

Promoting

HEALTH

&

Well-being

through

ART



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ART is a form of Creativity.

Whenever someone “makes art” it means,
that while acting creatively he/she has to take a number of different decisions,
therefore he/she takes active part,
in an **artistic process**.

Creativity & Art, form a pair of interactive, functional human behavior elements.

Human behavior consists of all that someone feels, does and thinks.

Art is both the context and the aftereffect of creativity.

Creativity is the context within which art is evolved.

This presentation is an attempt to explore

how

HEALTH & Well-being can be promoted through

ART

To start, let's explore the terms



HEALTH

Well-being

ART





As stated by **W.H.O.** (1948)
health is



***“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being
 and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity,
 therefore, a dynamic process that, at its core, is about having the capacity to self-manage.”***



According to **W.H.O.** (2019) in society culture and health are linked,
 given the fact that the cultural context has a shaping effect on health.
 Additionally, *health can be promoted at both an individual and a society level.*

W.H.O.'s definition focuses on **Well-being** from both individual and social perspective.



W.H.O. about Well-being :

A **positive** state in which physical, mental, psychological and social **health**, as well as a sense of **pleasure** and **happiness** are consciously felt.

Well-being

is in constant interaction with

HEALTH



ART's function

as a **tool** used to promote

HEALTH

&

Well-being

artistic
creative
practices

culture

literature

music

*performing
arts*

*visual arts,
design and craft*

*online, digital &
electronic arts*

ART as a **tool**

HEALTH

Well-being

ART is like a region consisted of different bordering areas and processes.



W.H.O. in 2019 recognised 5 wide-ranging **artistic areas**



- **performing arts** (e.g. activities in the genre of music, dance, theatre, singing and film)
- **visual arts, design and craft** (e.g. crafts, design, painting, photography, sculpture and textiles) 
- **literature** (e.g. writing, reading and attending literary festivals)   
- **culture** (e.g. going to museums, galleries, art exhibitions, concerts, the theatre, community events, cultural festivals and fairs)  
- **online, digital and electronic arts** (e.g. animations, film-making and computer graphics)  



ART

cannot be strictly defined, because of :

- its flexibility in terms of processes
- the freedom that its function requires
- its timeless and cross-cultural qualities
- the complexity of its role

Therefore, it is necessary to be approached
from a **holistic point of view**.

In these terms, ART could be considered, within an **artistic context** as :

- a situation
- an activity
- an event
- an engagement
- a cause and result simultaneously
- a region consisting of different but interactive bordering **areas and processes**



For the purposes of this presentation, **ART** is defined as:

...a **process** which consists of optional and highly flexible components, that provoke a **double-edge involvement** (i.e. **active** and **receptive participation**), which is communicated through physical sensations, thoughts and emotional responses.

...a **medium** that enables both interpersonal and intrapersonal **communication**, (i.e. approaching hidden desires, repressed feelings, etc.).

...a **vital spacetime** which is defined and delimited by the proceed-along artistic process.

From this point of view, it is evident how ART can function as a tool for the promotion of Health and Well-being, as a **safe-space** allowing personal expression and self reflection.

Considering these as guidelines, this presentation will explore how **ART's function** interweaves **Creativity** with **Health** & **Well-being** through creative practices, in a lively relationship.



process **Artistic process**, involves **active participation**, which is communicated through sensations, thoughts, emotional and physical activities or responses.



Every active artistic process entails some basic elements in constant interaction with each other, from the beginning to the end of the whole experience :

- **Inspiration/Idea** 
- **Development** (practical or empirical)
- **Creation** (physical or experiential) 
- **Encouragement of mingling & socializing**
- **Presentation** (optional)
- **Reflection** (optional) (interpretation, emotional response, e.t.c.)

Participating actively in ART is a **practical experience**, i.e. an energetic sequence of steps that supports the creation of an art object, either physical or empirical.



A person who actively participates in an artistic process acts as a creator. As the process unfolds, the creator him/herself functions simultaneously as observer/viewer/listener, etc. of his/her own art. Therefore, **active artistic process turns the creator into the first recipient of his/her own artwork.**



process

Every artistic process, no matter if it is an energetic action or a receptional response,...

... it is also:

- an informative physical or empirical experience
- a solitary or social practice
- a unique personal journey
- a safe space to play & try/discover new experiences
- an opportunity for socializing and connecting with others/society

...stems from Art's creative or teaching practices,

which are art-based methods aiming to introduce people to the sense of creation.

They include physical or experiential artistic techniques and they can be adapted to every level of physical, mental or psychological need and ability.

