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Art for Healthcare: A Review of Artists and Their Ideations

Nurhaya Baniyamin¹,
Ain Farhana Binti Mohd Nazri²

¹The Department of Applied Arts and Design

²Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design
International Islamic University Malaysia

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to:
Nurhaya Baniyamin, nurhaya@iium.edu.my

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Art for Healthcare: A Review of Artists and Their Ideations

Nurhaya Baniyamin¹, Ain Farhana Binti Mohd Nazri²

The Department of Applied Arts and Design Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design

International Islamic University Malaysia

Abstract. Recently there is an increase in interest to use art as a part of the healthcare healing process and environment. The artwork is now regularly set as a condition in design feature for hospitals. The benefits of art in hospitals and medical institutions have been confirmed by numerous studies and subjective evidence. The artwork produced can be a commission collection or a seamless development of interior design concepts. This paper attempts to compile and discuss a range of artistic works and artists that specialize in nature and abstractions of nature which have contributed to healthcare or the healing environment. The paper highlights their thoughts and ideas on the making of their concepts and the way certain techniques help achieve their artistic works. The guidelines published in a study will also be reviewed. Selecting the right artwork for a medical facility requires various thoughts and concern. This includes choosing landscapes and nature-based art, avoiding abstract art, and choosing the right colours for art. Notably, there are many benefits for patients in using beautiful wall art for hospitals and healthcare facilities. The paper reckoned that the primary goal for the patient's well-being is choosing art that can help the patient and improve the overall aesthetic quality of the space. The integration of the healing environment into medicine has taken a more holistic approach and has turned the hospital environment into a place of courage that impacts both staff and patients' well-being. Visual stimulation of nature, natural lighting, artwork, relaxing colours and therapeutic sound can greatly accelerate the therapeutic process. The paper concluded that when art is considered an integral part of hospital design, this will maximize the benefits of arts in healthcare facilities.

Keywords: Artistic woks, Artworks, Healthcares, Visual Stimulation

Correspondence author: Nurhaya Baniyamin, nurhaya@iium.edu.my, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



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Introduction

When it comes to providing high-quality healthcare, people often look to prescription drugs, life-saving surgeries, or physical therapy sessions first. Sick patients often regain their health through a combination of therapies, including various treatments and environmental changes. When healthcare providers overlook the impact of the environment on well-being and ability to heal, patients can take much longer to recover or face serious emotional problems. Notably, there are many benefits for patients in using beautiful wall art for hospitals and healthcare facilities.

The benefits of art in hospitals and medical institutions have been confirmed by numerous studies and subjective evidence. A 2011 study by the University of London found that when patients looked at a stunning image, the physical and emotional effects created a resemblance to those experienced as if they were looking at a loved one. An increased blood flow to 10% had been recorded to the “joy response” portion of the brain. When patients can feel happiness and relief instead of stress and tension, their emotional well-being can have a clear positive effect on their recovery time. As a result, patients' satisfaction increases ([Corporate ArtConsulting](#)).

The use of works of art in medical facilities and hospitals is only effective in improving the health of patients. However, not all works of art are created equal and not all works of art are suitable for the patient's needs. Choosing art that can help the patient and improve the overall aesthetic quality of the space is the primary goal of the patient's well-being. There are many things to consider when choosing the right artwork for a medical facility, like choosing landscapes and nature-based art, avoiding abstract art, and choosing the right colours for art. When it comes to nature-based art, some studies have shown that art depicting realistic natural scenes is often the best choice for patient artwork in hospitals. Patients in particular want to see works that depict beautiful natural landscapes and landscapes that make them feel memorable and comfortable. This makes psychological sense for a variety of reasons. Patients want to remember the good times, and when they see wildlife flourish, they are encouraged to grow and prosper. That is why winter scenes and artwork depicting abnormal weather are not recommended in the medical setting. They usually describe thoughts of tension and suicide on the patient psychologically. Natural photographs and artistic renderings of beautiful landscapes are the best options in the medical setting. Therefore, nature-based art is generally selected and decorated within medical facilities.

