

Arts + Health

Research,
Practice +
Experience



Welcome to the Integrative Community Practitioner Forum. Hosted by UVM Integrative Health, a joint initiative of The University of Vermont Medical Center, the UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Larner College Medicine.

This talk is part of an inter-professional series on non-drug methods that can help manage pain.

Rebecca Schwarz MFA

Art from the Heart, Burlington City Arts

in collaboration with UVM Medical Center

This evening will be broken into four short segments:

First, a bit of info on Art from the Heart, and an introduction to the field of art and health.

Then Patricia Fontaine will talk about expressive arts and lead an experiential activity
Buffy Dekmar will speak about her experience with connecting people with creativity and what some of the research is pointing toward

And Annette Burger will describe her experience integrating the arts into her nursing work (in internal medicine) here at the Medical Center.



Photo: Martha Loving

7 days a week

Reached over
5100 people
last year

Generous donors, and taxpayer dollars helped us connect over 5100 people last year with quality art supplies and the devoted attention of artist volunteers. The program runs every day, and sometimes several times a day, with volunteers making art with and for pediatric patients, and siblings, as well as adult patients, families and staff.

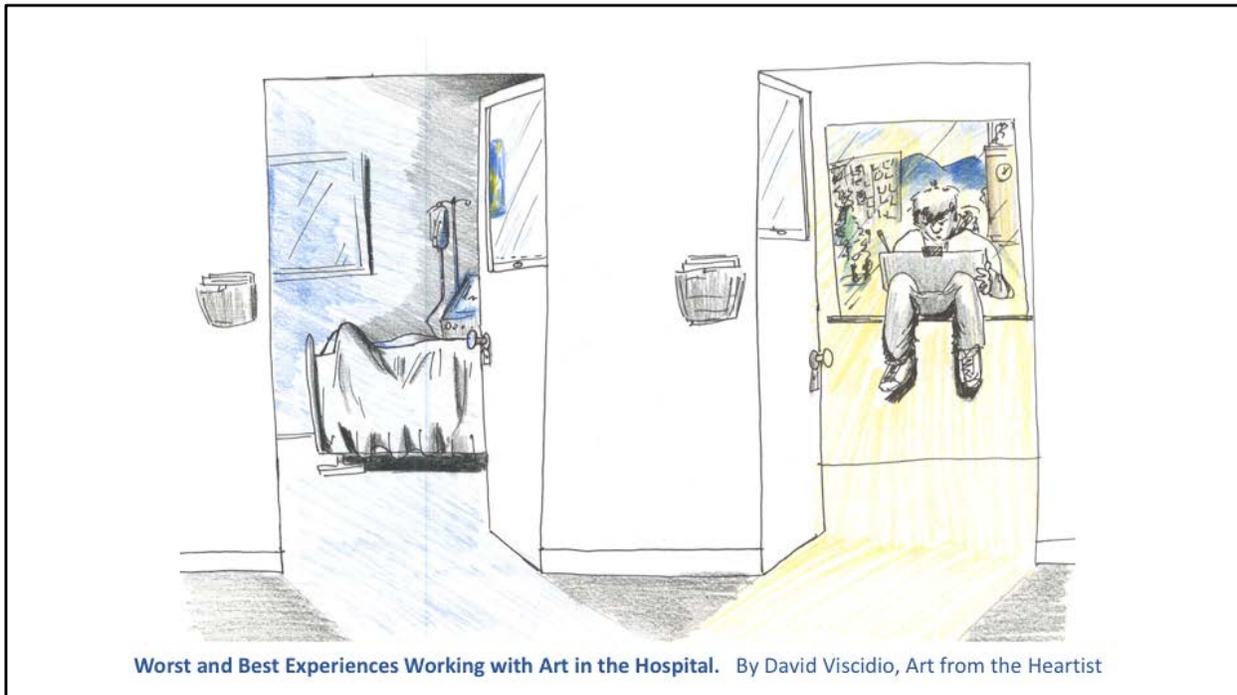
Art from the Heart

Since 1994

Connecting patients,
their families
+ caregivers with
devoted volunteer
**time to
nurture creativity +
imagination**



Since 1994 Art from the Heart has been facilitating creativity with kids and families at the hospital. Over the years the program has grown under the care of Burlington City Arts in collaboration with the Medical Center and with the Essential work of volunteers - who are really how the program happens.



Art from the Heartists make their rounds, helping to connect people with creativity and with the parts of themselves that are well. We work to create windows of imagination on sterile walls, and open doors into joyful experiences. We visit to make the hospital a more comfortable place and empower people – pediatric to palliative – to be more themselves.

We are not art therapists with a capital ‘T’, but art can certainly be therapeutic. Artists can help to facilitate the creative state that transports us, and opens up access to feelings of flow and perhaps spirituality. Artists in healthcare are not shamans or healers or therapists – we are facilitators of the transcendent power of art. And we are there to support caregivers and staff in the agonizingly painful, and immensely meaningful experiences of caring for others, and dealing with illness, the complexities of life, and of death.

If someone chooses to explore the meaning in their work, we listen and honor their thoughts, as any fellow human would. If we are concerned for people we bring these concerns to the hospital care team. We are not there to lead people to catharsis, interpretation or therapeutic exploration, And, the creative journey has many benefits - which I hope you will experience tonight.



Chauvet
Cave

c. 30,000
BCE

Across time humans have made art to help understand and influence the worlds we find ourselves in – we can even say that art making is one of the activities that defines us as humans. The arts seem to offer an evolutionary advantage, as the behavior has persisted and flourished for millennia.



The profession of art therapy – which is primarily housed in psychotherapy - became formalized in the 1940s. Arts in healthcare is primarily housed in the physical care places of hospitals and nursing homes, and started en masse in the 1990s with the field working to formalize itself as we speak, with a trajectory to become part of the allied health care team.

Whales Tales

Photo print
gift for patients

11 x 17"

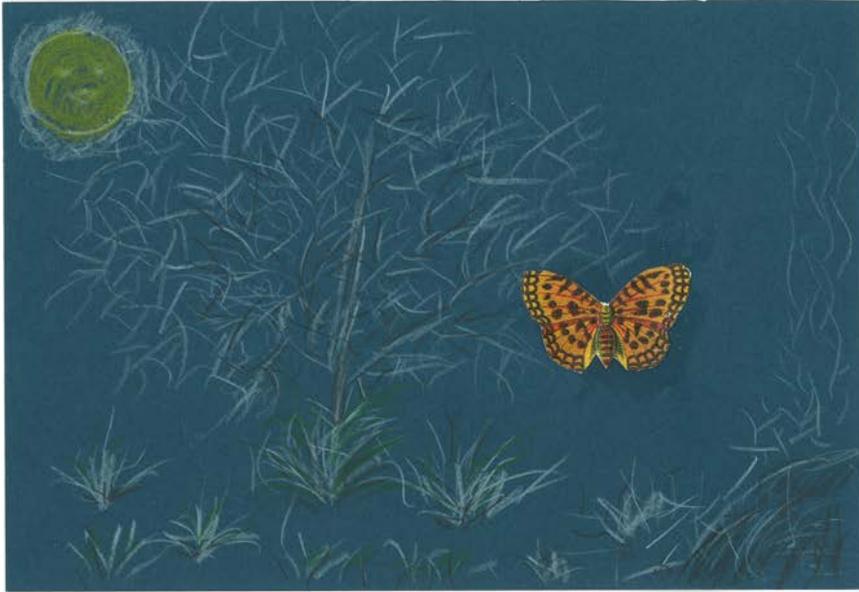
Brian Drourr



Whales Tales Brian Drourr

I am a 4th generation photographer and a social worker at UVMHC. Some of my earliest memories are of playing with my father's Nikon FM3 camera. I have been taught, and learned as much from actually taking photos, and getting out there, as I have from any form of photography education I have received. I have carried my love of adventure and photography together over the years and thus my "photographic style" evolved from my passion for the outdoors and being in nature. It's my hope to bring that sense of awe and amazement and evoke that sense of "being there".
This print is a gift from Art from the Heart and the artist, Brian Drourr. For more info on artmaking in the hospital, please visit burlingtoncityarts.org/art-heart

One way that we interact with patients is to offer artwork for them to look at. Often windows – if they are lucky enough to have one, look out at another building. This photo of the Whales Tales is by Brian Drourr, who in addition to being a great photographer is a social worker here at the hospital. We work to connect people on the human level, and bring in their interests and among other things, the shared calming magic of the night sky.



Untitled #1

Collage

4 x 5 ½ ”

James
An adult patient

The impulse to create and express divine mysteries is part of what makes us human.
We see it clearly in children, And it continues in all of us whether we think of
ourselves as artists or not.



We are about process more than product.

