



FOCUSZART Focusing Studio
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Making Art from the Body Sense

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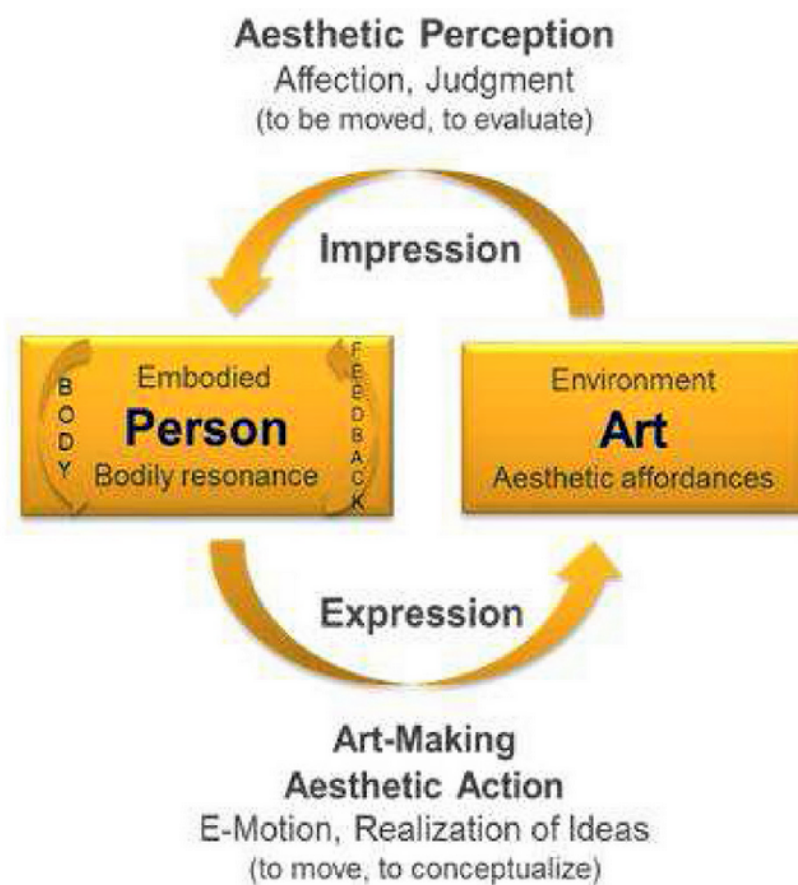
Embodied Aesthetics for Wellbeing



Embodied Aesthetics

The term Embodied Aesthetics (EA) is used differently within phenomenological philosophy.

A model of EA has been presented by the German researcher Sabine Koch (2016) including the perception and action side of aesthetics. Koch sees action (movement) as the basis of perception, but also perception as the basis for action (movement). She therefore speaks of the unity of action and perception:



Screenshot

from: The Embodied Self in Parkinson's Disease: Feasibility of a Single Tango Intervention for Assessing Changes in Psychological Health Outcomes and Aesthetic Experience, Article in Frontiers in Neuroscience, July 2016

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304994766_The_Embodied_Self_in_Parkinson's_Disease_Feasibility_of_a_Single_Tango_Intervention_for_Assessing_Changes_in_Psychological_Health_Outcomes_and_Aesthetic_Experience/download

Embodied Aesthetics EA in terms of Expressive Arts Focusing ExAF is *resonating to professional visual art through the Art Sense including artistic response along intermodal therapeutic avenues. The Art Sense is a Body Sense explicitly responding to the Fine Arts (Bianchi, 2018).*

„Therapeutic avenues“ is a term introduced by Gene Gendlin 1996; working with expressive avenues in Focusing Oriented Expressive Arts FOAT® is introduced by Rappaport (2009, 2014), see Expressive Avenues and Appendix.

EA as background for Expressive Arts Focusing ExAF exercises is recording to the method of Receptive Art Therapy, an approach of Art Therapy using professional visual arts in psychotherapy and educational settings. Receptiv Art Therapy invites the client to choose a piece of Fine Arts, perceive it and reproduce parts of it that capture their interest. The artistic reproduction can be done simple (low-skill-high sensivity approach) using different techniques, different materials and different sizes. The outcome is a piece of art or a series of art pieces expressing the client's mood or emotional state processed over time, telling about the client's story.

