



Monsters, bombs and hurricanes: Art Therapy and the Six Part-Story Method in minors with experiences of violence and trauma. Two years results of a longitudinal study.

Monstruos, bombas y huracanes: Art Therapy and the Six Part-Story Method en menores con experiencias de violencia y trauma. Resultados de dos años de estudio longitudinal.

Tamara González-Casado

Maps, monsters, and unresolved stories: what is the symbolic universe of the traumatized child? According to UNICEF (2024), 60% of children under the age of five are regularly exposed to psychological or physical violence, with an immediate impact on their health (Malchiodi, 2020; UNICEF, 2024; Van der Kolk, 2015). In response to this reality, the *Brundibár* R+D project was developed. Our *Ithaca*: “to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children” (SDG 16.2, UN, 2015).

Art therapy and the Six-Part Story Method (6PSM) have emerged as effective tools for working with children affected by trauma (Abha, 2018; Linz, 2015; Malchiodi, 2018). Within this framework, the presenter’s PhD research unfolds as a long-term journey: a two-year longitudinal study conducted across three centers, involving 25 children and 60 sessions per center. Quantative and qualitative data are collected and analysed under a convergent parallel design (QUAL → guan) (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The Six-Part Story Method, originally proposed by Ofra Ayalon and Mooli Lahad (Lahad, 1992), fosters the symbolization of conflicts, the identification of defense and coping patterns and the development of narrative skills to construct coherent stories. A total of 2,689 visual files, 600 recordings, and 13 hours of transcribed material capture the literal testimony of each of these creative journeys.

What lies behind these stories? Understanding childhood trauma means understanding how it is internally perceived and experienced by children under a profound sense of threat or



helplessness. This paper presents the most relevant findings from in-depth case studies in which children become aware of their symbolic universe—what patterns repeat and return, what their dominant adventures look like, what names their monsters bear, what they fear, and how they choose to confront them. Through creation each child discovers what their *Ithaca* is.

Biography

Tamara González-Casado is an Art Therapist and Researcher specialized in working with minors and families in the educational and social contexts. She is currently finishing her PhD in art therapy in the face of violence and trauma in childhood. Her thesis holds a predoctoral scholarship part of the R+D “Brundibár”, co-directed by Marián López Cao, Ana Serrano and Celia Camilli. During the development of her dissertation she completed international internships in Tallinn University supervised by Eha Rüütel (Estonia), HAN University of Applied Sciences with Suzanne Haeyen (The Netherlands) and Brunel University of London (United Kingdom) with Dominik Havsteen-Franklin.

Recent Publications

González-Casado, T., Seuren, M., Heijman, J. (2nd-4th July 2025) **A scoping review into the working mechanisms in trauma informed Art Therapy interventions.** [Paper presentation]. European Federation of Art Therapy’s conference ‘Between & Beyond Creativity and Destruction: The role of Art Therapy in Affecting Personal and Social Transformation’, London, United Kingdom.

Fernández Cao, M., Serrano, A., Fontana, M., Camilli, C. González-Casado, T. Gutierrez, E. (11th-14th September 2024). **BRUNDIBÁR: Metaphor as resistance to adversity.**

Longitudinal study of art therapy intervention with vulnerable children (2021-2024) [Panel presentation]. 17th European Arts Therapies Conference (ECArTE) ‘Singing about the dark times: Creation and resistance in the Arts Therapies’, Ghent, Belgium.

González-Casado, T., Peral, C. (5th-17th June 2023). **Imagine it otherwise. Interventions with children and adolescents in vulnerable situations: Art Therapy for trauma and violence in childhood.** *In Panel BRUNDIBÁR: Art Therapy for vulnerable children and dyads. Research in Prevention and intervention.* A project funded by the Spanish ministry of



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Science and University in collaboration with Save the Children and Universidad Complutense Madrid [Panel presentation]. European Federation of Art Therapy's conference 'GROWING*TOGETHER', Riga, Latvia.