

ART THERAPY

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL - Often I have a conversation on the value of art. As an artist, I certainly have an emotional connection to the creative process and as an observer for those who view and buy my art. It got me to thinking about how many ways art affects our lives. Does making art make the soul happier and can it help heal emotional or physical pain? I met a lady at “Art in the Carolinas” and she explained that her life had a series of traumas. She was taking over 10 medications to help her be what she defined as balanced or normal. She happily continued to share how art relieved her from taking several medications, once she entered a formal program of art therapy.

She was the first person that I had met and spoken with that was receiving this type of therapy. Could it mean that we could be healed through visual and emotional stimulation? Upon further research I found a few resources to define Art Therapy, its application and its impact.

Board certified art therapist Pamela Hayes describes art therapy as psychotherapy + creativity converging. She further defines it as, “Words are our primary method of communication, but often words cannot express the complexity of our internal and emotional lives. The process of art-making provides us with a means to our subconscious that is unrefined and uncensored.”



There is an official certifying organization to become a licensed art therapist called the Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB). The following definitions are found on their official website, www.atcb.org.

What Is Art Therapy?

“Art therapy uses art media, the creative process and the resulting artwork as a therapeutic and healing process. Clients – young, old and in-between – are able to explore their feelings, reconcile emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage behavior, develop social skills, improve reality orientation, reduce anxiety and increase self-esteem.

Art therapy is practiced in mental health, rehabilitation, medical, educational and forensic settings – as well as in private practice, in workshops and small-group settings. Clients come from all walks of life, facing a full array of challenges. Individuals, couples, families and groups can all benefit from various art therapy formats.’

Art therapy is an effective treatment for persons experiencing developmental, medical, educational, social or psychological impairment. A key goal in art therapy is to improve or restore the client’s functioning and his/her sense of personal well being.

Art therapists are trained in both art and therapy. The process isn’t an art lesson – it is grounded in the knowledge of human development, psychological theories and counseling techniques.

A master’s degree is required for entry-level practice in art therapy. Minimum educational and professional standards are established by the American Art Therapy Association, Inc. (AATA), a membership and advocacy organization.

Art therapy is growing and the professional, academic and research foundation is expanding. The Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB) continues to invest in art therapy’s professional standards and ethics and is the only nationally recognized credentialing organization for art therapists in the United States.”

In my research I also found that all of the five senses has a licensed therapy program in order to help people heal from emotional and physical pain. In addition to art there is music, sound, food, and touch (found in massage) therapies.

Blogger Michael Hyatt shares his insight on getting more art in your life. “If you want to find more creativity, satisfaction, and happiness, the single best solution I know is adding more art to your life.”

What Art Can Do for Us?

In our pragmatic culture we usually see art as optional. We drill this into kids from an early age. We tell them to be practical and belittle their dreams because we can’t imagine how they’ll make any money pursuing them.

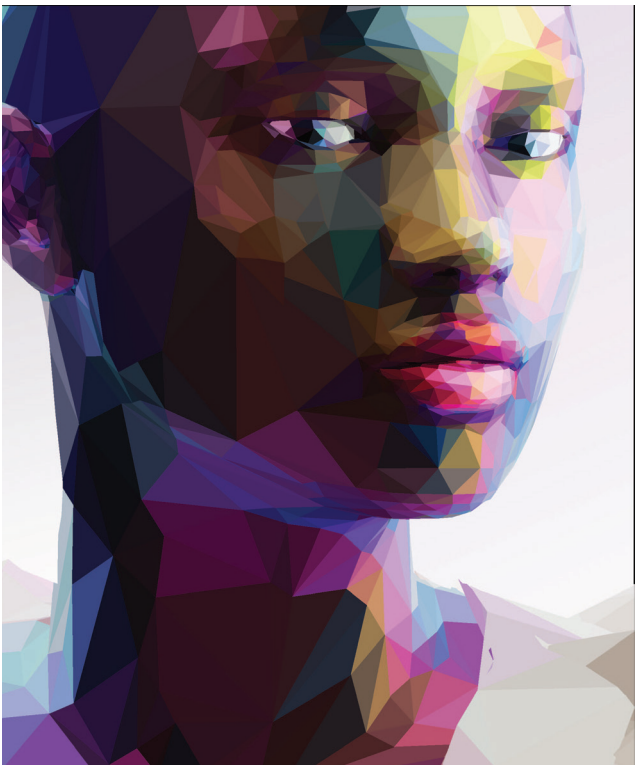
But the truth is, art is indispensable. Art gives us meaning. There are things that cannot be understood with pure reason—like love and beauty, to name two. Art helps us understand our world.

