delso Johnston. The Cassatts were of French Huguenot stock, immigrating to America in the mid-1600's. Originally called Cassart, the name had evolved to Cassatt. The Cassatt family was prosperous and well connected.

Cassatt began her artistic career in the fall of 1861 when she enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. After some few years of studies Cassatt became frustrated and dissatisfied with her studies at the Pennsylvania Academy, where originality and freedom of expression were suppressed. She therefore decided that in order to be an artist she must go to Europe to study the old masters independently.

In the fall of 1880 Mary Cassatt executed the first of many portraits of her various nieces and nephews who were on extended vocation to her place. The arrival of these young children may have inspired her paintings, considered the first of her many rendition of the child theme; while nearly a third of her paintings are devoted to this subject. Cassatt consistently brought an objectivity and originality to these paintings which saved her from the hackneyed and sentimental.

In 1901 Cassatt began a series of pastels of little girls posed alone against plain backgrounds. These proved to be quite popular with collectors and she produced a number of them during the next few years. In (Fig. 8) 'Margot in Blue' Cassatt used on numerous occasions this young girl as her model.



Fig. 8

"MARGOT IN BLUE"

1902

Mary Cassatt.

Pastel on paper, mounted on canvas.

61 x 49.8cm

The Walters Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland.

She is typical of the type preferred by the artist. Because of her round face, bright eyes, small nose, and cupid's bow mouth; in a word, cute. The pastels in these works are applied vigorously in slashing, scribbled strokes that activate the surface but do not describe the forms. Most of the visual interest is concentrated in the fancy and colourful costumes the girls wear. The palette is limited to a few colours, usually one quite bright, in this case a vivid blue which accents the neutral tones of white, grey, and brown.

Fig. 9 is another popular studies of little girls by Cassatt. The artist painted most of her portraits from child models of four or five years. One reason why the artist preferred these girls is that, they were well behaved and able to hold a pose for an extended period.

Certainly her compositions were not designed to tax the nerves of her young models. Cassatt always preferred poses of less activity. She usually depicted these girls sitting still, their hands neatly folded in their laps. The energy and excitement of childhood never interested her. This was probably the natural preference of a woman who though she loved them, never had noisy children of her own.

SIMONE IN A WHITE BONNET

1903

Pastel on paper 64.8 x 41.9cm

Collection Mr. And Mrs. Dale H. Doan

San Antonio, Texas



Fig. 9.

"SIMONE IN A WHITE BONNET"

1903

Pastel on paper 64.8 x 41.9cm

Collection Mr. And Mrs. Dale H. Dorn

San Antonio, Texas.

The sketchy nature of her works, with its brown paper working as another colour, illustrates Cassatt's pastel technique. First she quickly drew in the general outlines of the composition in dark chalk. These lines were then covered over with different layers of pastel which were more thickly applied in some areas, usually the face. Then Cassatt went back over the design, again with dark chalk, and reinforced and strengthened the major contours in the composition. Mary Cassatt's final pastels were admired by her friends and associated. She was particularly pleased when both Louisine Haremayer and James Stillman acquired examples for their collections. Cassatt herself also seemed satisfied with these works and wrote to Mrs. Haremeyer (December 4 1913).

*"I brought seven pastels to town,  
four were large, a nucle boy and his  
mother. They were in many respects  
the best I have done, more freely  
handled and more brilliant in colour .....  
The Durand-Ruels were most anxious to buy  
And other dealers too".*

Another interesting portrait of Mary Cassatt was done 1896 entitled "Ellen Mary Cassatt in a whit coat". Fig.10 it is a portrait of her niece, Ellen Mary, who was then about two years old. The picture at times has been called, appropriately, the "little Infanta". The stiff, regal pose, serious expression, and elaborate costume recall the portraits of Spanish princesses by Velazquez.

1896  
Oil on canvas 81.3 x 61cm  
Private collection



Fig. 10.

"ELLEN MARY CASSATT IN A WHITE COAT"

1896

Oil on canvas 81.3 x 61cm

Private collection.

The sober colour scheme of white and brown is accentuated by the golden yellow upholstery. The composition, purged of all unessential detail, is unified by the sinuous line of fur trimming in the child's coat and bonnet which winds across the picture and around the figure. This complex, serpentine curve is structurally balanced by the straight lines of the background and chair which frame and stabilize the figure. The general flatness of the forms is relieved by the small, roundly modelled face of the child. This lack of spatial recession and the emphatic use of outlines to compartmentalise forms are seen in Japanese prints. Like her friend Degas, she was a master of pastel and her control of this difficult medium in rendering a difficult subject matter like children show how skillful Cassatt was. She produced works of extraordinary spontaneity and vivid colour. Her oils reveal the deep influence of Degas as well as the impact of both Japanese prints and photography.

