



# Croatian Traditional Techniques as Art Therapy Protocols: Drywall as Expression of Therapeutic Themes of Boundaries, Protection, Defence and Privacy

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## **Abstract**

*Multicultural art therapy respects and accepts the specifics of a particular culture in a narrow and broader context (Comas-Diaz, 2104, as cited by Corsini and Wedding). Specifics of culture and tradition often reveal mentality and collective societal issues. Considering the peculiarities of Croatian tradition, specialists in art therapy were set to take the elements of Croatian culture and tradition and incorporate them into clinical practice. The idea was to research these traditional processes as art therapy protocols and, as such, to be better understood and better applicable in the cultural context of Croatia.*

*In this article, three different populations are introduced to the material and technique of drywall while the therapeutic effect of this technique is investigated.*

*Working with each population separately has its specifications, but the technique and the material were universally accepted. Holocaust survivors, women*

*in transition age who recently immigrated to Israel, and adults with psychiatric disturbances; each of these populations brought significant insights and very similar results.*

*The non-directive approach in groups and individually resulted in spontaneous expression of the themes of boundaries, protection, defense, and privacy, and the experience of the process – a meditative and contemplative work.*

*Technique naturally resonated therapeutically, spontaneously leading to different directions of working through the issues, and easily used in symbolic as well as animated narrative, in representative artworks, as well as meditative processes.*

*We can very well see the possibilities of applying this technique in therapy, which we hope to witness in the future.*

**Keywords:** *art therapy, multicultural theory, Croatian tradition, drywall, psychiatric population, functional adults, Holocaust survivors*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. History and Characteristics**

Drywall is a building technique using exclusively stone, with no mortar (Croatian General Lexicon, 1996), utilized to build walls, stanchions, livestock compartments, vineyards, field and pasture compartments, small buildings for shepherds, and wells in Dalmatia and beyond, in the Mediterranean (Šaravanja, Oreč, & Kurtović, 2018) and wider. This specific building technique uses material found *in situ*, which, moved to a pile, represents a ground cleared for further processing, natural material gathered for construction, and expresses the harmony of nature and man, the result of sophisticated simplicity following understanding of nature.

Material is minimally, if at all, roughly trimmed by other stone and placed on the rock placed before that, which will, stacked like that, form long, winding walls that can easily be mistaken for a natural environment. Covered with different vegetation, drywall offers a home to various indigenous species of insects and reptiles, thus creating symbiosis, which calls practicality, aesthetics, ethics, ecology, and sustainability to a dialogue.

Bigger stones are laid at the bottom, smaller ones closer to the upper edge, and the skill is measured by the way stones are placed – diagonally, vertically, or horizontally. The shape, weight, and size

of the stone on one hand and the aptitude and experience of the builder on the other (<http://www.dragodid.org/jadranski-suhozidi-cres>) make drywall an original artwork, a result of the process, a struggle of patience and creativity in finding the best way of assembling a whole of stone parts.

These characteristics of drywall can easily take us back to the ancient history of architecture, but at the same time, they remind us of the basics of ecological building: in relating to material, natural surroundings - including space and live organisms, indigenous plants, and animals, and to property.

Drywall as a construction is movable, easily adjustable in height, and easily restructured without any damage to the surroundings or visible change in the drywall itself.

First and foremost, drywall marks the border that divides private properties. It is a line in the land register that outlines the Dalmatian landscape, giving clear information in the legal sense. At the same time, this border doesn't offer particular protection because the walls are only around a meter and a half high. As a matter of fact, this symbolic boundary is made for communication, not division and isolation. Today, with so many laws of privacy, walls, security systems of surveillance, and persons who feel the need to implement these measures, it is almost impossible to imagine the width and freedom of living in these designations of ownership.

The possibility of setting the border as a mark and reminder of one's integrity represents respect for one's own and someone else's property but wishes for communication as well, which is undoubtedly made with anyone who passes by.

Dalmatia is permeated by these walls, covering around 60,000 km and having a volume bigger than all the Egyptian pyramids. Indeed, they are "incredible monument to human labor" (Božanić & Belamarić, as cited by [suhozid.hr](http://suhozid.hr), [tris.com](http://tris.com)).

Let's not forget the sensory information, smells of plants, touch of the breeze, feel of stone... experience of Dalmatian landscape is distinctive.

