

## Review Article

# A Systematic Literature Review of Art Therapy on Depression Recovery

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**Abstract:** While there is increasing interest in the use of art therapy for psychiatric conditions, there have been few systematic reviews completed on the subject. As a result, this review sought to investigate current research and bring to light its efficacy in the treatment of depression. Art therapy can be used as a therapeutic intervention for depression by using art as a medium through which to explore and express emotions, symbols, and thoughts. Furthermore, art therapy can be used in conjunction with other therapies for depression, such as psychotherapy or medication. The purpose of this systematic review was to investigate the current research into art therapy conducted on depressive disorders and to discover whether it is effective in the treatment of depression. Art therapy targets individuals with a variety of issues (e.g., anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, and grief). The therapeutic value, therefore, lies within the cathartic process one undergoes while creating and exploring their artwork from which these issues are explored and identified. The psychology of art therapy, both from a theoretical and practical perspective, is central to the theories of art therapy. Art therapists use art as the medium through which to act out the client's mental states and emotions. The systemic literature review identifies art therapy as an effective intervention for depression.

**Keywords:** Art, Depression, Intense Anxiety, Psychology of Art Therapy

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## 1. Introduction

According to a report published by the World Health Organization, almost a quarter of the entire world's populace risks experiencing a mental wellness challenge, and twenty percent of the world's children and teenagers could have psychological problems in their entire lifespan [7]. Such unmet demands for psychosocial support are further exacerbated by external factors such as wars, adversities, prejudice, natural catastrophes, and illnesses such as COVID-19. From the dawn of recorded history until the present day, art and mental health have been at the forefront of human attention. It is interesting to note that despite this fact, as well as the amount of effort that has been put in, as well as the growth of information in each field, people still struggle with the "fundamentals" of art and health, as well as their connotation about society. When a person cannot verbally describe their experiences, or when words are not adequate, they can do it through the medium of art [7]. Artistic

expression is one of the ways that humans have developed as a means of adjusting to new circumstances and finding solutions to difficulties. Several other academics and I have proposed that the production of art is an essential component of human functioning and that it is beneficial to human survival. The fields of aesthetics and perception, as well as experience, are intimately connected to art's psychological underpinnings.

## 2. Art and Depression

Almost every piece of art is created to elicit a particular feeling in the viewer. People who struggle with anxiety may find some temporary respite from their symptoms by engaging in creative activities, such as seeing works of art. One of the numerous therapeutic benefits of art is a reduction in anxious feelings and feelings of terror [6]. The practice of making art can be immensely good for one's mental health as a whole. It is the foundation upon which one can construct or investigate their creative potential, and it capitalizes on the worth of ideas

concealed within the paint. Research in the psychology of art, in general, gives an exclusive perspective that many philosophers spent years exploring.

Sigmund Freud was an enthusiastic art collector who also wrote extensively about the lives and dispositions of various painters. The book "The Interpretation of Dreams," which Freud published in 1899, was a significant contributor to the development of avant-garde art activities in the early 20th century. Extensive study reveals that even when language and speech are lost, patients with dementia and patients with other progressive neurological disorders retain the ability to create art. This is the case both for dementia patients and patients with other progressive neurological disorders [1]. Studies also demonstrate that the process of producing visual art aids in lowering anxiety levels increases peace besides relaxation, and provides people who are hospitalized with an outlet for their creative expression.

As soon as people begin working on artistic projects, time passes in a manner that is pleasurable and much more quickly, and one ceases focusing on the negative factors that are creating anxiety. Art schemes can encompass a wide variety of activities and methods, including the use of digital mass media and acrylic, decoration, building equipment for one's household, and even painstakingly re-establishing a home to its former splendor. Some examples of these activities and methods include:

The first "Surrealist Manifesto" was written in 1924 by André Breton, who was profoundly influenced by artistic ideas for therapy. This provides a window into an understanding of where the Surrealists drew their inspiration from. This prepared the path for abstract art to emerge from the realm of virtual representation. Patients with depression and persons who suffer from intense anxiety might learn to accept themselves via the process of creating art [2]. Through self-expression, one can create a complete picture of themselves and come to terms with their image, all without passing judgment on themselves. In addition, the act of seeing oneself makes it possible for a person to meditate and concentrate, which, in turn, instills the mind with serenity and self-possession. As a consequence of this, patients may prove more composed when confronted with unsettling circumstances in which they would otherwise act aggressively.

