



# Art Therapy, a New Tool to Enhance Human Psychology

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## Abstract

The article explores the intersection of art and psychotherapy, examining how art serves as a therapeutic tool and how psychological principles inform artistic practices. It investigates various art forms, including mandala art, music therapy, dance therapy, and cinema, analyzing their therapeutic applications and highlighting the dynamic relationship between psychology and artistic expression. The article discusses the benefits of integrating art and psychotherapy, such as enhanced self-awareness, emotional expression, and empathetic understanding. It also addresses ethical considerations surrounding vulnerability, privacy, and potential misinterpretations.

## Subject Areas

Art, Music, Psychology

## Keywords

Art, Therapy, Art Therapy, Cinema, Cinema Remedy, Psychology

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## 1. Introduction

Since the very early beginning of human history, art and psychology have been present in human beings; even if they did not necessarily occupy a very important scale, they are still clearly present in their daily life activities at some point.

It is noticed that the earliest known evidence of 'artistic behavior' is of human body decoration, including skin coloring with ochre and the use of beads, although both may have had functional origins (Morris-Kay, 2010) [1]. The Homo sapiens Aurignacian archaeological culture from the Upper Paleolithic is considered to be the source of the oldest undisputed art. The predilection for aesthetics, however, appears to have only surfaced in the Middle Paleolithic, between 100,000 and 50,000 years ago (Wilford, 2011) [2].

Drawing on caves comes here as a very clear form of artistic expression, but it is especially an efficient way of archiving and reciting how those previous human generations lived their daily lives. It is thanks to those simple draws that we understand better about ourselves nowadays by getting a closer idea of how life used to be in ancient times.

It is maybe the spontaneous and natural need of the human to be memorized and remembered even after his death; his need to seek eternity is what drives our instinct to archive our actions, life tragedies, and achievements in first draws later in text and today in more flexible and diverse ways such the audiovisual supports that got a more rich potential in archiving moments visually and audibly at once. Nowadays, thanks to artificial intelligence's uncountable abilities and what technology could offer us wider possibilities, we have even been able to immortalize and awaken the voice, memories... of those who left us so we can refresh our memories and establish a bridge that connects the past with the present.

## 2. The Role of Therapy in Contemporary Art

Therapy, which we observe in connection with some traditional arts, also has a solid relationship with contemporary arts. Brazilian artist Lygia Clark, an artist in the painting discipline and other related objects, believes in the role of therapy in art. Clark's art is mostly associated with the Brazilian neo-materialist and tropicalist movement. The artist brings a clinical dimension to contemporary art with her works. As a result of her intense work from 1976 until her death in 1988, she developed her own therapy methods. The artwork she is naming the "Construction of the Self" basically aims to get closer to the patient's body. The art therapist touches clients through "related objects." Some of the objects are soft, while others are solid (Cherif, 2019) [3].

Materials include light and heavy pillows, pantyhose and objects made from seeds, materials made from stone and air, small pebbles wrapped in nets, plastic bags and tubes filled with water, and seashells. Materials come together in an interesting order (Wanderley, 2002: p. 35) [4]. The associated object is not compatible with the human body sometimes, but even a certain relationship is still established between the body and the object through weight, size, texture, temperature, sound, and movements. Art has no specific nature, and thus, it is clear that artistic space and experimentation are limitless. As the name suggests, the important point in the technique is the fantasy that the subject may establish with the relevant object. The same object may have different meanings for different structures at different times (Clark, 1998: p. 319) [5].

Clark's idea is to exercise with the imaginary body that she established in her mental imagery. Therefore, physical relaxation, treatment, and transformation are achieved with the help of relevant objects or direct touches on the therapist's hands. Lygia Clark's artworks can be evaluated simultaneously from artistic, political, and medical perspectives. She neither wants to give up art nor is she against its transformation as a medical tool; she placed herself on this border rather than

living on the borders of both disciplines. Clark's works have therapeutic power with artistic and clinical applications (Rolnik, 1998: pp. 347-348) [6].

### 2.1. The Use of Mandala in Psychotherapy

The circle is the symbol of eternity and holistic success. Mandala is the art branch that can best reflect eternity and success. This art is as old as humanity moving on the path of righteousness. It is one of the oldest known symbols; this art in different cultures with borders is seen all over the world. It is true that mandalas are often found in Eastern cultures, but mandalas are not only seen in Eastern regions and mystics. These artistic works are also found in Africa, America, and Australia.

