

Healing Light: The Healing Journey Through Dementia Research

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Abstract

Dementia, classified as an irreversible and progressive neurodegenerative disease by the World Health Organisation (WHO), poses a global challenge, with a projected prevalence of 131.5 million by 2050, predominantly increasing in most developing countries. The pervasive worldwide issue of social stigma surrounding dementia, influenced by the severity of cognitive disorders such as rejection, discrimination, and exclusion, persists. Despite the implementation of art and other creative campaigns for social awareness, arts-based approaches for dementia awareness and prevention have primarily gained traction among close stakeholders rather than the general public. The concept of an enabling environment is emphasised by the requirement for physical spaces to be accommodating and psychologically supportive. Moreover, understanding empathy as a therapeutic tool facilitates close and effective communication with care stakeholders and other human beings. Consequently, the therapeutic potential of art and design in dementia, often overlooked due to the focus on the physical dimensions, is unfolded emotionally as mediums to communicate the message to the broader public within the inclusive design framework.

Objectives

To reflect the awareness raise in the context of Thailand (from the exhibition). Art-based approaches have the unique capacity to shift perceptions on ageing and dementia, overcome language.

Research Methodology

The ethnographic sketches from the PhD thesis were further explored and employed in conjunction with the "Cyanotype" or sun printing technique. Analogous to dementia care principles, the technique represents living in the moment, embracing unpredictability, and fostering experimentation. The research uses 'Healing Light Exhibition' as the main case study for the exploratory study to reflect and explore the conversation and impact of art and awareness in the context of Thailand.

Findings

The research focuses on discussions about dementia and personal perspectives, with a specific emphasis on self-definition and societal constructs. Emotional aspects and the therapeutic potential of art in dementia care design are often overlooked by designers and architects who predominantly focus on the physical aspects of dementia.

Conclusion

Future research is required to understand the impact, to improve and the long-term awareness of innovative arts-based approaches in palliative care introduction in the context of Thailand.

Concept



Cyanotype Processes



Cyanotype paper preparation

The process begins by mixing two chemicals: ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide, which create a light-sensitive solution.

Sunlight casting

The ethnographic sketches were shielded from sunlight remain unchanged, creating a stark contrast between the exposed and unexposed regions.

Washing

Washing is a critical step in the cyanotype process, ensuring the final image's clarity and longevity.

Drying

Drying is the final step in the cyanotype process, solidifying the visual impact of the print. After the paper or fabric has been thoroughly washed to remove unreacted chemicals, it is left to dry in a shaded.

Drawing

Drawing is a powerful tool in art therapy, offering individuals a means to express emotions, process experiences, and explore their inner worlds through creative expression.

Sewing

Sewing is a therapeutic practice within art therapy that combines creativity with the tactile engagement of needle and thread, offering a soothing and meditative experience.

Writing and reflecting

Writing serves as a profound therapeutic process, offering individuals a means to explore and articulate their thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Artworks



The collection is divided into four main parts:

1. Introduction and Observation for Visual Journeys: Diagrams and Autoethnography
2. Overlaying Photographs and Recollections: A Photographic Series
3. Transformation and Metamorphosis: The Journey of Change
4. Fragmented Realities: The Broken Path and the Move On of Memories (Detachment)

Healing Light Exhibition at Palette Artspace, Bangkok, Thailand (7 December 2023 - 18 December 2023)



Figure 1: The diagram explains how art serves as a conversational space to engage and create an environment, whether that fosters open dialogue and meaningful exchanges between individuals.

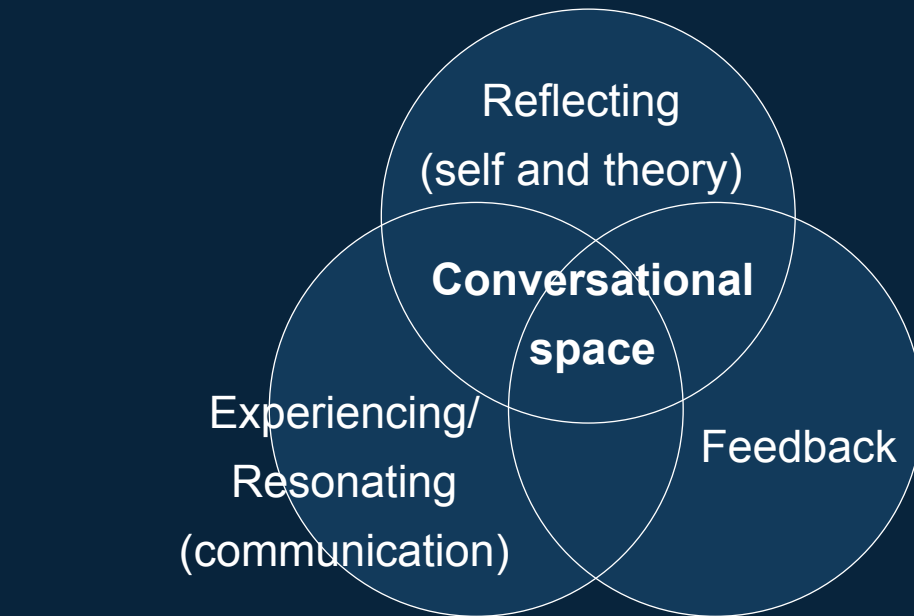


Figure 2: The art exhibition enhances acknowledging, experiencing, and moving forward the main mission



The "Healing Light Exhibition" (as shown in the illustration) held at the Palette Artspace in Bangkok, Thailand, from December 7th, 2023, to December 18th, 2023, created an engaging conversational space with diverse audiences, including doctors, informal caregivers, artists, and students. Consequently, the exhibition focused on discussions about dementia and personal perspectives, highlighting individual experiences and societal constructs.

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