



HKU Common Core Office
Transdisciplinary Research Project

Folk Arts: An exploratory study into self-expression and
traditional arts revitalization

BOOKLET GUIDE

(for conducting research)

by Eeshaanee Shandilya, Van Kie Liew,
Aastha Gaur, Vaishali Ranbir Rathi

Mentor: Dr. Kathleen Wyma

Index

Sl. No.	Topic	Page
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Hypothesis and Research Question	4
3.	Historical background	4
4.	Theoretical basis of the study	7
5.	Cultural Appreciation	8
6.	Mindfulness Aspects of Folk Art	9
7.	Features of Folk Art Forms	10
8.	Psychological structure of the study	16
9.	Methodology	17
10.	Participant Commitment	20
11.	Research Facilitator Commitment	21
12.	Workshop Session	22
13.	First Meeting with Participants	23
14.	Subsequent meetings with Participants	26
15.	Images from Closing 'Paint with us' Session	28
16.	Data Analysis a. Results b. Case Studies	29-37
17.	Alternative Perspectives of Discussion	38
18.	References	39

INTRODUCTION

Traditional and folk-art forms have long played an integral role in our society. These art forms not only help understand different ways of life, but also tell a story that has been lived by many generations of a community. These stories have a great potential to empower communities, promote social inclusion, and even drive social change. They also help reduce stress, through the therapeutic aspects of storytelling. However, this potential is largely unexplored. Exploring different cultural, psychological, behavioural and societal aspects of traditional folk arts can illustrate the different perspectives of folk-art forms in a global context. The sociological theory on Art Perception by Bourdeiu elucidates how the interpretations of art are subject to 'codes' of knowledge of the history, society, philosophy and other ideals behind the art form. For instance, Madhubani paintings encapsulate the idea of harmonious living and acceptance of opposing ideas. The philosophy of parallel lines depicts that two different ideologies in human beings, which could be conflicting, can not only harmoniously coexist but also make the painting beautiful (Bharati Dayal, TedTalk), thus fostering harmony in the community. Through this research, we aim to explore and bring forth the nuances and important aspects of traditional art forms, that would delve into understanding human beings on a societal level (including societal issues), and explore the connection between mental health (particularly stress) and the practice of traditional or folk-art forms in order to reduce stress and create more resilience in our society.

The aim shall be to explore such fascinating aspects of traditional art forms and depict it in the form of research articles, awareness videos or workshops, so that it bridges the gap between the youth and understanding these art forms. Though educational programmes have attempted to bridge this gap, we believe that there is a need to illustrate the benefits of storytelling through these folk art forms and see a potential therapeutic aspect to it. We intend to look into the active participation of students for learning about folk arts through workshops regulated mini experiments as that will be an active process of art making that will involve behavioural and emotional changes when people have to deal with canvas themselves. This not only enables them to express their modern life story, but also revitalizes the art forms that are limited to a specific region of the world. Over a couple of weeks, we can analyse their emotional response to making that artform when they are stressed to tap into one's emotional response to folk art and stress.

When one looks closer into art, it is noteworthy to mention that it is a very therapeutic process when participants get involved in the task they are doing and it is accelerated through the process of storytelling. Since art helps to significantly reduce stress amongst the

people (explained by Machioli by testing the cortisol levels of participants over an hour of art practice), we shall investigate the impact of a specific form of art i.e. the folk art forms, as means of expression to influence the emotion and well-being of people. We may also investigate the aspect of mindfulness and meditation through painting and compare and contrast methods with the standard practices.

HYPOTHESIS

Since different art forms like Zentangles, Mandala etc. have been proved useful through many research for its therapeutic effects through its ability to express, this project shall aim to investigate the potential of folk art forms in equipping people with a self-expressive tool with the focus on the effects of storytelling about one's experiences through such expressive art forms. This project also hypothesizes that through this process, the storytelling aspect (i.e. self expression) shall induce some therapeutic elements to the participants as they work through this process while at the same time revitalizing the art forms and bringing it on a global platform and making it accessible to people from all backgrounds.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can using folk arts facilitate self-expression amongst people in everyday lives, in turn inducing therapeutic effects through the method of storytelling?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

India is a land of diversity known for its vast range of arts. Indian folk arts hold a special place in the history of the land as they represent remnants of the rich rural and tribal cultures of the city. The four folk arts which we intend to explore through this project also have their unique philosophies and set of ideas. Our intent through the project is to preserve these art forms and introduce them to the world on a global platform, while emphasizing their accessibility and conserving their essence.

Madhubani has been associated with the empowerment of women, it finds its origins in the epic Ramayana, where the King Janaka commissioned local artists to paint murals and decorate the town with the art form for the wedding of his daughter, Sita. Even today, the art form is used to decorate houses for newlyweds. Over time, the art was forgotten by the masses. Traditionally done on mud walls, Madhubani has now found its way to canvases and clothes. The paintings mainly narrate mythological tales of Indian Gods such as Krishna and

Ganesha. The painting has a very interesting process. Women usually pray to the deities before starting the painting. Further, they use cotton wrapped in a bamboo stick as a paint brush. Manually prepared colours made using materials such as turmeric, indigo and flower extracts are used for the art form. The paintings are traditionally made by the women of the house and were originally used for ritualistic purposes. The art form was commercialized only in 1962 when an artist recognized it and introduced it to the global public. He asked the artists to make some paintings on paper instead of the murals, and took these paintings back to his country. Folk art grew extremely popular. It came to be associated with **women empowerment** over the years as the women from the rural families of the Mithila village were actively involved with the paintings. Through our initiative, we wish to use Madhubani and other folk arts as a tool to empower the youth. As the award-winning Madhubani artist Bharti Dayal says about the revival of the art form, “we need to....give them (children) the opportunity to imbibe, appreciate and preserve this art form.” Our initiative builds on this philosophy and intends to combine the preservation of the art forms with an attempt to test the viability of folk arts to help in stress reduction in modern life.

Gond art has a rich history of over 1400 years. It is said that the primitive forms of the art form existed in paintings made as early as 2000 BCE. The Gond tribe has a very interesting philosophy behind the art form. The tribe believes that all things are possessed by a spirit and are hence sacred. The Gond paintings depict this sacred connection between humankind and natural surroundings. Just like Madhubani, Gond art has also seen a lot of changes with time. Initially a form of pictorial art of walls and floors, done using local colours like charcoal, coloured soil and plant sap, the art form has now changed to minimalistic human or animal forms. Though it initially depicted only the relationship between humans and the environment, it is now also used to tell mythological stories. There have also been many contemporary technical changes in the art form’s interpretation. For instance, some artists use dots and others use dashes in their drawings. Gond art gained large global recognition after the famous artist and archivist J Swaminathan encouraged young artists to visit the villages and engage with the art. Through our initiative, we also intend to take people to the world of Gond art, but in a more virtual and engaging manner.

Located just near the busy city of Mumbai, the Warli tribe is one of the largest ones of India. Despite living so close to one of the most developed cities of the country, the tribe rejects most of the technological developments of the urban world. They are, however, known for their art. An art form which dates back to the 10th century CE, Warli is known to be one of the finest folk art forms of India. The art form was brought out to the larger public only in the 1970s when artist Jivya Soma Mashe and his son Balu Mashe started using it with an

artistic pursuit rather than as a festive celebration, which was its initial objective. Though the art form has undergone changes concerning its primary objective, the form has remained largely the same. The form depicts the livelihood of the people from the Warli village, and is an artistic representation of the nature around them and their lives. The Warli artists use clay walls as their canvases for their elaborate paintings, which are done mostly in a specific type of white paint which is made using rice flour and water. We wish to take this essence of 'representing one's life through art' and apply it to the lives of students and young working professionals through our project.

Coming from one of the oldest tribes of India, the Saura art form is known for its distinct portrayal of tribal culture. The tribe's deep connection to nature is depicted through their art, which may at first seem like a simplistic drawing of everyday rural life but is in fact full of symbolism and meaning. For a tribe without a written language, art acts as a medium to express themselves and also record their history. Though the art was initially done by only the priests, the intangible oral traditions of how to make the paintings were passed down. Saura art of Orissa employs an array of repeated motifs in their artwork. The art form has undergone many changes and fusions over the years. Saura was traditionally made on the red or brown clay walls of village houses using natural dyes of materials such as rice, white stone and plant extracts. The paintings were typically dedicated to the deity of the tribe, known as *Idital*, and were made during festive occasions. The art form has many recurring motifs such as the tree of life, sun and moon and numerous animals. The easy methods of making the motifs have attracted people to the art form. The art form also has the usage of numerous colours today, rather than the conventional monochromatic themes. Today in the 21st century, from the walls of rural houses, Saura has found its way to bags, sarees and even notebooks! Our project aims to extend it to the students as well.

Overall, our project aims to converge the intangible philosophies of the folk art forms and apply them to the contemporary world, while attempting to preserve them as well as to investigate its effectiveness in reducing stress in a global city like Hong Kong.

THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE STUDY

In our study, we wish to apply the following theories and engage with them.

1. Art Perception by Bourdeiu

The sociological theory on Art Perception by Bourdeiu elucidates how the interpretations of art are subject to 'codes' of knowledge of the history, society, philosophy and other ideals behind the art form.

Through our project, we intend to use folk art as a medium for the participants to tell their story through the art form, and interpret it in their own way. Their interpretation of the art forms can be read as a reflection of their own socio-cultural ideas as well the ones mentioned to them during the study.