In reviewing related literature, I came across literature on a few Ghanaian artists who treated the subject of children. I will attempt to briefly talk about one of them, her philosophy and manner of working.

According to E.A. Campbell in her unpublished thesis "Urban Themes in Contemporary Ghanaian Painting" she started drawing as a child and most of her early drawings were a direct reflection of her immediate environment.

"I grew up in a sub-urban setting in Kingston and my drawings depicted children especially little black girls in ribbons, wide party dresses and shoes like the children in the sub-urban part of Kingston where I lived."

## EVA CAMPBELL

Eva Campbell was born in Accra in 1963 to a Ghanaian mother from Akuapim and a West Indian father, Dr. M.O.N. Campbell who came to Ghana in the late forties and taught at the University of Ghana, Legon. Shortly after her birth, the Campbell family moved to the West Indies.

Eva Campbell's early years were spent in Barbados (her father's birthplace) and later in Jamaica, where her father, lectured.

Ato Delaquis writes on Eva Campbell's painting:

*"(Her) works are marked by deep humanistic values of an optimistic strain, unlike many painters in whom a pessimistic view of twentieth century existence seems to manifest.*

*Her creativity, despite its representational nature is thoroughly modern. The human conditions are the fulcrum on which her expression finds solace*

*..... In sheer draughtsmanship, she has few equals among African women painters. With deep roots spanning each side of the Atlantic, her diversified background has fully matured her beyond her year.*

According to Eva Campbell in her unpublished thesis "Urban Themes in Contemporary Ghanaian Painting" she started drawing as a child and most of her early drawings were a direct reflection of her immediate environment.

*"I grew up in sub-urban setting in Kingston and my drawings depicted children especially little black girls in ribbons, wide party dresses and shoes like the children in the sub-urban part of Kingston where I lived".*