The symbolism of mandalas should be examined with the methods of social sciences, such as the important influence of religion, history, psychology, and art, and thus, according to various criteria (Helga Fiala, 2006: p. 15) [7]. Moon (2007) states that all works of art are metaphorical depictions of the artists who created them [8]. Metaphorical imagery can provide counselors and therapists with psychological insights that transcend linear rationality. Metaphors are expressed artistically through symbols, colors, and shapes. Mandalas created by clients are symbols of emotions and thoughts, and they are geometric reflections of the world. The display is automatically affected by the centered mandala feature. "Feeling without symbols is a kind of blindness, symbols without feeling have no meaning." (Gendlin, 1962: p. 5) [9]

The person who manages mandala art has the opportunity to be aware of both the place and the space. The mandala artist is at the center of the universe; he drags his mind towards a sufficient focus; by focusing on complex consciousness, the artist can reach a composition and discover the ideal principles of existence. So it is relevant to say that the mandala is not only a cosmogram, but also a psychogram view (Helga Fiala, 2006: p. 13) [7].

Nature itself could be a good representation of artistic natural creation. Looking at the tree trunk as an example, we can clearly see samples of repetitive layers with various textures, forms, and shapes. Despite their variety and differences, they remain similar and homogeneous within their repetitive forms. This aesthetic reminds us of the mandala art principles, which are based on the multiplication of forms with repetitive actions of drawing in a circular movement. Nature, which is based on circles, inspires us continuously. Natural patterns are observable regularities of form that can be discovered in the environment. These recurring patterns can occasionally be analytically modeled and occur in various contexts. The German biologist and artist Ernst Haeckel painted hundreds of marine organisms to emphasize their symmetry (KGS ART DEPT, 2019) [10]. Symmetries, trees, spirals, meanders, waves, foams, tessellations, fissures, and stripes are examples of natural patterns.

### 2.2. Musical Therapy

While music is a field of research, it is also considered proof of the unlimited potential of human beings. Music transforms what cannot be expressed verbally. It

allows for a new birth without screams and pain. The composer is the fundamental transformer of the above purposes. All these purposes form a whole, and the aim of the sounds is to make an impact on people's lives and provide them with inspiration. Music is a language for musicians, acousticians, and other audio professionals. It continues by adapting the composer's intuition to a directive imposed by the musician.

It has also proved that music could be an efficient tool leading to artistic therapy; some methods are used in the treatment of certain behavioral disorders. The concept of music as a possible treatment method that can affect mental health dates back to the writings of Aristotle and Plato.

The Urban Music Therapists Federation, which was established in 1971 to meet the needs of academic education and clinical research, with the aim of prioritizing clinical training in research, creating a registry, subsequently making certification conditional studies, producing research and clinical publications, was founded in 1980 with its own name "Music Therapy". It publishes a journal containing research and clinical publications in the field.

According to the American Music Therapy Association, music therapy has a long history. In the 20th century, after the First and Second World Wars, music therapy was officially launched. [11]. Many professional and amateur musical groups play for thousands of veterans receiving treatment in veterans hospitals across the country and suffering from war-related physical and emotional trauma. Another frequently used method in music therapy is the AAMT method. In cases where the AAMT method is active, the patient participates in active music production directed by the therapist. In the other application of the AAMT method, the patient listens to music and answers some questions using methods such as lyric analysis (Aalbers *et al.*, 2017; Chung and Woods-Giscombe, 2016) [12].

Music therapy is an established medical service similar to occupational therapy, cognitive therapy, and physical therapy and is used as a treatment component to address physical, psychological, cognitive, and social problems in patients of various age groups. The use of as therapy can be successful because it is an effective, non-invasive method. In addition to its mental health applications, music therapy is also used effectively in a variety of additional medical services and education.

### 2.3. Dance Therapy

The human body is characterized by different abilities, such as the ability to communicate and express itself simultaneously. The human body takes on many qualities. Dancing, on the other hand, appears as an instrument that teaches the individual to be at peace within himself. It relaxes the mind and contains a certain spiritual energy.

