

Art Therapy in Visual Communication

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Abstract: Art therapy, as a new type of psychotherapy, has attracted much attention in recent years for its application in the field of visual communication. In this paper, the application and effects of art therapy in visual communication are discussed in depth through a comprehensive literature review and case study. It is found that art therapy helps individuals explore emotions and solve psychological barriers through creative artistic expression, and can promote self-knowledge and regulate emotions. Visual communication design provides individuals with a non-verbal way of expression, which makes up for the emotional dimension that is difficult to cover with words. In addition, by presenting actual cases, this research found that art therapy has achieved significant results in problem-solving and psychological rehabilitation. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of art therapy in visual communication practice and provides a theoretical and practical basis for further exploration of the field.

Keywords: Art therapy, visual communication design, mental health

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of society, people's pace of life has accelerated. At the same time, along with the harm of epidemics in the previous years, people's psychological pressure is increasing. In contemporary society, visual communication, as a powerful communication medium, not only shapes our perception of the world but also profoundly affects the emotional experience of individuals and society. Art therapy, as a non-pharmacological and innovative therapy, has gradually gained attention in China in recent years. Art therapy is not only a therapeutic tool but also a comprehensive art practice that can express emotions through visualization and promote the inner growth of individuals. Visual communication, as a discipline encompassing a wide range of fields such as graphic design, video production, and digital art, combines with art therapy to provide us with new possibilities to create visual works with more depth, impact, and emotional resonance. One of the core concepts of art therapy is the promotion of an individual's mental health and emotional adjustment through creative expression. In visual communication, this concept can be translated into how elements such as images, colors, and shapes can be used to convey emotion, resonate, and leave a deep imprint on the viewer's mind. The combination of art therapy and visual aspects can effectively alleviate individual psychological stress, improve mental health, and promote the overall development of the individual. Art therapy integrates art elements into the process of psychotherapy and helps patients

express their emotions, relieve stress, and improve their physical and mental health through creation. For this reason, this paper reviews the research progress of the application of art therapy in visual communication in recent years, with a view to providing valuable references for research in related fields.

2. Art therapy

2.1. Concept and meaning of Art therapy

2.1.1. Concepts of Art Therapy

The main form of art comprises three aspects: artworks, art creation, and art appreciation. Art therapy is a form of art-mediated psychotherapy, in which the process of learning, creating, and appreciating art under the guidance of a professional releases the negative emotions accumulated in the patient's deeper consciousness in his or her life, thus achieving the purpose of relaxation[1]. Appreciating artworks not only helps disturbed patients express their inner emotions, but also helps individuals express their emotions, solve problems, and promote psychological growth through the creation of artworks. Art therapy believes that the psychological experience in the process of art creation and appreciation can help individuals recognize themselves and achieve the goal of psychotherapy. The process of art creation is a form of healing itself, whereby the artwork responds to the patient's latent conscious emotions, and then through the therapist's interpretation and psychoanalysis, to achieve the therapeutic goal, while the patient's reflection on his/her own artwork and the creative process can be guided and analyzed by the therapist so that the purpose of art therapy can be realized together[2].

2.1.2. The Meaning of Art Therapy

There are many different forms of art therapy, and each form of art therapy has its unique role and applicability to the population. As an innovative means of intervention, art therapy has an essential position in the field of mental health in China. It guides individuals to utilize the process of artistic creation to achieve the purpose of psychological adjustment, emotional expression, and spiritual growth. Art therapy is of far-reaching significance, helping to relieve stress, improve self-knowledge, cultivate creative thinking, promote interpersonal relationships, and thus improve the quality of life of individuals. In the context of comprehensively promoting the construction of a healthy China, art therapy will play an even more critical role in providing rich and diverse spiritual care for the general public. There is a point of view in psychology that art is the most crucial point of personal character in the social process and that appreciating and creating art is a way to keep people relaxed at tense and vital junctures in life. Art therapy is effective in changing people's emotional states[3].