In Croatia, drywall is present since the early Bronze Age, in the Eneolithic, and the Bronze and Iron Age (Frangeš, 2015). With the arrival of Iliric tribes to the Balkans, drywall is used more often as a consequence of the development of cattle breeding and social life organization (Frangeš & Rosić, 2013).

This long chronological thread continues until today through the sensory experience of nature. The neural pattern of sensory experience associated with the affect and other sensory information becomes a mental image (Damasio, 2021) transferred, just as the tradition is, from generation to generation. Procedural memory, backed up in the long term, unconscious memory, is transmitted through the implicit memory of the body at the sensory-motor level (Lusebrink, 2004). In this way, the spirit of

the Eneolithic human is embodied in the action of drywall construction.

## **2. Methodology and the Analysis of the Process**

Using the principles of multicultural theory and the expressive therapy continuum (Hinz, 2009), we will explore the development of the topic of Croatian cultural heritage as an art therapy protocol in this article.

This mini-research aims to “introduce cultural and traditional competencies into clinical practice” (Comas-Diaz, 2014, as cited by Corsini and Wedding, p. 534), bringing art therapy work closer to the Croatian population.

Traditional skills in a multicultural approach mediate very easily between the older generation and art therapy. These skills are in the hands of the older generation, whose masters pass them on to us. The exchange of knowledge and strength is a welcome element for working in a larger group within the framework of social art therapy or land art therapy.

The case of spontaneous joint construction of dry stone walls in Kornati in 2010. shows that tradition has a pulse. Drywall builders from Tisno and firefighters from Pag built memorial crosses on their own initiative for 12 firefighters who died in the tragedy in Kornati in 2007. This action was a burial ritual, farewell, honor, sadness, pride..., a therapeutic act,

the trace of which remains as a material monument of drywall.

By exploring local cultural traditions and therapeutic themes, we give space to the expression of individual and collective themes of the community.

The idea of multiculturalism is that it “recognizes different views of the world of each culture, unique and dynamic, which must be understood within its own context” (Comas-Diaz, 2014, as cited by Corsini and Wedding, p. 534), which provides an adequate framework for Croatian art therapy.

“Multiculturalism embodies cultural constructivism - a process in which an individual creates his world through social processes that contain symbols and metaphors” (Comas-Diaz, 2014), which is organically followed by the recognition and association of cultural symbols with personal stories expressed in the construction of Croatian art therapy.

### **2.1. Drywall - Construction Process**

Drywall is a contemplative building technique oriented to the process rather than the result. A method is a set of repetitive actions that require focus, concentration, and contemplation. The primarily sensory-motor colored action (haptic sensing of the stone) cooperates with the higher cognitive functions of the prefrontal cortex for problem-solving and inference (adjusting the shape, placing it in the chosen place).



In art therapy process, sensory information awakens the affective symbolization, perceived objects acquire meaning, which is then followed by cognitive insight. The process bypasses the control, criticism, and formal impulse of needing a result and allows subconscious content to surface (Dalley, 1987).

## **2.2. Adaptation of Drywall as a Technique in the Art Therapy Process**

The drywall was moved to the table, the stones were replaced with stones of a different type, and in this case, mosaic stones were used. In this way, color was included in the process, which is a negligible element in the original drywall design (stones are shades of grey).

During one year (2017/2018), the art therapy specialist offered this technique to psychiatric patients (art therapy group/individual work in a chronic psychiatric ward), Holocaust survivors (psycho-educational art therapy group), and a group of adult women (art therapy group).

The material is proposed with the possibility of intuitive use, while the topics that will spontaneously appear during the work are observed.

Afterwards, the participants can proceed to develop and work on the chosen topic or complete the process.

## **2.3. Description of the Art Therapy Process**

### **2.3.1. Art Therapy Group of Psychiatric Patients *Herzog Medical Center, Psychiatric Clinic, Jerusalem, Israel***

A group of psychiatric patients at the chronic ward of the Herzog Psychiatric Clinic in Jerusalem meets once a week for two hours in a multifunctional activity room, having access to art materials (except for sharp, potentially dangerous objects). The group is small-format, open-type due to the dynamics of the reception, and acts mainly in a directive manner.

The participants spontaneously started using the offered material to build two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes placed on a table or surface. The flat forms are characteristic of the reduced energy of the depressed persons (Fig. 1, 2a, 2b, and 2c).