The EA model of Koch stays within the phenomenological approach of the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty and his understanding of the body. This understanding has been transcended by Gendlin through the experiential concept of the living body. How to translate the EA model of Koch into experiential terms is some furture work of FOCUSZART.

To get a taste of how EA with Fine Arts feels experientially, the following prompts may be a guideline for readers to experiment with.

We suggest to make two prompts (I and II) with both pictures of Fine Arts to get the More of if.

EA-Prompts: (for yourself or in pairs/small group with share)
Follow prompt I. and II, approximate time for each prompt 20 min.

Prompt I.

- Approach the painting by slowing down ... look at it ... pause, breath ... receive what you see ...
- How does the picture resonate to you as a whole?
- How is the atmosphere of the painting affecting you?
- What comes up when you touch the screen and slowly use your index finger to follow the body outline of the person depicted (foreground)?
- Repeat „drawing“ the body outline several times with eyes open and closed; then „draw“ with your index finger into the air and make your „picture“ bigger by repeating this move, just for to feel ...
- What is showing up doing this? ... Any bodily sensations? – images? – words/phrases? – (inner) sounds? ... (inner) movements or other fresh movements coming up?
- Just feel ... be curious and friendly without judging how it echos from within ... and then check inside for a sense of rightness
- Allow yourself to now turn to expressive arts activities ... turn to your artistic expression from the felt sense ... in whatever avenue it wants to be expressed (drawing, writing, sound exploration, rythmic expression, move)

Prompt II.

- Now switch from the foreground (person) to the background (nature) of the picture you are on
- Repeat using your index finger to follow the main lines of the background carved into nature including the horizontal line of the sky (pic 1 shore at the sea, pic 2 meadow and woods)
- What is showing up while „drawing“ with your index finger now? ... Any bodily sensations? – images? – words/phrases? – (inner) sounds? ... (inner) movements or fresh movements coming from moving your hand?
- Feel your inner echo to this; check it for a sense of rightness

- While doing so, can you feel the difference to prompt I? Can you hold this different feeling inside ... stay with it ... enjoy it?
- Sensing this fresh feeling of difference: What is needed to bring some *felt difference* to your art expression now?
- Comparing your art expressions of foreground and background: What is calling you most from Felt Sense? What words come to mind? What kind of insights pop up for you?



Edvard Munch, Melancholy 1891-1896

Write up of final Felt Sense and insights:



Paula Becker-Modersohn, Woman with Sheep (190?)

Write up of final Felt Sense and insights:

Alteration of the EA-prompts:

- drawing the lines of the foreground/background on the paper with eyes on the professional art piece
- drawing the lines with not looking at the professional art piece (drawing by inner imagery)
- repetitiv drawing of the lines (foreground/background) with change of speed
- drawing by one hand following the lines with index finger directly on the art piece, the other hand is synchronizing, holding pencil and drawing on paper
- drawing the lines of foreground and background with both hands simultaneously
- drawing the lines into the air with eyes closed, following the movements without content, feeling of rythm of move
- acting out the figures of the painting wholebodily and in drama play

Expressive Avenues

Gene Gendlin showed that all kinds of therapeutic approaches work with pathways that foster very different experiences for the client. Those pathways lead to experiences that have imaginary, bodily, auditory or interactive/relational quality. They exist across the huge variety of therapeutic theories and practices. Gendlin called these pathways „therapeutic avenues“ (Gendlin 1996).

„For example, art therapy, guided imagery, and clinical hypnosis use an imagery avenue; dance therapy, bioenergetics, and somatic experiencing use a body avenue; and music therapy, EMDR with headphones listening to the beeps (... ..) use the auditory avenue“ (Rappaport in Madison 2014, p. 208f). Also there is the interaction avenue, that is the therapist's ways to respond to a client.

The avenues do not exist separated from each other. There is a „link between the avenues“ (Gendlin 1996, p. 174) that is provided

from the living body/organism. Gendlin called it the felt sense or body sense.

The body sense can be seen as the „junction“ between the avenues. Any avenue can lead to a felt sense/body sense, and any avenue can carry it forward to a new and fresh body sense.

A moment-to-moment encounter referring to the body sense is the key both for client and therapist to process the client's issues.