2.2. Explore the benefits of art therapy

Art therapy has various benefits, helping individuals express their emotions, improve their mental health, foster interpersonal relationships, and improve their quality of life. Art therapy applies to people of different ages and psychological conditions and has a wide range of application prospects. Art therapy is flexible and versatile and can be customized according to the different needs of different patients. Art therapy is a kind of spiritual communication, with mapping and covert; art is like a bridge, which enables doctors to quickly improve their understanding of the patient, know the patient's needs and problems, and take timely measures and methods. Art allows people to let go of their disguises and masks and let the language of their hearts speak[4].

2.3. The development of art therapy and its acceptance in mainstream therapy

Art therapy has been around for a while, originating in the United States in the early 1900s, and over more than a hundred years, it has become a widely used psychotherapeutic tool worldwide[5]. During special times, people are more inclined to express themselves creatively, and experts believe that painting, crafting, and sculpting often have therapeutic benefits in and of themselves. Art therapy, as an innovative adjunct to therapy, has gained widespread attention and application in China in recent years.

Art therapy is a non-pharmacological treatment that can complement traditional psychological rehabilitation. Take mainland china as an example; according to relevant data, the number of patients with mental illness is increasing year by year, and art therapy provides another rehabilitation possibility for these patients. Through painting art therapy, patients' mental symptoms are significantly improved, and their quality of life is enhanced. Numerous cases have documented positive physiological responses to tactile and visual experiences, whether in a brightly colored hospital lobby or creating ceramics with clay. In one case, an experiment at Drexel University in 2017 showed that doodling or coloring on drawing paper activates parts of the brain associated with pleasurable activities and feelings of reward[6]. Additionally, art therapy has also achieved remarkable results in the field of psychological rehabilitation of adolescents. Some studies have shown that young people who have undergone art therapy are more confident, have improved social skills, can look at problems from different perspectives, and are no longer paranoid. Some introverted children are also able to express themselves more boldly, express their emotions, and open their hearts to their family and friends[7]. This shows that art therapy has achieved good results in practical application, and there has been a considerable increase in its acceptance in the mainstream therapeutic field in this country. In conclusion, the development and acceptance of art therapy has shown a gradual upward trend. More and more medical institutions have begun to try to integrate art therapy into the mainstream treatment system to provide more treatment options. In the future, China should continue to increase research efforts on art therapy and train professionals. At the same time, it should also enhance public awareness and understanding of art therapy through publicity and education, so that it can be applied to more patients.

3. Visual communication

3.1. Definition of visual communication and its meaning

3.1.1. Definition of visual communication

Visual communication refers to the process of conveying information, expressing emotion, and guiding behavior through visual elements, such as form, color, and texture. Visual communication plays a vital role in human society and is a crucial information transmission and communication method. Visual communication design is an art. Moreover, it is a way and a medium to convey information through images, colors, typography, and other elements to the audience and guide them to produce specific emotions and reactions[8]. Visual communication design is a discipline combining art and technology, which focuses on the organization and communication of visual information and is a way of applying aesthetic principles to information dissemination.

3.1.2. Communicating the meaning of a message through visual elements

In the process of conveying information, visual elements have essential significance and role. Visual communication design is a tool and process that utilizes visual effects to convey information with good penetration and interactivity and is an essential tool for conveying information and exchanging

