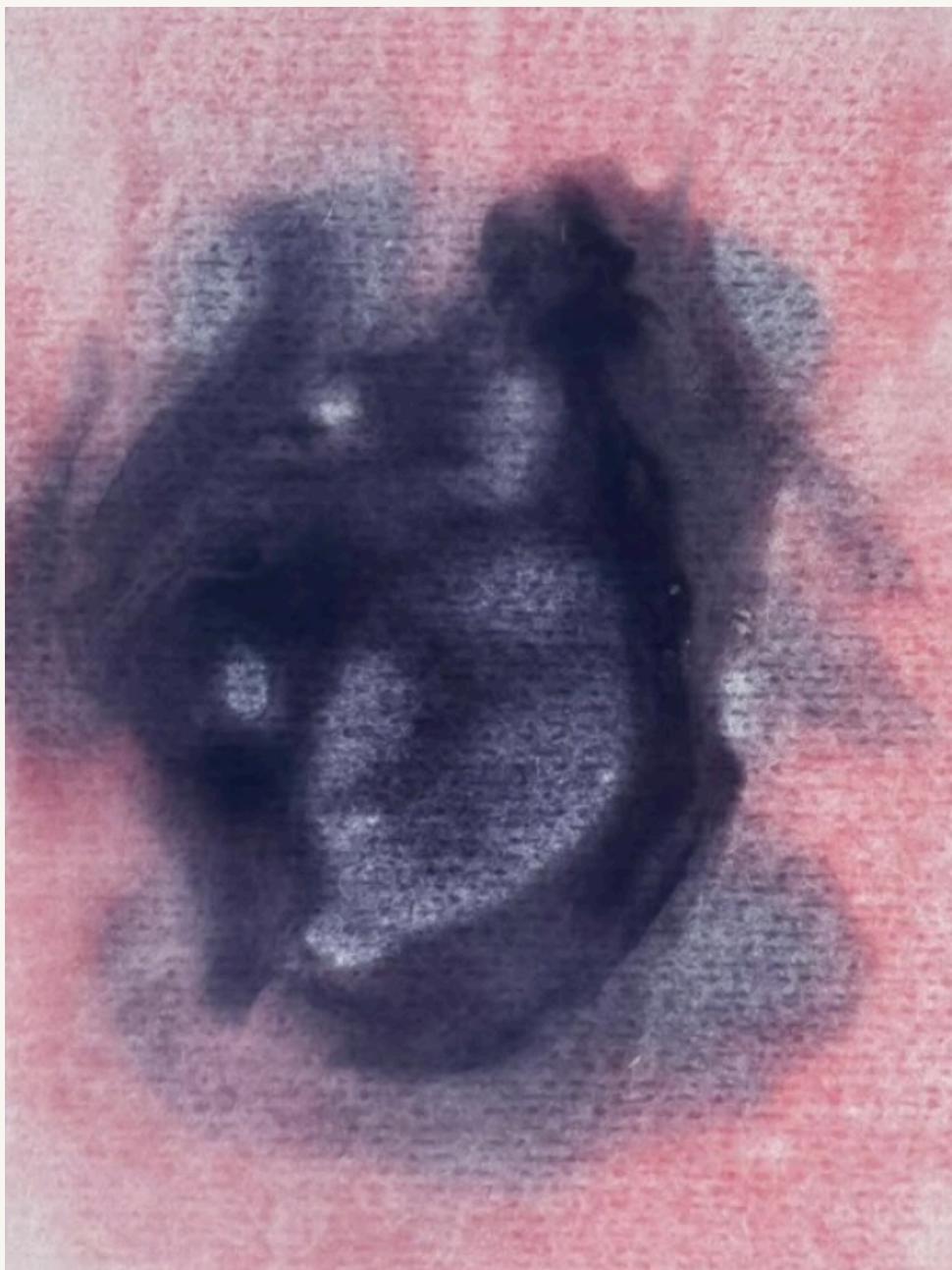


# ART THERAPY BROSCHURE

## BY STUDIO R.B



**“ART ENABLES US TO FIND OURSELVES AND  
LOSE OURSELVES AT THE SAME TIME.”**

THOMAS MERTON

# ART THERAPY BROSCHURE

## WHAT IS ART?

**Since the early 20th century**, almost anything can be considered art. This broad understanding shows how difficult it is to define art, as it has evolved alongside historical, cultural, and social changes. In general, art is seen as intentional human creation that communicates ideas, emotions, or aesthetic experiences (Bryan, 2025).