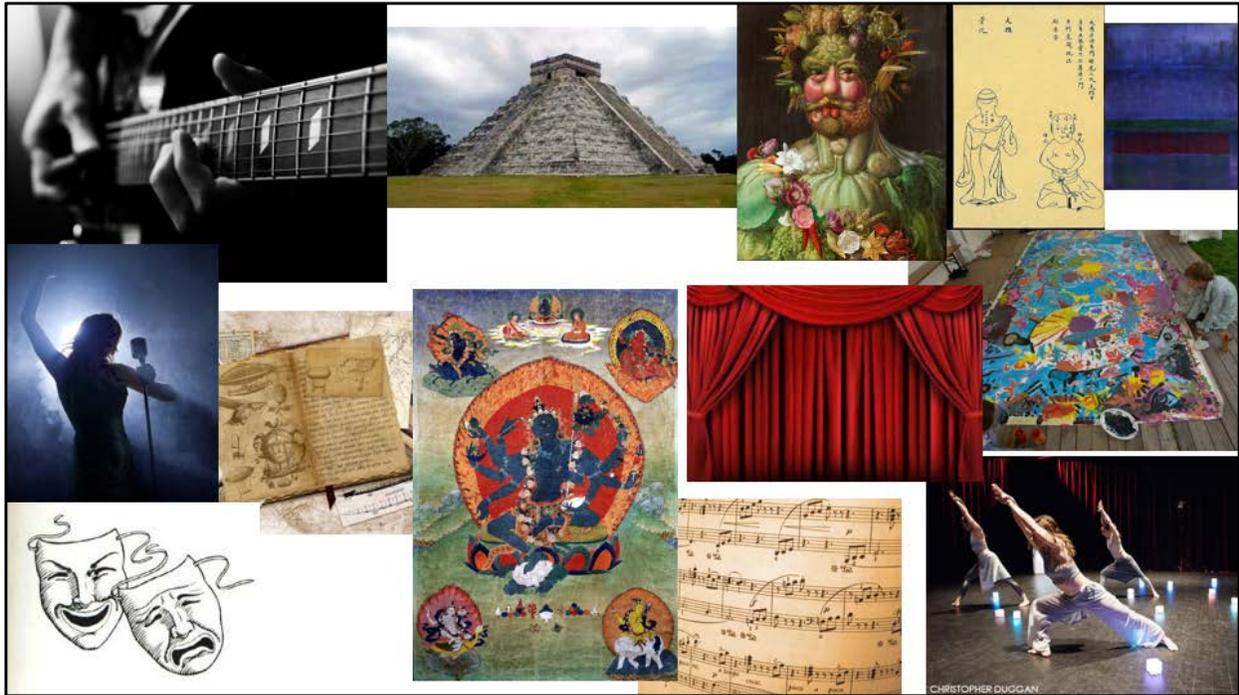


Art holds contrasts

funny + terrifying

bright + fearful

Art has the power to hold contrasts for how things can be both funny and terrifying all at once.



I think there should be as many words for art as there are Inuit words for snow. There are so many complex forms of art, and so many ways to think about it depending on the context that it is in. Certainly, Some contemporary art can be more perplexing than enlightening.

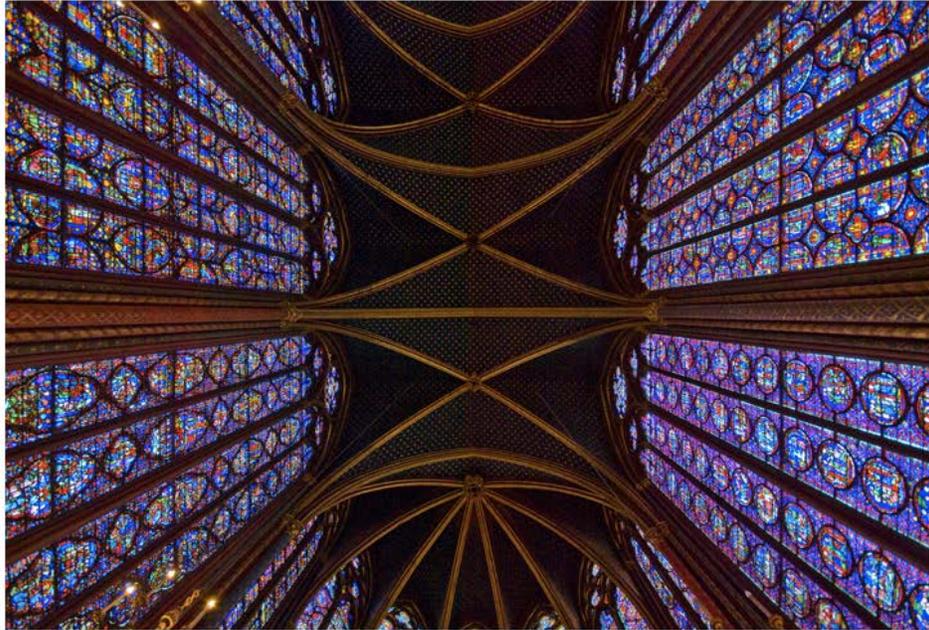
But even if you don't identify as an artist, it is likely that you turn to the arts through the drama of TV, and movies, or music, dancing, reading and so on. The arts in their many forms help us learn about, process and try on **new realizations**, or find an **escape** or entrance into wonder – limitless – and knowing. These powerful qualities are what connect the arts, spirituality and healing.

Stained
Glass

Worm's
Eye View

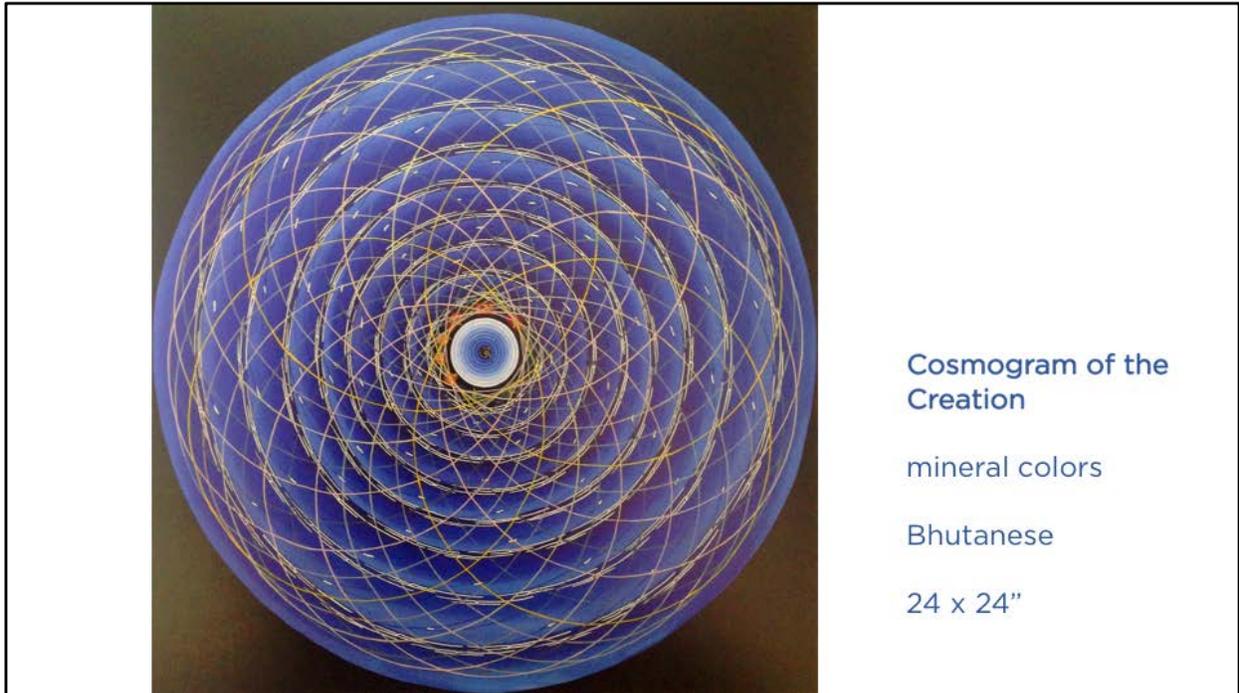
Sainte-
Chapelle

Paris,
France



Over most of human history the arts were not separate from other daily activities, but were integrated. The Arts help to differentiate and make the ordinary Extra Ordinary and important.

Holy grounds, temples, churches, formal ceremonies, music, story, and dance are things that are made Special (Dissanayake) – and designed to help us shift into contemplation. Making something special, or extra ordinary takes it beyond the mundane to touch the spirit, and signify the importance of a moment, a place, a feeling and so on.



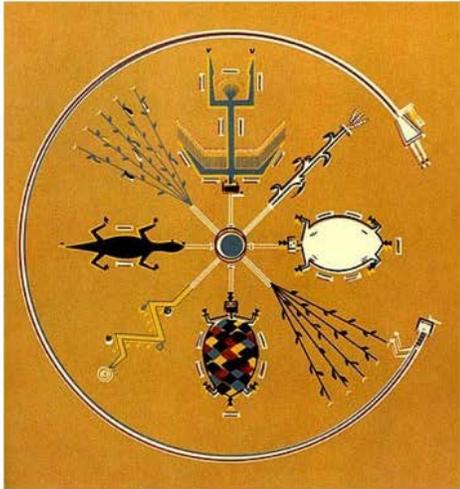
The arts can quiet and focus the mind and allow for deep connection with imagery and ritual. They also frequently involve many members of the community, and help to knit people together in support of one another, and bring the patient into the center of care.