Dance therapy aims to increase self-awareness and relieve tensions and blockages in the body. On a physical level, dance strengthens the muscular system by improving circulation and coordination. The mental and emotional benefits of dance are mostly about increasing self-confidence and stimulating intellectual

abilities and creativity. Sometimes it helps to confront emotions that are difficult to put into words, such as anger, frustration, and isolation. Many cultures get their roots through body movements. Like the human language, which is said to be the language of poetry and literature, we can conclude from the above that dancing can be thought of as the language of the body.

According to the famous psychologist Howard Gardner (1993), one form of kinesthetic intelligence is dancing. In essence, these movements are forms of thinking and the ability to solve problems through control of bodily movements. [13]. Choreographers' observations show that musical, visual, verbal, and interpersonal intelligence are used for success. Dance can be used not only for physical ailments, but also as a possible treatment method in psychotherapy.

Sharon W. Goodill, in her book "An Introduction to Medical Dance/Movement Therapy: Health Care in Motion", shows that working together creatively with the dance-mind connection will support and strengthen the healing process (Goodill, 2005) [14]. Different cultures use different forms of dance to express themselves. Dervish dances among Sufis in Anatolia, jazz music and dances among AFRO-Americans, Stambeli dance, and Gnewa dances in North African countries such as Tunisia can also be mentioned. The dances mentioned reflect more than just a dance. Dances are more ways of expressing oneself through the body. The movements of the restricted body under pressure during the dance cause the body to connect to the spirit and enable a new level of consciousness to be reached.

Dance is a way of denying reality, a desire to integrate with eternity, and leaving the boundaries of the body to join the infinity of the soul. While all these can occur spontaneously, they can also occur as a result of monotonous movements called dance. "Many Jewish families in Tunisia once had a remarkable passion for the Stambeli. Jews in Tunisia, la Goulet, and Ariana would try "stambeli" therapy". They saw Stambeli as a natural way to show their loyalty and devotion to Sidi Sa'd, whom they believed to be the saint protector of the brotherhood" (Abdallah 1988: p. 164) [15].

As can be seen, dance is a form of individual healing, a set of figures based on the partnership of soul and body. Social pains that are impossible to express are expressed through common dance groups. Religious beliefs have an important place in turning to dance. The emergence of dance based on religion also necessitates its connection to the human soul since the human soul is purified through religious rituals. Turning to dance as a ritual also becomes a method of therapy.

### 3. Cinema as Therapy

#### 3.1. The Birth and Development of Psychological Cinema

Cinema is one of the branches of art that emerged approximately a century ago. The history of cinema dates back to 1895, when brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière invented the cinematograph and made the first public screening of their film "La sortie des usines Lumière" (The Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory). This era of cinema is the period in which the concrete aspects that herald the

beginning of the descriptive film are processed over and over again. It aims to bring back perceptual images of the world. This purpose of cinema announces the birth of the descriptive film about the events in the outsider world. Afterward, a coherent cinematic structure takes place in the building of the narrative film. As a result of these improvements, a psychological film that explores human psychology with thought, emotion, passion, fear, and spiritual content and turns to the inner world of human beings emerges.

A revolution in cinema shooting and storytelling took place in 1941 with Orson Welles' first film, *Citizen Kane*. A transition is made from the descriptive film to the narrative film, where the plot is created with a proper narration. The psychological background in the mentioned film relates to both narrative and descriptive film. Welles explores the inner world of man by investigating thoughts, emotions, passions, and fears that have nothing to do with the material world. Munsterberg points to the beginning date of the psychologically themed film. Accordingly, following Maurice Merleau Ponty's Conference entitled (*Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie, Cinema and New Psychology*) held at the Paris Cinematographic Research Institute on March 13, 1945, a new psychological perception emerged in the understanding of film [16].

According to Tan, before the age of cinema, academic research in psychology had long been interested in determining the basic mechanisms of mental functioning (Ed S. Tan, 2018) [17]. According to the information mentioned in the article "Psychology of Film", published by Ed S. Tan, Honorary Professor of the Faculty of Communication of the University of Amsterdam, under the signature of the publishing house Palgrave Communications in 2018, the indirect effect of moving images on the audience's opinions about the film has been analyzed. The psychologically themed film offers the audience a moral and psychological perspective.

