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THE EXPERIENCE OF ART IN PSYCHOTHERAPY - HOW TO SEE ANGEL IN THE MARBLE AND CURVE TO SET HIM FREE?

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Michelangelo said "I saw angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.", as he didn't see himself creating something new, but unwrapping beauty that was already there. Art and psychotherapy have many things in common - both are based on relationships and sincerity, communicate through interpretation, creativity and imagination. Experience of art - as mode of learning about reality and one's inner world - can be incorporated into psychotherapy. Our Day hospital program includes psychodynamic analytic oriented group psychotherapy, psychoeducation, sociotherapy and art workshop. The latter implies patients' artistic creation and visits to museums. It stimulates patients' relationships with art and brings back a need for esthetic experience which can have protective and reparative role. Here we present several clinical vignettes, thus showing specific relations between psychotherapy and patients' experience of art; and give an overview of psychiatric patients' works stored in artistic collections (from Prizhorn until now), as well as art brut, and new psychotherapeutical technique - art therapy. Taking into account analytic and iconographic interpretations, we discuss their similarities and ask - what does a patient achieve by interpreting unconscious contents and what does interpretation of art mean to a recipient? Art and psychotherapy undoubtedly have an impact on us - they cause not only a direct physical reaction, but a sense of pursuit of meaning and contemplation leading to cognition. Every work of art leaves empty space for recipient to fill in. We believe this encourages an integrative process which is also aim of psychotherapy.