Next, abstract art certainly has its place and can be used effectively in any corporate situation. However, one group of medical advisors does not usually recommend using it in medical settings. Abstract art is not always liked; While those with a well-trained eye can enjoy it, art lovers often find it difficult too. The use of abstract art in healthcare can lead to heightened anxiety in patients. The theme of this work of art is inherently vague and completely open to interpretation. While this may make a visit to the museum pleasant, it is usually not very convenient for medical facility residents. Health and art advice, ubiquitous calming and welcoming atmosphere are the best choices for works of art. Abstract art is therefore not suitable for healing patients.

Finally, the most suitable works of art to be selected in healthcare should carefully choose the appropriate colours. It can be seen that the only effect that colour can have on the state of mind of individuals is simply amazing. The choice of colours is especially important for healthcare facilities, from the colour of the walls to the colours of wall artwork. Cool colours can convey a sense of relaxation that can be of great benefit to many patients. But it's also important to balance cool colours with warm, neutral tones. Extremely bright reds and yellows can increase anxiety in many people. Hence, as part of the healing process, many healthcare facilities would opt for more subtle versions of these colours. In general, the colours of the selected artwork should allow patients to feel relaxed. Therefore, it can highlight that nature-based artwork, well-suited colour choices are appropriate for healthcare facilities, not include the abstract arts.

Literature Review

When speaking of nature, it is clear to see that the natural environment has a positive impact on the well-being of individuals. The environment plays a crucial part in biologically as well as psychologically. Unfortunately, in today's world, youth spend more time engaging with technical devices than outdoor activities. According to [Mainella et al.](#), children's lack of association with nature is a result of the rise of modern technology and heightened media exposure. A recent study reports that youth between the ages of eight and eighteen spend an average of seven hours thirty-eight minutes each day with electronic media, totalling almost fifty-three hours each week ([Mainella et al.](#)). Thus, it can be noted that due to high exposure and more spending time with gadgets may affect the biological and psychological development of the youth.

It cannot be denied that images, arts, portraits, just to name a few, can be a powerful tool which can relate with the wellbeing of a person, no matter how old the individual is. This situation can be seen majorly in the healthcare settings where a variety of artworks are filled to improve the health being of patients. According to [Simonton et al.](#), in addition to standard cancer therapies, it recommends a relief program, attitude change, and psychiatric imaging, indicating that the patient develops a mental picture of cancer and the immune system wins over the disease. A research-based on the ancient idea that an image or photograph stored in the mind can influence changes in the body, which is the basis of healing techniques ([Butler 117](#)):

Psychologists have long recognized that images are pre-verbal, deeply connected to us. Emotions and the unconscious mind Artists also believed that images could express emotions in ways that our thinking minds could not comprehend. When we say that a painting, a photograph, a piece of music, or the scent of a flower moves us in a way that we cannot express, we recognize the power of images.

Guidelines for the Selection of Artworks in Healthcare Facilities

In a healthcare setting, art is often the most visible element of the space. Today, nearly 50 per cent of all hospitals in the United States have art programs. While there are costs associated with arts programs, the Society for the Arts in Healthcare (SAH) and the

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) conclude an analysis that hospitals use art "to create an enjoyable" in addition to "create a friendly atmosphere and community ties. And as this CEU shows, the impact of art on patients is often verified by credible research, making the selection process crucial. The following guidelines published in a study by Ulrich and Gilpin (2003) can help designers and determinants to choose works of art wisely in hospitals and medical centres ([Hathorn and Nanda](#); [Nieminen](#); [Ulrich and Gilpin](#)):

Tabel. 1 The Guidelines

Waterscapes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calm or non-turbulent water	Flowers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy and fresh;• Familiar;• Gardens with open foreground
Landscapes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual depth or open foreground• Trees with broad canopy• Savannah landscapes• Verdant vegetation• Positive cultural artifacts (e.g., barns and older houses)	Figurative Art: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotionally positive faces• Diverse leisurely

Source : The center for health design's "Guide to Evidence-Based Art"

According to the guidelines, the case studies were proposed in the findings

Methods

This paper compiles a range of artwork from Western and Asian context to show the themes and concepts of arts used in the hospital. The research findings have been gathered from secondary sources, based on existing data and online databases including research material published in journal articles, e-books, online news, videos and other electronic materials related to the current analysis. By using secondary data, the researcher obtained additional information from available sources to better understand between the relation of art and healthcare facilities, especially with the aim of the healing process for patients, in general.

Result and Discussion

The case studies include artists from various countries that promote healthcare in their artworks based on their realistic interpretation.