According to Merleau Ponty, who commented on this new understanding, "The message that cinema wants to give can be understood through perceptions. It is not necessary to think about the film, but it is necessary to perceive the film. Cinema shows the thought in gestures, the individual acting, and the spirit residing within the body (François Albera, 2013) [18].

Hugo Munsterbeg's publication titled "Photoplay: A Psychological Study" published in 1916, announces the beginning of the psychological-themed film [17]. In the first part of the book, it explores how the psychological-themed film affects basic functioning mechanisms such as perception, attention, memory, and emotions. In the second part of photoplay, an awareness is mentioned of the unreality of perceived scenes. This unreality has a fundamental quality in psychological aesthetics. Today's film psychologists seek to advance perceptual understandings of films by collaborating with experts in the fictional analysis of films.

With the development of technology, great advances have been made in measuring psychological reactions (perception, attention, memory, and emotions) during a movie. These advances are thanks to the emergence of many new tools to

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record physical, psychological, and cognitive data. One of these imaging techniques is Functional Magnetic Resonance, which allows image brain functioning. As Tan mentioned, “Combining the displayed analytical data with laboratory measurements as comprehensive data constitutes the next step in the development of psychologically structured film.” (Ed S. Tan, 2018) [17] In other words, the film with a psychological background enters a major formation process by analytically combining different methods in the functioning of the brain.

After the Merleau Ponty conference in 1945, a new psychological film understanding of form and perception psychology emerged, which was a reaction to previous intellectual film theories. According to this understanding, the cinema film appears as “an object to be perceived”. A new approach with a psychological basis: “What is the nature and meaning of cinema?” It seeks an answer to the question in the form. The viewer can grasp the meaning of a movie through perception. Perception arises on its own and does not require any act of thinking.

This relationship is a dynamic relationship. Cinema also benefits from psychology. The scripts written and the performances benefit from theories developed in the field of human psychology. The fastest way to add twist and depth to a simple scenario is to introduce dramatic conflicts or details into the psychology of the characters. The depth provided by conflict can be created by a wide variety of personality development theories. For example, in the movie, the characters may have different defense mechanisms, Oedipal complex, or sexuality-related problems based on Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. In Woody Allen’s films, we come across characters who try to resolve the deep emotional space and emotions created by love in an intellectual tone and in the light of theory, and eventually turn everything upside down. In the films *Love and Death* (1975), *Annie Hall* (1977), and *Manhattan* (1979), the film director used the rationalization mechanism in the personality traits of characters who cannot handle emotions naturally. The theme that brought actor and game success in films such as *The Graduate* (1967) and *Straw Dogs* (1971) is the Oedipal complex and the attempt to resist the libido.

According to Jung, the collective unconscious consists of common images called archetypes that everyone could accept. Interpersonal communication is facilitated by the symbolism behind the archetypes. Archetypes shaped and shared throughout human history appear as characters in cinema. In symbolism based on Jung’s archetype theory, the first symbol of the self is called “hero”, the outer mask of this self is called “persona”, and the hidden lost-dark face of the self is called “shadow”. The self in the collective unconscious includes parts such as persona and shadow, as well as the image of a wise person who will guide the self and images of men (animus) and women (anima). What is expected from the hero is to discover the various parts of himself and to feel more complete as the process progresses. For example, in Star Wars, Luke Skywalker is the hero of the series. Skywalker’s dark side is Darth Vader, his guide is Obi-Wan Kenobi, and his anima is Princess Leila. Skywalker is the one who represents his different parts throughout the series, connecting with and exploring them and becoming a whole person

while solving problems.

According to Rollo May, an important name of the existentialist school, human beings think that they should have a purpose or meaning for living in the world they live in. When a person cannot find such a purpose and meaning, he begins to experience anxiety. The contradiction experienced by such a person is called “existential anxiety”. According to May, it is necessary to mobilize our own consciousness against conflict and anxiety. There are four phases in human life that must activate consciousness. The stage of innocence is the first stage of the hero. Before he encounters the problem, he is not even aware of his existence in the world. In the rebellion phase, the problem is finding the character, and the hero enters into the existential conflict. For the solution, the character sets a goal and he is totally dedicated to it. Finally, he becomes aware of the mundane affairs of the world. Adapted to the Star Wars series, Luke Skywalker is an innocent child in the galaxy far from conflict. But this situation does not last long, and Skywalker rebels when his relatives are killed in the fight between the empire and the rebels. He enters the war with a sense of revenge. First, he gets into a selfish motivation that saves Princess Leia later. It reaches its destination. But at the most important stage, an inner journey begins when he realizes his Jedi identity.