ideas in today's society. It uses various symbols and visual elements to organize and create the real world, and through a certain medium, transforms it into information that the audience can be interested in and understand, to arouse the interest audience and stimulate their emotions. The research of visual communication design includes: how to use visual elements to create beauty, how to use plane composition, color composition, three-dimensional composition, spatial composition, and other arts to express and convey information, to better achieve the purpose[9].As an intuitive and vivid way of expression, visual elements help to enhance people's ability to absorb information, and can effectively enhance people's attention to information, so that the audience can quickly capture the core content. Through the skillful use of visual elements, the attractiveness and influence of information can be improved, and the information can be delivered to the audience more clearly so that the efficiency of communication can be improved. Visual elements are intuitive, vivid, and easy to understand in the process of conveying information. Among many messages, creative and visually impactful designs are more attractive to people. Through the use of unique visual elements, information can be made to present a distinctive personality and recognizability, thus stimulating the audience's curiosity and desire to explore. Effective use of visual elements can improve the delivery of information and enhance the emotional resonance of the audience. Visual elements also help to strengthen the expressive power of information. With the help of visual elements, abstract concepts can be visualized, making complex information easier to understand. For example, when presenting survey data, it can be made into charts, pie charts, etc. to visualize the data and relationships and understand the information more clearly. Secondly, the logo of the organization is also a kind of visual design which can enhance the impact of the brand and make people impressive and unforgettable. In short, conveying information through visual elements has significant meaning, and people should skillfully use various visual elements.

3.2. Explore the various forms of visual communication

Forms of visual communication in people's daily lives include graphic design, advertising, film and photography. All forms have unique visual language and expression, constituting a colorful visual culture. Visual communication is an essential means of communication, passing information to the audience through various forms. With the development of science and technology, visual communication design presents rich and diversified forms. Graphic design is the basic form of visual communication, including posters, business cards, advertisements, logos, packaging, which is characterized by bright colors, simple graphics, and clear text, aiming to attract attention and convey information through intuitive expression. Film and television animation is another form of visual communication, using dynamic images to shape the storyline scene and other aspects of the vivid image of the information. Exhibition installation is also a form of visual communication. Through the exquisite and rich display of exhibits and booth design, the information expressed will be displayed to the audience. As an emerging form of visual communication, interactive design makes full use of digital media and other technical means to realize real-time interaction, which focuses on user experience and is full of fun and participation. Visual communication design forms are rich and diverse, and bring a beautiful experience to people's lives. In the future, with the continuous progress of science and technology, visual communication will continue to innovate and present more amazing forms.

4. The relationship between art therapy and visual communication

Art therapy has a close connection with visual communication. Art therapy uses visual elements to convey individual emotions and psychological states through artwork creation. Visual communication, as a form of information transfer, can effectively express and improve psychological

changes during art therapy. Donna Bates, president of the American Art Therapy Association, believes that appreciating artwork can help improve human health. To date, the organization has used art appreciation in a wide range of clinical treatments and care areas[10]. Visual art creation in art therapy is oriented to psychological needs, focusing on the expression and channeling of individual emotions, which helps individuals express their emotions, release pressure, and enhance their physical and mental health with the help of visual art, and visual communication design uses visual language as a carrier to convey ideas, information, concepts, and emotions, and to realize the communication between people. Visual communication design uses visual language to convey ideas, information, concepts, and emotions to realize communication between people. The two draw on each other and merge to bring more innovation and possibilities. Art therapy draws on visual communication, visual communication promotes art therapy, and the mutual integration of the two brings new thinking and practice in the fields of medical therapy and design, and related research results continue to emerge.

5. Research Methodology and Analysis

5.1. Research methodology

In this paper, the literature research method is used to screen the literature by searching and screening the literature to ensure its authority and representativeness. The literature research method is widely used in various disciplines, and its main role is to understand the current status of the relevant issues, to better complete the research on the subject. Organize the retrieved literature, and then organize and analyze the data to extract the theoretical basis of the application of art therapy in visual communication, the therapeutic effect, and other aspects of the core content, to summarize. Compare the same results between different studies, analyze the advantages of the application of art therapy in visual communication, and provide directions for future research. Then, select cases in the literature to analyze, analyze the cases in depth, and explore the characteristics of the application of art therapy in visual communication. This study aims to comprehensively sort out the research progress of the application of art therapy in visual communication, deeply analyze the efficacy and influencing factors of art therapy in visual communication, and provide useful references for the application of art therapy in visual communication. During the research process, the combination of various research methods, such as literature review, empirical research, and case analysis, is emphasized to ensure the objectivity, comprehensiveness, and authority of the research. Through an in-depth analysis of relevant literature and cases, the current status and development trend of the application of art therapy in the field of visual communication is summarized. Through the comprehensive use of this series of research methods, our review paper aims to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the application of art therapy in visual communication and a vital guide for future research and practice.

