

## How does art heal?

All forms of art have the capacity to heal and have been used consciously and not consciously to do so. Throughout human history people have used art to connect with their souls and to heal a sense of loss, grief, isolation, broken hearts, loneliness, fear, despair, pain etc. Art heals through accessing the invisible source of life (that is why we get inspired). Art also heals through bringing hidden issues to the surface, thus making us conscious. Art magically helps us to stay focused, to experience and deal with issues in our lives where the soul seeks manifestation. Art heals with its sincerity, power, beauty, vibration, color, tone, dynamic, rhythm, words, interaction and intention.

Healing happens in two different ways: When you create art to get in touch with and express your emotions and when you channel higher energy with conscious intention to heal and transform. Of course most of the time art heals spontaneously without us even being aware that it does. However, we are aware of the fact that art makes us feel better, and we look to experience different forms of art by either making it or just by simply enjoying it.

Too often in our modern world emotions are neglected, suppressed or denied. Nevertheless emotions are always there, as a powerful drive in our lives. The more we suppress or neglect our emotions the more permanent the blockages in our system become. Ignoring what is going on inside us, we engage ourselves in pursuit of happiness outside of us until we face the consequences - chronic diseases, degenerative diseases, alienation, wars, environmental disasters and materialism.

A core belief is present in many different forms of traditional medicine practices all around - Ancient Greek, Indian Ayurveda, Tibetan, Hawaiian, Chinese, Native American, or different Old European. This belief stresses that an illness or any kind of distress is caused by blocked energy (prana, mana, chi, ki) somewhere in our physical, emotional, mental, etherical or spiritual bodies. In traditional medicine, all different methods are applied to release the blocked energy and help it flow freely again throughout its special energy channels. These are connected with the seven major energy centers called chakras in yoga tradition. The energy in the chakras directly influences the glandular system, which regulates the different organs of the body. With different methods applied, we help the blocked energy to start circulating again and restore our health and well being.

We can create art to get in touch with our emotions - sometimes obvious, sometimes deeply hidden - and to express them. Art is a safe and graceful way to access our emotions and experience them. Art heals by helping us focus on a feeling or event and assist us to go deeply into experiencing them, thus getting the full spiritual benefit of living our lives. In this way we can actually become masters of our emotions instead of the other way around (when emotions become our masters). The same thing is happening when we heal emotionally - we get in touch with and express overwhelming or deeply hidden emotions therefore getting to own our emotions and take full responsibility for our live experiences.

The different forms of art have been naturally used throughout human history to heal. Starting from the cave drawings found all around the world we can see how people depicted their fear of the unpredictable forces of Nature or their perception of the mystical power in the world. Myths, legends, songs and stories have helped to recognize and understand emotions, events, relationships. In ancient Greece drama was used for emotional healing by inducing a process called catharsis. By identifying with the characters who go through a big tragedy the audience experiences and releases their own emotions. Folk dances, drumming, music masks, pantomime and theatre have been used as a form of emotional expression, Divine blessing and guidance, prayer or ritual. All these art forms have helped people to live through difficult events as a tribe. Traditionally shamans have used prayer, herbs, energy work and different forms of art like dancing, drumming, chanting and talking with an intention to heal.

We can also create art with a healing and spiritual intention. Samples of this kind of art can be seen in all different spiritual traditions - Navaho Indians sand mandalas, Tibetan's mandalas, Hawaiian hula dance, Japanese drumming, Bulgarian singing, Indonesian theatre, just to name a few. In this form of art healing, often used by shamans and spiritual teachers all around the world, highly inspired sounds, forms, colors, beats, words, steps are channeled with healing and transformative intention. It works on a subconscious level through the energy that is transmitted. This energy, vibrating on a higher level, has the power to unblock and transform the energies in our own body, mind and soul.

All these different forms of healing through arts have never ceased to exist. Today almost everybody connects with one form of art or another - we watch movies, listen to music, read books: we dance, sing, write (in our journals, letters, e-mails), play. To use art consciously as a healing force is only a matter of intention. One does not need to have an artistic talent to benefit from this type of healing or to take part in it. Anyone can use art as a therapy to access the subconscious mind, to deal with emotional issues, to restore the soul, to connect with the higher consciousness and wisdom, to ease the pain and heal. In order to heal we often just need some guidance to focus on the right issue, and then support and encouragement to use our own resources. Everybody can dance, sing or write; act, play music or take pictures. Art is such a powerful tool, always available once we start to use it consciously as a healing force.