...includes:

- instructions
- other processes



...gives birth to:

- ideas
- thoughts
- questions



...requires :

- space and time
- engagement (physical or empirical)
- experiential elements (i.e. sounds)
- material substances, objects and equipment (found, bought or self made)



process

Artistic process involving receptive participation

Every receptive artistic process provokes several reactions in constant interaction with each other, from the beginning to the end of the whole experience and causes a number of outcomes :

pause

- **Triggering Inspiration/Thoughts/Ideas** at at at at
- **Encouraging mingling & socialising** at at pause
- **Development** (psychological or mental)
- **Energetic Response** (physical or experiential)
- **Performance** (co-acting/co-creating) (optional)
- **Reflection** (interpretation, emotional response, etc.) (optional)

When one involves oneself receptively in an artistic process, one is also acting energetically :

- as a **responsive attendant** at an artistic event/happening/incident, in terms of physical senses, mental interpretations or thoughts as well as psychological reactions, i.e. emotional responses. A a a
- as a **responsive spectator** in the sight of physical artworks.

Participating receptively in ART is a lively **inner experience** i.e. a variety of responses towards a physical or empirical **art object**.



process

Engaging with artistic processes promotes **Well-being**, because ...

...it offers :

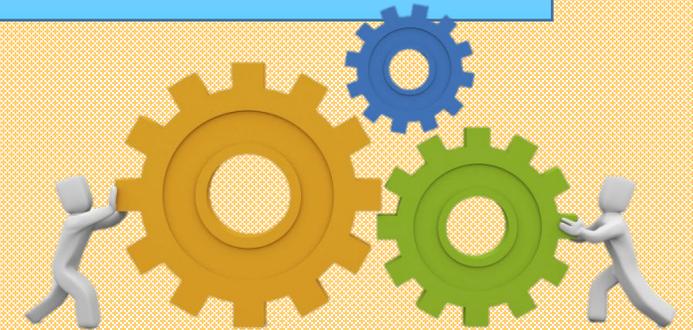
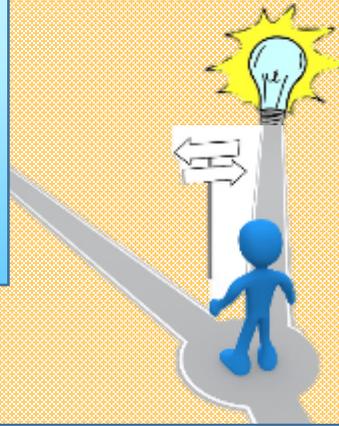
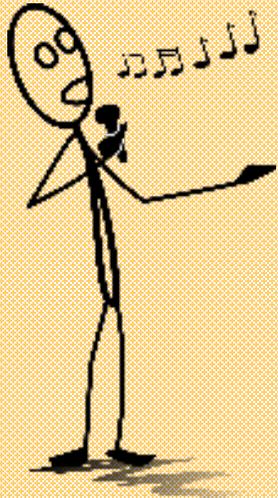
- resource for thoughts & feelings
- bodily expression
- alternative learning sources
- cultivation of new skills

... it teaches :

- how to act in moderation
- how to stay focused
- how to free imagination
- how to express thoughts and feelings
- how to follow instructions fruitfully
- alternative communicative skills

... it stimulates :

- inspiration
- expression
- communication
- socialisation
- innovation
- cultivation in all aspects



process

One does not need to be an artist in order to participate in an **artistic process** because **the core of the process' aim is the process itself.**

When artistic processes aim to trigger & develop well-being, they **do not require** :

- special skills or talents
- academic aspiration or commercial aesthetic value, in relation to the artistic creation or product
- to end up with a created specific art object.



Involving in an artistic process could be achieved through :

- Facilitator or self-directed engagement
- (directly) self activity as a creator
- (indirectly) receptive engagement, as a spectator, listener, attendant etc.



Artistic process' **benefits** :

- develops psychological, physical, mental & social skills
- constantly increases self-awareness, especially in regard to notion of “the other”, as well as in regard with the notion of “myself”
- reveals hidden or forgotten mental abilities & skills
- encourages feelings like satisfaction
- cultivates determination



Art can function as a **medium** of alternative & easier **communication...**

...with one's inner self



Artistic processes

enable people to come in contact with their inner self by providing countless symbols and a variety of alternative ways and means of expression.



... amongst people

Artistic processes

provide opportunities to engage and communicate with others.

Directly

Creative active or receptive participation within a group workshop context.



Indirectly

Receptive participation through artworks in solitary privacy or amongst others in a group.



vital spacetime

Art functions as a **safe-space** because, it provides an opportunity for adults to feel playful and act free of critical evaluation. Artistic processes create a kind of innocent, unexplored universe, open to anyone who needs to try new things with materials, thoughts & feelings, without critical concerns.