2. Principle of Peekable by VS Ramachandran

VS Ramachandran's Principle of Peekable (1991) illustrates how at a first glance at a painting, we might observe it only from the surface, and may not interpret it deeply. However, on a closer look, we may have different perspectives of understanding it.

Through our study, we wish to emphasize a deeper understanding and analysis of the forms of folk arts and multiple perspectives of understanding it.

3. Principle of Metaphor in Art by VS Ramachandran

Art can be a metaphor for one's mental state or even of their life story. Our project intends to encourage participants to adopt folk arts as a medium of self expression, and utilize them to tell their own stories.

This creative process of art-making not only makes art a more approachable tool for the outlet of emotions but also give people the opportunity to stir through their own creative process.

4. Mirror Neuron System

The Mirror Neurons are a part of the brain's motor system, and are the ones which correlate not with specific movements, but rather with specific goals and incidents.

When applied to a form of art, this may mean that when someone draws an art form, the same neurons are shot as when they saw a painting of the particular art form. Through our

project, we intend to utilize this theory by enabling the participant to go through a good (or happy) emotional experience by not only revisiting it but also creatively using stirring up that aspect of the thinking brain.

5. Creative Impulse theory by Carl Jung

Carl Jung (1971) described, “True art is something “supra-personal”, a force which has “escaped from the limitations of the personal and has soared beyond the personal concerns of its creator.” He believed that art itself had no meaning, just like nature. He rather focused on the creative process as something distinct, and said that works of art could arise out of mental states.

Through our study, we shall implement this theory to drive the outlet of expression through the elements of folk art forms as described in the subsequent sections. We shall also attempt to examine how it can be used as a tool to release stress.

CULTURAL APPRECIATION

The art forms that have been shortlisted are ones that are native to a small minority of the population of the Indian subcontinent. While the project aims to cater to a mixed group of individuals and allow them to experience a taste of South Asian Folk Art, under no circumstance will the appropriation of the heritage of these tribes be allowed.

Appropriation takes place when a culturally dominant race cherry picks aspects of a less dominant race while ignoring the true significance of that culture. Such actions lead to a loss in identity and heritage history of the less dominant group while the appropriator claims this culture as their own.

A line may be drawn when a shift in ideology is seen and in place of appropriation, a line of appreciation is adopted. *But the question arises, where is the line?*

When one is sharing aspects of their culture, or indulging in another community's culture, one must always ask the question about what the real purpose of their engagement is; and if they are engaging, are they doing so responsibly. Responsible engagement entails knowing the accurate background of the community the culture is native to, appreciating and honoring practices and being open to active learning of the cultural knowledge of that group. One can not cherry pick certain elements they find “Appealing” or “fashionable” and call it their own.

By lieu of this project, the main goal is to talk about the folk art forms originating in these niches in India. But inevitably, raw culture will be brought to a platform that may have no prior experience with the matter at all. Thus, to avoid appropriation and ensuring that the audience has an adequate understanding of the content they are being exposed to, workshops shall be conducted by the Research Facilitators to teach the participants about the background. By this method, it shall be ensured that the participants know the root history behind the art they are engaging in and the stories of these tribes will not be lost.

While participants will be allowed to practise the art by themselves, they will be taught the accurate methodology that goes behind these forms. Workshops may involve a small introduction to cultural appropriation and sensitizing the participants to the gravitas of the matter. The personal journey of the participants in this project will be very subjective and each one will interpret the art in their own way, but as they absorb the knowledge originating from the tribal communities of India, the true essence may not be lost at any point of time. The project shall be conducted bearing in mind the creators of this craft.

MINDFULNESS ASPECTS OF FOLK ART

Creating art is a type of meditation, an active training of the mind that increases awareness and emphasizes acceptance of feelings and thoughts without judgment and relaxation of body and mind. The process of making art overrides the need for verbal communication. Creativity is its own language and enables humans to connect with one another — and themselves — on a non-verbal level.

The most distinctive characteristics of "folk art" concern the materials and creative techniques used. Thus, unlike in more sophisticated art, "folk art" tended to make use of natural substances like wood, straw, clay and so on. Tools tended to be fewer in number but invariably multi-purpose. Folk art also expresses cultural identity by conveying shared community values and aesthetics. It encompasses a range of utilitarian and decorative media, including cloth, wood, paper, clay, metal and more. If traditional materials are inaccessible, new materials are often substituted, resulting in contemporary expressions of traditional folk art forms. Folk art reflects traditional art forms of diverse community groups — ethnic, tribal, religious, occupational, geographical, age- or gender-based — who identify with each other and society at large. Folk artists traditionally learn skills and techniques through apprenticeships in informal community settings, though they may also be formally educated. Folk art is simple, direct, and mostly always colorful.

Storytelling fosters mindfulness

In a study of around 15,000 children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, it was seen that story sessions influenced both socio-emotional development and cognitive skills. In a paper on the British Council website, it has been seen that storytelling workshops help mental health and well-being by supporting relaxation, as well as help children express their thoughts and emotions. Likewise, storytelling in art creation can help form healing narratives (Harpaz, 2014). Telling stories in art reconstructs a person's experiences as remembered, cultivating a stronger sense of self and identity.

As the participant would engage in this activity of storytelling, they would be required to translate their emotions into artistic expression, thus forcing them to process information and convert it into another form. This may enable them to tap into emotions they either suppressed or were unaware of and the healing process may take place. Moreover, it would help gain perspective while they practise the art. By taking a mental pause from a state of confusion and attempting to structure it in a "non-traditional" communicative format, participants will gain a sense of relief and reach a state of emotional balance where they can tackle their stressors one by one.

Our goal is not to analyze the participants' art, nor invite the participants to delve into the meaning behind their work. We intend to let the storytelling element guide their process, helping them create art without the burden of wanting to be "perfect", thereby allowing them to freely channel and release negative emotions.

FEATURES OF THE FOLK ART FORMS

Warli Art:

- **Circle:** observation of nature representing the sun and the moon
- **Triangle:** observation of nature→ derived from mountains and pointed trees
- **Square:** human invention indicating sacred enclosure or piece of land
- Triangles in the human body: **equilibrium of life**
- Art for them is the means of communication→ imparting moral values amongst the younger population
- Usually made by married ladies in the pillars of their houses
- Focus on nature; and or insect is as big as human beings→ depicts their **respect for nature**

- In Warli paintings it is rare to see a straight line. A series of **dots and dashes make one line**.
- the art form deals with themes that narrate their **social lifestyle** and activities
- Only **white** as a medium of colour



Made by 'Jivya Soma Mashe'

[Born in Maharashtra in 1934, Jivya Soma Mashe is one of the most widely recognised names of Warli art. His fame within the community reached the ears of eminent artist Bhaskar Kulkarni, who further refined his raw artistic talent. Jivya painted his beliefs, life, customs, and rituals in simple drawings that made him a legendary warli artist. His works today feature in major art collections and museums across the world.]

Retrieved

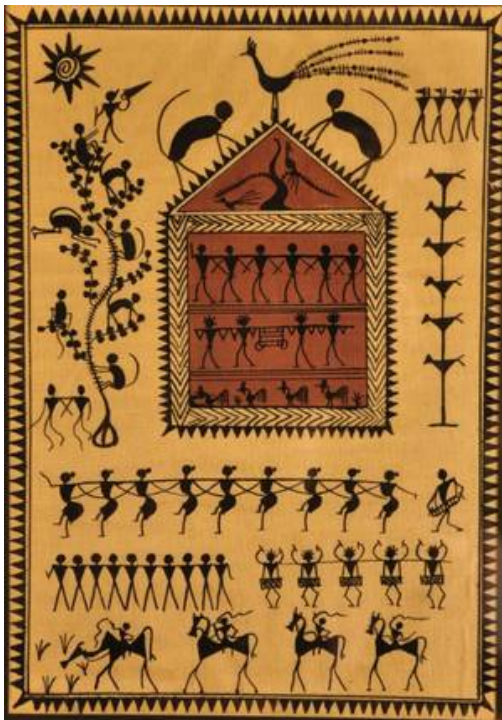
from

<https://www.mojarto.com/blogs/top-5-famous-folk-artists-and-examples-of-their-folk-art>
and <https://indigoarts.com/galleries/warli-paintings-india>

Saura Art:

- Religious significance
- Ikons (or icons) painted on the walls of the huts
- Religious and ritualistic significance
- Background: **earth colours or black**
- **Fish net approach**→ sun, horses, moon, tree of life are recurring motifs in these paintings

- Artists (usually priests) would explain the significance of the art form after completing it→ mostly represent the day to day lives of the community
- Follow the aspects that Langia Saura people understand the original aspects of the art form
- **Net-like Approach:** each figure or shape reveals some meaning about their cultural, social or religious lives
- Many times displays the glory of nature→ “Tree of life is a recurring motif”
- Community still doesn't have a written scripture and practices shifting cultivation for a living.