Bohie Palecek, Braidwood, NSW Australia

Bohie Palecek is subtly inspired by nature and uses nature as a metaphor for her personal experiences (see figure 1). Her narrative artefacts are as if she were looking through the eyes of an innocent, inquisitive child. Artefacts with a dichotomy between

the security of the home and the forests behind it; Known and unknown. When her femininity is free from domestication, her courage embraces the motherhood of the natural world and welcomes her into the power and support of her female ancestors. The power to intimidate against that relationship by intrinsically malicious intent. Millennial threats, identity theft, world wars and food shortages are backed up by children's products pulled offline with parents. This lack of safety makes the child curious and often leads to fraudulent things painted in bright and cheerful colours. Somewhere in the artificial structure of what it means to be a woman in today's world, Bohie filters contemporary myths to find her own identity through art.



Figure 1 Pixelate Head Bird by Bohie Palecek
Source: <https://bohie.com.au> (2020)

Rachel Kavathe, Columbus, Indiana

Rachel Kavathe's work (see figure 2) focuses on the relationship with the environment and the sense of place. In addition to working as an artist, she is also a landscape architect and urban designer. All three professions have its main trends that guide its work, to understand how society interacts better with the natural world and can integrate biodiversity into a better-built environment. Through Rachel's educational work, she explores a cultural understanding of the meaning of nature and how that definition should evolve in response to changes in the environment. As an urban designer and urban developer, she strives to better integrate natural systems into the built environment and bring people together in their natural environment ([Williams](#)).



Figure 2 Stone Sculpture by Rachel Kavathe
Source: ([Williams](#))

As an artist, Rachel strives to find ways to express the importance of a subject through shape, colour and content. Her sculpture is primarily stone carving using a variety of materials to show the contrast between natural and man-made materials. The sculptures are made of limestone, marble, alabaster, copper, brass, 3D printing materials, acrylic, resin and other natural materials. Besides, it can be seen in her paintings that exploring the shapes and colours of the landscapes around her can be a tool to better understand the true nature of the environment.

Sophy Tuttle, Lowell, Massachusetts, USA

Sophy Tuttle's artwork (see figure 3) focuses on the collaboration of nature, conflict, and those who feel connected to nature every day. The mural entitled "Borderlands" size 48x24 was painted in acrylic. Her bright and carefully studied murals and paintings aim to destroy deeply rooted beliefs about the hierarchy of nature. She lovingly rendered birds, animals and plants ([Williams](#)). Although extinction and loss occur during the man-made period of mankind, she wanted her image to draw attention to the wonderful beauty that exists in nature today. She believes that the best work of art is to catalyze a new path. As such, she considers herself one of the growing cohorts of artists to discuss anthropological issues in a fascinating and humane way.



Figure 3 “Borderlands” mural painting by Sophy Tuttle
Source: https://sophytuttle.com/ngg_tag/pronghorn/ (2020)

Claire Fleming Staples, Oakland, California

Plants are an intrinsic element of Claire Fleming Staples (see figure 4) painting exercises and also for her life. As she became more knowledgeable about wild plants, how to harvest, and make medicines from them, the plants in her paintings became more specific and realized. She stated that her house crops have become more diverse and plentiful. When her life is interrupted by capitalist revenge which involves the tragic death of a loved one, her artistic practice becomes a healing process for her; painting an ameliorating garden with lush colours, leaves, flowers, vines, and soon developing an Arcadian vision for the viewer to step into ([Williams](#)).



Figure 4 shows plant painting by Claire Fleming Staples
Source: <https://www.claireflemingstaples.com/paintings> (2020)

In her somatic Reiki therapy training, she received the visions of plant allies that she incorporated into her work, along with symbols and other metaphysical tools. By working in this way, she was grateful for Hilma Af Klint’s newly discovered artistic

lineage, the Pennsylvania Dutch and Shaker artists she grew up with, as well as Medieval Christian paintings whose plants lead to pagan magical herbs located just below the surface. Claire is very eager to have the opportunity to learn more about her relationship with planting/harvesting/preparing and observing/making plants by adding botanical and biological lenses in her artworks. She added that she considered tying Balsam Root in her painting Sunspell, which first caught her eye in Lassen, and that now hangs dry in her pantry, that she harvested from his friend's farm in Mendocino.