Figure 1 Pyramid



Figure 2a Floorplan of home



Figure 2b



Figure 2c

The person who made the pyramid (Fig. 1) is with us for the first time. As expected, she keeps most of the information to herself and only shares how wonderful the mysterious place of the pyramid is for her because she can keep the secret forever. In so doing, she wants to preserve her

privacy, the information about herself, which the psychiatrist asked her shortly before the group meeting. Maintaining integrity and humanity in a psychiatric hospital setting is a rare privilege that a person in an art therapy group has the opportunity to preserve.

A depressed person with a history of trauma and self-harm through the process of work remembers her childhood in the walls of the old city where she felt protected, not only by the thousand-year-old walls of the city but also by the walls of her parent's home (Fig. 2).

Through the initially positively colored reverie in the description of her house and yard where she hung laundry and ran after a ball (Fig. 2a), she gradually feels powerless to build a realistic representation of the home, and, naming each room, she fills the floor plan, representing a horror vacui conveying suffocation in the current residence, as well as being overwhelmed by memories and feelings. The person is gradually overwhelmed with the work (Fig. 2b and 2c) and speaks with displeasure about the current sense of deprivation in the department, the theft of personal belongings, and, in general, the suspicious atmosphere that has replaced the lost security of the home.

The need for protection is more clearly expressed in the work in Figures 3 and 3a, which show the need for privacy and security in the environment she recently found herself in. With slow and steady actions, she creates a wall that reaches its final height in the middle, and on the sides, it descends "about to the height of the waist," which is to this person pleasant for communication. She talks about the need to have a wall that can completely hide her but also to be able to see the surroundings. That's why the wall should be lower on both sides. The safe distance from which she can tolerate the presence of an unknown person is marked by a stone outside the walls. She must be able to see the newcomer from that distance, not to surprise her... A person needs a safe distance even in a group; she sits on the side of the table where no one is sitting, which is also near the door. She communicates only with the therapist in a low tone; she refuses to share the contents with the group.



Figure 3



Figure 3 a



Other examples show the more dynamic work of people with bipolar disorder (Fig. 4). Along with repeated construction and demolition, starting and abandon-

ing construction, and greater energy input, the idea of the need for protection is equally clearly expressed verbally.



Figure 4

In contrast to the above-discussed examples, there are works by people who show patience, commitment to the process, and experience the meditative effect. In Fig. 5 and 6, we see examples of people diagnosed with schizophrenia who do not name the goal of the construction or its function in terms of theme, feelings, or thoughts about their work, but intuitively build the wall. Fig. 5 shows the creation of a person who wants to succeed in build-

ing a wall as wide and high as possible. She carefully lays one stone on top of another, fully committed to the process. She comments on how the wall is rounded to make it stronger and imagines how big it should be to close the whole circle and thus be complete.

Another person builds a similar circular structure (Fig. 6), which causes a barrage of praise from the others in the group and great satisfaction of the author.



Figure 5

Uniqueness is rewarded. Here too, the person found calm in the meditative process of construction, and, despite the collapse of the structure, decided not to

repair it. She comments that “it doesn’t matter, what happened - happened;” in other words, she already got what she wanted, and the result is insignificant to her.



Figure 6

In Fig. 7, the person extends her feeling of isolation and insecurity in the institution where she is "imprisoned," to the fra-

ework of state security. She describes how Israel is a country with constant security problems but also has an army that will defend it if there is a conflict. Trust in the military and the state gives a person a protection framework.

The process started with stones and was expanded with the techniques of drawing with crayons, painting with acrylics, and collaging colored paper. She continues to draw cacti and other plants typical of Israel.