Right Artwork by Manas Das

[Retrieved

<https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/saura-invocations/article2112837.ece>

<http://www.artsoftheearthindia.in/artworks/2013-2/>]

from

and

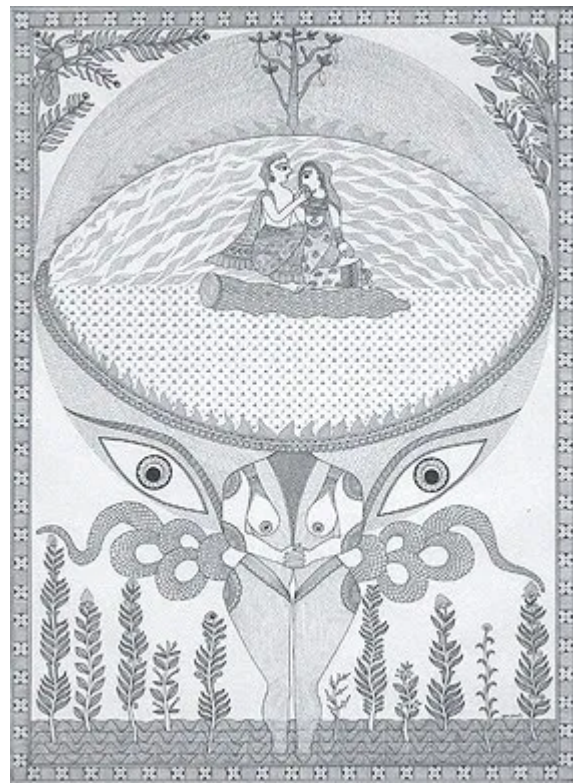
Madhubani Painting:

- Ram and Sita wedding
- Each symbol in the wedding painting represents a specific depiction.
- **Philosophy of procreation and recreation**
 - Bamboo (male sex organ)
 - Lotus (female sex organ)
 - Starting of new life

- Essence of painting
- “Expressing themselves very freely in the image forms”, “Everyone has unique style to express themselves”
- **Become oneness**
- Feminine divine power of shakti→ Bharati Dayal feels that inside of her
- Association with nature→ and its preservation

[IIT Lecture]

- Desire to be one with god
- 2D imagery
- Association with nature and scenes from ancient epics
- No space is left empty→ gaps are filled with leaves or flowers



[Artwork 1: (Artist Malvika Raj) While Madhubani art still retains the traditional practice of illustrating scenes from Hindu mythology, Malvika Raj, a Dalit woman artist from Samastipur, Bihar has been subverting the genre by illustrating folklore surrounding Buddha’s epoch. In one of her interviews with The Hindu, she stated: “I am a feminist and I strongly support women’s empowerment but Dalit women are considerably lagging behind in this movement and unable to move shoulder to shoulder along with other women in every walk of life as they are facing three-fold inequality and suppression – first, they are Dalits; next, they are women and lastly, majority are uneducated and poor.”

Artwork 2: (Artist Pushpa Kumari) Born in 1969, Pushpa Kumari illustrates social issues through a spiritual perspective. The oneness that she views the world with and the emotional intensity of her approach towards social issues like HIV, female foeticide or even mythology differentiate her from her artist counterparts. Not only does she portray the world she inhabits, she also adds her own understanding of these issues. The personal and political interpretation of collective struggles through subtle details or dramatic expression indicate her emotional investment in her art. However, despite the personal and political rendered in her work, she retains the traditional style of painting.]

Retrieved

from

<https://feminisminindia.com/2018/03/19/6-madhubani-women-artists-listicle/>

Gond Art:

- Word “Gond”→ Dravidian expression ‘kond’ → “the green mountain.” → inherent connection to nature → spiritual aspects
- the custom of decorating the walls of their houses→ originated in cave-dwelling traditions of their ancestors.
- depicts various celebrations, rituals and **man’s relationship with nature**
- The **dots and lines**→ mystical element to the art form→dotted line imparts a **sense of movement** to the still artworks and catches one’s attention quickly
- Painted in bright colors→ showcases village life and the blending of human figures with rituals and nature
- “In the eyes of a Gond artist, everything is sacred and intimately connected to nature.”
- **story-telling** is a strong element of every painting
- Gond art→ belief that a good image brings good luck.





[Artwork 1: Artist Rajendra Kumar Shyam: Rajendra Shyam is a Gond artist who initially worked for his uncle Jangarh Shyam, in Bhopal. Following this, he worked many jobs as a labourer, before he took up painting as his full-time profession in 2007. Rajendra's canvases are filled with perfectly symmetric, dense compositions which narrate elaborate stories from Gond culture and depict scenes from rural life.

Artwork 2: Artist Jangarh Singh Shyam: Though Gond art has been around for centuries, it was only in the 1980s that the art form gained recognition and fame, through Jangarh Singh Shyam, a Gond farmer and artist. He was the first Gond artist to use acrylic on paper and canvas for his paintings, creating the school which is now known as the 'Jangarh Kalam'. He had an untimely death at the age of 39 in 2001, but not before he made a mark for himself in India and internationally. Today, the late artist's immediate and extended family members are renowned Gond artists themselves, and his house in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, is abuzz with creative activity. Jangarh is survived by his wife, Nankusia Bai and his two children, Mayank Shyam and Japani Shyam.]

Retrieved

from

<https://www.artisera.com/blogs/expressions/14-important-gond-artists-who-are-promoting-the-tribal-art-form>

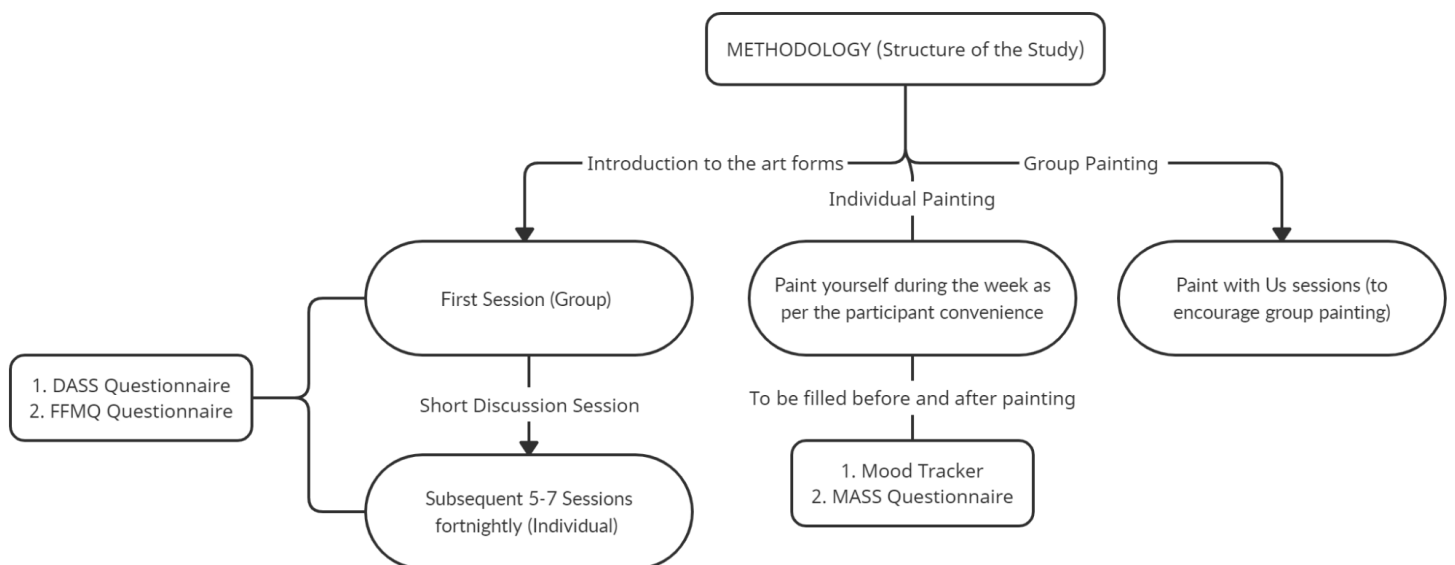
PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

1. Reducing stress and anxiety

A study investigating the effects of visual art-making on cortisol levels showed significantly lower cortisol levels after 45 minutes of art making (Kaimal et al., 2016). A follow-up qualitative interview showed that participants felt art-making to be relaxing, enjoying, freeing from constraints and for learning new aspects of themselves. Another study that invited students to paint or color given templates found significantly lower mean anxiety scores after a 30-minute session (Sandmire et al., 2012).

Kaimal et al. (2017) showed that visual self-expression activated the medial prefrontal cortex, thereby implying reward perception through creating art. The study also indicates that art-making can help regulate mood.

Therefore, our study will investigate how creating art using folk art forms can reduce stress and anxiety in our participants. We intend to use the DASS questionnaire which has been proven to be a valid and reliable instrument to assess these metrics. Furthermore, we also plan to use the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire to supplement our qualitative interview examining participants' happiness and contentment levels.



METHODOLOGY

In our study, we try to investigate the only only the effect of practicing folk arts but also the preferences they show when they choose a folk art form. In the first interaction, the participants will be demonstrated in 3 clusters of folk art forms and some brush techniques. After that, they will get to choose the folk art form they prefer to practice for the next 4 months. The participants will also explain their expectations from learning this folk art form and why they chose it. Before the pilot session, and after the final session, participants will fill out the DASS questionnaire for us to assess their levels of depression, anxiety and stress.

The participant-centered study will try not only to understand their storytelling aspects, but also give insights into preferences of people in a metropolitan set-up.

Then over 4 months, there is a fortnightly meeting with the participants about them trying out the new art form and how they express through the different elements of the folk art forms. The first meeting in the month of March is structured in the SECTION 11 of this Booklet Guide. For subsequent meetings, the aim will continue to be to understand the storytelling aspect, and see if people who reported stress initially feel better through the practice, despite being aware that there could be other factors impacting their stress also.