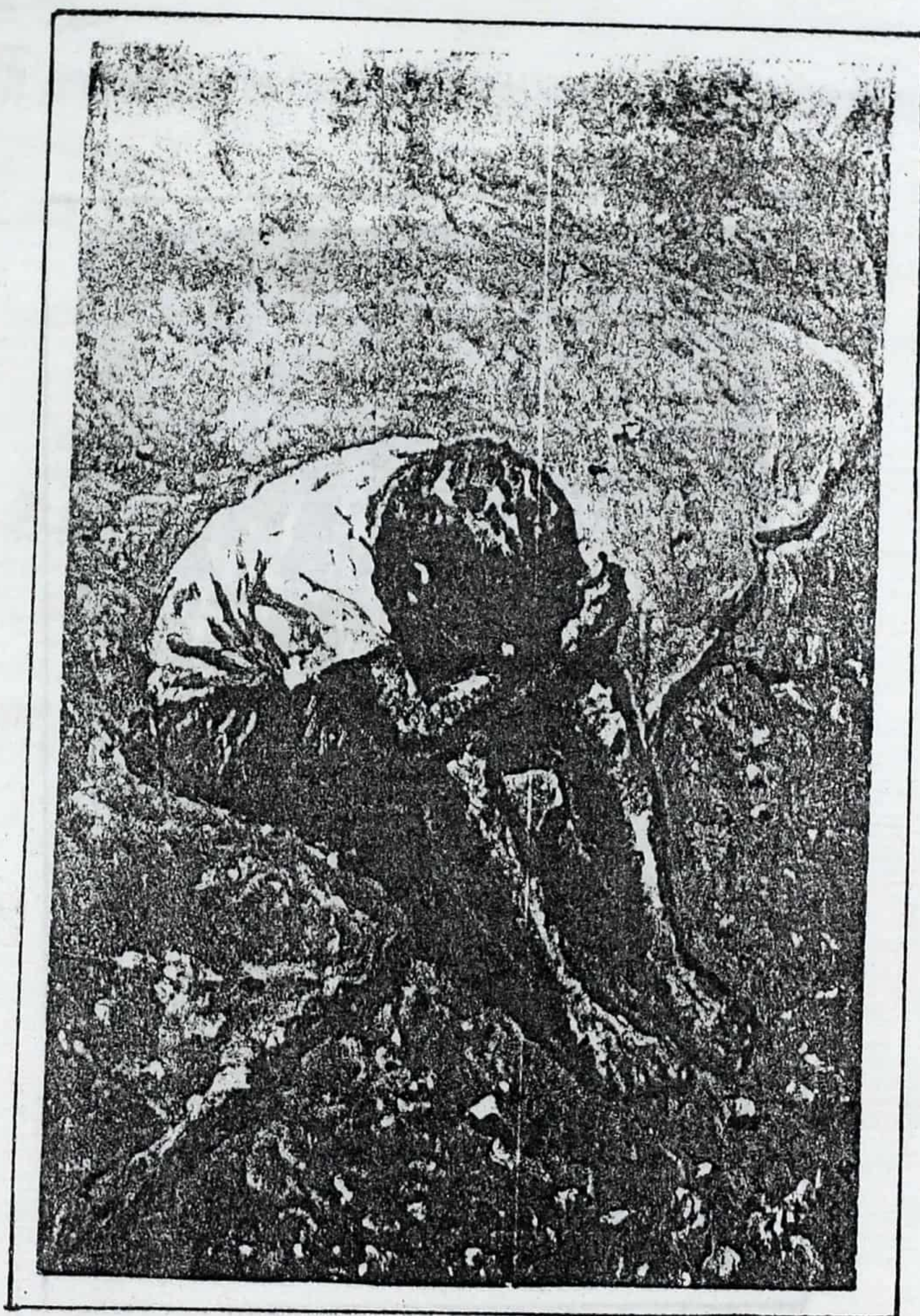


Fig. 11  
"ADOLESCENT"  
Eva Campbell  
Oil on canvas



Fig. 12  
"STREET KIDS"  
Eva Campbell  
Oil on canvas

LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
KUMASI-GHANA

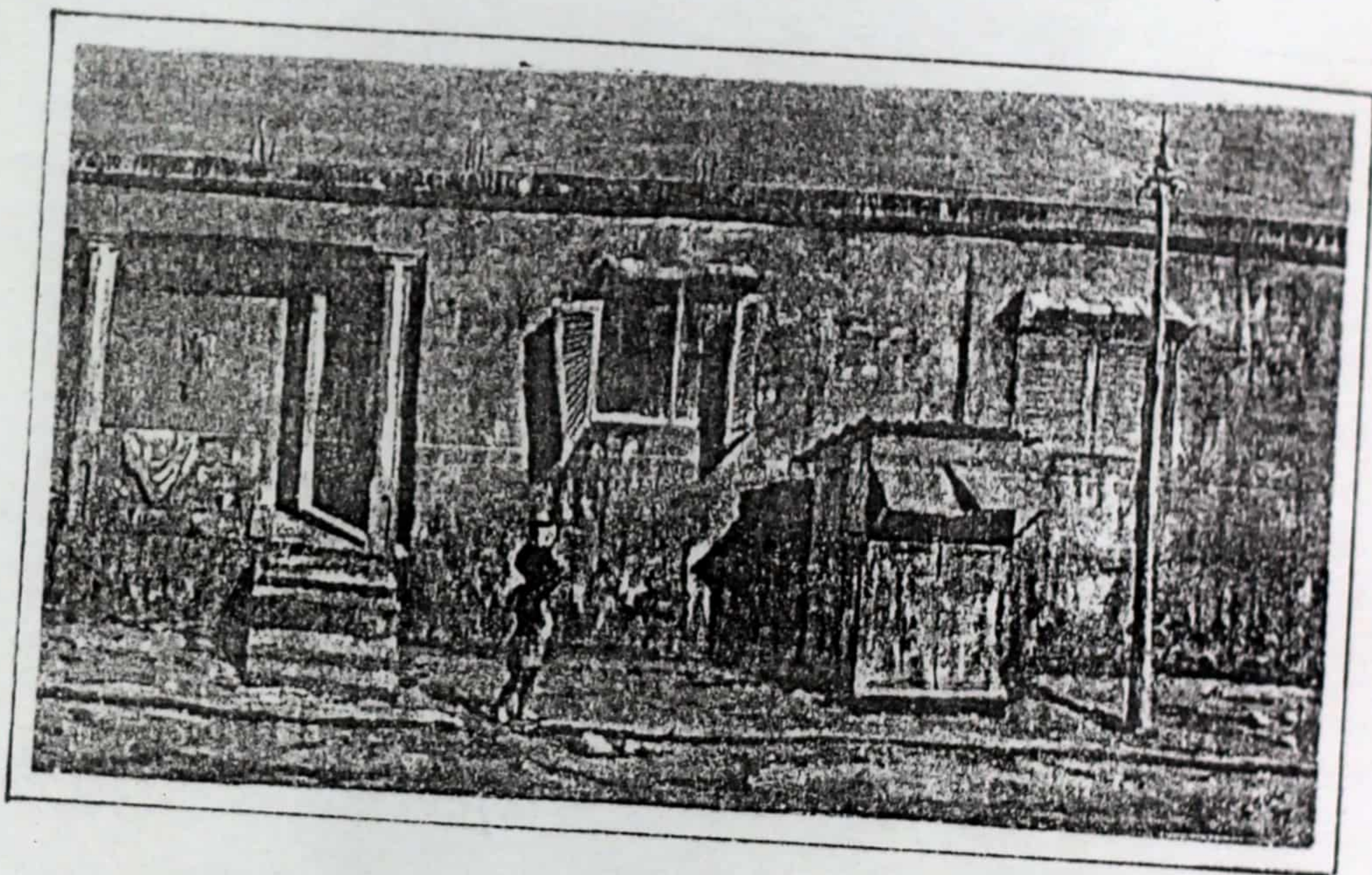


Fig. 13  
"FAÇADE"  
Eva Campbell  
Oil on canvas

The painting, "Adolescent", (Fig. 11) depicts a city kid in a posture representing hopelessness and in her own words, Eva has this to say,

*"the urban centres produce several young people who drop out of school and either take to the streets as juvenile delinquents or start trading in order to fend for themselves and complement the family income".*

These children appeal to her imagination hence she prefers drawing such scenes.

A similar painting, "street Kids" (Fig. 12) show two small boys standing idly besides a crumbling wall with two large compound houses in the distance. The idea behind is similar to the "Adolescent", frustrated youths contemplating their lot in an urban society where no one seems to care about these unfortunate children.

Children frequently recur in Eva Campbell's paintings. She sees the contemporary African child as beautiful and adventurous and this she strives to depict in her work. Eva is a painter who puts great relish and insight into painting various aspects of childhood life. Through hard work and persistence she has become one of Ghana's young and promising female artists rubbing shoulders with her male counterparts.

Having received her sixth form secondary education at Ahmadiya Secondary School, Kumasi, she proceeded to the College of Art, University of Science and Technology, Kumasi where she obtained a first class honours in painting. During the 1988/89 academic year, she was appointed as a Teaching

Assistant at the College of Art. She went on to pursue a Masters programme in African Art.

The skifull execution of children in their paintings by the above mentioned painters show how some people have studied child anatomy and were able to paint them effectively. The review of literature on these artists has helped me to acquaint myself with what others have done and where they have come to.

Out of all these information gathered on various artists, questionnaires, interviews of some of street children well be conducted. Personal observation as well as analysis will be made and suggestions and conclusions drawn. This will help the public to understand the plight of the street child.

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### CHAPTER TWO