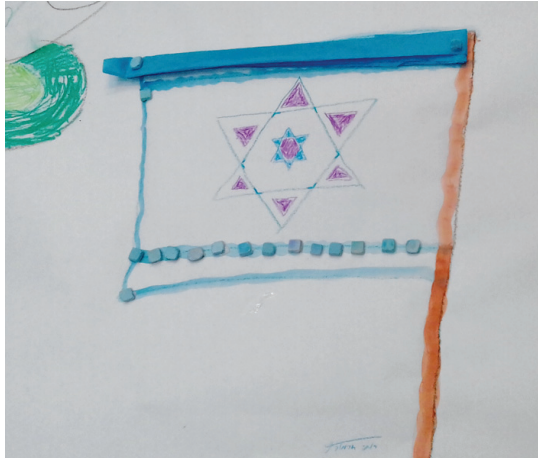


Figure 7

In order to hide from other people's eyes and the interference of others in her life, one participant builds a path to the sea, a place where she feels calm and safe (Fig. 8). She also talks about the possibility of finding her path, in the work shown as walking away alone. Unlike her first work, this one she richly decorates, devotedly creating the sea and plants and a figure in silver clothing. She builds a better future, imagines positive outcomes, and strengthens the inner image of her possibilities, desires, and plans.

After finishing the artwork, she expresses her desire to go to the seaside when she leaves "here," maybe even with her children, who are now with her husband's fa-

mily. She expresses feelings of relief and exhaustion.



Figure 8



Figure 9.



A young man whose recent episode of paranoia forced his family to hospitalize him left him even more frightened in the unknown and, therefore, dangerous hospital environment. With a stone, he marks himself inside the space protected by a round wall (Fig. 9), which he identifies as his room in his parents' home. Stones are also used to symbolize the attackers who surround him, climbing the

walls of his safe place and entering it. He is completely surrounded, and his voice is getting quieter and quieter. To recruit his own strength to overcome fear and build resources to establish psychological resilience, we study his artwork together and the possibilities of changing the situation in the art process, building, demolishing, moving... so that the pebble inside the walls could feel safe.



Figure 9 a



Figure 9 b

He imagines himself in his safe place, by the lake (Fig. 9a, b), where he sometimes goes for a walk. One blue pebble, representing a person, is placed against several blue stones, symbolizing water. As if he is water himself. Here he stops and goes silent, calmer.

We extend this safe place he created to the image of the lake and the mental image available to him at all times to the group and the room where we meet on the ward. In this way, we leave the person with something that can strengthen them

in the coming hours. Through art therapy, the person felt support and co-regulation with the therapist. This experience can be helpful when it is necessary to maintain functions in the window of tolerance, i.e., when he has to self-regulate.

In conclusion, drywall as an art therapeutic technique raised several themes through therapeutic processes. One group of patients developed the theme of protection, boundaries, and privacy, while the other used this technique as self-sufficient for concentration and self-motivated work.

**2.3.2. Art Therapy Group  
for Holocaust Survivors**  
*Center for Continuous  
Education, Jerusalem,  
“Coffee Europa”  
Governmental Organization  
for European Holocaust  
Survivors, City of Jerusalem.*

The group meets once a week for an hour and a half sessions. It has a psycho-educational model of art therapy approach. The group is large, open, and has two leaders, a psychotherapist and a social worker.

Through a year of working with the group, a high level of cohesion, content sharing, and mutual support of members was developed.



Figure 10



Figure 10 a

support, radio communication, and one mission - to defend civilians hidden in an underground shelter.

By moving soldiers and civilians (pebbles), the theme of protection and defense is played out in a narrative form.

Building drywall is accepted with minimal resistance due to the size of the stones: the used surrogate is small, thus making manipulation difficult. The age of the participants (over 75 years old) brings a decrease in motor functions, which is certainly something to pay attention to in the application of the protocol.

In general, the narrative quality of the technique stands out, which was not the case in the population with psychiatric difficulties.

In Figures 10 and 10a you can see the floor plan of the bunker and the underground shelter for civilians in the immediate vicinity. The person is one of the few soldiers left in a unit without military

Another person remembers her career as a construction engineer in Russia after the war. Increasing symptoms of anxiety and depression, made her leave a very successful career. She remembers with a smile a project of national importance and highly praised at that time (Fig. 11a, 11b).

She describes the gradual abandoning of the career, memories, and departure from the country by smaller and smaller piles of pebbles, while many group members empathize with the author.

The engineer builds another building (Fig. 11b), which, she comments, is partially demolished for interpolation with new buildings. Once a recognized and respected figure of Russian architecture, now in her late years, reflects on her deterioration.