Other factors that will be considered in the study are:

- How frequently the participant is motivated to do the art form
- Where are they drawing their inspiration from (to make sure they are not copying from the internet)
- How helpful did they find the process? (i.e. how do they feel after doing a session of the art)

***NOTE:** Only the first session will be guided. For the remaining sessions, the participants will be expected to do the painting in their free time (so as to not hamper the thinking space of the participant while doing the art form). Only discussion will take place through the subsequent meetings.*

Hybrid METHOD Implementation

- One-on-one sessions fortnightly with RF
- ‘Paint-with-Me’ sessions on the some weekends (1 hour):
 - Optional to attend
 - For participants who want to interact with others and paint

- Saturday 4-5 pm HKT (to be discussed with the team)
- Online
- RF needs to communicate with their participants to collect the data and motivate them to paint when they are stressed or free.
- First session:
 - Group session in groups of 4-6 participants hybrid mode
 - Material will be given to participants
 - Consent collection
 - Will have to fill the form about which folk art they want to pursue
 - Explain to the participants about the 4 art forms
- Subsequent sessions:
 - DASS questionnaire
 - Questions (not limited to) to be asked:
 - Qualitative Questionnaire (Latest Framework)

Question Framework:

- Art Experience:
 - A. How did you find the art form? Was it easy to understand + apply in your art?
 - B. Were you able to try out the art form in your free time or stressed times? / Under what kind of environment did you try out painting? (Like were you stressed or you had some free time etc.)
 - C. Was it difficult to draw what you intended to? Was it because of:
 - a) Art skill
 - b) Not enough understanding of art form
 - c) Not knowing what you want to draw / not enough inspiration / not knowing what to express (i think this might be important for self-expression, maybe it will get better over time)
- Specific to what they have made:
 - A. How did this idea come across your mind?
 - B. Which concepts did you use that I previously shared with you? Why did you choose them? How does it relate to your life?

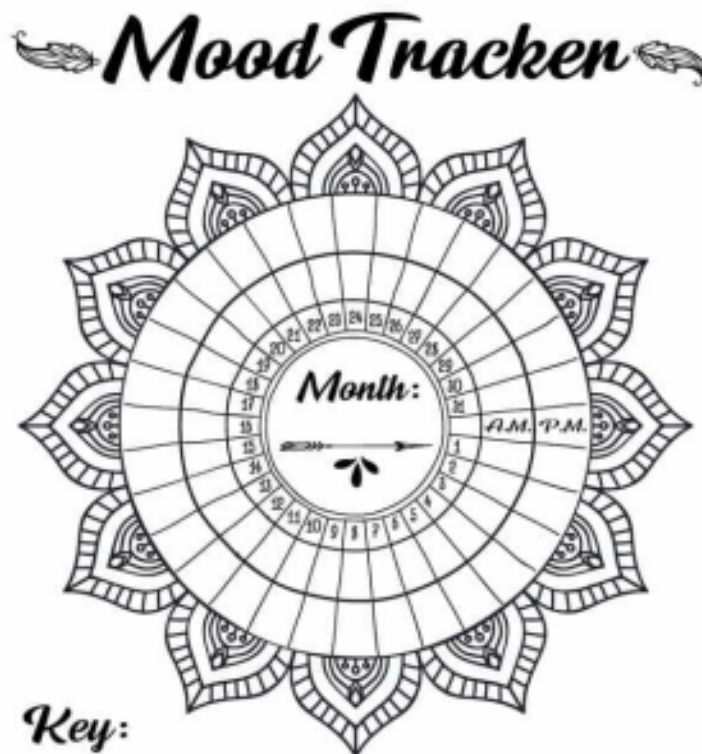
- C. [Art specific questions] What made you select this colour? How do you relate to it? What emotions does it make you feel?
- D. In general how much time were you able to spend in trying out the art form?

- Stress relief experience:

- A. How would you describe your emotions in the past two experiences overall?
 - 1. Did you have any sudden traumatic experiences?
- B. Did you explicitly feel any difference in your emotions or mood before and after you painted?
- C. [Check if any happy incidences happened where they naturally felt less stressed]

- Participants also need to fill the Mood Tracker everytime they are painting:
 - Just colour a box with the colour they resonate with before and after they start painting

- Colour to be from one of the 12 colours
- Can be made into an online form



FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY
© STRENGTHESSENCE.COM



PARTICIPANT COMMITMENT

1. Each participant will have to sign the consent form which states the following:
 - a. They will ideally continue till the end of the study, and can feel free to leave anytime they wish to. But it will be recommended that they inform the project lead (Eeshaanee at +66780370) about the same.
 - b. They can feel free to reach out to the project lead (Eeshaanee at +66780370) anytime they feel uncomfortable with the project
 - c. They give us consent to collect the data in the stress analysis structure
 - d. It is optional to share with us their artwork but is highly encouraged so we can get a better understanding of the participant's mind frame
 - e. The participant data will be withheld for 1 year after the project and will be destroyed thereafter
 - f. It is optional for the participants to join the final art exhibition which will have the artworks of different participants of the study, to encourage spreading awareness on the art forms

2. Demographic information of the participants to be collected:
 - a. Age
 - b. Occupation
 - c. Ethnicity
 - d. Art Background
 - e. Stress Level and its sources

3. Regular meetings with the participants:
 - a. Once in two weeks (**positively**)
 - b. 1st of the month
 - c. 14th of the month

RESEARCH FACILITATOR COMMITMENT

1. Each research facilitator may take charge of minimum 3 participants and maximum 8 participants
2. The research facilitator will have to be committed to the same participants throughout the study and may occasionally switch with other Research Facilitators for difficulties if discussed with the entire team beforehand.
3. The Research Facilitator commits to be courteous to the participants and their backgrounds. They have to patiently listen to the participants about their art expression aspects and make a note of it for qualitative data collection
4. No meeting shall be audio or video recorded without the prior consent of the participants.
5. The meetings with the participants should be fixed one week in advance and notified on the booklet guide.
6. For any issues within the team, it may be addressed on the Weekly Meetings on Sundays or to Eeshaanee (+852-66780370) or to the Department of Common Core directly.
7. The Research Facilitators may choose not to share their personal details with the participants except their email address (They can, if they want to).
8. For any verbal misconduct or conflict between the participant and Research Facilitator should be reported immediately to Eeshaanee (+852-66780370) or any other team member or to the Department of Common Core for assistance.

WORKSHOP SESSION

Meeting time: 1 hour

Date: 25-May-2021

Time: 15:00-16:00 HKT

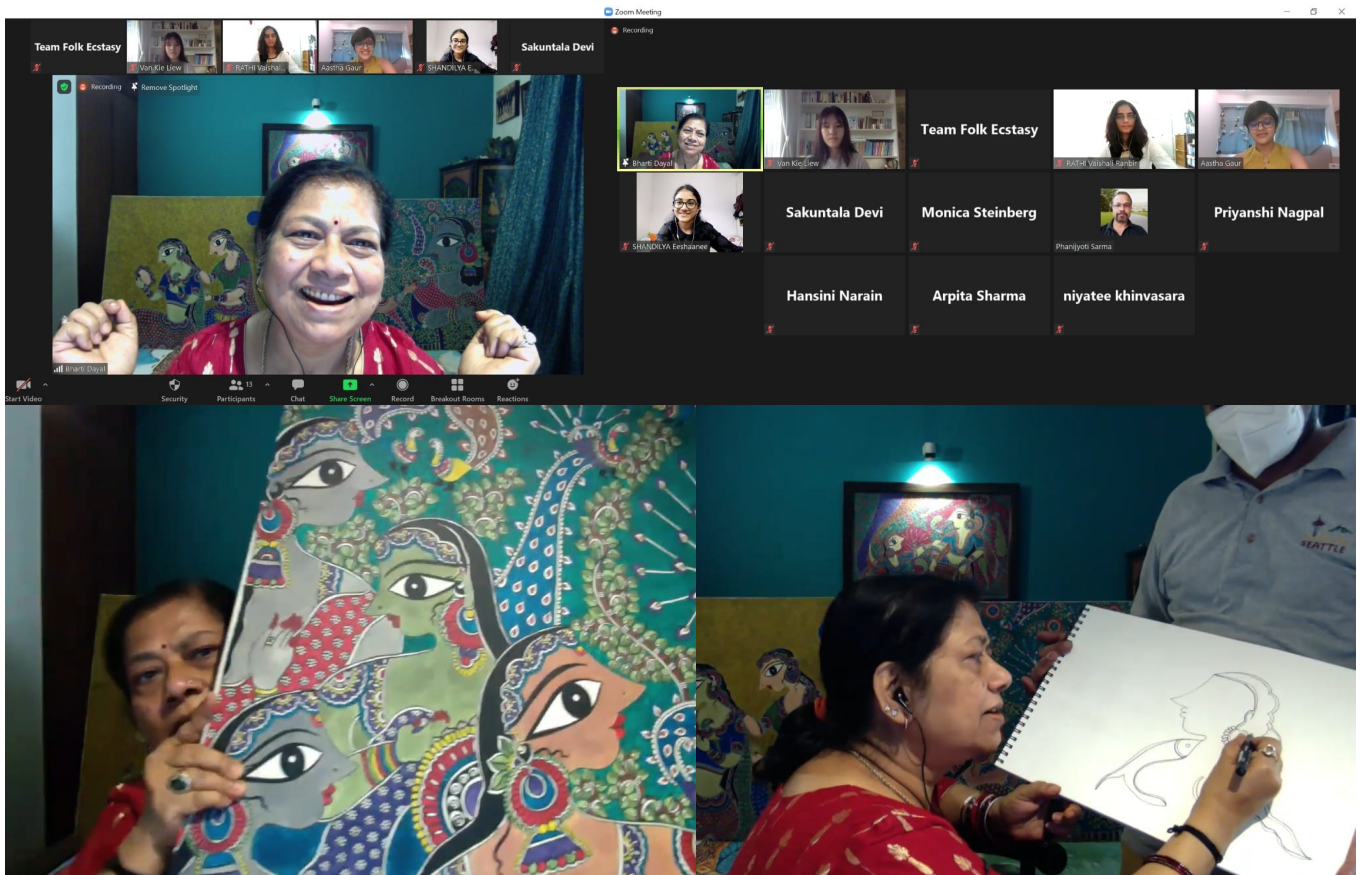
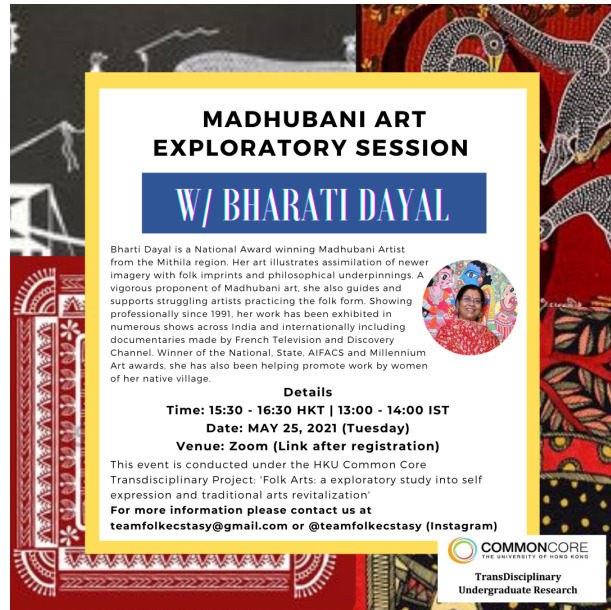
Venue: Online through Zoom