There is evidence of similar beliefs found all around the world in early cultures. Disease and pain represented disruptions of the harmonious relationship between people and spirit. Shamans or healers act as intermediaries between the ordinary visible world and the spirit world,



facilitated by the tools of the arts: music, song, drama, dance, and the visual.

Many people today continue to work with traditional healers, in some parts of the world 80 % of the population uses traditional healing methods, often in conjunction with Western medicine (World Health Organization).



Navajo Sand Painting

The Navajo utilize sand painting, which is one aspect of a multiday ceremony that has dance, drumming and chanting as well. The patient lies in the middle of the tribal circle next to the person chanting and singing. At the same time the shaman creates a sand painting on the ground that represents the spiritual and physical landscape that the patient and illness exist in. The images are symbols that hold deep cultural significance. Origin myths connect the patient to the forces of creation, and recreating themselves in wholeness and health.



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Sufi Healing Words

Amulets sewn onto fabric to be worn

Wooden tablet for writing healing words which are then washed off to produce a therapeutic drink

Reading as healing

In Sufism, which is Islamic Mysticism, healers are trained for 12 years before practicing. In addition to dance they used chanting, and healing words. Sometimes, Healing words and words of protection are written on a paper and placed in an amulet. It is believed that the power of the words as well as the power of the healer is transferred to the person by wearing the amulet.

Sekhmet
Amulet

Thoth
Book of the
Dead
Papyrus of Ani

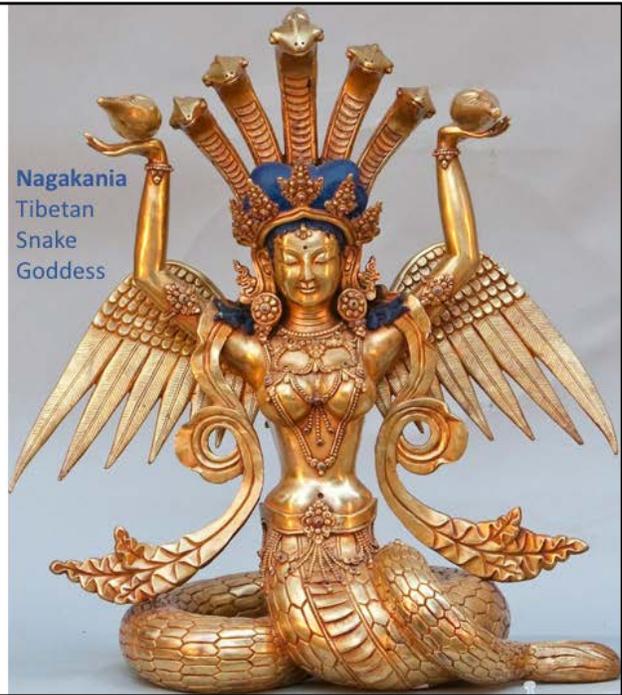
Ancient Egypt



In ancient Egypt amulets and incantations were used to help protect and cure. Important deities to health were Sekhmet goddess of healing – And destruction – and Thoth, the god of writing, wisdom, music, and balance. Interestingly, Thoth is credited with the invention of both medicine and writing. Sekhmet is frequently shown with a musical instrument and a snake (snakes are decorating her throne), these are two themes we will find again and again.



Snake Goddess
Minoan
17th –
16th C
BCE



Nagakania
Tibetan
Snake
Goddess

Shrines with Minoan goddess figures over 3600 years old have been excavated in towns and certain areas of palaces, suggesting that the sphere of these goddess extended to the official public arena. Evidence is scarce as to the meaning of them, but based on her exposed breasts and more recent appearances of snakes and goddesses and gods we can take a pretty good guess that she is about fertility and regeneration.

The naga is considered a protective deity among other things.

Asclepius

Greek god of healing

Snake

symbolic of regeneration



In the temples of Aesclepius, the Greek god of healing, fasting and music helped prepare patients for dream therapy or divine sleep. In their dreams Aesclepius would visit, and cure you or advise treatment. Drama played a role in healing as well with comedy or satire prescribed for depressive patients, and tragedy prescribed for manic ones.

“It was in these Aesclepiions that Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, began to develop rational medicine – a new philosophy attributing diseases not to the gods or the spirit world, but to purely physical and natural causes.

Seven Deadly Sins

detail

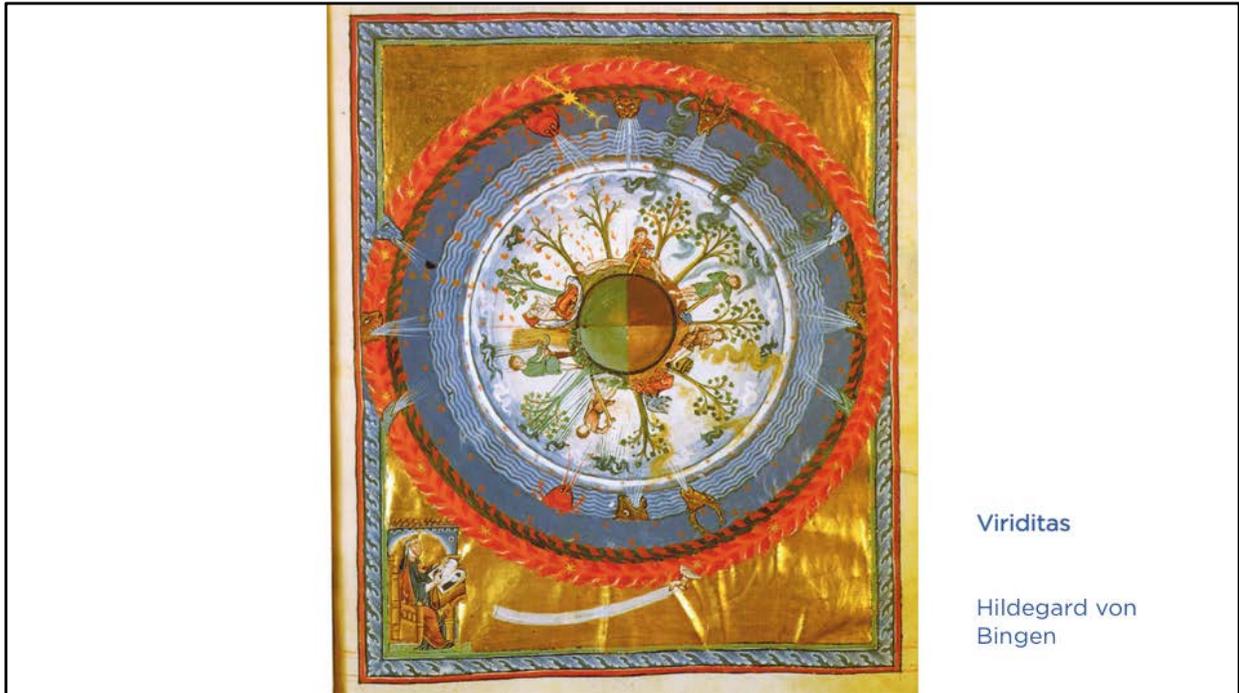
Hieronymus Bosch

1505-1510



Jumping to the middle ages and the Judeo Christian traditions, God and his wrath were considered the cause of disease and suffering. Faith, prayer, piety, and repentance were considered curing. The ideals and even some of the healing practices upon which animism and paganism are based can be seen in Christianity during the Middle Ages but with a new vocabulary: spirits and gods became saints, and diseases were now thought to be caused by Satan, and sin, rather than by spirits or Gods – so things hadn't changed that much after all.

The body was viewed as negative and sinful, while the soul, was highly revered. Western medical development during this time was suppressed while Greek and Islamic thinkers continued to develop rational medicine.



Viriditas

Hildegard von
Bingen

However, some progress was made in Europe with folk and religious healing, for instance the work of Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) advanced several fields. She was an abbess, mystic, herbalist, lyric poet, composer and writer, She wrote “two treatises on medicine and natural history, with a quality of scientific observation rare during that period”.



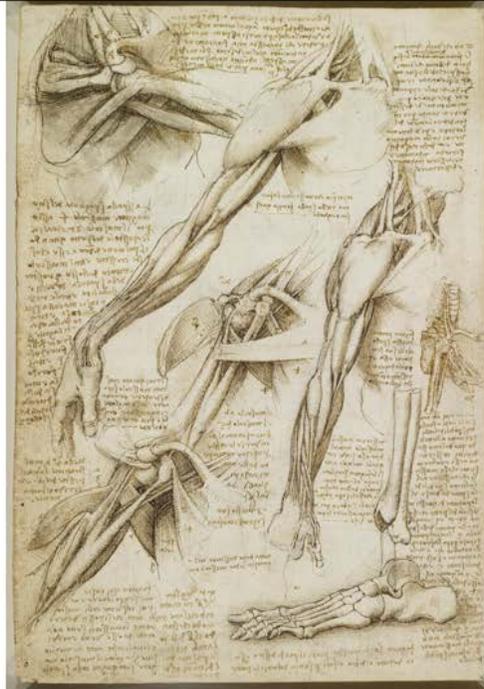
Until the 1500s in Europe nature based rituals continued "Scandinavian fire dances were performed to maintain health and to cleanse the body of illness. Participants would dance all night to reach a state of transcendent spiritual ecstasy, then would repeatedly leap through a raging fire to burn off harboring diseases and help restore and maintain health."