5.2. Cases and Analysis

5.2.1. Cases

Case 1:

The scenes chosen for "Perfect Horizon", a themed promotional poster released by Muji in 2003, are the Great Salt Lake in Uyuni, the Republic of Bolivia, and the steppes of Outer Mongolia, both of which give a similar visual impression. The poster is filled with a sense of peace and tranquility. The poster serves as a bridge between the designer and the audience to convey and communicate MUJI's philosophy and analysis. Kenya Hara introduced the concept of "emptiness" from Zen into the design of MUJI, presenting it in the most primitive and simple form.

The concept of "emptiness" from Zen studies is introduced into the design of MUJI, which is presented in the most original and simple form[11]. Gestalt psychologists have found that only those graphics that are the most simplistic make people feel the most pleasurable psychological sensations[12]. This emotional change was applied to the design by Kenya Hara, who replaced complex and complicated forms with simple design methods, and through the simplest aesthetics gave the viewer an easy, enjoyable, and relaxing emotional communication, hitting people directly in the heart, and achieving emotional communication and empathy between people and objects.

Case 2:

Art therapy, as an expressive psychotherapy, enables participants to heal themselves in the creative process as well as to realize external healing in aesthetic experience. Its scope of application is extremely wide, convenient, and operable. Based on the information collected in the research of art creation therapy, Li Yanwei combined her personal experience to create the series of works "Sad Breasts" as a practice of art therapy. Through installations and art scenes, the series reproduces the patients' psychological journey, confronting their pain and transforming their grief to achieve healing effects. The authors selected breast cancer patients as the research subjects and conducted field research. After the feedback from the research subjects, they improved the design and carried out a complete art creation therapy for the patients, and through the feedback from the interviews, they learned that the design made the patients' moods soothed and their psychological state gradually tended to be peaceful, which demonstrated the effectiveness of the art creation therapy. The author applies the information and insights collected in the research to the design, uses picture books and installations to design the scenes, and reproduces the psychological changes from pain to calmness and warmth in art therapy through the exhibition[13].

5.2.2. Results and analysis

The application of art therapy in visual communication has a wide range, covering a variety of fields, such as mental health, education, social services. The effect of art therapy on visual communication is remarkable, as it helps individual emotional expression, mental health enhancement, interpersonal relationship improvement. Art therapy has a wide range of application prospects in the field of visual communication. In the future, research and practice in related fields should continue to be in-depth, giving full play to the advantages of art therapy in visual communication and bringing benefits to more people.

6. Conclusion

Art therapy originated in the West, and with the growing emphasis on mental health, art therapy has received more and more attention in China, especially after the New Crown epidemic[14]. The application of art therapy in visual communication has significant practical value and significance. By combining art therapy with visual communication design, this paper shows, after discussion and analysis that the application of art therapy in visual communication can help relieve psychological pressure and improve self-knowledge. Future research can further focus on the diversified application of art therapy in visual communication, such as expanding the application to the treatment of other psychological disorders, exploring the intrinsic connection between art creation and psychological adjustment, and exploring the adaptability of art therapy to different age groups and special groups in visual communication. In addition, empirical studies can be conducted to verify the effects of art therapy on the psychological, physiological, and social functions of individuals and groups in visual communication, to provide richer theoretical and practical support for the application of art therapy in the field of visual communication. In conclusion, the application of art therapy in visual

communication has a broad prospect and far-reaching social significance. It is expected to provide strong support for the construction of China's mental health service system.

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