To be conducted by Folk Arts Team after interaction with the local artists

Message sent on the Communication Channel:

“Bharti Dayal, Madhubani Artist and National Award Winner, will be sharing with us about her paintings and a demonstration of her painting process—including art techniques! Ms Dayal is a renowned artist who has exhibited her paintings across the world, so if you want to know more about Madhubani Painting, mark your calendar 😊”

Screenshots of the session:



FIRST INTERACTION WITH PARTICIPANTS

Meeting time: 45 minutes - 1 hour

Flow of the meeting:

- I. Tell them about the study (5 mins)

- II. Background and Other theories to be explained (10 mins each)
 - Social aspects manifest in the art
 - How to use it?
 - How to not culturally appropriate | what is the art form used for and what it is not used for

- III. Consent and Logistics (5 mins)
 - Consent and regulations
 - Get the signatures
 - Give the materials (choose 3 colours) and ask why

- IV. Art exploration (20 mins)
 - Keep interacting with them during the session (Refer to Section A)
 - Getting to know them

Section A:

The goal of each Research facilitator (RF) is to facilitate the thinking process of a person. Even though the art form is important, AF needs to center the conversation around the participant.

Important concept about conversation (Lee & Lee, 2016):

In any project/meeting there are 4 kinds of people: leader, follower, facilitator and coach. While a leader leads the project and follower does whatever task is assigned to them, a facilitator enables others to squeeze out their thoughts in the form of a conversation. This can be done by flipping the sentences participants express into questions. For instance:

Participant: I'm joining this project to explore something new

AF: Oh wow, that's great! Thanks for joining us. How do you think that will help you develop some aspect of yourself?

Participant: Because trying out new things is always fun.

AF: Sure! What aspect in art motivates you to join our project?

Participant: I think it's something very new that I haven't tried before.

AF: That's great! How would you like to begin your journey with us? Attempt at destressing or something else?

And the conversation goes on...

Some questions to help facilitate the conversation:

Solution Based Strategy (Malchiodi, 2012):

Four kinds of approach for problem solving in art therapy:

1. Neutralizing resistance

- a. How can we work together to solve your stress? (Riley and Malchiodi)

2. Exception Questions

[This type of question helps to deconstruct a problem by focusing on exceptions to the structure.]

- a. "When you experienced a moment when you were not depressed, how did you accomplish that?"
- b. "If you have to try to reconstruct that experience of yours, how will you visualize it?"

3. Miracle Questions

[de Shazer (1991) is credited with inventing "the miracle question," which is a technique that asks clients to imagine how their lives would be if they awoken the next day and they were symptom-free"]

- a. "Suppose that one night there is a miracle and while you were sleeping the problem that brought you to therapy is solved:
 - i. "How would you know?"
 - ii. "What would be different?"
 - iii. "What would you notice the next morning that will tell you that there has been a miracle?"
 - iv. "How would you be running your life?"

4. Facilitating change Questions

- a. "... the therapist might ask the mother to illustrate "how you mustered the inner strength that stopped you from screaming at Johnny." "Can you illustrate how Johnny acted differently, even for a short time, after you explained the reason you were upset?" "Johnny, make a picture for Mom that shows her how you will help each other not to yell." A solution-focused

therapist joins with the client to solve the immediate stressor and to change both “doing” and “viewing” of a problem situation.”

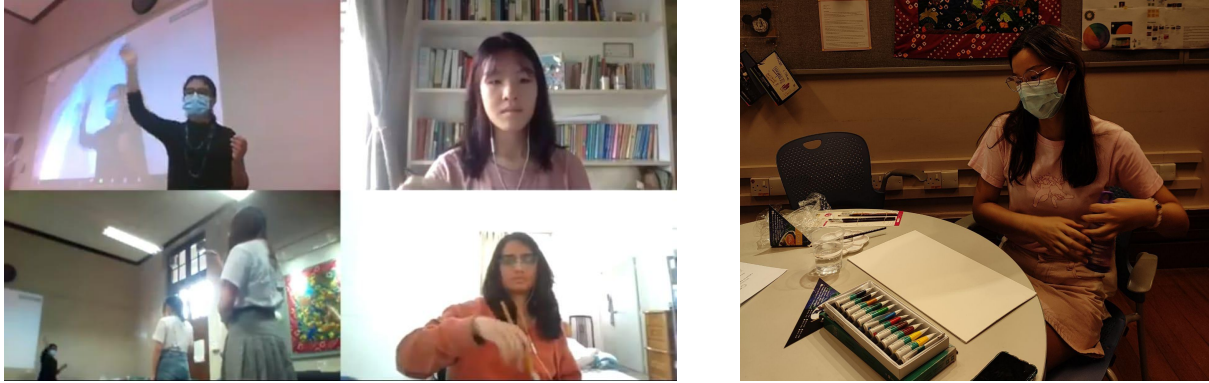
In all these situations, we need to understand that participants might be shy to explain what they think or may be hesitant to share what they are picturing. We do not have to push them to share it but facilitate expressing it on the canvas which can be some kind of code too, if they want to! We just need to work on helping them express.

Narrative Strategies (Malchiodi, 2012):

- How long has the problem (attitude, behavior, emotional difficulty, habit, illness) been pushing you around? What does it make you do that you don't want to do? Can you show me through a drawing what it looks like when it is pushing you around?
- Are there times when you didn't allow the problem to get you into trouble? Can you draw or imagine a time lately when the problem was present but you didn't allow it to get the better of you?
- Are there times when you feel you can push the problem around? Can you show me through a drawing what it looks like when you are pushing the problem around?

First Interaction Images:





SUBSEQUENT INTERACTIONS (brainstorming)

Meeting time: 20 mins

Flow of the meeting:

I. Warm up:

- a. Ask them how they are doing?
- b. How stressful they are on a scale of 1-10
- c. Fill in the DASS and FFMQ survey

II. Develop/discuss the artwork they have been working on.

Questions may include:

- How did you find the art form? Was it easy to understand + apply in your art?
- Was it difficult to draw what you intended to? Was it because of:
 - Art skill
 - Not enough understanding of art form
 - Not knowing what you want to draw / not enough inspiration / not knowing what to express (i think this might be important for self-expression, maybe it will get better over time)
- How did this idea come across your mind?
- What does it signify to you in your regular life?

- Are you able to relate to what you're making?
-
- [Art specific questions] What made you select this colour? What does it signify to you
- Which concepts did you use that I previously shared with you? Why did you choose them? How does it relate to your life?

Final Question Framework:

- Art Experience:
 - A. How did you find the art form? Was it easy to understand + apply in your art?
 - B. Were you able to try out the art form in your free time or stressed times? / Under what kind of environment did you try out painting? (Like were you stressed or you had some free time etc.)
 - C. Was it difficult to draw what you intended to? Was it because of:
 - a) Art skill
 - b) Not enough understanding of art form
 - c) Not knowing what you want to draw / not enough inspiration / not knowing what to express (i think this might be important for self-expression, maybe it will get better over time)

- Specific to what they have made:
 - A. How did this idea come across your mind?
 - B. Which concepts did you use that I previously shared with you? Why did you choose them? How does it relate to your life?
 - C. [Art specific questions] What made you select this colour? How do you relate to it? What emotions does it make you feel?
 - D. In general how much time were you able to spend in trying out the art form?