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## CHAPTER TWO

### ON MY PAINTINGS

One of the objectives of this project is for me (the researcher) to study the life of children on our streets and apply their plight as the basis for my artistic expression, taking into account the necessity of aesthetic principles. Because I am aware that without aesthetic considerations, the content easily degenerates into mere illustrations, which I try to avoid. The street child therefore serves as the central core whereby I the (research) derive my inspiration. The result is my personal interpretation and representation of the plight of the street child. The street child therefore serves as means to an end. The products of my artistic expressions on the street child are not supposed to be perceived as illustrations. Therefore, I made attempts not be 'dogmatic' in my paintings. I moved freely without any inhibitions whatsoever, I made use of disparate artistic alternatives such as lines, texture, colour orchestration, shapes and all the elements of art one could think of.

In order to be able to express my observations based on my personal understanding and perceptions of the street child, I had to put myself into the everyday life situation of these unfortunate victims by interacting with them, sharing jokes and gifts while

I made my sketches and take photographs. This personal encounter has

provided me with conceptual inspirational source, which stimulated me into thinking and visualising aesthetic interpretations of my encounter with the street child.

In a text of a speech given at Ohio University, Athens.

Ohio on April 17 1959, David Smith declared:

*"Art comes from the inside of who you are when you face yourself. It is an inner declaration of purpose, it is the factor which determines artists' identity".*

Paintings in this project try to provide the observer with visual, intellectual and educational view about the street child. The paintings may stir up affection, sympathy, sorrow, and disgust, anger or any form of human emotions in the observer. The observer therefore becomes his own interpreter of the paintings. My paintings in this project can be seen as language in which I express my ideas and experiences. What I have done is to stir up an urge in the observer to find out what the artist is communicating about. At the end of it all, if the observer is bale to perceive my impressions and understands my passionate message about the unfortunate street child, then this project has served the purpose it was made for.