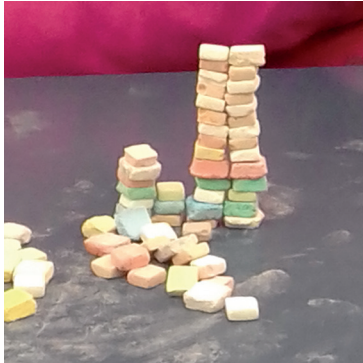


Figure 11



Figure 11 a



Figure 11 b

Figure 12 shows the walls of Jerusalem, but this time they are not shown as protective, but as tormented, burdened by history, the cause of endless conflicts,

as walls that lead to problems. “I could continue building these walls to infinity,” says the author, just as it seems to her that there is no end to wars.



Figure 12

In picture 14 we see another example of using the technique for the purpose of a process that very quickly became fun in itself for the person. After the third row, the person solves the problem of demolishing the wall by supporting it

where it is necessary, thereby limits the development of the wall and his work on the right and left sides.

On the left side, we see the work of a person who found the activity frustrating. After being unable to stack not even a



Figure 13



Figure 14

stone, gave up building and continued to group them according to color (Fig. 13), as if to “clean up” the “mess” she made, thereby controlling at least something she can’t connect to in any way.

### **2.3.3. Art Therapy Group for Adults (Women)**

#### ***English Speaker’s Culture Center, City of Jerusalem***

The group meets once a week for two hours. Art psychotherapeutic group is with doors open ajar and open-ended. The members are women who immigrated to Israel from different countries.

A group of women aged 55 to 79, without previous diagnoses, use this technique for similar therapeutic goals of establishing boundaries.

Artwork shown in pictures 15 and 15a. represents a person’s relationship to the environment. A square plan is defined by walls surrounding the central pillar. Each side of the wall is made of differently colored stones and represents the four elements: fire, water, air, and earth.

Its most intimate part, the true Self, is surrounded by a space protected by walls. She describes the safe space as the space between her core - the central pillar, and his skin, as the border to the outside world - the walls, as free, airy, and peaceful. There are also four elements outside the walls to which she relates in a certain way. Each piece from the outside arouses a specific combination of colors that reflect an emotional or mental condition and specific behavior. For example, to fire from the outside, to a strong character, with a firm and clear attitude, she will react with a “black on white” attitude, a sharp and clear statement to establish boundaries.

Next work, which also selects colors and gives them a specific meaning, is a narrative representation of the beginnings of civilization (Fig. 16), where blue pebbles represent a water source, brown pebbles a built bridge and a dam, yellow pebbles represent a field of wheat, while grey, brown and yellow pebbles stacked in columns that the author calls Stonehenge, represent a spiritual place. There are no





Figure 15

borders because a lot of land surrounds the area; it is safe and open to nature. The author emphasizes that the border is not a particular obstacle for her, that she herself has a sense of width and is aware of her strong character, which will probably enable her to cope with the limitless. She is also aware of natural boundaries: rivers, fertile land, and forests..., the basis for survival, which man must adapt to. After that comes the possibility of human intervention, construction of shrines, bridges...



Figure 15 a

The flat-set work in Figure 17 represents the Empire State Building and the author and her husband at the bottom of the giant. The author initially wanted to show how impressed she was by the building when she saw it live for the first time. Then, under the impression of Jackson Pollock, whose exhibition she recently visited, she adds “scattered” pebbles - Pollock’s spots. However, it then reminds her of 9/11, and all the exhilaration turns to horror. Only afterward does she declare that her admiration for the building is



Figure 16

actually inspired by a fear of heights and that she has never and will never climb the Empire State. The visible instability in omitting the indication of the ground, the line of gravity, and our basic security in this work stands for the absence of a border or the need for one.

The heart, as an organ and as a center of emotions (Fig. 18), is shown here as protected from external influences. At the

same time, the stones represent emotions, and their color highlights the weight and warmth of emotions. Emotions flow: positive emotions rise and leave the heart and body, while others remain; they are heavy, so they fall to the bottom of the heart and are more challenging to get rid of. Holes are drilled on one of the channels to indicate the possibility of positive emotions coming out. The outflow of



Slika 17



Slika 18

positive emotions indicates defense with positive emotions against deeply stored, more complex emotions that the person is not yet ready to express.