- Stress relief experience:
 - A. How would you describe your emotions in the past two experiences overall?
 1. Did you have any sudden traumatic experiences?
 - B. Did you explicitly feel any difference in your emotions or mood before and after you painted?
 - C. [Check if any happy incidences happened where they naturally felt less stressed]

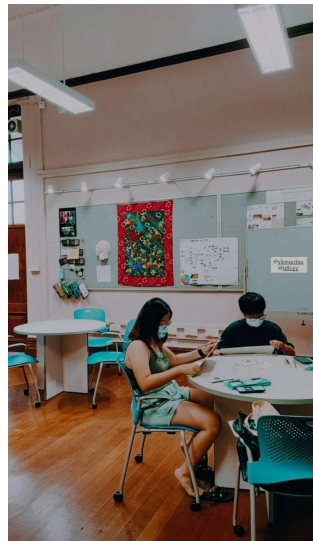
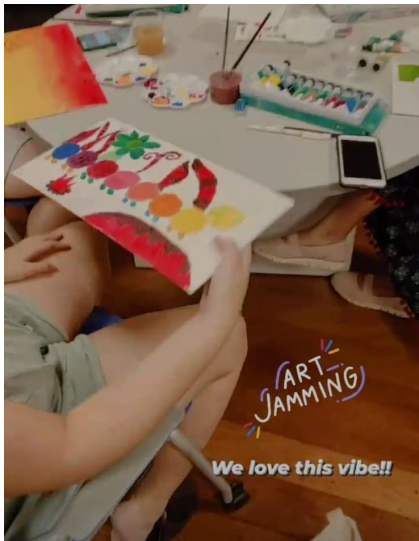
IMAGES FROM CLOSING 'PAINT WITH US' SESSION

Meeting time: 1 hour

Date: 11-July-2021

Time: 11:00-13:00 HKT

Venue: Common Core Lounge, MB 150, Main Building, HKU



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

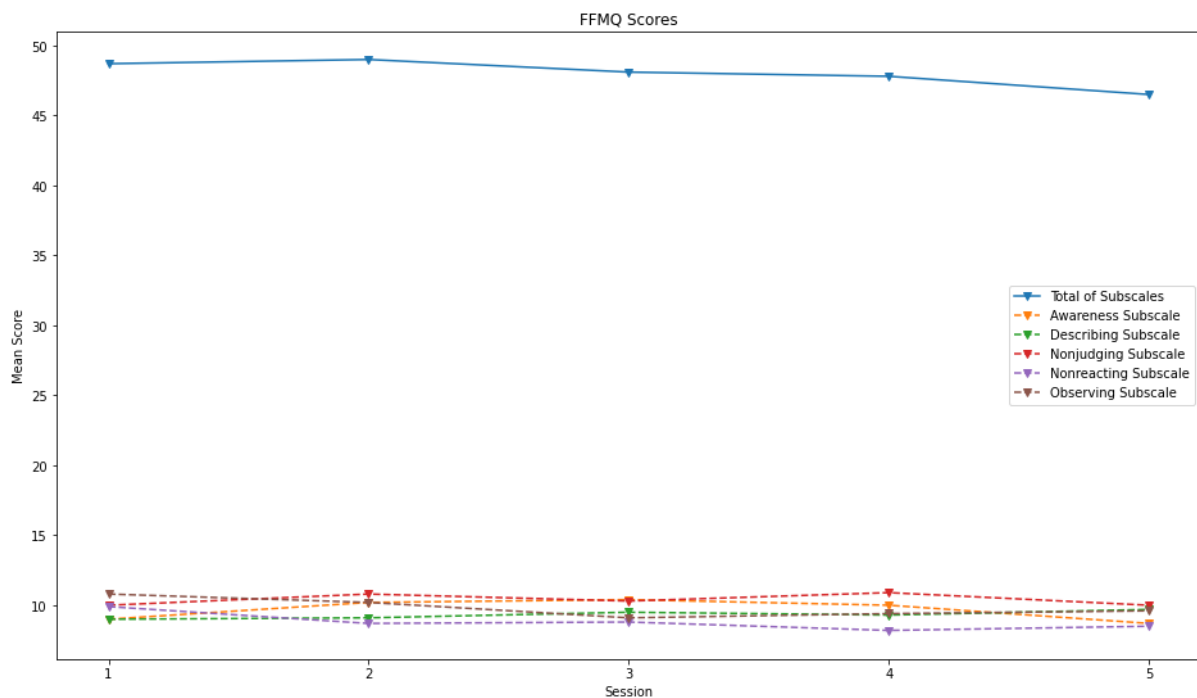
Sample Size Selection:

Initially we had chosen 4 sessions. Although it did not have normal distributions, conducting a Friedman's test still yielded non-significant results ($t = 0.411$, $p = 0.938$). Hence, we decided to go with 5 sessions, which had a normal distribution. After all, we did a total of 5-6 meetings, and those who did more meetings were likely more informative due to commitment.

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ):

The questionnaire has 5 subscales: Observing, Describing, Acting with awareness, Non-judging, and Non-reacting. Gu et al. (2016) suggested omitting Observing due to inconsistency between before and after comparisons. We will look at all 5 subscales, and the total of these scales nonetheless. Then decide on whether or not it tells us anything of value.

Results:



The mean of the total **FFMQ score** does not differ significantly at different time points [$F(4, 45) = 0.191$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.017$]. The mean of **FFMQ ‘observing’ subscale** does not differ significantly at different time points [$F(4, 45) = 0.762$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.063$]. The mean of **FFMQ ‘describing’ subscale** does not differ significantly at different time points [$F(4, 45) = 0.107$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.009$]. The mean of **FFMQ ‘awareness’ subscale** does not differ significantly at different time points [$F(4, 45) = 0.695$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.058$]. The mean of **FFMQ ‘non-judging’ subscale** does not differ significantly at different time points [$F(4, 45) = 0.150$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.013$]. The mean of **FFMQ ‘non-reacting’ subscale** does not differ significantly at different time points [$F(4, 45) = 0.532$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.045$].

A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that none of the session pairs are statistically significant for **total FFMQ score** and for **each FFMQ subset** ($p > 0.05$).

Reference:

Gu, J., Strauss, C., Crane, C., Barnhofer, T., Karl, A., Cavanagh, K., & Kuyken, W. (2016). Examining the factor structure of the 39-item and 15-item versions of the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire before and after Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for people with recurrent depression. *Psychological Assessment*. doi: 10.1037/pas0000263

The Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21):

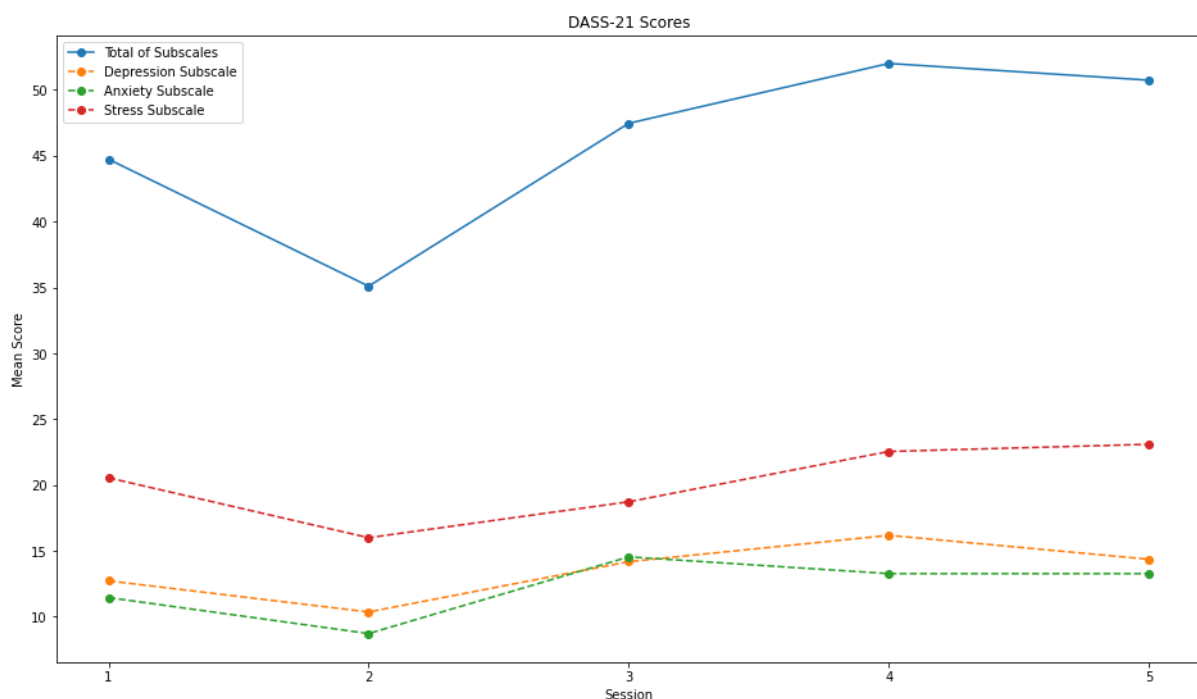
The questionnaire has 3 scales: Depression, Anxiety and Stress; each contains 7 items that are further divided into subscales of similar content. By summing the scores of the relevant items, the scores for the 3 main scales are calculated. This questionnaire measures the dimensional rather than categorical aspects of psychological disorders. It is developed based on the assumption that the major difference between these emotions experienced by neurotypical subjects is mainly that of degree. It has no effect for the sorting of patients into discrete diagnostic categories as mentioned in classificatory systems like DSM and ICD.

For DASS-21, we had one extra participant than the FFMQ, as this participant did not fill out the FFMQ for two sessions.

Reference:

Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995). *Manual for the Depression Anxiety & Stress Scales*. (2nd Ed.) Sydney: Psychology Foundation

Results:



The mean of **total DASS-21 score** *does not differ significantly* at different time points [F(4, 50) = 0.757, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.057$]. The mean of **DASS-21 depression subscale** *does not differ significantly* at different time points [F(4, 50) = 0.636, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.048$]. The mean of **DASS-21 anxiety subscale** also *does not differ significantly* at different time points [F(4, 50) = 0.731, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.055$]. The mean of **DASS-21 stress subscale** *does not differ significantly* at different time points [F(4, 50) = 0.802, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2=0.060$]

A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that none of the session pairs are statistically significant for **total DASS-21 score** and for **each DASS-21 subset** ($p > 0.05$).