These stages essentially show that cinema uses psychology as a procedure. Cinema is also used as a psychological analysis tool. Therefore, there is a dynamic relationship between these two basics.

### 3.2. Psychological Dimensions of Cinema

Cinema, as an art form, has evolved into a tool for exploring the human psyche. Orson Welles’ *Citizen Kane* (1941) revolutionized narrative techniques, merging descriptive and psychological elements. Hugo Münsterberg’s *Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (1916) marked the beginning of psychological film analysis, exploring how movies influence perception, memory, and emotions. If we dismiss this pleasure or displeasure in the beauty of the photoplay and focus solely on the processes of perception, attention, interest, memory, imagination, suggestion, and emotion that we have examined, we will notice that we always arrive at the same conclusion. One general principle appeared to control the spectator’s entire mental system, or, more specifically, the relationship between the mental mechanism and the images on the screen (Münsterberg, 1916) [19].

Cinema therapy, as an extension of these practices, further emphasizes the therapeutic potential of artistic mediums. As a complete art form that combines visual imagery, narrative, sound, and performance, cinema provides a powerful means of exploring psychological themes. When integrated into group therapy sessions, cinema facilitates shared emotional experiences and fosters collective introspection. By engaging with characters, stories, and symbolic imagery, participants can gain new perspectives on their own struggles and develop a sense of connection and empathy with others in the group. This approach highlights the unique ability of cinema to serve as both a mirror and a guide for psychological healing. However,

the integration of psychotherapy in art is not without its challenges. Ethical concerns, including issues of vulnerability, privacy, and the risk of misinterpretation, necessitate ongoing critical discourse and research. This approach highlights the unique ability of cinema to serve as both a mirror and a guide for a possible psychological remedy.

Similarly, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's conference "*Le Cinéma et la Nouvelle Psychologie*" (1945) introduced a new framework for understanding film as a perceptual experience rather than purely intellectual engagement. The intersections between cinema and psychology and between cinema and philosophy multiply in the period when Merleau-Ponty gives his lecture at a date that gives him a pioneering position if we exclude, before it, the "*l'Esquisse d'une psychologie du cinéma*" by André Malraux (1940) which does not strictly speaking fall within the philosophical field but which nevertheless goes beyond that of criticism, in the direction of this "*Psychologie de l'Art*" on which the author will work after the war.

Philosophers and philosophy are also very present in reflections on cinema outside of specialized places such as IDHEC or the Institute of Filmology to which we will return. In the columns of the French Screen, where "Cinéma et Psychologie" appears, there is a debate about existentialism in cinema, about "lived time" and duration in cinema considered as "a metaphysical and to be frank, Bergsonian apparatus", there is questioning about "Thinking about cinema" and about the need to define a "philosophy of cinema" (Albera, 2013) [18].

For Merleau-Ponty, "if philosophy and cinema agree, if reflection and technical work go in the same direction, it is because the philosopher and the filmmaker have in common a certain way of taking a position, a certain view of the world that is that of our generation" (*Temps Modernes version*). He appears to place this meeting of cinema and contemporary philosophy, that is, "phenomenological or existential philosophy", in the context of a historical moment rather than an internal correspondence between the cinematic and the philosophical: philosophy is not only made to produce concepts, he exclaims.

Modern psychology and contemporary philosophy offer us "consciousness thrown into the world, subject to the gaze of others and learning what it is" from them. And cinema relates to them because it is particularly apt to make the union of the mind and the body, of the mind and the world, and the expression of one in the other. However, the corpus of films presented by Merleau-Ponty at his conference as descriptions of filmic or filmable circumstances, as well as the figures and processes invoked, are somewhat startling today.

### 3.3. Therapeutic Applications of Film

Cinema allows individuals to explore complex emotions and unconscious conflicts in a controlled setting. Techniques such as symbolic imagery, character-driven narratives, and archetypal themes provide viewers with avenues for introspection and emotional release. For instance, films like *The Graduate* (1967) and

*Star Wars* (1977) utilize Jungian archetypes, allowing audiences to confront and integrate different aspects of their psyche.