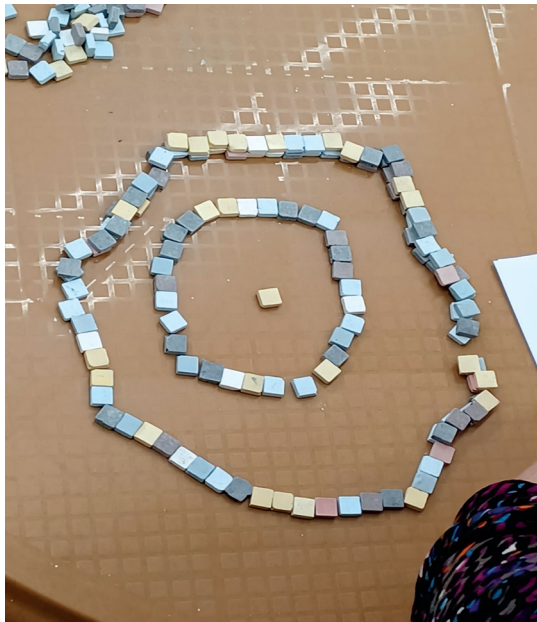
Figure 19 shows the work of a person who attends the group for the first time, even

arriving late, which also affects her tension and sensitivity to surrounding sounds, to which she responds by twitching and turning in the direction of the sound source. Her sensitivity is evident in the artwork:



She places one stone on the table, representing her, the starting point. She builds two concentric, round walls around it, and on the side where the rest of the group sits, she places two more “dams”. It is evident that she needs multiple protection. Psychotherapist also implements the technique in individual sessions, so here is an example from one of them. The lady,

a Holocaust survivor after WWII, lives an “illusion of life”, which exists only in photographs, even her photographs, which she looks at with an empty stare. Inside, the same darkness pervades. After the death of her husband, she completely withdraws, has suicidal thoughts, and expresses her attitude by less and less participation in all forms of being. Her boundary with



Slika 19



Slika 20

the world is firm and impermeable; she is utterly distant from others and gives a very narrow window for communication. This space was successfully established through art therapy. Figure 20 shows a person's feelings of being cornered due to her immobility and dependence on a wheelchair.

She depicts herself with a green endless string of plasticine, a representation of herself that she shaped the first time we met. Her color was green and, she would be surprised, green means hope for her. In the process of building a wall - her boundary for everyone, which was on the left part of the paper, she suddenly moves

the constructed wall in front of her with a firm hand movement to describe the feeling of being trapped even in her own home.

### 3. Results

The results of this mini-research provide clear, positive feedback on using traditional building techniques for therapeutic purposes.

Out of a total of twenty (20) participants, as many as thirteen (13, i.e., 65%) spontaneously created on the topic of protection, borders, security, and privacy (Table no. 2).

Three persons (15%) use the technique as a self-sufficient meditative process, and two people (10%) add meaning to their meditative-contemplative building process (the tortured walls of Jerusalem and the beginnings of civilization).

Two persons create a paper on the theme of memories from the past, unrelated to border themes (10%). Remembrance and contemplation surfaced through work in this technique, so the process can be placed in the category of a meditative process that evokes memories and gives meaning.

Only one person leaves the process due to the inability to handle the material (5%).

Looking at the structure of the work, most people made three-dimensional constructions (13, i.e., 65%), while seven

people made two-dimensional works (7, i.e., 35%) (Table No. 3).

According to the way of presentation, the works are divided into symbolic, narrative, meditative, and contemplative processes. A person who struggled with managing small parts replaced the construction process with the process of grouping stones according to color, emotionally and cognitively controlling an unbearable and unfeasible process (Table No. 3).

According to the use of materials, in most cases, participants used only stones (15, i.e., 75%), and only five (5, i.e., 15%) use additional art techniques (crayons, clay, plasticine, collage, wire) (Table no. 4).

In eight out of twenty (40%) cases, people used color to construct a particular image, separating colors and building certain elements according to them (5, i.e., 25%) or using colors to represent emotions symbolically (3, i.e., 15%) (Table no. 5).

Table 1: Overview of participants and their works according to structure and topic. The colour indicates the groups of participants in the research: yellow - psychiatric patients, pink - Holocaust survivors, purple - women's group.