Dance has been used to achieve transcendence and health across time. The ancient Greeks danced around the sick for healing purposes in the 5th C BCE and the Dionysian cults practiced dance to achieve ecstatic feelings, Sufi whirling dervishes and the San of Southern Africa did, and continue to as well. These are just a few. And, think of dance parties you might have in your living room or at a club or a celebration which help us be in our bodies and feel connected with one another.

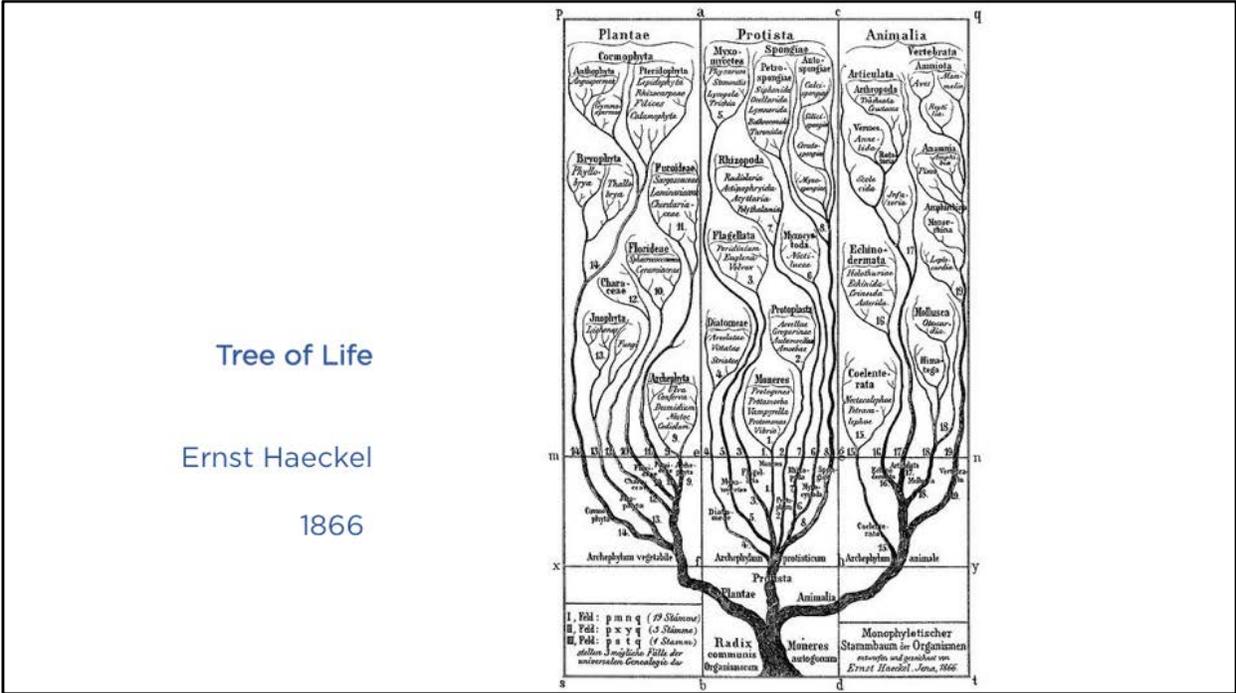
Anatomy Sketches + Notes

Leonardo Da Vinci

c. 1510



With the Renaissance, artists and physicians worked together to understand anatomy and physiology, and develop new ways of experimenting and teaching. This partnership helped move knowledge forward. Stunning developments were made in the field of medicine over the course of the Enlightenment.



And yet the reductionist ideals that separate things into smaller parts to be studied, ultimately separated mind, body and spirit, and we know that things are interconnected. Without attending to many aspects of a person, the community, and our widely interconnected realities, we can fall short of supporting health.



The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”
<http://www.who.int/about/mission/en>

The arts are experiencing a renaissance in healthcare to support this holistic understanding of health. The arts and healing have never been fully separated, and now we are seeing them growing together again. Over half of all hospitals in the U.S., and nearly all children’s hospitals, have some kind of arts programming, with many of them being art on display or concerts in lobbies, and some of them with hands on activities as we have here.

And with that, it is my pleasure to introduce Patricia Fontaine who will lead us in an experiential activity.

- Whole Person Healthcare, Volume 2, 2007. Praeger. Edited by Ilene Ava Serlin
- Homo Aestheticus, Where Art Comes From and Why, 1992. University of Washington Press. By Ellen Dissanayake
- Met Museum. Chauvet Cave (ca. 30,000 B.C.) Lions hunting Bison, Chauvet Cave. A pride of lions hunt bison, one of the rarest scenes ever found in Paleolithic art.
- A Brief History of Art Therapy, by Randy m. Vick <http://areas.fba.ul.pt/jpeneda/briefhistoryat.pdf>)
- There really are 50 Eskimo words for 'snow', https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/there-really-are-50-eskimo-words-for-snow/2013/01/14/e0e3f4e0-59a0-11e2-beee-6e38f5215402_story.html?utm_term=.0ff8f73a8508
- Shamanism and Tantra in the Himalayas, 2002, Inner Traditions. By Claudia Muller-Ebeling, Christian Ratsch, Surendra Bahadur Shahi
- Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine, Shambhala. 2002. By Jeanne Achterberg
- Traditional Medicine, World Health Organization Media Centre Fact Sheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/2003/fs134/en/>
- <http://maninthemaze.blogspot.com/2011/06/sacred-art-of-navajo-sandpainting.html>
- <http://www.africanhealingjourneys.com> University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Penn Museum)
- Ancient Egyptian Medicine, 2002, University of Oklahoma Press. By John F. Nunn
- https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/snake_goddess
- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Hildegard>
- Constitution of World Health Organization: principles <http://www.who.int/about/mission/en/>
- Arts in Medicine Literature Review, 2017 <https://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/2017-02-Arts-Medicine-Literature-Review.pdf>
- 2009 State of the Field Report, Arts in Healthcare. <http://legacy.arts.ufl.edu/cam/documents/stateofthefield.pdf>

Patricia Fontaine MACP, MATLA

Healing Art + Writing

Patricia has masters degrees in Counseling Psychology and Transformative Language Arts and currently teaches classes using expressive art and writing for people living with illness and for caregivers. Her classes are drop –in and I encourage you all to go. They are held at Hope Lodge and here at the Medical Center in the Frymoyer Community Health Resource Center.



Patricia Fontaine

**Arts and Health:
Research, Practice and Experience**

May 18, 2017

What is Expressive Art?

Expressive artist

Barbara Ganim says,

“...this healing process is not about
creating *works of art*, but rather, it is about
creating art *that works for you.*”

- ❖ Oncologist Carl Simonton pioneered use of images and visualization to improve healing in 1970's.
- ❖ Research found recovery time for patients decreased when art was used to express feelings of stressful body sensations.
- ❖ Needs no artistic skill or training!
Not art therapy in diagnostic sense, or formal art.

Characteristics of Expressive Art:

- ❖ **Imagery** is the original language of the (Right brain) body-mind
- ❖ **Art** is the voice or expression of that language
- ❖ **Color, shape, form, line, and texture** are the alphabet
- ❖ **Metaphor** and **symbol** helps translate this language

Ganim suggests these steps

(that spell the word ART):

- 1/ **Access** images of stressful feelings/emotions with visualization
- 2/ **Release** emotions and feelings by drawing images
- 3/ **Transform** images of negative thoughts and painful emotions into positive and empowering images.

Art and Healing: Using Expressive Art to Heal Your Body, Mind, and Spirit,
Barbara Ganim

Listening To and Learning From Your Drawing

- 1) What did creating this drawing feel like?
- 2) Look at the shapes, forms, colors, and images.
Write about what any of them might mean to you.
- 3) If this drawing could speak, what would it tell you
in just a few words?
- 4) What have you learned from this?

Easy Experiential Art Activity with crayons and paper

For a couple of minutes, find a comfortable position, relax, and close your eyes if you would like. Take 3 long, slow, deep breaths, focusing particularly on the outbreath - proven to really relax the nervous system.

Bring to mind something that has been mildly to moderately stressful for you recently - nothing too extreme. Notice how it feels in the body and where you feel it (the lower back, the throat, the belly).

Now imagine your 4 year old self creating simple images - colors, shapes, and forms - to draw what this feels like, or help this stress relax.

Open your eyes, pick up your crayons and draw for a few minutes straight. Be kind to yourself as you would to a four year old who is drawing with crayons and paper. Allow the drawing to be whatever it wants to be, scribbling if you'd like.

If you feel stuck, just choose a color and start making shapes. Remember to release any judgement or criticism, just as you would for a 4 year old. Allow what you draw to

feel good in your hand, trusting your intuition to draw what fits for you.