Empirical studies have demonstrated the therapeutic benefits of guided film viewing in clinical settings. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) data reveal that specific cinematic techniques evoke measurable psychological and emotional responses, validating their use in psychotherapy. The main purpose behind screening films during group therapy sessions is to open a chance to dive into the inner of the audience in a natural and soft way. The film itself is considered an opportunity to spend time within the group and break boundaries, which could help to establish confidence between patients and specialists and help them communicate their thoughts and feelings better.

Dr. İshak Saygılı said, “In particular, showing patients a movie is a very common method. So how does this happen? A movie is given to the assistant to show to the patients in the clinic. During the movie, some clinics distribute tea and cake to the patients. Afterward, the movie is turned off, and daily activities continue. In other words, the movie is not talked about much. Even if it is talked about, it is not heard. Although this activity is not necessarily called therapy, it can be used as an occupational therapy method. To put it more roughly, some of the activities done to keep the patient busy are included in this group.” (Cherif, 2019) [3]

The first aim of the group is to understand the concept of common sense and to strengthen solidarity. There are interaction groups and psychodramas that patients could participate in. Activity programs such as cinematic elements and film screening participate efficiently in instilling the idea of a group, and solidarity and positively impact how people look at each other for a better understanding of the meaning of the other.

### 3.4. Case Studies

My interviews evaluated Cinema Therapy/Sine-Terapy (in Turkish) with the therapist Dr. İshak Saygılı from İstanbul Erenköy Mental and Nervous Diseases Education and Research Hospital who has many studies on the subject and Specialist Dr. İmen Hacı Kacem Krid from CHU Hedi Chaker University Hospital; and art therapy with artists Derya Çiftçi and Hend Sabry. We created the bibliography based on different schools and names as much as possible in order to provide an introduction to the literature section of my research and a framework for subsequent studies. Interviews were conducted with psychiatrists and artists, and the selected films were examined through content analysis.

Consider the application of cinema in treating trauma. Films like *Good Will Hunting* (1997), *Ordinary People* (1980), and *The Flower of Aleppo* (2016) have been used in sessions to facilitate discussions about grief, resilience, and interpersonal relationships. Through guided analysis, the audience could identify with characters and narratives, fostering emotional catharsis and deeper self-understanding.

Dr. Saygılı mentioned that he was taking sections from the films of Turkish film

directors such as Yılmaz Güney and Zeki Demirkubuz. There were also some that he picked from American films. Some of the cinema therapy group film screenings united around twelve people each. We called this a film session, also under the name sine-terapi/cinema-therapy.

If we're going to speak about a case situation, without or with expert help, human beings could say, "I read a book and my life started changing." There is a published interview with Zeki Demirkubuz in which He said, "People can alternate after they set up a courting with something they're connected to with love." (Cherif, 2019) [3]. This may also want to be a love of game, football or a team... Ordinary matters that we appear down on what can heal or participate in human remedy. One of the patients said during therapy that he was bored with cinema therapy sessions at first, he was looking down on it and making fun of it. However, in the fourth and fifth weeks, he started to cry, stating that he understood what we were doing. The patient said, "I understood what we were doing in one of the clips, we are playing a game here. The therapist is aiming to make us think about ourselves by seeing things that we cannot talk about directly with each other from the cinema scene." Donald Winnicott, one of the psychoanalyst theorists, has a beautiful book called *Playing and Reality* in which he studies the origins of creativity and how can we develop it—whether within ourselves or in others? The psychoanalysis and theorist Winnicott shows in his book that by carefully nurturing creativity from early childhood onwards, everyone has the opportunity to live a rich, fulfilling, and cultured life (Winnicott, 2005) [20]. The patient's comment during the sessions mentioned previously almost summarized Winnicott's theory according to what she said.

### 3.5. Ethical Considerations

Art, as an expression means, could certainly be considered a rich and non-conventional language for communication. It is considered, in some cases, a good alternative to reaching others. From that perspective, using art requires a good understanding of the self and empathy towards others to build a strong connection between the artist and the audience in general. Considering art therapy as a method to deal with certain patients, the artwork becomes a medium aiming to ensure efficient communication for a better understanding of the case; this explains the responsibility of the art medium, artist, and therapist in this case.