Art for depression and anxiety is the manifestation of the human mind, and its attractiveness lies in the various ways in which it can be interpreted; none of these interpretations is wrong. Even while art can be described in a textbook, the act of creating art will always be dynamic and one-of-a-kind. This aspect of art is what brands it so fascinating; it portrays aspects of the human psyche, but how those aspects are interpreted is up to the viewer. When people are going through extraordinarily challenging circumstances, such as when depression is at its worst, art can help them cope [5]. Problems with one's finances, learning that one has an incurable disease, the death of a loved one, or even the realization that one's own life is coming to an end are all examples of such circumstances [11]. People who are going through difficulties of this nature can learn to express themselves in a setting that is secure and that ultimately leads them to a point where they can experience serenity if they receive training from a therapy

artist. For instance, the interpretation of the meaning behind a piece of abstract art can vary from person to person. A patient can receive an imaginative expression of what they can relate to by buying abstract paintings or asking an artist to produce one for you. This saves you the trouble of having to create something similar on your own.

Paintings are made one-of-a-kind, meaningful, and impossible to replicate right down to the very last brushstroke, thanks to the personal touch of the artist who created them. Because the idea of art is basically a creation of the human intellect and psychology, even a creation that wasn't made by another person is still capable of conveying your narrative [1]. Participating in artistic activities slows down the pace of cognitive deterioration in people who do them. Even though admiring artworks enables one to receive the therapeutic advantages of art, participating in inventive activities is a much more operative way to experience these benefits [12]. There is an inverse correlation between senior citizens' participation in craft projects and their chance of developing cognitive impairments. People can, for example, grow high levels of expressive resilience and altitudinal thinking by engaging in creative activities such as painting and sculpting.

Art is to some degree, something one can connect with, one that brings a person's attention to the subject and creates a connection between the patient and the art [3]. The make-up of art is at work here, and it draws your consideration to the aspects of the piece that resonate with you. All of the individual components, such as the colors, brushstrokes, concept, and tale, as well as the texture, are distinct and come together to form something that catches your eye. Your ability to investigate, experience, and express your feelings more healthily is facilitated by the artistic expression of the artist [10]. This psychology of artworks enables one to connect deeply with each piece because it reflects what you feel, what you desire, or what you comprehend.

Depending on the things that are important to you and the things that resonate with you, a work of art might teach you something about history, serve as a memory of a particular time, or represent an item of greater worth [9]. After that, one may incorporate it into their house in several ways, such as having a painter create a custom piece for you or purchasing an already-made piece. Nobody should be surprised to learn that enjoying art and allowing it to have a calming influence on them is enjoyable. When it comes to the true psychological influence that art has on people, the aesthetic qualities of a piece are simply the tip of the iceberg [11]. This is what makes this piece genuinely extraordinary. The mind is stimulated by art, making it something useful to have around in more ways than one. Inspiring, bringing back happy memories, and increasing productivity are three things that are all possible benefits of most types of painting. However, intellectual paintings induce attention to themselves and foster imaginative dialogue. Additionally, it is known to help people who suffer from post-traumatic anxiety syndrome. Despair, anxiety, and even trauma can all be curbed and contained by art in numerous ways [8]. One can hire an artist to make something that has the psychological effect you want to

receive or transmit and then commission them to do so.

The sensory experience is at the heart of the creative process; art builds a bridge between thought, sensation, and emotion through physical movement. One of the finest things about art, or more specifically, its psychology, is that an individual does not need to be an artist to enjoy art properly [12]. This is particularly true concerning the psychological aspects of art [13]. Or even require an exceptionally creative or articulate person to comprehend it. You can request paintings to be created that is a representation of who you are and how you are feeling and then purchase those paintings. Through the practice of the art of creative expression, one can express their personal story, share their views, and deliver their message. Art psychology enables the artist commissioned to generate a communal experience that forces people and spaces to join together and enjoy a wonderful living environment.

A commissioned artwork that was made for a specific purpose will continue to have an influence today, tomorrow, and many years into the future [14]. This is one of the many reasons why art is considered to be beautiful. The study of art psychology will have a long-lasting impact on your point of view and the way you conclude rather than merely observing the world around you. An exceptional level of cognitive capacity is demonstrated when one can connect the dots, or give the visual representation and the theory underlying it a meaning of their own [4]. In respect to art, an individual does not need to have expert talents and aptitude to condition their mind at ease and mental relaxation. All they need is some creative expression. People can get more relaxed over time and finally rid themselves of intense anger, tension, and sadness if they continue to engage their minds in creative activities that they find enjoyable. This is true so long as they continue to do so.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, both the study of the psychological effects of art and the actual execution of it involves an investigation of the strange and the representation of intellectual ideas. Art gives means of expression that educate, instigate, and describe things that words can't have a purpose and shines a light on those forms of expression. The expression of one's unique ideas and experiences through the medium of art is a fundamental component of natural human behavior. As a result, it is crucial to welcome creativity for all that it has to offer and to enjoy the myriad of healing consequences that it has.

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