As all avenues are together in every person (Gendlin 1996, p. 174), the therapist can attune best to the client's needs by working on all avenues, - during one session or from session to session - addressing the whole person inside.

Asking a client to take some time and turn to his/her inside body, waiting for a body sense to come, the symbolization of the body sense can open up to any of the avenues:

- A word or phrase can open up to a poem or writing
 - An image can open up to visual art
 - A gesture can open up to movement or dance
 - An inner sound can open up to music or sound exploration.
- (Rappaport 2009, 2014)

References:

Bianchi, P. (2018). Einen Kunstsinn suchen und finden. Wir könnten porös sein wie ein Schwamm. In: Kunstforum International, Bd. 253, 45-56

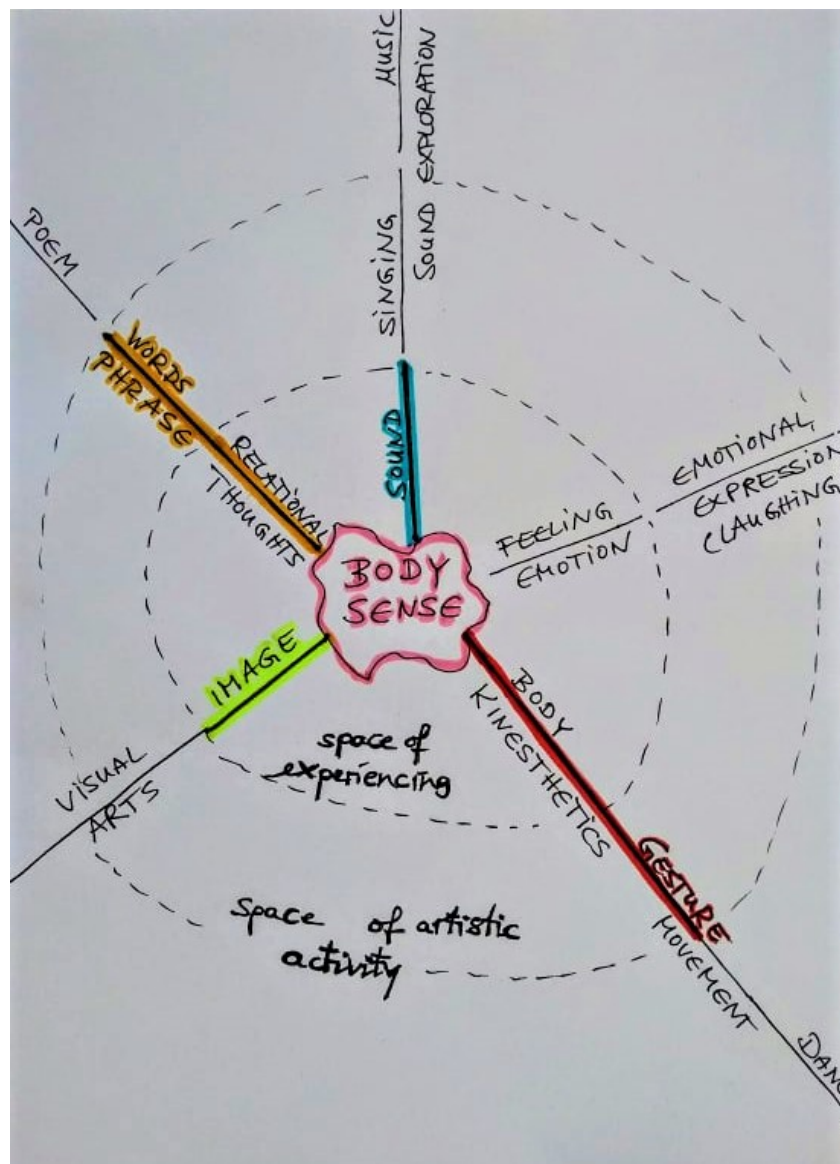
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Practice of Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy: Beyond the Talking Cure. London, Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Rappaport, L. (Rappaport, L (2009). Focusing-oriented art therapy: Accessing the body's wisdom and creative intelligence. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Appendix



The Avenues in Intermodal Focusing © Freda Blob
Focusing Network FN, Notes from FN Training Manual 1995



Windmill - Artpiece of a Student: Energetic Flow of the Avenues
FOCUSZART Summer Challenge 2021 "Time to grow artistically"