From her side explaining her experience with art during therapy sessions, Dr. Hadj Kacem said, "We use art therapy as part of the institutional care of children with autism spectrum disorders. Plastic arts are a means of expression and self-knowledge for these children. In fact, autistic children who are involved in plastic arts can express images in the outside world with their own imagination, movements, and awareness (Cherif, 2019) [3]. In that context, art can be considered a medium that is much more efficient than casual communication. It is a different and fascinating tool for children who have difficulty communicating through words and speech for certain circumstances and disabilities.

Questioning the art therapist Derya Çiftçi, according to her experience within art therapy sessions about the motivation of patients toward art, she expressed how much some were involved in the matter. She said, “We told the patients that we would open an exhibition to showcase their works at the end of the year with as many paintings as possible. While we were at the art painting session with them, we saw that they were enthusiastic about this. Even though they will not be able to see the exhibition themselves, they worked diligently, and they seemed motivated... And I believe that is the reason why the exhibition had a very positive impact (Cherif, 2019) [3].

Cinema is often regarded as a complete art form because it integrates multiple artistic elements, including music, dialogue, acting, set design, atmosphere, and striking visuals, to create a powerful, immersive experience. This unique synthesis deeply affects the psyche and mood of the audience, stirring emotions, triggering memories, and even shaping perceptions. Its ability to delve into the complexities of human psychology makes it a potent medium for exploring inner struggles and fostering emotional connection. For this reason, it is crucial for filmmakers to approach their craft with a heightened sense of awareness, striving to create works that not only captivate but also promote healing and personal growth. Collaborating with psychologists and mental health specialists can enhance their ability to address sensitive themes responsibly and guide their audience toward positive transformation.

While cinema offers profound therapeutic benefits, ethical challenges must be addressed. These include ensuring client privacy, avoiding potential re-traumatization, and maintaining sensitivity to cultural and personal contexts. Therapists must carefully select films and guide discussions to mitigate these risks.

#### **4. Conclusions**

This academic paper has delved into the significant role that psychotherapy plays in contemporary art. Throughout history, artists have engaged with psychological themes and have used various ways and techniques to explore and express their emotions, thoughts, and personal experiences. By integrating psychotherapy into their creative process, artists have been able to confront their inner struggles, both consciously and unconsciously, and transform them into powerful visual narratives.

The analysis of renowned artworks underscores the dual role of contemporary art as a medium for sharing personal and collective psychological experiences. Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaborations between artists, art therapists, and clinical psychologists enrich both fields, leading to innovative artistic practices and therapeutic methodologies. These partnerships highlight the potential of art as a therapeutic tool, contributing to mental well-being and broadening our understanding of human experiences. Cinema therapy, as an extension of these practices, further emphasizes the therapeutic potential of artistic mediums. As a complete art form that combines visual imagery, narrative, sound, and performance,

cinema provides a powerful means of exploring psychological themes. When integrated into group therapy sessions, cinema facilitates shared emotional experiences and fosters collective introspection. By engaging with characters, stories, and symbolic imagery, and participants can gain new perspectives on their own struggles and develop a sense of connection and empathy with others in the group. This approach highlights the unique ability of cinema to serve as both a mirror and a guide for psychological healing.

However, the integration of psychotherapy in art is not without its challenges. Ethical concerns, including issues of vulnerability, privacy, and the risk of misinterpretation, necessitate ongoing critical discourse and research. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure responsible and ethical practices within this evolving field. Overall, this article serves as a significant contribution to the ongoing dialogue between psychotherapy and the role of art within it.

By expanding our understanding of how these two domains intersect, it illuminates the transformative power of art as a means of personal expression and self-discovery, ultimately enhancing psychological healing journeys. Future research could explore more nuanced frameworks for ethical collaboration, investigate diverse cultural perspectives on therapeutic art, and assess the long-term psychological impacts of such practices. By continuing to bridge these domains, we can foster deeper empathy, enhance mental well-being, and advance our collective understanding of the human condition through the lens of artistic expression.

This paper contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection of psychotherapy and art, highlighting its transformative potential. Future research could investigate diverse cultural perspectives, develop ethical frameworks for collaboration, and assess the long-term psychological impacts of therapeutic art practices. By bridging these fields, we can foster deeper empathy, enhance mental well-being, and enrich our understanding of the human condition through artistic expression.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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