I will ring a bell when it is time to bring your drawing to a close.

When you are done, please consider the four questions on the screen, especially question number 3. Just write a few short notes to share with your neighbor, remembering not to apologize for your drawing, or to offer analysis to your neighbor's drawing. Allow yourself to listen well and be listened to.

When you are finished, pause for a moment, close your eyes, and notice if you feel different than when you began. How is that place of stress in your body? Has anything changed? However you feel is just fine for you.

Buffy Dekmar M. Ed

Art from the Heart,
Burlington City Arts + UVM Medical Center

Now it is my pleasure to introduce Buffy Dekmar, who bridges the worlds of art, education and care.

Buffy has taught elementary school grades 2, 3, + Kindergarten and worked as a professional photographer. Her focus now is, among other things, on pre-med studies and being a volunteer supreme with Art from the Heart. Over the last two years Buffy has been key in helping Art from the Heart expand service to work with adults. She has written a comprehensive manual for Art from the Heart and has blogged on the experience of creating with and for patients for the UVMHC Blog. Her efforts on the research projects that we have done have been thoughtful and essential. For two years Buffy has taken a deep dive into reading up on the literature, examining how art and health work, and she will be sharing some of her observations presently.



Expressive Arts in Healthcare

Experience & Research



Buffy Dekmar, M.Ed., Art from the Heart Volunteer, University of Vermont Medical Center

First, I'll admit that when I began volunteering with Art from the Heart a couple of summers ago, I thought I would simply be providing people with fun and crafty ways to pass the time while they waited for, or recovered from, appointments and procedures. I knew I wanted to gain exposure to medical settings as I prepared for my own medical education, and I thought this would be a way to use my skills from teaching and being a photographer in that process. I didn't really think of this work as facilitating healing of any kind... At first.

Our Art Experience

Human connection
Spirituality
Hope
Choice
Sense of Self
Usefulness
Comfort
Companionship
Solidarity
Beauty



It didn't take me long to realize our program is about more than just entertainment.

We regularly experience interactions with patients that seem to bring beauty and hope into dark, stressful, sometimes even frightening moments.

We are volunteers. We are not trained to provide professional art therapy. However, our interactions with patients are deeper than the basic relief of boredom.

Not all patients need art and that is okay. We believe that even if a patient refuses to participate in our creative projects, we may have still improved their healthcare experience through friendly conversation or even by providing them a rare opportunity to say, "no" to someone who stood at their hospital bedside. However, for those who do participate, the rewards are even deeper.

I like to think of our work as "art recreation with therapeutic side effects." We provide art entertainment, with the underlying assumption that it IS benefitting patients and improving health outcomes. And as it turns out, this is not just my opinion. I have learned that these aspects of art interventions in medical settings have been widely observed and documented by art therapists, physicians, nurses, psychologists, and

artists.



“ When caring artists and
compassionate healthcare organizations
join forces, the results cannot just be felt,
they can be measured. ”



Blair L Sadler & Annette Ridenour
Transforming the Healthcare Experience Through the Arts

The work we do is complex and multi-tiered. According to the State of the Field report from 2009, researchers of arts in healthcare find challenge in isolating and quantifying the creation of art from other subtle elements: communication, choice, sound vibrations, companionship, spirituality, light, color, and tactile stimulation. However, it can be done. I like this quotation from the book, *Transforming the Healthcare Experience Through the Arts*.

For the past few years, Art from the Heart has joined forces with UVM medical students to measure the results of Art from the Heart here at UVM Medical Center, assessing the efficacy of our program from various angles. Which I will talk more about in just a moment.

Abundant Historical Evidence

MUSIC

Used in healing since the beginning of mankind. In ancient Greece, music was used to treat depression, mania, plagues and hangovers

Most widely explored form of art in health

First paper on arts in health care (1729) cited reduction in anesthetics and pain medication used during and after surgery when music was played in a veterans' hospital (Serlin 2007)

Check out Jill Sonke's talks and articles about music and dance in patient care.

VISUAL ART & WRITING

Mid 18th Century: Benjamin Franklin required patients to contribute writing to the hospital "newspaper" (Serlin 2007)

Mid 20th Century: Freud, Maslow and Rogers articulated the importance of self expression in human well-being and self-actualization (Serlin 2007)

2014: German scientists demonstrate neural effects of art involvement on resilience in adults (Bolwerk et al 2014)

In our background research we found plenty of studies supporting the incorporation of *music*. In fact the first paper on arts in health care dates back to 1729, citing a reduction in anesthetics and pain medication used during and after surgery when music was played for patients in a veterans' hospital.

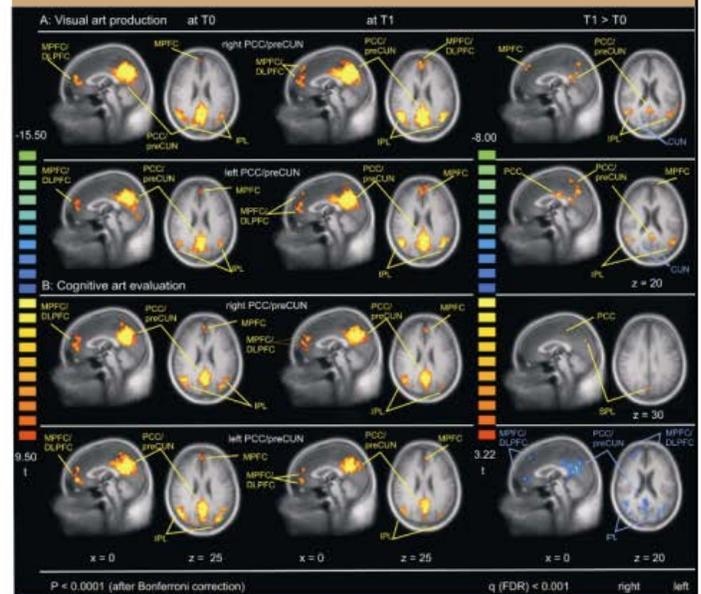
Music has been used to comfort patients AND as a part of their therapy plans for centuries (Serlin). Jill Sonke is a current researcher at University of Florida who has done some interesting Ted talks and writing on the implications of music and dance in clinical settings. I definitely recommend looking into her work if you haven't already.

In the areas of expressive writing and visual art, which we are most equipped to offer, we have learned that Benjamin Franklin believed so strongly in the importance of creativity to wellness, that he required patients in the hospital he established to contribute works of writing to the hospital's newspaper (Serlin)! Since Ben Franklin's time, psychologists like Freud and Maslow have further explained the human need for self-expression, and the creative arts have been increasingly involved in efforts to "rehumanize" patient care since the 1970s (Serlin). An exciting study published in 2014 explores the effects of visual art on functional brain connectivity at the neural

level.

Visual Art Production Improves Psychological Resilience in Adults

2014 German study comparing functional connectivity of PCC/preCUN brain regions to frontal and visual cortex, in two groups participating in (A) visual art production and (B) cognitive art evaluation.

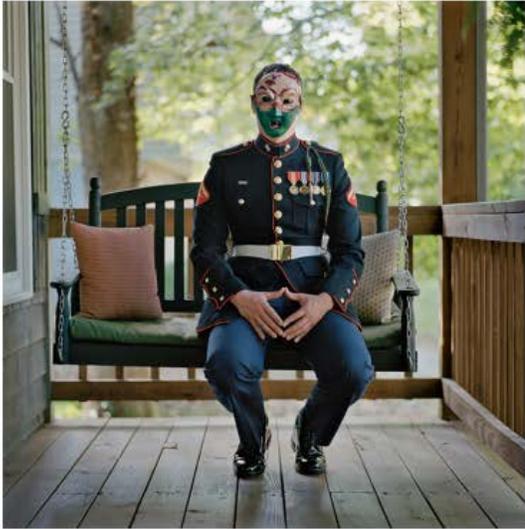


"The default mode network" from "How art changes your brain: Differential effects of visual art production and cognitive art evaluation on functional brain connectivity" (Bolwerk et al 2014).

...Showing significant improvement in psychological resilience in adults who participated in visual art production, compared with those who only interpreted art. It is one of the first studies to begin to explain the connection between art-making and physical changes.

While the biological mechanisms of HOW arts impact health are still being discovered, humans have intuitively known about these benefits for centuries. Recent research is largely qualitative and anecdotal, but it does show that creative arts have a place in healthcare. Art therapy is being used increasingly in psychological care...

PTSD, TBI Patients Benefit from Mask-Making



Photos © Lynn Johnson for National Geographic

...such as the use of masks to help sufferers of PTSD and TBI express and overcome the mental images that torment them. These photos are from a National Geographic article called "Behind the Mask: Revealing the Trauma of War."

"I THOUGHT THIS WAS A JOKE.
I wanted no part of it because, number
one, I'm a man, and I don't like
holding a dainty little paintbrush.
Number two, I'm not an artist. And
number three, I'm not in kindergarten.
Well, I was ignorant, and I was wrong,
because it's great. I think this is what
started me kind of opening up and
talking about stuff and actually trying
to get better."