However, art existed long before modern definitions. Archaeological evidence shows that humans were creating art as far back as 40,000 to 14,000 years ago, particularly through cave and rock paintings from the Upper Paleolithic period (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024). These works include hand stencils, animal depictions, abstract symbols, and geometric forms, offering both visual and emotional expression. Research suggests that many of the earliest handprints in caves were likely made by women, challenging the idea that early art was mainly produced by men (Hughes, 2013).

Art has always been a shared human activity. Throughout history, art has remained a central part of societies. It has been used to express religious beliefs, political power, social order, and cultural identity. From prehistoric caves to contemporary galleries, art continues to shape and reflect human life. In other words: "It's plausible, then, that the impulse to make and consume art is a product of biological evolution" (Davies, 2015).



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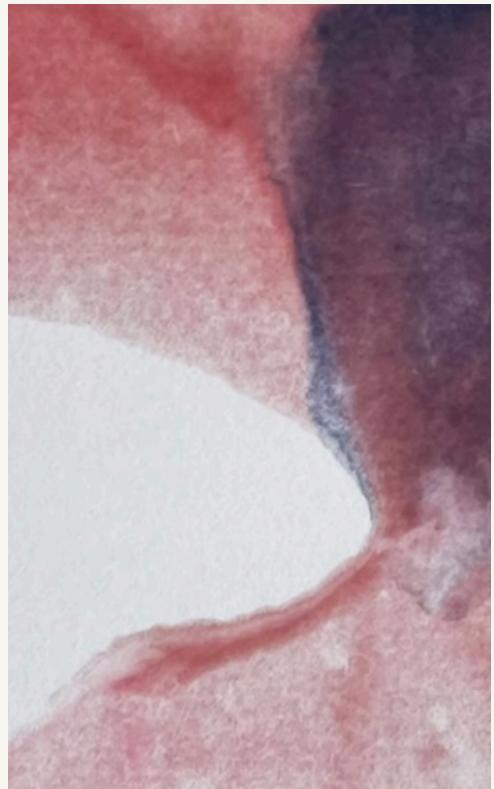
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## WHAT IS ART THERAPY?

The understanding of art as a fundamental form of human communication is at the heart of art therapy. Art therapy combines artistic creation with psychotherapy, using creative expression as a primary way to communicate thoughts and feelings, rather than relying solely on words (Case, Dalley, & Reddick, 2022). No prior artistic skill is needed, which reflects the idea that art is a universal human capacity. The formal practice of art therapy began in the early 20th century, developing alongside psychoanalytic theories that emphasized the use of symbols, images, and the unconscious mind. Adrian Hill first recognized the therapeutic value of artmaking in 1942 while recovering from illness (Bush, n.d.). Margaret Naumburg later established art therapy as a psychotherapeutic approach, viewing images as symbolic expressions similar to free association in psychoanalysis (Tobin, 2016). By the middle of the 20th century, art therapy was increasingly used in hospitals and mental health institutions.

## THE TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP IN ART THERAPY

Art therapy is often described through a triangular relationship between the client, the therapist, and the artwork. Meaning develops through observing, reflecting on, and discussing the images created, allowing a non-verbal understanding of psychological experiences. The images act as a symbolic language, providing access to unconscious or pre-verbal material. Jung (1964) explains that a word or image is symbolic when it conveys more than its immediate meaning, opening pathways to wider unconscious processes. Through art, the psyche is engaged, often generating a chain of images that support insight and personal transformation. Art therapy is a structured approach, guided by a trained and licensed art therapist. While making art alone can be therapeutic, it is not the same as art therapy, as the essential triangular relationship is not fully in place. Art therapy goes beyond the act of creating itself, involving professional interpretation and support to encourage self-exploration, emotional healing, and personal growth (Case, Dalley, & Reddick, 2022).