This chapter will therefor give some analysis of the paintings in this project. Most of the paintings were done from original sketches made by the artist from live models or photographs and later developed into paintings in his Master of Fine Art studios College of Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.



Fig. 14a

"IGNORANCE"

Oils

77cm x 102cm

CANVAS

*"Brighten the corner where you are",  
so goes the saying.*

This ignorant shy looking little girl is  
just trying to be happy where she finds  
herself despite her predicaments.

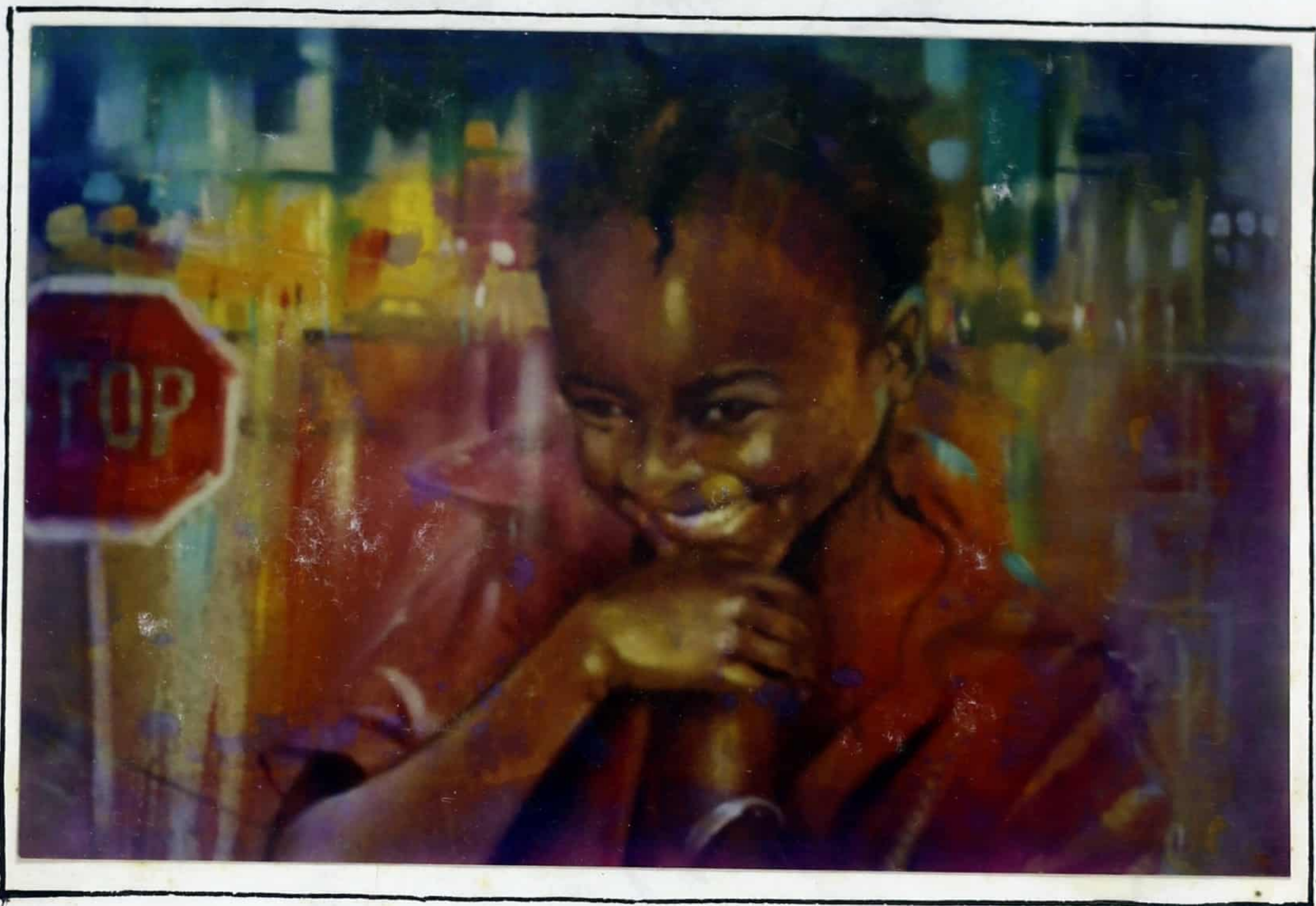


Fig. 14b

Detail of plate 14a showing broad  
Smile and shy looking posture.