Katie St Clair, North Carolina

Mushroom foraging was a meditative practice in Katie St. Clair's work of art (see figure 5). In her belief, it is a way of attracting the senses and absorbing the rich colors, shapes, scents, textures and tastes that surround her in the woods. St. Clair's paintings not only reflect the immersion in the forest environment but also try to clarify it in other languages so that words are not seen or explained. These forms of abstraction allow her to express the subtleties of complex nonlinear ecosystems, thus demonstrating the transformative power to deal with them with just their strangeness, wonders and surprises. While being brought into the studio, laboratory techniques changed the shape of the collected fungi into unconventional paint textures, and fungal colours and plant extracts added new elements to St. Clair's artwork repertoire. In search of colour and new elements, mushrooms found growing or dying in the ground continues to draw her back to the rugged forest area in expanding her own artistic collection ([Williams](#)).



Figure 5 Sphere of Mushroom Sculpture by Katie St Clair
Source: <http://www.katiestclair.art> (2020)

Lori Ono, Tokyo, Japan

A well-known photographer, illustrator and writer in Japan, Lori Ono has contributed her artworks fascinated by mushrooms. Through mycology which is the

study of fungi, she discovered how small objects can mimic larger patterns. In other words, mycology is on the path to broader geographical structures. From this macro lens perspective, the mushroom gills resemble the tide in Coyote Buttes, Utah or Devil's Peak. Mushrooms have the ultimate properties of the subject, object and material. Fungi are the subject of research in both science and art. Artists and investors who are finding new ways to use fungus beyond colours and foods are using the mycelium, which is part of the fungus, for fabric, construction, packaging and sculpture.



Figure 6 The Gills of Mushroom which Resemble the Wave of Coyote Buttes

Source: [Ono](#)

Figure 6 shows this series of macro photos examines the nature of repeated forms in nature at various scales ([Ono](#)). Lori Ono noted that at the most basic level, it is important to combine fungi with other elements. Studying these connections, she can better understand the world. Her work mainly explores the shape and form of mushrooms through photography and book art. As she continued her studies in mycology, she also produced illustrated stories and magazines to combine what she had learned and shared with others. Thus, this shows her nature-based artworks in collaboration with sciences: mycology.

Tilda Shalof, Toronto General Hospital

Tilda Shalof, an intensive care nurse at Toronto General Hospital for nearly 30 years, started her wall art by collecting pieces of plastic; Multi-colored drug caps and tube connectors, vial caps and syringe liners - all left behind by some of the sickest patients in the hospital ([Landau](#)). However, with the help of visual artist Vanessa Herman-Landau, the story began to find its shape: a huge mural made from discarded medical plastic. The mural was inspired by the relationships between divided cells, connected figures, light and darkness, and the suggestion of spirituality in the work. The

piece, which measures 1.2 meters (4 feet) high and 2.43 meters (8 feet) long, now hangs in the corridors of Toronto General, the same hospital where Shalof worked for 28 years.



Figure 7 The 10,000 pieces of Medical Plastics Mural by Tilda Shalof
Source: [Landau](#), 2020

Figure 7 show Tilda Shalof Artworks. The purpose of creating the mural that Shalof mentioned is because she wanted to put something behind after her retirement and give it as a gift to the staff and patients, whom she had worked with for so many years. The story Shalof wanted to tell after her work, is to remind nurses and doctors of the importance of all the many acts of speciality care they do every day and night and how it all adds up to something important. For patients and the public, she hopes that viewing the mural will be an uplifting and joyful experience that immerses their minds in fantasy, imagination and possibilities.

Yayoi Kusama, Matsumoto, Japan

Born in Matsumoto, Japan, at the age of 10, she started to use her visual language of polka dot and net painting as motifs to deal with mental health problems. Since 1977, Kusama has been living by choice in a mental hospital in Tokyo due to nervous disorders and childhood hallucinations. To this day, she continues to paint and create in her artist's studio across the street from the psychiatric hospital.