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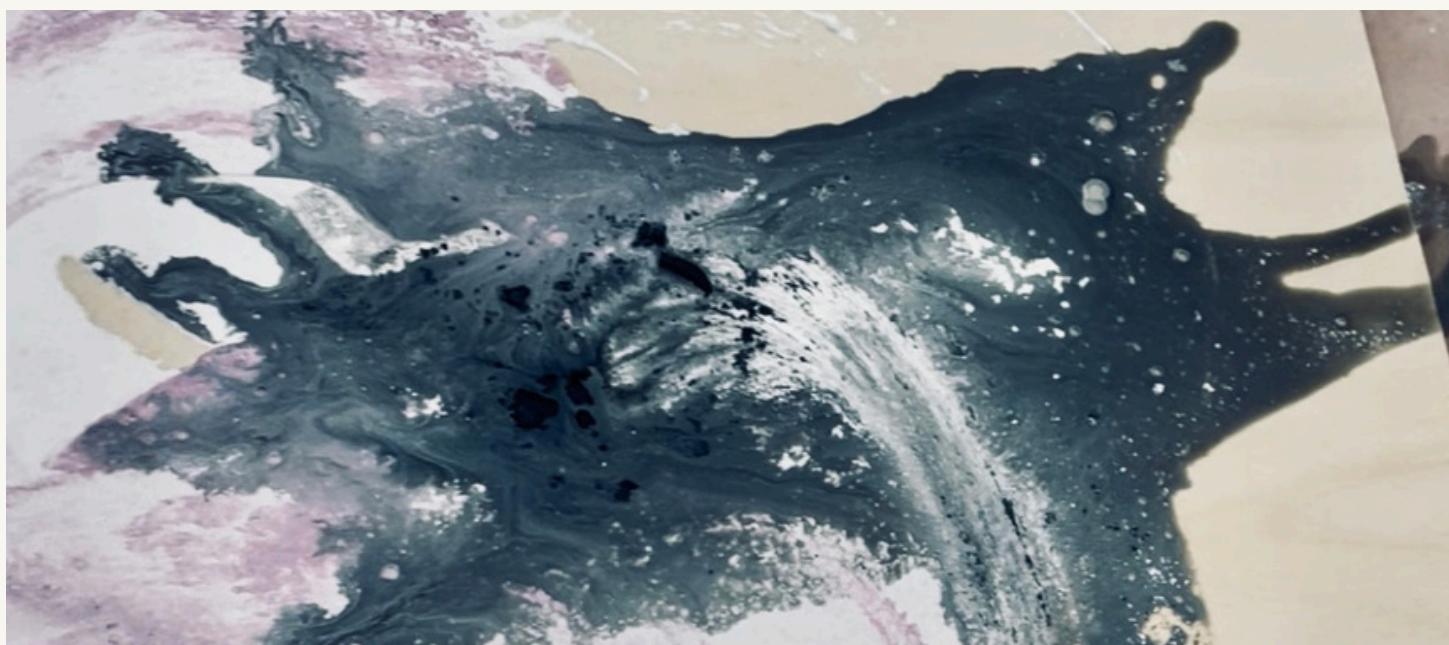
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## WHY TO CHOOSE ART THERAPY?

Clients turn to art therapy for many reasons, often related to major life events, health changes, or experiences of stress, anxiety, or depression. Art therapy offers a safe, non-verbal space where emotions can be expressed and understanding of the self developed, especially when the self treatment is not enough (Şanlı, Bulguroğlu, & Akın-Sarı, 2025). It is particularly useful for people who find verbal expression difficult, such as those experiencing psychosis (Case, Dalley, & Reddick, 2022). Children can also benefit, as they often communicate through sensory exploration, making art a natural way to express themselves. Clients may seek therapy to better understand their emotions, manage stress, and enhance self-awareness. Guided by a trained therapist, the creation and reflection on artwork allows for careful documentation of the therapeutic process, supporting continuity, insight, and personal growth over time.

**“I’ve tried a lot of different therapy. (...) But art gives me a way to visualise what’s going on and makes sense of it, because I find it quite hard to make sense of my head, so it helped me to visualise what was going on.”**

Client Claire, BAAT



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## ART MATERIALS AND THERAPEUTIC SETTINGS

A key part of art therapy is the careful selection of materials and the therapeutic setting. Materials can include traditional art supplies such as clay, paint, collage, and pencils, as well as unconventional tools like plants or digital media (Case, Dalley, & Reddick, 2022). Choosing the right materials for each client is important, as differences in texture, fluidity, and solidity can affect engagement and expression (Hinz, 2016). Therapeutic settings also vary widely, from hospitals and clinics to schools, prisons, community centers, clients' homes, and private practices. Each environment brings its own opportunities and challenges. Clinical settings require careful attention to safety and professional collaboration, while schools or community centers may focus on social development and prevention. Prisons often need structured interventions, whereas private practice allows flexibility and personalized approaches (Case, Dalley, & Reddick, 2022). Together, the choice of materials and the setting play a vital role in supporting the client's engagement and the overall therapeutic process, by creating a safe space.



## TO CONCLUDE

Art therapy is more than simply creating art, it is a structured and guided process that combines psychological insight, creative expression, and emotional support. Clients benefit from a safe and supportive environment where they can explore emotions, process life experiences, and encourage personal growth. By carefully selecting materials and designing appropriate therapeutic settings, art therapy offers a unique pathway to healing. It bridges the conscious and unconscious, the verbal and non-verbal, and the inner and outer worlds.

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