Fig. 14c

A sketch from the artists pads. Originally the model was selling doughnuts at a bus stop in the afternoon, not in the night as depicted in Fig. 14a and b.

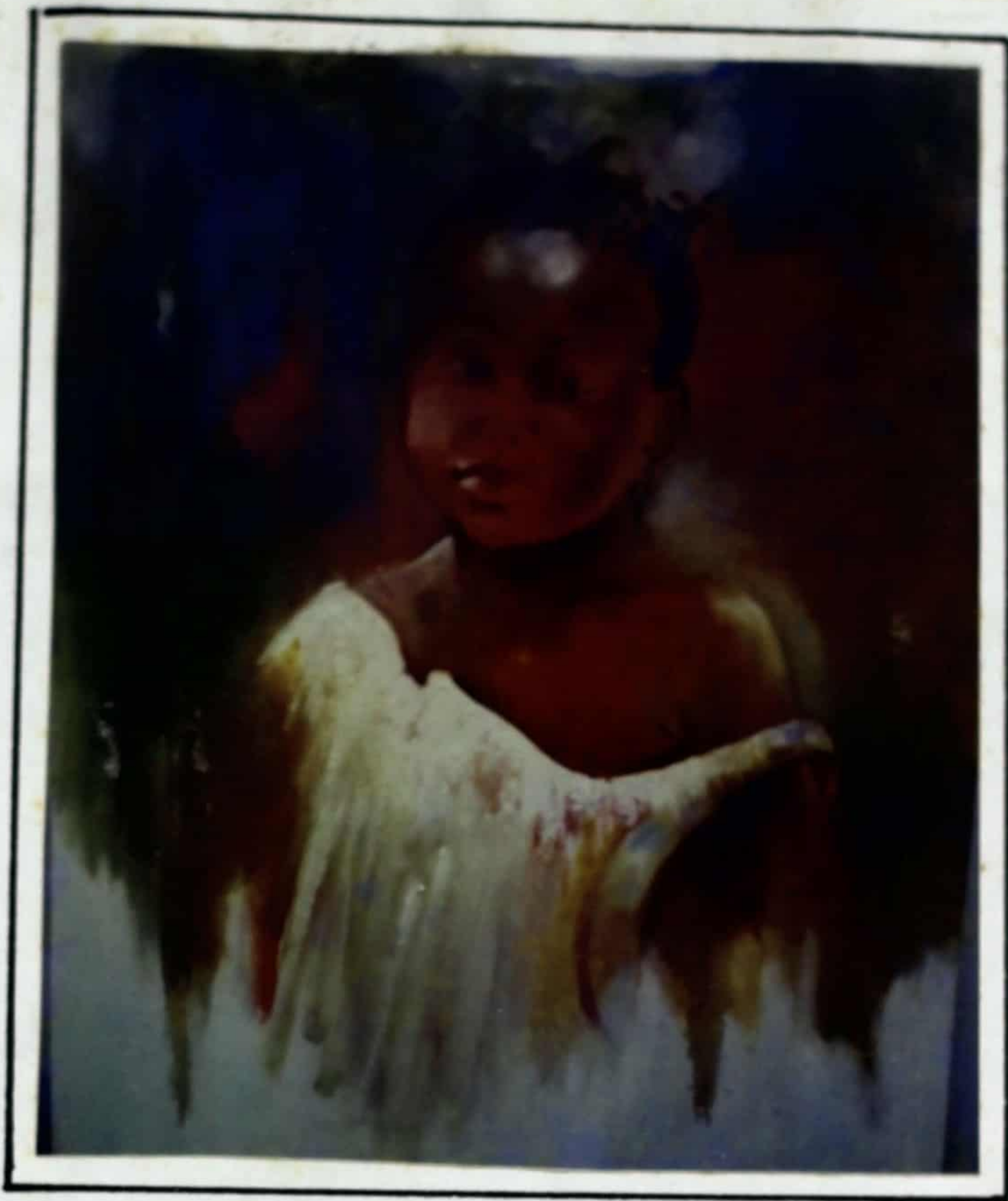


Fig. 15a

"IS THERE ANY HOPE"

Oils

64cm x 82cm

Canvas

The little girl's face is sketchily drawn, yet detailed. The lower part of the canvas has been left unfinished with the white canvas showing. This gives a feeling of uncertainty to the observer. So, is there any hope for them?



Fig. 15b

Detail of Fig. 15a

close-up showing the sketchiness and  
transparency of the colour.



Fig. 15c

A quick sketch of a little girl  
at the market.



