

Sensormotor Art Therapy: Clay Neurologic Connections and Psychotherapeutic Effects

Summary

This article lays out the characteristics of clay through its sensorimotor qualities, ways these qualities mirror in neurology and art therapeutic experiential, and the effect these processes generate. Clay is material in use for over 25 000 years through the history of mankind. Ritual (Hansen, 2018; Henley, 2002), medical, craft and artistic use was combined for a good part of the history of civilization which suggests its influence on the subconsciousness of man in general, and in therapy specifically. Ritual vessels, sculptures and idols, masks, and ritual backdrops were modeled by clay (Raphael, 1947, as cited in Sholt and Gavron, 2006). The intention of its modeling left us with the first materialized traces in subconsciousness and gave us insight into processes our ancestors went through. This experience is evident if we observe the process of clay art therapy. If we try to explain it on a purely sensorimotor level, this explanation will soon be insufficient and we will have to search for deeper reasons and results of this activity. Touch is not only sensorimotor, haptic sense, but also an emotional message (Cozolino, 2006, prema Elbrecht i Antcliff, 2014; Knox i Uvnäs-Moberg, 1998; Weller i Feldman, 2003 prema Elbrecht i Antcliff, 2014; Hinz, 2009; Sholt i Gavron, 2006). Neurologically speaking, clay work changes the activities in the brain which influences positively on the mental functions of the person (Kruk, Aravich, Deaver i deBeus, 2014, Lusebrink, 20). Claywork relieves a person of excessive, negative emotions, stress, and aggression, and makes a person aware of his own/her own emotion and the mechanisms that induce and result in those emotions. In art therapy clay is successfully used in diagnostics and symptomatic framework of dementia, trauma, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, food disorder, strengthening self-awareness, identification processes, etc. Above mentioned aspects of clay work were scientifically observed

separately and not sufficiently researched as connected processes. This article attempts to balance and explain the neurological, artistic, and art therapeutic connections with regards to available literature and research.

Key words: *art therapy, sensorimotor sense, clay, haptic sense, mental functions*