



Healing Emotions Through Design and Handwork

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Contextual Review and Concept: Humanity has expressed their feeling and emotions of anxiety, doubts, and hope through different means such as poetry, quilting and artwork. With the stressful time that I am passing during COVID19 and as a mom and student, the purpose of this project was to let my emotions heal by working with my hands designing and dyeing. So, that I can satisfy my emotions of missing my home country and extended family. Historically and culturally art is known as a healing tool, especially when patients are surrounded by music, poetry, storytelling, painting, gardens, and fountains (Ulrich, 2003). Art is considered as a clinical concept that helps people to move toward higher levels of wellness. It prompts individuals to connect between themselves emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and socially to develop coping skills. As well as teach healthy and ill individuals to thrive and overcome challenges they may face (Rancour & Barrett, 2011). A study by Sandmire et al., (2012) showed that art making activities such as drawing, painting, coloring pre-designed mandalas, and collage making decreased a person's state of anxiety and stress. Many studies concluded that art experiences benefit positively people's health and well-being as well being a powerful, emotional, and cultural tool in improving the quality of life to individuals and society (Fleischer & Grehan, 2016). Doing artwork related to one's culture could strengthen the homesick individual, retain their identity, and provide emotional therapy (Dieterich-Hartwell & Koch, 2017).

Technique, Process, and Cohesion: Stitching resist is a traditional method called "*shibori*" by the Japanese and used by others for decorating cloth such as in China, Asia, and Africa. Stitching is used to resist and protect the area from dye creating varieties of delicate or bold, complex to simple, or pictorial or abstract design (Wada et al., 1983). The artists can create different processes and various patterns that record and sustain the memory in the cloth (Wada, 2016). For this project hand stitching was used to create patterns to resist natural dyes for a ruana.

The diamond was the primary resisted shape (Wada, et al., 1983). Stitches were spaced at one cm to protect the area from dye. The fabric was bamboo rayon. The natural dyes were logwood purple and marigold. The dye process included scouring the fabric with detergent and soda ash for an hour at 100 C. Then, the fabric underwent tannin pretreatments of either gallnut extract at 10% to the weight of fiber (WOF) or pomegranate at 8% WOF. Next, the fabrics were mordanted with aluminum acetate at 10% WOF (Schrader, 2010).

I selected marigold as it dyes fabric yellow and represents the golden desert sand that constitutes most of my homeland Saudi Arabia. The logwood purple dye was selected as it symbolizes my current schools' color and where I am currently living during the pandemic. Marigold dried flowers were used at 20% WOF and the logwood extract at 1% WOF. Fabrics were dyed twice for 2 hours in 90 C. The ruana pattern was made in the size of 124 cm wide and 145 cm long. All the pieces were sewn together and then decorated by basic sashiko, a Japanese form of embroidery.

Significance, Rationale, Contribution: This project started from a healing and emotional concept since artwork and working by hand represent meaningful connections between artists and their home countries (Dieterich-Hartwell & Koch, 2017; Sandmire et al., 2012). By doing this project I intended to calm my emotions and heal my grief from feeling isolated and socially distant due to the current situation with COVID 19. By working with my hands and imagination through designing, coloring, and stitching, I could liberate my mind, body, and spirit from my loneliness. Through colors and shapes, I connected with my home country memories and good times spent with my family and loved ones. This creative work helped me to overcome the emotional situation I was going through and it also can be a reference for other people struggling with bad situations to heal by doing creative artwork.

Originality and Innovation: The project is one-of-a-kind with stitched resists, natural color, and embroidery. I used the language of fashion design to communicate feelings and heal emotions. Additionally, the colors and the shapes helped me to make connections between art and my emotion.

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