It does that because it helps us transcend our world. I said that listening to Arvo Pärt lifted me out of myself. Art has the power to point us to the divine, to the ultimate Artist. It doesn’t answer all the questions, but it can shine a light on questions we didn’t even know we had.

And art requires something of us. At the most basic level it can stir us to gratitude. But it can also awaken the creative imperative in us. As people, made in the image of our Creator, we have to do more than merely produce. We have to create, to express, to give life to the ideas inside us.

The cool thing is that creativity works like a muscle; the more we use it, the stronger it gets.”

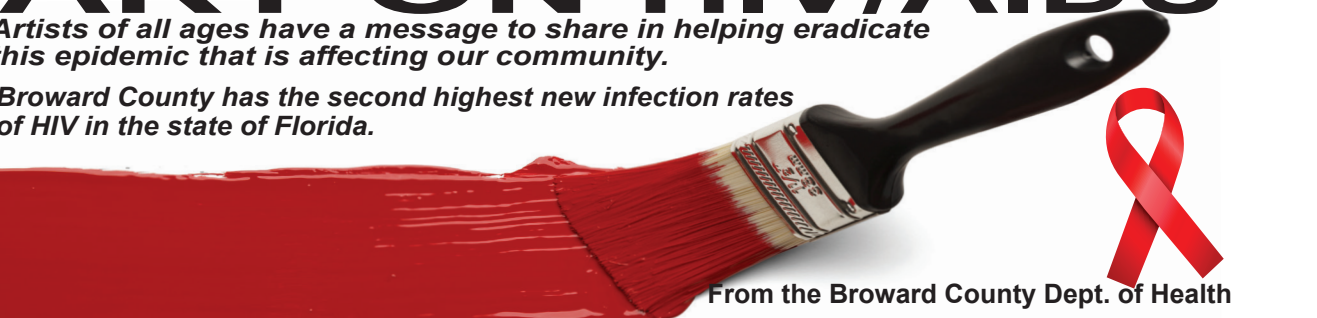
In summation, art definitely impacts our lives more than an adornment on a wall. It helps people heal and become happier.



ART ON HIV/AIDS

Artists of all ages have a message to share in helping eradicate this epidemic that is affecting our community.

Broward County has the second highest new infection rates of HIV in the state of Florida.



From the Broward County Dept. of Health

| Florida | United States |
|---|--|
| A total of 109,969 persons are living with a diagnosis of HIV Infection in Florida through 2014 | CDC estimates a total of 933,941 persons living with a diagnosis of HIV infection through 2013 |
| Blacks accounted for: | Blacks accounted for: |
| 47% (n=51,496) of total | 43% (n=398,645) of total |
| 38% of adult men and 68% of adult women | 37% of adult men and 61% of adult women |
| 79% of the pediatric cases | 65% of pediatric cases |
| 27% of MSM (men who have sex with men) | 31% of MSM (men who have sex with men) |
| 52% of IDU (Injection Drug User) | 52% of IDU (Injection Drug User) |
| 72% of heterosexuals | 64% of heterosexuals |
| 57% of AIDS case deaths in 2014 | 47% of deaths with HIV infections in 2013 |
| According to Florida’s 2014 Population Estimates | According to the 2013 US population Estimates, |
| 15% of Florida’s population is black | 12% of the US population is black. |