Drawing Talks

Julie Spray, PhD (University of Galway)
julie.spray@universityofgalway.ie

Miss Volvo*, age 10, wasn’t shy in our focus group at her school in Galway, Ireland.

But at home she was different.

I don’t have a signature
Oh you haven’t done a signature before?

Well, you get to design your own signature!
I’ve always wanted to do... Maybe that’s it?

That’s cute!
I think you... I messed up the ‘c’

Missy makes it harder for others to copy though right?

Remember the rules?
You don’t have to answer anything you don’t want to.

So thinking about Covid time, what’s the first thought that comes into your head?
I don’t know actually. Vom.

What’s the earliest things you can remember?
I just remember Zoom calls from, uh, school.

How you feeling, you look a little nervous?
Oh, yeah?

What was little Miss Volvo like at that time?
I didn’t have a Zoom call that day.

Oh, I think I still have my drawing book...

*Name changed to protect privacy.
So what do you think your story is, from all this experience of growing up in a pandemic?

Mm, I'm not sure, actually.

Do you want to do the drawing? Or do you want me to, or do you want us to draw together?

Oh, I can draw it.

Cool, would it be alright if I draw you, then?

Good.

How's it going?

I think I might be finished. Some of the art, I made some mistakes.

That's okay!

Oh, wow.

Would you like to keep my drawing?

Yeah!

I'll trade you!

Yay!
I can show you some of my art pieces?
Oh I would love that!
Author Biography

Dr. Julie Spray is a medical and childhood anthropologist who researches children’s perspectives on health using child-centred, ethnographic and arts-based methods. She is currently a lecturer in Children’s Studies at the University of Galway, where she teaches an interdisciplinary course called “Comics, Childhood and the Alternative”. As part of her “alternative” pedagogical approach for this class she also completes the assignments; this comic is her self-directed project for the 2023 class, and addresses her personal learning goal of conveying ethnographic narrative through comic form. She is author of The Children in Child Health: Negotiating Young Lives and Health in New Zealand (Rutgers Series in Childhood Studies, 2020).

Author contact: Julie Spray, PhD (University of Galway), julie.spray@universityofgalway.ie

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