Army Staff Sgt. Perry Hopman
Quoted in "Behind the Mask: Revealing the Trauma of War"
National Geographic 2015



I appreciated this quotation from the same article, because on top of the layers of complexity of our actual work, engaging participation is sometimes the greatest challenge of all. A war veteran said of the mask-making art-therapy activity, "I THOUGHT THIS WAS A JOKE. I wanted no part of it because, number one, I'm a man, and I don't like holding a dainty little paintbrush. Number two, I'm not an artist. And number three, I'm not in kindergarten. Well, I was ignorant, and I was wrong, because it's great. I think this is what started me kind of opening up and talking about stuff and actually trying to get better."

Expression...

Research-Supported Benefits of Arts in Healthcare

1 - Expression

2 -

3 -

4 -

5 -

This is the first on my brief list of five key research-supported benefits of arts in healthcare.

Expression → Insight

Gaining self awareness
Processing complex thoughts
Improve emotional well-being
Empowering to tell one's own story

"Art therapy
appears to be a mechanism through which

**subconscious
psychological
material**

can be processed."

Angheluta & Lee
"Art Therapy for Chronic Pain: Applications and future
directions."

Just like the mask-making did for the army sergeant, creative arts can aid expression of difficult ideas, which can elucidate insight. You may have experienced this: starting to write or draw aimlessly and suddenly looking down at the page and learning something about yourself that you had not consciously thought of before? Expressive art has been shown to help patients develop awareness, gain insight, and process and express "subconscious psychological material."



"In a Big Field," 1998

"I'm the flower... in a big field... all alone. No one else has gone through cancer and their parents splitting up in one year. The little caterpillar is eating my leaves. I don't know what that caterpillar is, what it stands for, but I don't like it"

Nicole, age 16
(Baerg 2003)

Here is a drawing from a study by Art Therapist Susan Baerg in 2003. The artist of the piece was a teenage girl who was being treated for cancer at the time. Her quote says, "'I'm the flower... in a big field... all alone. No one else has gone through cancer and their parents splitting up in one year. The little caterpillar is eating my leaves. I don't know what that caterpillar is, what it stands for, but I don't like it'" (quoted in Baerg 2003).

This was the result of simply being invited to draw the way she felt.

Baerg writes, "Through exploration of their artwork, the teens find valuable hints to healing, and gain wisdom and insight that begins to soothe their souls."

Projects to Promote Expression

- Poetry
- Drawing
- Narrative writing
- Sculpting (clay, paper, wire, pipe cleaners, origami, etc.)
- Photography
- Collage
- Personal History Conversation Starters
- Cardmaking
- "About Me" Pages



Expression can be as simple as pencil to paper, or as elaborate as painted paper mache and other mixed media. Broadening our idea of what “being creative” means is a good starting place. At art from the heart, we have learned subtle ways to make art as approachable as possible. Instead of saying, “Can I bring you some ART supplies?”, we ask patients, “What gets you excited about being creative? We are here to connect you with that.” These are a few of our go-to projects for fostering creative expression.



“All art is autobiographical.
The pearl is the oyster’s autobiography.”

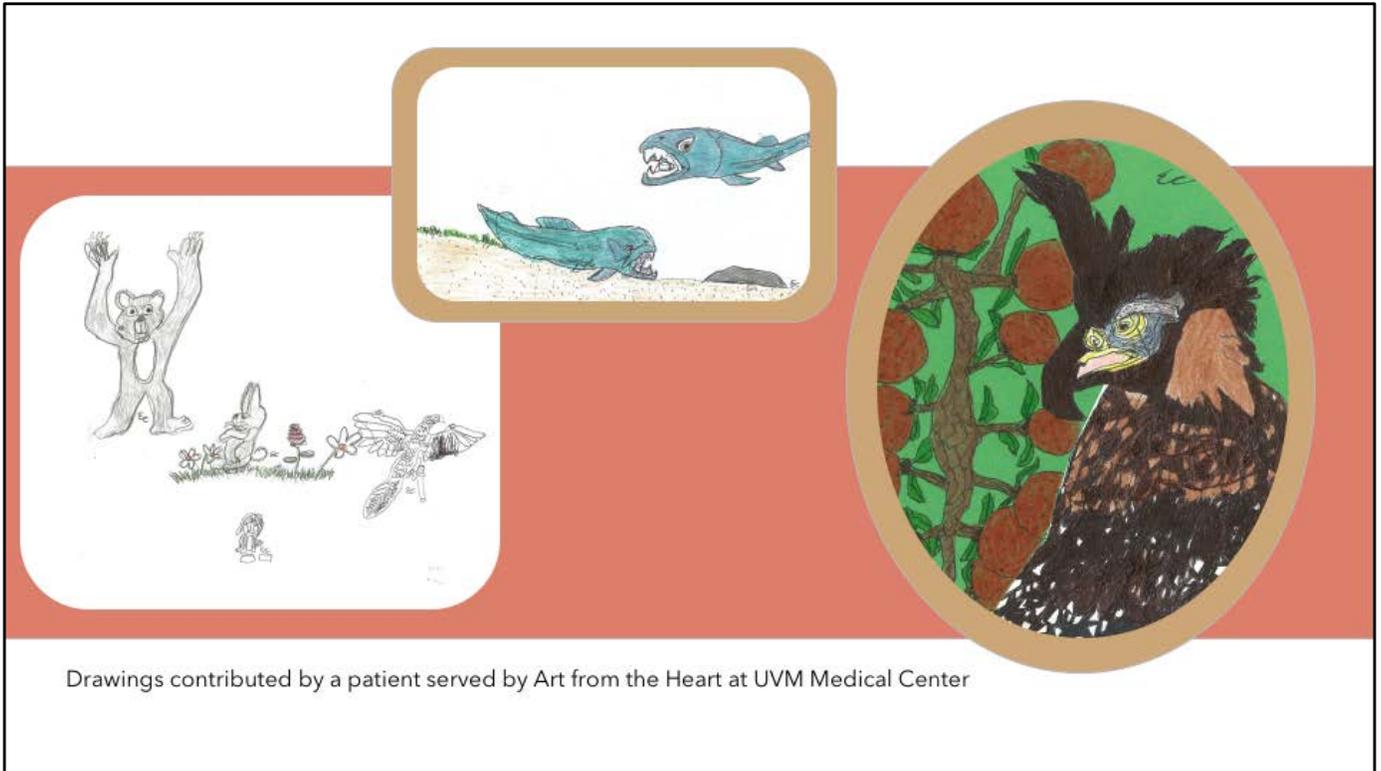
Federico Fellini

Quoted in *Transforming the Healthcare Experience Through the Arts*



According to the case study by Art Therapist Susan Baerg, patients benefit from displaying or sharing their art. Art is autobiographical, and it can be validating, empowering even, to tell one’s own story and to have an audience.

Our program encourages patients to submit their creations for display. We have found that this option often promotes participation and adds to patients’ sense of usefulness, pride and achievement. We have heard from nurses that anything we can do to change a patient’s *outlook* can have enormous effects on their *outcomes*.



Drawings contributed by a patient served by Art from the Heart at UVM Medical Center

A patient here at UVM medical center created these drawings during his time in the hospital. As with all art, themes can be inferred. However, experts caution against over-interpreting patients' artwork to avoid bringing up unnecessary anxiety (Angheluta 2011).

Research-Supported Benefits of Arts in Healthcare

1 - Facilitating Expression

2 - Distracting from Negative Thoughts, Feelings, or Circumstances

3 -

4 -

5 -

Secondly, involvement in creative projects has been associated with distraction from unpleasant circumstances, feelings, or thoughts. This is closely linked to the third benefit on our list...

Research-Supported Benefits of Arts in Healthcare

1 - Facilitating expression

2 - Distracting from Negative Thoughts, Feelings, or Circumstances

3 - Reducing Stress and Anxiety

4 -

5 -

Reducing stress and anxiety. It is easy to see how distracting from stressors reduces stress. Art also has intrinsic calming effects as it involves concentrating on colors, motions, shapes, repetitive action, or inspirational subject matter. Researchers have, thus far, found these effects hard to separate and have instead focused on the meaning of the reduced stress and anxiety that undeniably results from art interventions.

“Engagement with creative activities has the potential to contribute toward reducing stress and depression and can serve as a vehicle for alleviating the burden of chronic disease.”

Stuckey & Nobel, 2010

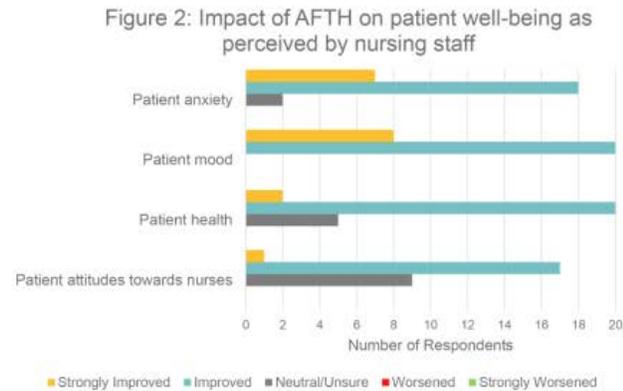


The use of art to relieve patient stress has been supported by studies in multiple fields: oncology, pediatric trauma, geriatrics, neurology, and psychiatry. By reducing stress of being in the hospital, art interventions improve health care experiences for patients, caretakers, and healthcare teams. We use mandalas and pattern doodling often for their long-standing connections to meditation, mindfulness, and reflection.

