

Video Self Portrait: A Tangible Artefact of the Movement Arts

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ABSTRACT

The Halprin method of movement-based expressive arts employs the modalities of movement and dance, expressive drawing and creative writing to facilitate the creation of self-portrait dances connected to real life issues. Adding the medium of video to this process enables the dancer to view their expressive movement, and to create a tangible artefact, an edited video piece. In this study a single participant is facilitated in the creation of a video self-portrait.

The thematic analysis reveals 'authenticity' as central, relating closely to other themes such as 'freedom'. The making of a video self-portrait facilitates a therapeutic outcome – the participant has a strong emotional and kinaesthetic response to her video piece and her experiences of the process correspond closely to Csikszentmihalyi's model of a 'flow experience'.

INTRODUCTION

Thesis Statement / Hypothesis

The creation of a video self-portrait as a tangible artefact of the movement arts facilitates a therapeutic outcome, and supports the 'flow' theory of creativity.

Movement has the capacity to take us to the home of the soul, the world within for which we have no name. Movement reaches our deepest nature, and dance creatively expresses it. Through dance, we gain new insights into the mystery of our lives. When brought forth from the inside and forged by the desire to create personal change, dance has the profound power to heal the body, psyche and soul.
Anna Halprin (2000, p.196).

Through movement, feelings and emotions can be expressed and the unconscious can become visible (Halprin, 2003). Anna and Daria Halprin, pioneers in movement-based expressive arts therapy, have developed a process (the Life/Art Process) to facilitate the creation of self-portrait dances generated from real life issues, utilising self-expressive movement, drawings and poetic writings. I have developed a method of adding the

medium of video to the self-portrait process, enabling the dancer to view their expressive movement, and to create a tangible artefact, an edited video piece.

Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1990) researched creativity extensively and proposes a number of elements as components of what he defines as a 'flow' or 'optimal experience'. I have found that the experience of creating and viewing video self-portraits facilitates therapeutic outcomes, and corresponds closely with the elements of an 'optimal' experience defined by Csikszentmihalyi. In this study I facilitated a single case study in the creation of a video self-portrait in order to enquire how another movement artist experiences this process.