CASE STUDIES

The following is a compilation of the individual stories of each participant that has taken part in the study. The study dealt with their coping styles and response to stressors and hence has been a personal story which must be documented and retold. Participants were from varied cultural backgrounds; however, some had previous experience with using creative expression as a means of mitigating stress. They were all introduced to art forms that they have never practised before and the visual nuances of their images mark their journey through the study, practice and potentially palliative aspects of Indian Folk Art. However, we made sure that they were all introduced to art forms that they have never practiced before and the nuances that their journey entails talks about how individuals from varied backgrounds take to the practising of a foreign art form which incorporates self-expression as a part of this process. Moreover, their interest in the art forms underpins the motive of cultural rejuvenation as part of the study.

Notes:

- *The names and some identity details of the participants have been changed for the sake of confidentiality of the participant. However, the details related to the artwork and the participant's art journey is kept true to justify the efforts put in and the qualitative analysis done by the team.*
- *One participant is selected for each of the four art forms in the project and the selection was done based on the visual elements incorporated in the art form.*
- *The art forms given to the participants were based on a random allotment and had not considered their preference of the art form in order to eliminate any biases towards specific art forms.*

PARTICIPANT 1: Mawar

Background:

The participant in question was from Jakarta and moved to Hong Kong to pursue a PhD degree. They previously worked as an architect and had an interest in painting and fine art. Moreover, they used painting as a method of expressing themselves and relieving stress. Although they noted that after school they drifted away from painting, while reflecting about their experience with the painting process, they stated that they were grateful for the opportunity given to them to reconnect with a lost passion. They were assigned the madhubani art form.

Study:

During the time span of the study, the participants went through periods of stress where they were mentally occupied with either personal affairs or academic pressure. They treated painting as an escape and took their time to finish each one, making sure that they had the time and space for that. Considering that their Research Facilitator (RF) was from an Indian background, they were able to identify key patterns in the way they interpreted their world through the lens of the art style. They mainly focused on maintaining a border and drawing the geometric patterns of madhubani.

Art analysis:

The participant initially painted an image from a dream that occurred to them. The dream was interpreted in the madhubani art style and they reflected the time during which they painted the piece. At the time, they had freshly moved to the city and were mentally under immense duress. Owing to being in this state of mind, they interpreted the dream as a form of rebirth and fresh starts. Similarly, the subsequent paintings were from instances in their life that stood out to them. They drew inspiration from the monstera plant as they found some form of solace in nature. Similarly, a butterfly they saw inspired them to create a piece that reminded them of hope. Sunflowers too stood as a symbol of hope for the participant and thus they created their final piece on similar themes. A recurring motif of all of their paintings was a centralizing factor; a sort of symbol that drew the viewer's attention. It was mostly depicted in an eye-like shape. They reasoned that it was only natural for them to think this way as they come from an architectural background where such centralizing elements are normal. The participant also mostly kept with a darker colour palette stating that it made them feel more at peace by doing so. They had an eye for detail which resulted in them making images that did not focus on the whole structure, but rather only a small part of the whole.



Research Facilitator's Perspective:

When taking into consideration Mawar's journey of understanding Madhubani and applying it, the RF came to learn that their previous experience with an architectural degree altered their perspective. This gave them a great eye for detail and they always had a way to draw their audience's eyes to a centralizing point. They were aware of how human vision can trick perspective, but applied this subconsciously. They looked at the world differently than someone who lacked their training. They applied colour theory and found some salvation in the meticulous textures and patterns of Madhubani. The RF was of Indian origin so their interpretation of the paintings were done with reference to their existing exposure to Madhubani.



PARTICIPANT 2: Paprika

Background:

At the time of the study, Paprika was 23 years old. They were a final-year student doing a bachelors degree in Art History and Japanese Studies and at the same time interned at an art gallery. They hail from Hong Kong and are ethnically Chinese. They were dissatisfied with their employment at the time as the capitalist approach to art in their workplace did not sit well with them. They also enjoy movies and show this through their art. Their previous coping styles involved either dropping the issue or enjoying some music. Paprika was to work with Saura

Journey:

Through the vicissitudes of maintaining their academics and job, this participant hit immense lows during the middle of the project. Nevertheless, they produced intuitive and deeply personal pieces. They reported that by approaching painting from the point of view of catharsis helped him find moments of peace during the tougher times of those few months. They took up a new job and were burdened by academic



pressures as well. They faced initial struggle with comprehending the art form but by the end of the study, they got accustomed to the lines and strokes of Saura.

Analysis:

Paprika took to the icons and motifs that were a signature to Saura painting right from the start. They related their mental state at the time or any issue which perturbed them and interpreted it through the art form. They retained elements of nature in most paintings. They carved out holes in their images to depict the emptiness and stress that they faced. In a manner of depicting the fall of art to capitalism, they created an image of a tree of money. They took a person dear to their heart and depicted that image in the form of a symbolic flower. Something veritably unique about this participant was their inclusion of other reputed artist's works in their own- namely Dali and Munch. They used their painting style to form a critique of reality and their own inner



notion of madness. They brought the project to a close with an image of how they visioned their break. They included an image of their camera, an extension of themselves.

Research Facilitator's Perspective:

Paprika's love for contemporary art and films was clearly seen in their art. The RF's close association and affinity for the two created a rapport of intellectual exchange and discussions. Paprika's ability to express the turbulence in her life, and the solace that art gave her, deeply resonated with the ethos of the project. She picked on simple moments of her life and converted them into Saura paintings, which conserved the essence of the folk art form, while also adding a personal touch to it. The RF undertook the exercise of the bi-weekly meetings as an intellectual journey, where Paprika's take on the Indian art forms and her ability to adapt it to her life, manifested into a learning experience for both.

Participant3: Niarach

Background:

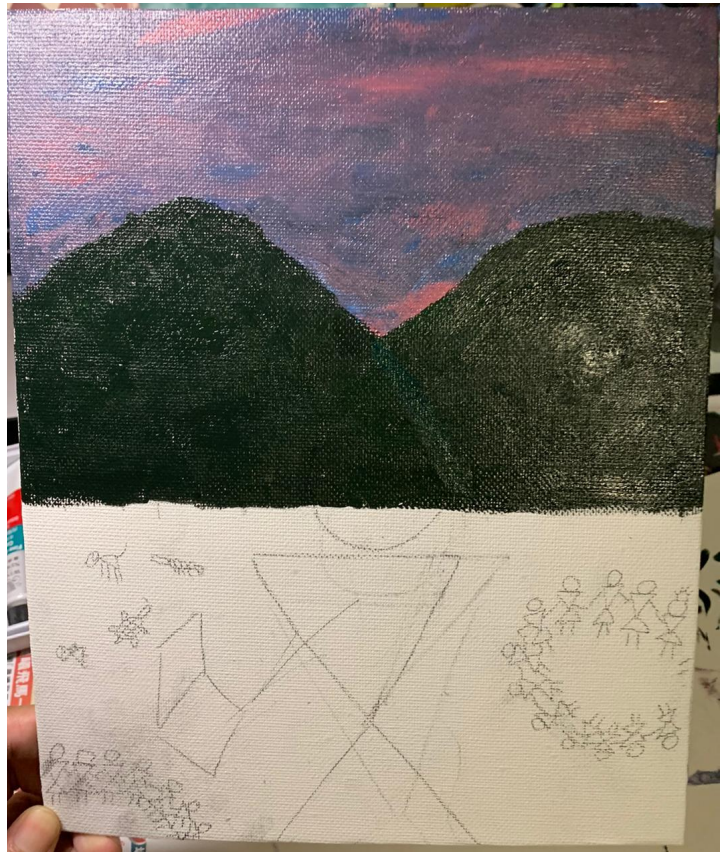
Niarach is a student who at the time of study was pursuing a masters degree in computer science. They were aged 28 then and were born and raised in Ireland. They ethnically identify as of Chinese origin. They love sailing and usually deal with stress by creative outlets like practising an instrument, reading, YouTube or drawing.

Journey:

To Niarach, painting with this art form was a good escape. After they moved from their home country, they used this medium as a way to keep home close. They went through periods of stress owing to academics and job hunting. During times of peace, they managed to work on more personal introspection and produced artworks that reflected their emotional state and understanding of life.

Analysis:

In a manner of fusing the settings from their old home, Ireland, and Hong Kong, their first piece was a collaboration between both worlds. They depicted both sides of what each place meant to them where on one hand one side was replete with symbols that reminded them of home and on another side the other side was all about their social and professional life in that they lived at the time. They



considered this process as an adventure. Painting a new style was exciting and learning to introspect in tandem with warli strokes in their mind gave them a fresh take on life. In a more ambitious attempt they tried to incorporate five paintings in one. This time they took their surroundings as inspiration and attempted to depict the community they see. After this attempt, they went back to highly personal paintings and drew their passion- sailing. Again, with observational eyes, they captured all they saw at sea in Warli. They made a simplistic drawing where one can see even Hong Kong's hilly backdrop in the background.