Art’s potential to reduce *chronic stress* indicates that art may also be an instrument to reducing prevalence of diseases linked to stress, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. (Stuckey and Nobel 2010)

According to Nurses on Baird 4 Here at UVM

In a 2016 study led by UVM medical students, nurses reported that Art from the Heart interactions had positive effects on patients.



During our recent public health research project, nurses here at UVM reported observations of Art from the Heart's positive effects on their patients. Most nurses stated that AFTH had reduced patient anxiety, improved patient moods and health outcomes, and had positive effects on attitudes toward nurses. The blue lines indicate a response of "improve," yellow is "strongly improve," and grey is neutral. Zero nurses felt art had negative impacts on any of these aspects.

By helping patients in these ways, art interventions not only improve healthcare experiences for the patients, but also make nurses' work more pleasant, possibly reducing burnout and improving staff retention.

Research-Supported Benefits of Arts in Healthcare

- 1 - Facilitating expression
- 2 - Distracting from Negative Thoughts, Feelings, or Circumstances
- 3 - Reducing Stress
- 4 - Decreasing Perception of Pain
- 5 -

The fourth benefit we'll highlight is the ability of art to decrease the perception of pain, specifically chronic pain which may not have a clear biological cause.

“Regardless of the nuances involved in its definition, chronic pain is widely accepted to be a phenomenological experience. In other words, the chronic pain experience is unique and *based on the perception of the individual experiencing it.*”

Angheluta & Lee, 2011

According to an extensive literature review published in the Canadian Journal of Psychotherapy in 2011, “Regardless of the nuances involved in its definition, chronic pain is widely accepted to be a phenomenological experience. In other words, the chronic pain experience is unique and based on the perception of the individual experiencing it” (Angheluta 2011).

To me, this sounds strangely similar to the way art is experienced. It makes sense that the two might affect each other.

100 million

Americans suffer from chronic pain. That's more than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined. (American Associate of Pain Medicine, 2017)

According to the American Academy of Pain Medicine, pain affects more Americans than diabetes, heart disease, and cancer combined: 100 million people. Chronic pain is linked with depression, inability to work, and loss of sleep, among other debilitating effects.

58%

Of patients using prescription drugs for chronic pain reported that their treatment was fairly effective.

Only 58% of patients using prescription drugs (and 41% of those using over the counter medications) for pain management report that their treatment is fairly effective. That is a considerable waste of money and unnecessary risk of drug dependency, which carries a hosts of problems on its own.

Art

One of many alternative therapies that can help relieve chronic pain, without the risks associated with prescription pain medicine.

Art is one of many alternative treatments that may help these individuals manage their pain and avoid the risks involved with pain meds.

Symbolic Art and Chronic Pain

Woman experiences pain in neck and back from a childhood injury. Depicts Chronic Pain as Monster, Vanquishes it in Artwork. Pain subsides.



Numerous case studies have been recorded that demonstrate the ability of art to relieve chronic pain on some level. In one story, a 79-year-old woman experiencing chronic pain in her back and shoulders worked with an art therapist to depict her pain as a monster. The therapist directed her through finding a way to vanquish the monster in her artwork, and the woman reported that her pain subsided. Of course, case studies are not generalizable, but if there is a possibility that art interventions may help in pain management, there are very few reasons not to at least try it.

This image was created by a pediatric patient here at UVM living with a serious chronic illness. We do not have commentary from the artist, but it does seem to express strong feelings!

Art Therapy and Art Recreation in Chronic Pain

Studies show evidence of patient progress in terms of:

- Changes in Physical Symptoms
- Changes in Psychological Well-being
- Changes in Social Interaction
- Changes in Body Image

Note: Not all results are positive. Certain art activities have actually been reported to exacerbate symptoms especially in migraine studies.

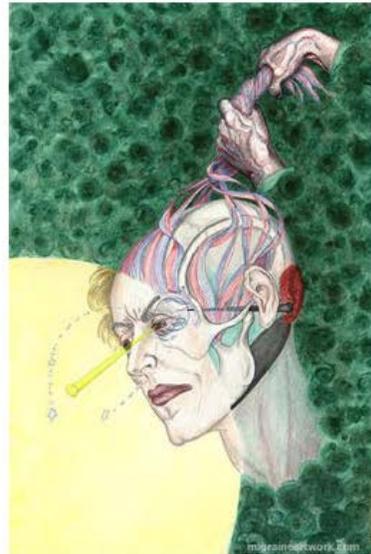
The main areas of progress supported by research on art therapy in chronic pain are: changes in physical symptoms, changes in psychological well-being, changes in social interaction, and changes in body image. Obviously, art is not a “cure all” pain remedy and results are not always positive; certain activities such as intricate details and creating with permanent markers and other smelly materials have actually been shown to exacerbate symptoms, especially with migraines.

However...

Some migraine-suffering artists choose to create art despite their pain, identifying and avoiding known “triggers” (Angheluta & Lee 2011).

Art can be used to communicate symptoms, leading to better treatment (Angheluta & Lee 2011).

Olea Nova depicts her headaches through drawing and painting. See more of her art at www.migraineartwork.com.



What's interesting though, is that even though art activities do not reliably reduce migraine pain, studies report that some artists choose to create art despite their pain.

This shows that the benefits of distraction and stress reduction are also relevant in the case for art interventions in pain management. It also demonstrates the value of using art to communicate symptoms, leading to “more comprehensive treatment” (Angheluta & Lee 2011).

The artist of this piece, Olea Nova, has an intriguing collection of headache-themed artwork at her site, [migraine artwork dot com](http://migraineartwork.com), which provides a glimpse into her agony for those who have never experienced it and a sense of solidarity for those who have.

Research-Supported Benefits of Arts in Healthcare

- 1 - Facilitating expression
- 2 - Distracting from Negative Thoughts, Feelings, or Circumstances
- 3 - Reducing Stress
- 4 - Decreasing Perception of Pain
- 5 - Improving Communication between Patients and Care Teams

This ties into the fifth benefit of art in healthcare: improving communication between a patient and his or her care team.

"Art from the Heart has opened up opportunities for patients to be interactive with nurses when they were limited in their communication skills or cognitively impaired.

Art is a way to connect

with staff and vice versa for staff to connect with patients."

RN, UVM Medical Center

This quality of *our* program came to light in last year's public health research project, where nurses were interviewed by medical students, regarding their experience with our art program on a general medicine inpatient ward here at UVM Medical Center, Baird 4. This is a floor where patients often stay for long periods of time, waiting for a placement in longer term rehabilitation facilities.

In addition to improving moods and reducing anxiety as I mentioned before, nurses reported that art projects promoted conversation between nurses and their patients. One nurse eloquently stated, "art from the heart has opened up opportunities for patients to be interactive with nurses when they were limited in their communication skills or cognitively impaired. Art is a way to connect with staff and vice versa for staff to connect with patients."

Communication → Results

UVM Nurses reported that Art from the Heart improved their communication with certain patients, as well as patient moods.

It makes sense that better moods and better understanding could lead to better cooperation and ultimately improve health outcomes.

"It creates togetherness; it's relationship building. And where we are all about relationship-based care, art just adds another layer onto that."

—
RN, UVM Medical Center

Artwork does not have to be ABOUT symptoms to promote important conversations. Several nursing staff members recalled using patients' artwork as an icebreaker. You can imagine how a patient's artwork hanging on the wall would help the nurse quickly begin to understand more about the patient on a more human level and initiate non-medical conversation using the patient's interests as a starting point. It makes sense that this kind of communication could strengthen relationships between care providers and patients, leading to improved cooperation, and more open discussion of symptoms and treatment options. In this way, art in healthcare can promote trust and compliance, ultimately leading to favorable health outcomes.

"About Me" Pages

Restore a patient's sense of self
Bring reminders of past joys into a
stressful space
Provide a quick conversation starter
Foster connections
Humanize patient care



Our volunteers have created these "About Me" pages, which we use to promote those types of interactions.

We keep a stack of these in our kit, along with a revolving set of project ideas, aimed at sparking conversation. These pages are available outside of the volunteer office here at the medical center for hospital staff who would like to use them.

Research-Supported Benefits of Arts in Healthcare

- 1 - Facilitating expression
- 2 - Distracting from Negative Thoughts, Feelings, or Circumstances
- 3 - Reducing Stress and Anxiety
- 4 - Decreasing Perception of Pain
- 5 - Improving Communication between Patients and Care Teams

In summary, we have looked at five interconnected research-supported benefits of arts in healthcare: facilitating expression, distracting from negative thoughts and feelings, reducing stress, decreasing perception of pain, and increasing communication between patients and care teams. We would love to hear YOUR experiences with arts in healthcare or discuss any of these resources after the program.

