

Art, Mental Health and Occupational Therapy: lines to a Regional History

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Introduction

The combination of clinical and pedagogical experience in occupational therapy in proposals that interlinks artistic practices and therapeutic processes, led us to discuss the relation between art, mental health and occupational therapy and its historical emergence and development.

Objectives

Therefore, we carried out a historical research designed to investigate how the fields of mental health, art and occupational therapy became interrelated in Brazil between the 19th and 20th centuries. On doing this we found some experiences developed by artists, people with mental suffering and therapists that transformed the boundaries of art and clinic in our country.

Methods

The methods used for this research, which is underpinned by the thinking of Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, were cartography and archeology. We used archeology to investigate the historical discourses and events, seeking out the forces behind them. Through cartography we sought to map out some lines which, emerging from each of these fields in relation to the other, intersect to form different patterns in the area under study.

Results

Through this work we could discuss the transformations that were brought about in Brazil in the 20th century in the fields of art, mental health and occupational therapy and also the changes on the cultural reception of works of art produced in clinical spaces. The enlargement of the art categorization, now including dissenting works of art, indicates a change in contemporary sensibility that brings transformation to cultural and social relation with madness and mental suffering.

Conclusion

Some art activities developed with people outside the art world, many times in situation of vulnerability, promotes health, understood as a connection with the creative potency that inhabits everyone. Here we are in the field of clinics and its micropolitical effects, as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari.

Contribution to the practice of occupational therapy.

This research contributes to a Regional History of Occupational Therapy, focusing on the development of this field in its relation with the art field that occurred in Brazil. It brings, also, to the profession and its practices the invitation and challenge of increasing its interdisciplinary connections.