Fig. 16a

"HEADLINES"

Oils

77cm X 102cm

CANVAS



Fig. 16b

Detail of plate 16a showing  
the headlines on the various  
news papers, the small vendor is selling.



Fig. 16c

A sketch of news-vendor boy



Fig. 17a

"CHILD LABOUR"

OILS

77cm x 102cm

CANVAS

The warm colour scheme is accentuated by the accidental washes. The crosshatching effect on the straw hat is similar to the artists' early works where lines and forms are used in an interplay of colour.



Fig. 17b

Pen and ink drawing using lines dots  
shapes and forms. One of the earlier  
works of the artist.



Fig. 17c

Detail of Fig. 17c

Using vigorous brush strokes to show how  
Unstable the little boy's future may be.



Fig. 17b

Preparatory sketch for Fig. 17a



Fig. 17e

Another preparatory sketch for Fig. 17a



Fig. 18a

"HELPLESSNESS"  
OILS  
77cm x 102cm  
CANVAS

Stiff and serious expression showing  
emotional stress.



Fig. 18b

Detail of Fig. 18a

Close-up showing the mood in  
which the girls is.



Fig. 18c

Preparatory sketch for Fig. 18a



Fig. 19a

"STREET LANGUAGE"

OIL

CANVAS

The poor torn and worn out dress of the boy shows careless maintenance as well as poverty. Secondly the wall depicts a poor neighbourhood.

## RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

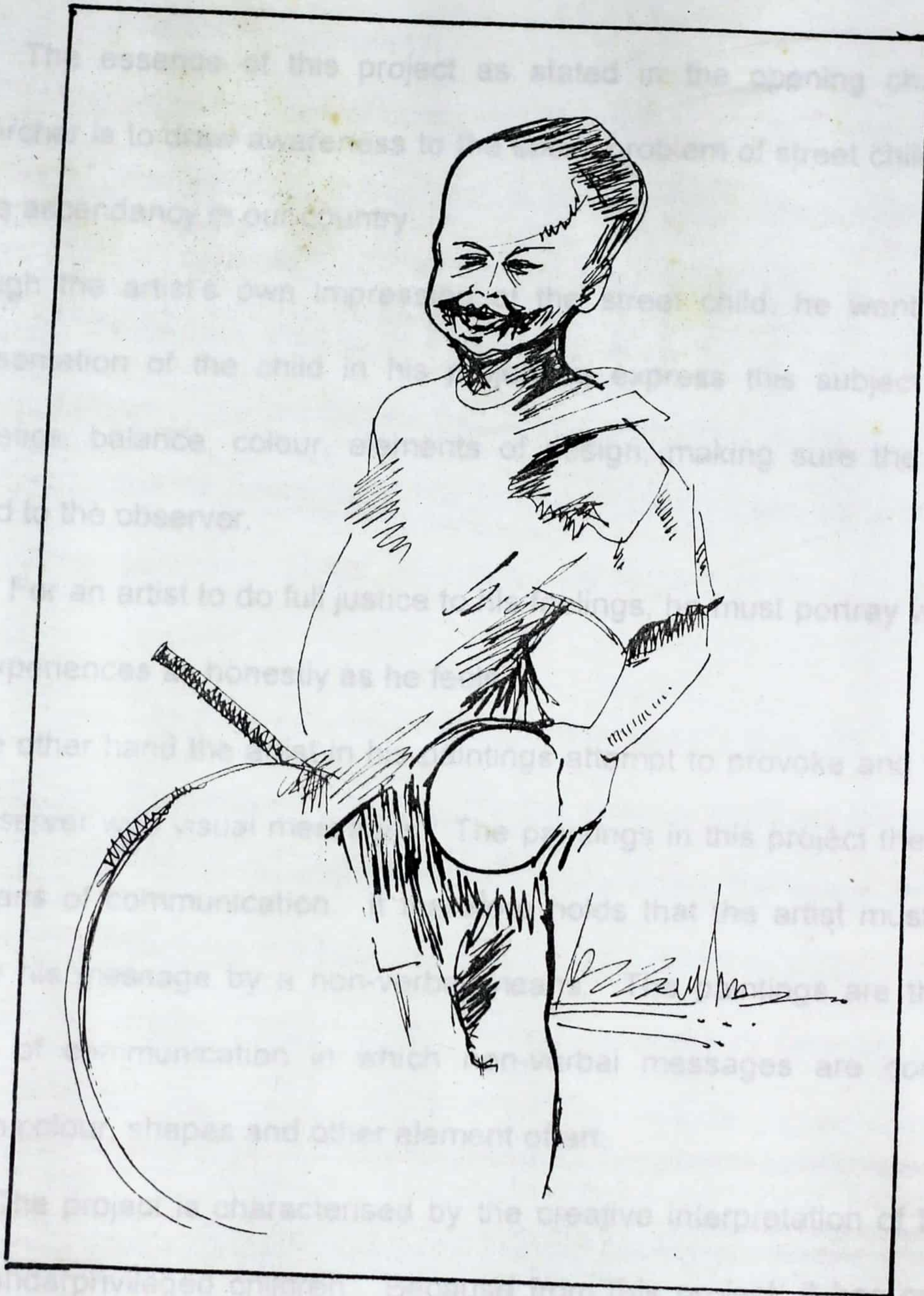


Fig. 19b

Preparatory sketch of 'Street Language'

## RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

The essence of this project as stated in the opening chapter by the researcher is to draw awareness to the social problem of street children which is on the ascendancy in our country.

Through the artist's own impression of the street child, he went beyond just representation of the child in his project to express this subject in terms of aesthetics, balance, colour, elements of design, making sure the message is carried to the observer.

For an artist to do full justice to his feelings, he must portray what he sees and experiences as honestly as he feels fit.

On the other hand the artist in his paintings attempt to provoke and to challenge the observer with visual messages. The paintings in this project therefore serve as means of communication. It therefore holds that the artist must be able to convey his message by a non-verbal means. The paintings are therefore the means of communication in which non-verbal messages are communicated through colour, shapes and other element of art.

The project is characterised by the creative interpretation of the plight of these underprivileged children. Because from this project, it has come to light that, creativity is undisputedly important and a significant part of painting process. It helps to enhance effective communication. Another observation by the researcher is that, the problem of child painting can be overcome if the artist

puts himself into the state of the child, devoid of any preconceived images of children. This is so because, the artist can express himself very well by being part of what he wants to express.

The social problem of street children, which has been the central core and source of information for this project, is still alarming. More children at the ages below eight are made to take their destiny into their own hands as if they have no parents. To bring a child to this world and allow him or her to suffer at such a tender age, as those we find on the streets everyday, is the greatest crime any adult can inflict on humanity. While individual parents are guilty of child neglect, the society generally cannot escape blame for the plight of street children in Ghana.

There are a lot of programmes in this country that are sponsored every year by wealthy corporate bodies, for the entertainment of few in the affluent class of the society. In a country like Ghana where the street child problem is becoming a menace all resources need to be pooled to support these innocent children. It is very crucial for the society generally to take up this challenge because supporting, the upbringing of children in a very good environment and offering them the necessary education, means educating future adults and making the populace very productive in the future. Let us not scorn them. They need the support of the society.

They need love and care. They need to be comforted. Above all they need the warmth of society.

It rests on society to transform these street children into responsible school children.

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The time is now. The children in there paintings are speaking to you for your help.

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APPENDIX

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING, SCULPTURE RURAL ART AND INDUSTRY

UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR M.F.A. THESIS, 1997**

**TOPIC:** ARTISTIC IMPRESSION OF STREET CHILDREN

**CANDIDATE:** REUBEN KWAME AGBELEGOR GLOVER

**SUPERVISOR:** H.B. ATO DELAQUIS

The following questionnaire has been drawn up to assist candidate's research in the above topic: you are kindly requested to respond to the questions as frankly as possible.

Your response will contribute immensely towards the success of this thesis, which will benefit Artists, the Street Children, NGO's and the general public.

Thanks for your co-operation.

Reuben Kwame Agbelengor Glover

Flat 5<sup>A2</sup>,

Unity Hall,

U.S.T., Kumasi.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STREET CHILD

1. Name.
2. Date and place of Birth.
3. Parents and their occupation
4. Education background.
5. Could you tell me briefly about your life and what brought you into the streets.
6. How is life like on the Street?
7. How do you fend for yourself in terms of food, shelter  
And clothing
8. Would you say your life is better on the street than it was before leaving home for the street?
  - ii. If yes, explain.
9. Would you like to learn a trade and get out of the streets?
10. What do you think society or the Government can do to help you and your friends.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

1. What do you know about Street Children?
2. Do you think it is a social problem or not
3. What do you think are the main causes of this problem?
4. Is it the negligence of the Parents or the government that is why the Street Children problem is on the ascendancy?
5. What role do you think society can play to reduce the number of children on the streets?
6. What recommendations can you give to help reduce this problem?
7. What contributions have you personally made towards this problem?
8. Do you see any future for these Street Children?
9. What advice do you have for Parents?