Research Facilitator's Perspective:

Niarach's RF has been doing folk arts for several years and thus appreciates the uniqueness of her paintings because she has managed to not only interpret the features of the art forms but also interpret the actions of the human beings in the activities that she wants to represent like sailing because it is not an activity that the warli tribe would be usually associated with. From an observer's perspective, the paintings are very quick to grab the observer's attention because it has a central theme and



the activities of sailing highlights this main theme in the paintings. The tiny seahorse in the corner of the artwork along with other aquatic creatures like starfish etc. has been depicted in such a way that it conveys the oneness with nature which warli art in its typical forms also aims to depict. Niarach's understanding on the importance of the borders in Warli is also seen through the thick white border in the artwork while the understanding of the colours used for the painting to be white is also clearly seen (since traditionally they used rice paste to do these paintings). This compels the RF's to not only interpret that Niarach has not only understood the essence of representing their life through the Warli art but also successfully incorporated features of it like the triangular human figures etc.

Participant4: Ariana

Background:

Ariana is a 21 year-old student who was born and raised in Hong Kong. They are ethnically Chinese and they have not had much experience with Indian art forms. Previously, they used to manage stress by social interaction with close friends, journaling and counselling. They were given the artstyle of Gond.

Journey:

Ariana particularly took to Gond as it was heavy on naturalistic themes. They retained the Mahua tree, a common symbol in Gond paintings, in all of their paintings. For them, during periods of stress, they found that focusing on the detailing of Gond gave them respite. But, while painting mostly gave them some sort of break along with a sense of satisfaction, they also acknowledged that it doesn't always seem to be the case. They were hit by unsettling feelings after some sessions of painting as opposed to the general feeling of achievement that most of our participants faced. But, by the next session they immediately realised that painting was meant to be made fun and their experience took a different turn since then.

Analysis:

They produced two, highly intuitive paintings. In one, they drew out a giraffe, an animal they adored when they were a child. Alongside this giraffe, there were two trees both in different colours. The giraffe faced the tree that was painted with deep red highlighted with vibrant hues to symbolize the balance in life and how they hoped to focus on the good and celebrate new beginnings. In another painting, they drew figures symbolic of a friendship they shared with someone. They drew owls and a fox stating that the friend resonated with these animals. She held themes of rebirth and love in their painting complete with an azure and crimson background, a bright red tree and a white snowy setting.



Research Facilitator's Perspective:

As the only non-ethnically Indian RF, they had to learn about these folk art forms as they guided the participants throughout the research project. Although the RF had experience with Indian culture, mainly South Indian culture, as they are from Malaysia, they never had a proper encounter with folk art forms. Therefore, it may have introduced a limitation in Ariana's journey, and hence, Ariana's data.

Even so, Ariana had managed to reinterpret the meaning of the Mahua tree and had incorporated it into both of their paintings. Their portrayal of the Mahua tree symbolizes a desire for balance in life; of losses, but also new beginnings. The most unique part of Ariana's paintings was their ability to give each of their animal figures a profound meaning. The giraffe is an allusion to their childhood, while the owls and fox bade well wishes to their emigrating friend. However, Ariana's experience with stress and mindfulness is partially inconsistent with the data analysis results. They noted an improvement in stress management throughout the sessions, but the caveat was that it was temporary and usually not sustained for longer than one hour. As our participants only had to fill out the DASS and FFMQ questionnaires during each meeting, those who had a lapse between their painting session and the interview meetups may have lost all traces of the calming effect.



ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF DISCUSSION

Our study was made to be participant centric i.e. tried to incorporate and introduce folk arts as a lifestyle tool which may have led to several factors in getting the above quantitative results. Some of the factors (but not limited to) are discussed below:

1. Time invested by participants

Being participant-centric, our team wanted to introduce paintings as a lifestyle change for the participants which is why we gave the freedom to the participants to paint for as long as they want through the week, so that it caters to their artistic curiosity. However, there is a potential of discrepancy of the impact due the different amounts of time invested by each participant.

2. Group sessions v/s painting individually

Some of our participants have informed us that they enjoyed painting with others more than doing it on their own. This may have also impacted the quantitative results. However, during consideration of the methodology our team stood by the introspective and meditative aspects of art which can be felt significantly when participants do it themselves which led the individual painting sessions to drive the project.

3. Personal Factors

Since the participants were not under constant observation over this long period, our team suspects that there could have potentially been other factors that impacted the participants level of stress and anxiety including the examination period in the month of June.

At the same time, we also acknowledge art is a personal process for everyone and its impact will be seen differently on different people due to many other uncontrollable factors like their interest in the art form, cultural background, family situations etc. which can impact their ability to express themselves.

Future Scope of Development:

The project has several scopes of development as mentioned in the previous section. A more rigorous customised method of measurement might help reduce the variability in the quantifiable data. However, one should also keep in mind that an effective approach for each person might be different and research on topics of creative pursuits will always have some scope of further development. While we looked into not only understanding the effectiveness of folk arts in stress reduction, the methodology also significantly focused on making the participants comfortable with the journey. Taking on creative arts, particularly folk arts as a lifelong journey of self expression was the key to the project. And we look forward to seeing more research being conducted in such transdisciplinary subjects in the future.

References:

Agarwal, P. (2018, February 5). *Encourage storytelling through art*. Medium. <https://writingcooperative.com/encourage-storytelling-through-art-ad25502b6e1b>.

Art and storytelling. Art and Storytelling. (n.d.). <https://www.arts.gov/stories/magazine/2013/1/engaged-and-empowered/art-and-storytelling>.

Can you meditate through art? Mindful Art Studio. (n.d.). <https://mindfulartstudio.com/meditate-through-art/>.

Dilks, A. (2020, February 03). Carl Jung and the artistic Impulse: Madness in the creative spirit. Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://highexistence.com/carl-jung-artistic-impulse/>

Folk art. Folk Art, Traditional Crafts: History, Characteristics. (n.d.). <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/definitions/folk-art.htm#:~:text=The%20most%20distinctive%20characteristics%20of,number%20but%20invariably%20multi%2Dpurpose>.

Gambis, M. (2019, May 3). *Why making art is the new meditation*. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2015/08/25/why-making-art-is-the-new-meditation/>.

GraemeNeill. (2011, June 20). *Research finds storytelling key to children's development*. The Bookseller. <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/research-finds-storytelling-key-childrens-development>.

Harpaz, R. (2014). Narrative knowing: The nature and function of storytelling in therapy.

Narrative and Psychotherapy, 28-53. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209489.n2>

IANS. (2016, June 04). The rich history of Gond art and its evolution. Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/books/the-rich-history-of-gond-art-and-its-evolution-2832507/>

Iseke, J. (2013). Indigenous Storytelling as Research. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 6(4), 559-577. doi:10.1525/irqr.2013.6.4.559

Kaimal, G., Ayaz, H., Herres, J., Dieterich-Hartwell, R., Makwana, B., Kaiser, D. H., & Nasser, J. A.

(2017). Functional near-infrared spectroscopy assessment of reward perception based on visual self-expression: Coloring, doodling, and free drawing. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 55, 85-92. doi:10.1016/j.aip.2017.05.004

Kaimal, G., Ray, K., & Muniz, J. (2016). Reduction of cortisol levels and participants' responses following art making. *Art Therapy*, 33(2), 74-80. doi:10.1080/07421656.2016.1166832

Lee, S., & Lee, J. (2016). *The autopilot leadership model*. Singapore: McGraw Hill Education.

Lyngwa, A. (2017, August 31). Saura art – the story of an Ancient Indian tribe through THEIR CAPTIVATING ART. Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://www.artisera.com/blogs/expressions/saura-art-the-story-of-an-ancient-indian-tribe-through-their-captivating-art#:~:text=A%20tribal%20artform%20from%20eastern,that%20India%20is%20proud%20of.&text=The%20Sauras%20are%20one%20of,the%20southern%20part%20of%20Odisha>.

Malchiodi, C. A. (2012). *Handbook of art therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.

Niveditha. (2016, September 28). The tales of the folk from the West - Warli painting. Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://www.openart.in/history/tales-folk-west-warli-painting/>

Piechowski-Jozwiak, B., Boller, F., & Bogousslavsky, J. (2017, May 5). Universal connection through art: Role of mirror neurons in art production and reception. Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5485459/>

Roving. (2019, August 20). The tribal intrigue OF SAURA PAINTINGS. Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://www.tribesindia.com/the-tribal-intrigue-of-saura-paintings/>

Sandmire, D. A., Gorham, S. R., Rankin, N. E., & Grimm, D. R. (2012). The influence of art making on anxiety: A pilot study. *Art Therapy*, 29(2), 68-73. doi:10.1080/07421656.2012.683748

Singh, C. (2021, February 21). Madhubani paintings: People's LIVING cultural heritage. Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://www.ancient.eu/article/1527/madhubani-paintings-peoples-living-cultural-herita/>

Subramaniam, A. (2017, January 31). The art of GOND #HANDMADEININDIA. Retrieved

February 24, 2021, from <https://engrave.in/blog/gond-art/#:~:text=Chhatisgarh%2C%20and%20Odisha,-,The%20work%20of%20Gond%20artists%20is%20rooted%20in%20their%20folk,themselves%20as%20Koi%20or%20Koiture.>

Tracy Evans, S. A. C. (n.d.). *Cultural anthropology*. Lumen. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/culturalanthropology/chapter/folk-art/>.

Thomas, B. (2012, November 06). What's so special about mirror neurons? Retrieved February 24, 2021, from <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/whats-so-special-about-mirror-neurons/>

What is MEDITATIVE Art? Meditative Art School. (n.d.). <http://meditativeartschool.com/what-is-meditative-art.>

Video References:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-_g3gvLCEs
2. <https://www.sahapedia.org/warli-painting>