<b>Figure nr.</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Tema/theme/topic</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Pyramid</i>	<i>2D, symbolic representation</i>	<i>Privacy, border maintenance</i>
<b>2 a,b,c</b>	<i>Parents' home</i>	<i>2D, presentation of events from the past, narration</i>	<i>Need for protection, privacy, reminiscence</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>3D, symbolic representation</i>	<i>Border</i>
<b>4</b>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>3D, symbolic representation</i>	<i>Protection</i>
<b>5</b>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>Process orientation, meditative approach</i>
<b>6</b>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>Process orientation, meditative approach</i>
<b>7</b>	<i>Flag</i>	<i>2D, combined technique (drawing, collage) symbolic representation</i>	<i>Safety</i>
<b>8</b>	<i>Going to the seaside</i>	<i>3D, combined technique (making a doll, fantasies on future, narrative symbolic presentation of the solution to the situation</i>	<i>Separation, need for peace, protection</i>
<b>9a,b</b>	<i>Attack in my room</i>	<i>3D, combined technique (plasticine) narrative, presentation of events from the past, symbolic representation of the solution to the situation</i>	<i>Borders, protection</i>
<b>10a,b</b>	<i>Bunker</i>	<i>2D, narrative, presentation of events from the past</i>	<i>Defence, protection, reminiscence</i>
<b>11a,b,c</b>	<i>Author's buildings</i>	<i>3D, pictures from the past, narrative</i>	<i>Reminiscence</i>
<b>12</b>	<i>The Old City of Jerusalem's walls</i>	<i>3D, symbolic representation, narrative</i>	<i>Contemplation</i>
<b>13</b>	<i>/</i>	<i>3D grouping by colour</i>	<i>Process of frustration/ organization</i>
<b>14</b>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>Process orientation, meditative approach</i>
<b>15</b>	<i>Self / 4 elements</i>	<i>3D, combined technique (drawing) symbolic representation</i>	<i>Borders</i>
<b>16</b>	<i>The beginnings of civilization</i>	<i>3D, action narrative???</i>	<i>Contemplation</i>
<b>17</b>	<i>Empire State Building</i>	<i>2D, symbolic representation</i>	<i>Fear of heights / Limit of safety - the ground under your feet???</i>
<b>18</b>	<i>Heart</i>	<i>3D, combined technique (clay) symbolic representation</i>	<i>Borderline emotional</i>
<b>19</b>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>2D, symbolic representation</i>	<i>Borders, protection</i>

<b>20</b>	<i>Wall</i>	<i>2D, narrative ???</i>	<i>Borders, privacy</i>
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Table 2: Overview of the number of participants and their works by topic.

<i>Theme/</i>	<i>Borders/ Protection/ Privacy /</i>		<i>Meditative process/ Contemplation</i>		<i>Reminiscence, pictures from the past (not bound/connected to borders) 3D</i>	<i>Nothing 3D</i>
	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>		
<i>Number</i>	6	7	5	0	1	1
<i>Total</i>	13		5		1	1

13/20 have a protection theme; 5/20 use the technique as a meditative process, 2/20 have no therapeutic effect

Table 3: Overview of the participants and their works according to the presentation structure.

<i>Structure</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>	<i>symbolic representation</i>		<i>meditative process</i>		<i>narrative representation</i>	
			<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>
	13	7	7	3	3	0	5	4

Table 4: Review of the participants and their work according to the material used.

<i>Technique</i>	<i>Pebbles</i>		<i>Combined technique</i>	
	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>
<i>Number</i>	10	5	4	1
<i>Total</i>	15		5	

Table 5: Review of the participants and their work according to the use of color.

<i>Colour</i>	<i>Use of colour</i>		<i>Ignoring colour</i>	
	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>	<i>3D</i>	<i>2D</i>
<i>Number</i>	6	2	7	5
<i>Total</i>	8		12	

## 4. Discussion

Walls are built to be destroyed. Each wall is a border, protection, prohibition, and challenge at the same time.

When the wall was erected in Berlin, it became a border between two parts of the city, two segments of the country, and two different political orientations. It led to the development of entirely different cultures in a place that was once one. The power of the wall is to separate.

When the prison wall was erected, it served to protect citizens from potentially dangerous individuals and to confine criminals so that they would no longer endanger people and property and punish them. The function of the wall is to protect. Along with control and a criminal justice system, the wall creates a space of imprisonment, confinement, and the absence of freedom.

Psychiatric institutions have high walls so that patients do not put themselves and the environment in danger, and in the forensic department, as perpetrators of criminal acts, they are locked up with security measures, similar to those prisons. Also, the significant influence of stigma and misunderstanding of the environment influence separation from the community, hiding disadvantages from the eyes of the cultured public, and accordingly - building walls.