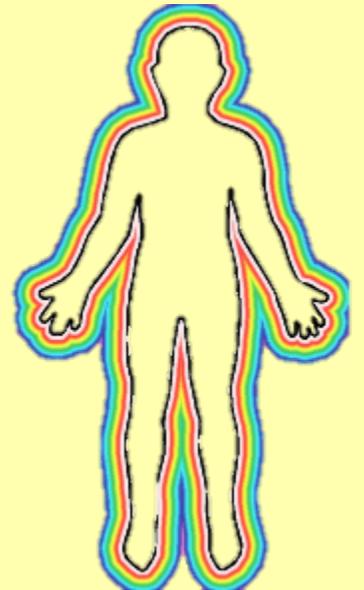
1. Artistic creation :

- offers a shockproof field of emotional release
- stimulates inspiration, memory, feelings

2. Artistic process decreases tension

3. Active creation through an artistic process or receptive participation of an artwork :

- stimulates new thoughts & feelings, therefore, provides an opportunity for self-awareness 
- triggers imagination and memory
- increases creativity



ART's function

ART as **process**, **medium** or **vital spacetime**
promotes
Well-being

by developing alternative opportunities for people
to engage and communicate
with others, as well as with their own self.



People interacting through an artistic process can experience **otherness** as a fruitful way of **communication** and **positive interaction**.

Furthermore, while engaging with **ART** people can feel evenly and proportionately equal, as they confront their own feelings or ignorance about new personal experiences, privately or in public.



Here are **two examples**, which clearly describe how

ART

leads to

Well-being

On the **first example**, the initial motive of the artistic creation, had to do with promoting Flemish art, by filling with artworks, anonymous public spaces, like airports' waiting rooms.

As one can see on the filmed art-documentation following, the venture evolved into a public call for participatory well-being.

The actual artwork, which will be presented, is "**Rubens Cupid**" (2018), a digital artwork, created by the artistic collective "Skullmapping" and inspired from an original painting of Sir P.P. Rubens.

The **second example**, that will follow the first, has to do, with the unique musical group **Stomp**, which was established on 1994. Stomp, engages its audience, by surprising it, using simple everyday movements as dance and ordinary objects, as ..musical instruments.

Let's first take a close look at [the original artwork of the Rubens' painting *The Feast of Venus* \(1636\)](#)



At Brussel's airport, in a public waiting room full of people, passengers are walking, sitting or waiting on lines. On the walls are hanging famous artworks, such as the one on the previous slide, which was created by P.P. Rubens (1577 -1640).

All of a sudden, a small painted angel extracts itself from the Rubens' painting and flies around giving an amusing performance. The small flying mischief-maker is an artistic projection, that meant to attract peoples' attention.

Here is what happened:

1st
example

Watch a video here:

<https://skullmapping.com/project/rubens-cupid/>



Obviously, when an artwork is designed and presented in a proper way, it is possible to stimulate peoples' feelings of joy, even during a common dull day.
Travelers, passengers and staff, some of them maybe bored or anxious, where all, more or less engaged with that unexpectedly presented artwork.

Stomp introduces to its audience music created by objects widely used in everyday life, as for instance zippo lighters, buckets, brooms or matchboxes.

Combining music created by unexpected objects with dance and theatrical performance, the group engages its audience in an inventive and stimulating show.

Once the group saw in newspaper an ultimate musical instrument. Let's watch the result:

2nd
example

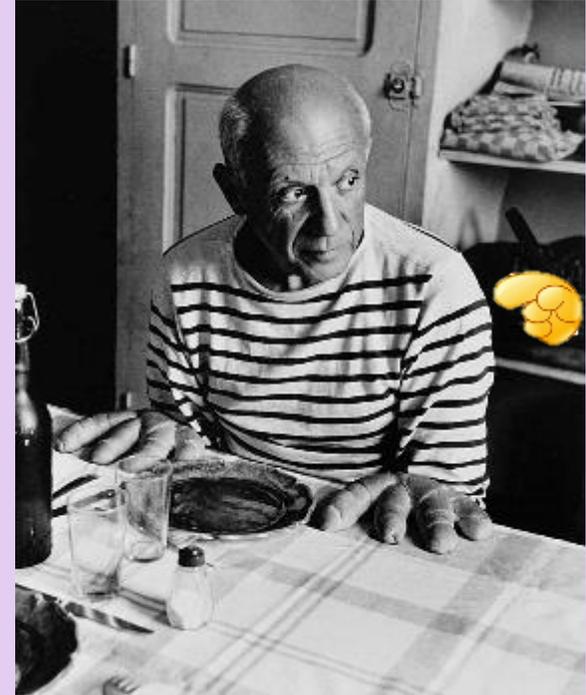
Watch a video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NhFmARAgU0>

No matter where artistic expression stems from.
When artistic inspiration meets its audience, **ART** meets its main purpose.

In **ART** one can use everything, anywhere and whenever he/she feels inspired to do so. Especially spontaneous artistic improvisation connects directly personal expression with

Well-being



ART's function when used to improve

the **quality of everyday life**

and unfolded from **experienced hands**,
it is truly a **powerful tool**.



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