Figure 8 Kusama's Artwork with Repetitive Dot Paintings
Source: ([Sinha](#))

Figure 8 show Kusama's Artwork, the repetitive dot paintings, yellow pumpkin motifs, mirror room and her soft sculptures define her work ([Sinha](#)). Kusama usage of space, dynamic mediums, vivid colour experimentation and deluxe installations have revolutionized the world of contemporary art. Her work is described as simple yet complex, reflecting her artistic journey and unique psychological state. She wants to erase the face of the earth, as seen in some of her works. On the other hand, she also has a lot of addictions, sometimes on the verge of intoxication. The forced use of Yveie Kasma points began as a result of very disturbing "deceptions" and "theories" that were present in childhood. She was frightened by the repeated gestures and flickering lights in the floral patterns that filled the room to such an extent that she thought the face of the earth had disappeared. She was soon diagnosed with a debilitating mental disorder. To get rid of the oppressive emotions, she was asked to draw and paint as a therapy. This is where she tries to save herself and the only escape from her loneliness is by painting dots and more dots.

Raja Azhar Raja Lop Idris, Malaysia

Malleable and complex, glass is never an easy-to-use medium. Yet the veteran glass artist Raja Azhar Raja Lop Idris has remained involved even after 17 years. He described that the glass is so unpredictable. One never knows what to expect from the sculpture as the opening of the furnace, one is always greeted with a surprise. Unlike painting, glass sculpture is a one-way process. There is no going back, no retouching if things don't work as expected. Before cutting a piece of glass, there are many things to consider including visual thinking, the form and layer, as well as the colour mix of the sculpture ([MalayMail](#)).



Figure 9 Raja Azhar's glass art called 'Tree of Life'

Figure 9 show Raja Azhar's Glass Artworks. This masterpiece titled is 'Tree of Life' measuring 38x36x60 feet at the National Heart Institute in Kuala Lumpur has given him the most contribution in the healthcare settings. Throughout his lifetime, it's always a learning process for Raja Azhar, who has found a lifetime of joy in glass, even on a journey peppered with challenges. In the meantime, hoping for more people involved in glasswork, and willing to offer his expertise to develop this in Malaysia.

Spencer Finch, Cleveland Clinic

Spencer Finch pursues the most elusive and deep experiences through his work. One of his works of art contributing to a health centre is eight Fujitrans images based on eight different views of Going-to-Sun Mountain. The coloured bands represent the separation of the sky, the sun and the earth, and the light that shines through these bands is mixed to create the exact light measured with a colourimeter at each observation position in Glacier National Park. New research has begun to take seriously the role art can play in the healing process. A 2017 study in Denmark found that hanging pictures in the hospital waiting room was particularly correlated with patient satisfaction. A 2007 article in England shows the positive effects of art not only on patient well-being but also on health outcomes ([Wecker](#)).



Figure 10 Spencer Finch, *Going-to-the-Sun Mountain* (2017) at Cleveland Clinic
Courtesy of James Cohan Gallery. Photo: Steve Travarca.
Source: <http://www.spencerfinch.com/view/projects/230> (2020)

Figure 10 show Spencer Finch with title *Going-to-the-Sun Mountain*. Kristin Rogers, art education and communication manager at insurance giant Progressive Corp mentioned that they look to their artwork collection to be a cultural asset first and foremost, followed by the worth of an individual artwork which will be measured anecdotally by its capacity to incite curiosity and encourage next thought. This decision resulted in Finch's artwork to be chosen for the Cleveland Clinic.

Conclusion

The philosophy behind healing is the psychological and spiritual notion of wellbeing. In the past few decades, the integration of the healing environment into medicine has taken a more holistic approach and has turned the hospital environment into a place of anticipation that impacts both staff and patients' well-being. Researchers have shown that visual stimulation of nature, natural lighting, artwork, relaxing colours and therapeutic sound can greatly accelerate the therapeutic process and create a less stressful hospital setting. Schools of medicine and nursing across the country see the value of incorporating art into content or health courses to help their students develop

their observations, communication, and other key skills with patients. Arts organizations, schools, and universities, along with health organizations, offer arts programs tailored to health promotion experiences within the community. Architects and designers create healthcare organizations that are not only beautiful but are based on strong evidence supporting the safe delivery of treatment and delivering more positive outcomes for patients, families, and general staff. The fact that patients often express preferences for landscape and natural scenery is in line with these observations and evolutionary psychological theories that predict positive emotional responses to the evolving natural environment. It is also concluded that if art is considered an integral part of hospital design, this will maximize the benefits of arts in healthcare facilities.

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