

## “Of Art”: Communicating without Words

“If it doesn’t begin as feeling, it doesn’t end as art” – Walter Darby Bannard

Art is a medium which captivates and enthralls, allowing individuals to express themselves on a deeper level, be it through Abstract Art, through Impressionism, or through the portrayal of nature in contemporary art. It is beneficial in focusing the mind, in expressing our emotions, and in improving our mental health. As an art student since the age of four, I have realized that the presence of Art in my life from a young age has impacted my mental and emotional development. Of course, it must be noted that Art alone cannot and should not take the place of real experience. For instance, a painting of a flowering field is just that - a two-dimensional imitation, whereas the natural Art of the field itself is comprehensive and immersive.

Art focuses the mind, attuning it to sharpness of detail and training it in astuteness and comparisons through the use of colour and shape. By this token, an artist is one who finds themselves in closer tune with the way things are, simply because they have refined their focus, which allows them to observe things the way they are. The exercise of capturing a natural event trains the artist to observe such details since it is these minute touches that make or break the scene. As one who has participated in drawing natural scenes, I would conclude that it is the shading, texture, and observance of negative space that help to build this type of focus. For instance, the constant repetition of training the eye to recreate the fur of an animal or intricate wing of a butterfly is that which builds this attention by necessity, since an artist is forced to observe if they wish to recreate. Additionally the ability to focus, which is the brain’s ability to concentrate, can be enhanced by the creation of artwork, through the ability of the artist to deconstruct the components of a scene within their mind and envision it from different angles or perspectives. Creating and envisioning the way things can be is in itself an exercise in memory and focus. Art also allows students to think more creatively and therefore improves critical thinking abilities; a skill that is in greater demand in schools and workplaces. “It takes time to find, examine, and consider the numerous details that constitute most works of art. This process of observation helps students to more closely observe and analyze the world around them - skills that make up the bedrock of critical thinking” (Walden University, 2020).

Moreover, art allows for the expression of emotions and is a universal form of communication; transcending language, time, literacy, and cultural barriers. Each artist willingly or unwittingly includes something of themselves in their work, whether it be an aspect of their character, a piece of their emotions, or view of the world. Art is like a snapshot of an artist’s state of mind, in that moment of time. It also often captures common experiences, and therefore is universal, as each viewer can find some aspect of the work to connect to.

Art therapy, which is a technique rooted in the idea that creative expression can foster healing and mental well-being (Cherry, 2020), can expand on these emotional connections and acts as a therapeutic healing power. It benefits an individual by helping them to deal with strong emotions in a contained way, decreases stress and anxiety, and increases self-awareness and personal discovery. It has also been seen to help facilitate empathy and acceptance of life’s changes by giving people the opportunity to release their thoughts and stresses onto a clean canvas. Research has shown that the creative power of this type of therapy has facilitated improving an individual’s concentration, helping them get a greater grasp on their moods or behaviour and aids the improvement of social skills (Brown, 2015).

In conclusion, art is persistent, timeless, and all-encompassing. It has proven most beneficial in focusing the mind, expressing our emotions, and in benefiting our mental health. In the end, any activity that allows a person to find their inmost self while losing themselves to their creativity is one worth cherishing and experiencing.

Subject/Purpose:

- To persuade fellow high school students that Art is beneficial in focusing the mind, in expressing our emotions, and in benefiting our mental health.

Audience:

- High school students from grades 9-12.

Speaker's Ethos:

- I have been an Art student since the age of four and have completed my own comprehensive Art Portfolio.

Point 1: Art helps to focus the mind, attuning it to sharpness of detail and training it in astuteness and comparisons through the use of colour and shape.

Rhetorical Appeals used:

- Logos: Used scientific studies indicating that Art develops the brain in a positive way, especially in relation to critical thinking.
- Ethos: I mentioned my experience on the subject and put forth some insights resulting from personal experience to establish my claim.

Point 2: Art allows for the expression of emotions and is a universal form of communication.

Rhetorical Appeals used:

- Pathos: Used when discussing the ability of Art as an outlet for expression.

Point 3: The uses of Art vary in our lives; one such use is its presence in Art Therapy, which benefits an individual by helping them deal with strong emotions, decreases stress and anxiety and increases self-awareness and worth.

Rhetorical Appeals used:

- Logos: Used scientific evidence to show the relationship between creative expression and mental healing.

Main figurative devices used:

Simile - Identified in red.

Paradox – Identified in pink.

Rich Imagery - Identified in green.

Aphorism - Identified in blue.

Parallel Structure – Identified in purple.

Works Cited

Brown, A. D. (2015, July 3). *Psychological benefits of art therapy*. Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/psychological-benefits-of-art-therapy/#:~:text=It%20encourages%20the%20development%20of,providing%20insight%20into%20traumatic%20experiences>

Cherry, K. (2020, May 11). *How art therapy is used to help people heal*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-art-therapy-2795755>

*Does art boost a student's critical thinking?* / Walden University. (2020, July 8). Walden University: Accredited Online University. <https://www.waldenu.edu/online-masters-programs/ms-in-education/resource/does-art-boost-a-students-critical-thinking>