Next up:

Annette Burger, RN

- Educated in Waldorf Schools
- Has always been interested in incorporating arts into learning and patient care
- Grew up in Germany, where she began her nursing studies
- Moved to Vermont and completed her LPN (2000) and RN (2008)
- Built a farm in South Hero, The Wells Family Farm
- Currently pursuing Nurse Practitioner, focusing in Integrative Health
- Firsthand experience with Art from the Heart in patient care on Baird 4 (adult general medicine inpatient unit)

For now, I have the honor of introducing our next presenter.

Annette Berger grew up in Freiburg, in Southern Germany, where she was educated in Waldorf schools, which incorporate arts into all aspects of education.

Annette attended nursing school in Northern Germany for a year, before moving to the US, where she continued her studies at Vermont Technical College.

She earned her LPN in 2000 and went on to achieve her RN Associates degree in 2008. She has been a dedicated nurse here at UVM for 17 years, all while also building a farm in South Hero, The Wells Family Farm!

She continues her education at Southern New Hampshire University, and plans to become a Nurse Practitioner, focusing on Integrative Health.

She has always integrated art into caring, and has been instrumental in expanding Art from the Heart to reach adult patients over the past couple of years.

We welcome her tonight to share some first hand experiences with arts in healthcare.

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Annette Burger RN

Baird 4, Inpatient General Medicine, UVM Medical Center



I work on Baird 4 here at the hospital, an Internal Medicine unit. Baird Four cares for patients in all stages of life and end of life, with acute conditions that are easily cured, to chronic conditions that are life impacting. We care for patients with a variety of conditions such as addiction, dementia, and many other complex issues. We deal with the psycho social and psychological issues of long term illnesses. Some of our patients might stay with us for a month or even two for treatments, or due to placement issues.

The hospital is by necessity, a sterile environment.



But it doesn't need to be bleak or stark. It is a new experience entering Baird 4 now that we have interactive and colorful art decorating our plain walls.

Art has created an inviting, comforting and visually pleasing space for our patients, their family members and staff.



This drawing was done by a patient's husband. The patient was sharing with their nurse that her husband was driving her "crazy", and he needed something to keep him busy, aside from sitting nervously beside her while waiting for updates from the doctor. I offered art materials and he was able to channel this nervous energy into this lively Halloween drawing on his wife's hospital room door that otherwise would have been plain. Not only did he draw a humorous picture for his wife, and allowed her to rest, but he created a fun piece of art that allowed people to talk about the upcoming holiday and the costumes they were planning on.

This drawing and others like it, help us break the ice, engage into therapeutic personal interactions, that allow patients and their family/friends to express and share their feeling and thoughts through art. In my experience, art helps foster emotional connection between the patient and their care team.

I have noticed that many patients who are hospitalized for drug addictions, and facing weeks of inpatient treatments, make use of the arts. During the many hours of down time, creativity gives patients a purpose, a meditative experience and an emotional outlet.

For example, drawing pictures of their children whom they are missing, and sharing their goal that they want to be able to parent again. Art helps the medical team get to know the patient and their dreams and hopes, which keeps our work patient centered. We can then build together – With the patient – a care plan with realistic medical goals, and help them to work toward their health and personal goals.



Another challenging group that our unit specializes in are dementia patients. This group can be hard to communicate and connect with. It can be difficult to gain their trust and keep them occupied and safe due to sensory deficits such as hearing or vision loss as well as memory loss and cognitive impairment. A side effect of these challenges, when they are not able to express their needs they can easily feel threatened, angry, or frustrated. This can escalate to the point of needing security personnel, and / or calming medications. At best, people with dementia often need to be redirected again and again – and this can be tricky.

We work to create a rhythm to their days, the About Me page helps us develop a routine daily care plan, similar to their home lifestyle.



Art works to help orient patients, so they have an easier time finding their room. We might say "Look for the beautiful butterfly drawing on the door with your name on it." Art creates a beautiful, comforting and nurturing environments.

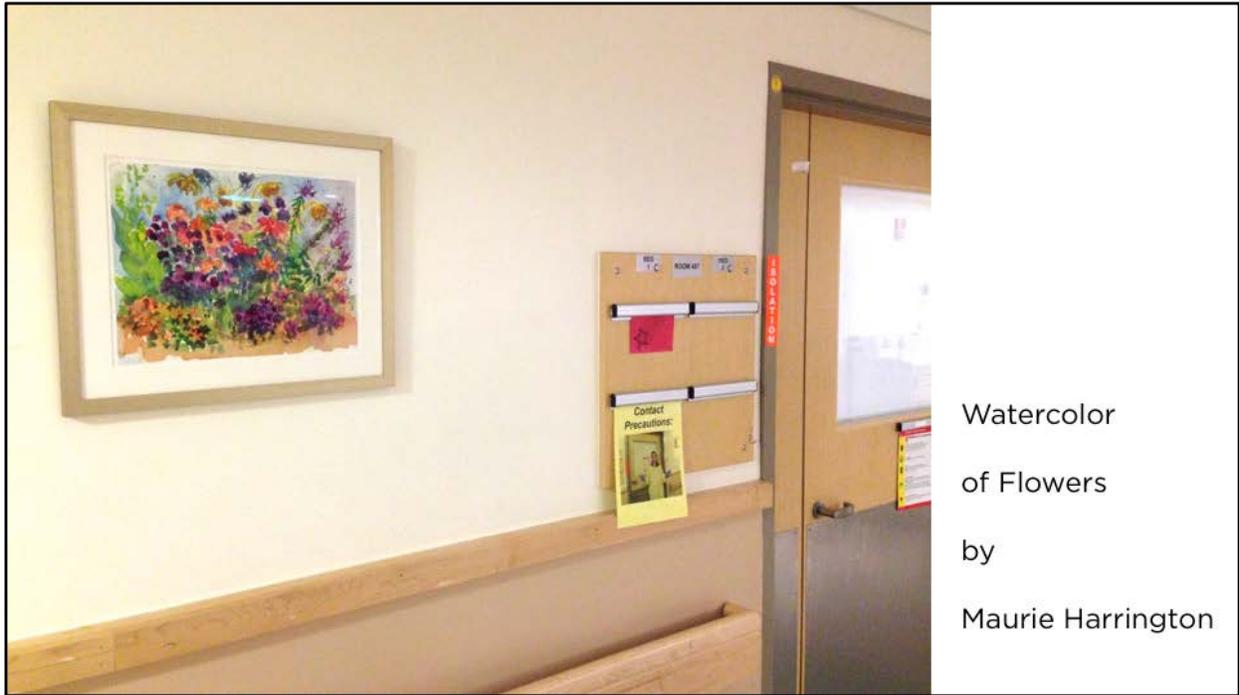
Making art, gives patients a purpose, it can be an outlet for expression, and for reminiscing about old times. These memories create comfort and bring pleasure.

“...it provides the opportunity for patients to think of something other than their illness or why they are here.”

RN Baird 4, UVMHC

When patients are making art, many times they will report feeling better, less anxious and less emotional and decreased physical pain in general. They seem to slow down and feel a bit better about their hospitalization and the many things they are facing. I see people relax when they talk about art pieces that remind them of vacations from the past, and other positive experiences. Their tone of voice changes, their eyes light up and they smile while sharing their story.

Even when some people are not engaged in the arts, the effects ripple out to others. Room-mates and staff who are around happier people benefit as well.



This painting was a gift to a patient to offer them something beautiful to look at from their bed. The patient was with us for an extended period. She found a lot of comfort in the painted garden, using it as a way to escape the sterile and dreary environment, and be transported into a lush and summery garden. When she was able to go home, she framed the piece of art and brought it back to us so that others might take comfort in it as she did. It now hangs in our hallway for everyone to enjoy. And many many people do! It draws people's attention, and lightens up thier moods, sparking conversations and transforming our hall into a place of bright summer escape and beauty.

It is amazing how one piece of art can give so many positive experiences.

“It’s just one other thing,
rather than just having to
focus on their illness and
why they are here, it’s
something you can talk
about that’s always
positive in their room.”

AFTH has helped us break down communication barriers w patients, families and loved ones. The art gives us a way to connect on a personal level, it opens up non-medical conversations, supporting all of our emotional well being. The patient becomes a person, more than just a diagnosis or a collection of symptoms. Beyond treating their medical needs, we can support their emotional and social needs. Art helps us tap into Compassion. Art supports a healthy relationship between the medical team and patient - they are better heard, understood, cared for, and valued and remain the center of focus.

I would like to encourage each and everyone of you to take e few minutes to connect with patients through Art to ask open-ended questions, and connect on a nonmedical level. The payoff will be well worth it, people will remember you for how you made them feel through your attention to their stories and interests. They will know you Care, and when you come back to talk about health issues and goals – they’ll be listening. They will be more open to hearing what you have to say and offer. And that will promote and facilitate a collaborative partnership between the patients and their extensive healthcare team.

I will leave you with that thought - spending time with people and art deepens your

connection.