Hospitals also have walls, and specific departments are guarded more than others (infectious diseases ward). However, these

walls are more “perforated,” harbor fewer prejudices, are passed more often and more relaxed, and arouse less curiosity. What we know scares us less. Learning the necessary measures and the rules of behavior in hospital circumstances leads to a better understanding and easier consent to the hospital conditions and protocols.

The monastery’s walls signify isolation and the need for peace and contemplation, a spiritual way of life. Life functions under different conditions inside the walls; the hierarchy and even the authorities are different. The wall here serves as a separation of the spiritual from the secular way of life.

The symbol of the wall is also a symbol of an obstacle, of something inaccessible, forbidden, and therefore challenging, something that arouses curiosity and fantasy.

The question is what a comfortable wall is, one that could protect our integrity and not pose a threat or ban entry into “our” or “your” space. How ample is that space? How high should the wall be to meet the stated needs?

Through the art therapy process of creating a wall, we explore our boundaries, the space needed for our sense of safety, protection, and privacy. Borders, both in war and in peace, must be known, recognized, and clear so that a person’s integrity would not be jeopardized. By respecting our boundaries, we let our environment understand how they should treat us while not closing the possibility

of communication. We make space for ourselves without endangering nature or the integrity of our neighbors.

Participants of the three groups presented with the material, rather than the technique, spontaneously built. Whether they were floor plans of buildings or buildings, a wall as a symbol of the borders of Self, a wall as a defense or a representation of the feeling of confinement, the themes raised in sharing were: borders (Fig. 1, 3, 8, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20), privacy (1, 2, 20), security (Fig. 1, 2), isolation (2b, 2c), and protection (Fig. 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 19). Sometimes, the lack of a border was a specific orientation of the topic (16, 17) and sometimes its emphasis (9, 19, 20).

Flat, two-dimensional construction (Figs. 1, 2, 7, 10, 17, 19, 20) provides greater control and less need for solving problems with creative power and assumes a more substantial regression or motor deterioration. Symbolic and narrative structural elements appear in two-dimensional works, but significantly less (15% of symbolic two-dimensional works, 20% of narrative two-dimensional works), while there are no meditative processes. This information can confirm the assumption of stronger mental disfunction, reduced motor, mental, or creative abilities.

Three-dimensional construction is undoubtedly in the majority, regardless of the population, and occurs in narrative, symbolic, and meditative/contemplative expression.

Symbolic expression appears in 53%, narrative in 38%, and meditative processes in 23% of three-dimensional constructions.

Narration in three-dimensional works has the role of action play of scenes (attack in the room, building of civilization, being cornered) or the story described by the created image (heart, wall-Self, walls of Jerusalem). In other cases, three-dimensional constructions used in narration are pictures from the past (bunker, designed buildings), and reminiscences.

Ultimately, the process produced interesting results that can be used for further research.

It would undoubtedly be useful to study work with natural materials in which a person could feel the sensory-motor effect stronger, considering the variety of shapes and sizes of the stone. Along with the variety of shapes comes the variety of designs, which was a limiting factor in given research. The size of the stone is also crucial in populations characterized by reduced motor function (the elderly and people with various physical and mental disabilities).

Studying land-art therapy in the natural environment and conditions would be worthwhile. Groups (partners, families, groups...) could benefit from the drywall as a good strategy for studying boundaries in relationships.



## 5. Conclusion

This mini-research showed that the traditional drywall technique was successfully implemented as an art therapy process in dealing with the themes of borders and boundaries, security, protection, privacy, and defense. It also proved to be a powerful means of narrative representation and action-based problem-solving. On the other hand, the technique was used as a meditative process, creating a space for contentment, relaxation, and concentration, and sometimes escaping (building indefinitely until the end of the working time).

People from three different populations responded to the material and technique intuitively by building and creating topics in these three directions: issues of security / safety / borders / boundaries / privacy, narrative (imagination or reminiscence), and meditative creative process.

In developing the themes, some persons spontaneously built drywall, and others added other materials (clay, plasticine, paint, wire, fabric...).

Adapting this traditional technique to the art therapy process proved to be a rich experience and a base for elaborating essential topics within the psychotherapy process.

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