

POP UP
ART HIVES
in 15 Easy Steps:

Enhancing Individual and
Community Resilience
Through Art Making



Introduction

Welcome to **POP UP ART HIVES in 15 Easy Steps!** It's fabulous to meet you.

This manual is specific to pop up art hives, the kind you might host once or twice in a novel location. It also offers ideas about how to run an art hive if you are suddenly in charge of one and you haven't had much chance to research them. Our experience at **Ebb & Flow Art Hive** in Alberta, Canada, formed the basis for this manual. We created it as part of our social justice project, a component of our graduate degree in psychotherapy and art therapy. By the way, when I say "we", I sometimes mean me, **Jillian Paschen**, and I sometimes mean our art hive as a collective.

Primarily, we outline the **15 Easy Steps**, as the title suggests (see pages 5-19). A **Practical Matters** section follows, (pages 20-24), with info about essential art materials and basic hive necessities.

To conclude, there is a **Workbook Component** to get you brainstorming about the particular focus you would like YOUR art hive to have (see pages 25-33). We look at the differences between art hives and art therapy. We also discuss three of the most popular foci for art hives—creativity, spirituality, and social change—and we draw connections between them in ways that invite your input.

Please note that a wonderful manual for regular art hives already exists! This isn't it. You can access it at arthives.org. It has excellent info on fiscal structure, grant writing, and safety with art materials and tools. It also tells you more than we do about the social and political background of art hives. It was co-written by the amazing Art Hive Founder, Janis Timm-Bottos, and Art Hives National Director, Rachel Chainey.

A word to users of this manual: As art therapists, we are not typically trained as “advocates or revolutionaries, [or] as social and cultural analysts and critics, but as those who, through the art therapy process, help people cope and adapt” (Junge, 2009, p. 109). What many suggest we are helping people cope and adapt to, though, is a society in disrepair and a “fatally injured mental health system” (p. 109). As a lifelong activist for social justice, I have chosen art hives, a form of free, open, community art studios, as a vehicle for societal and systemic change. I believe art hives serve as a healthy presence in the community and an adjunct to more formal mental wellness services. Through both art therapy and art hives, we proclaim ourselves to be “champions of a non-hierarchical, anti-elitist view of art” (Moon, 2002, p. 307). We also support “creative processes for decision-making and problem solving, as well as, meaning-making and healing” (AATA, 2013). As an art therapist, I see my community practice as a necessary partner to my private practice, and I see both as necessitating vigorous self-interrogation so I do not function as another jagged part of a broken system. I have created this manual to facilitate the growth of the art hive movement as one more path, along with art therapy and many other healing modalities, towards a kinder, gentler world. As Catherine Moon says, “In one sense, all art therapy practice is activist because it addresses social ills. [W]e art therapists address social change, one person at a time, through the work we do within ourselves and through assisting those who come to us for help” (Moon, 2002, p. 298).

Disclaimer: The conceptual frame for art hives has developed from a long line of movements for social justice. As with all art for social change projects and work that involves the process of co-creation, we must be careful not to claim too much for this practice. We must “caution against framing [these movements] as a catch-all panacea for social exclusion and marginalization, given the differentials of power that thread through urban society” (Carpenter, 2020, p. 174). However, we are fostering the forming of relationships that have the potential to transform our social consciousness. We can envision neighbours who have never spoken before, connecting outside of the polarizing lines that divide our communities. Our movement has “the capacity to impact the people who can trouble [...] structural forces, [...] question inequalities related to gender, class, race, and postcolonialism, and challenge societal inequities” (p. 187). Art hives are a hopeful practice. Change is in the air.

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1

Secure a group studio space

Your local community league, church, or outdoor space may be available. Use your network and word of mouth to find out which groups or organizations may be able to offer you space, free of charge. If indoors, you'll want tables, chairs, a washable floor, and access to a utility sink.

2

Access art materials

Focus on re-purposable, donated, and found objects (more info on page 19-23).

If you need to buy some items (like specialized paper, paint, scissors, tape, glue), consider sustainability, ethical production, and a light footprint on the earth.

Look for nontoxic and highly expressive items.¹ If you use items from nature, consider the principle of reciprocity.² Sustainability of art materials is an environmental justice issue.³



3

Invite participants from all walks of life

Be especially welcoming and open to children, the aged, people with differing abilities, LGBTQ2S+ individuals, and those from cultural and ethnic backgrounds that have been historically marginalized.

Edward Said reminds us to ask ourselves: “Different from what and according to whom?”⁴ This will encourage us to be gentle and humble. Remember to interrogate your biases on an ongoing basis, because humility and loving attitudes benefit us all.



4

Centre and ground yourself as a facilitator

Ensure that you are skilled in managing interpersonal conflict.

Have a background in trauma-informed practice.⁵

Make your own art frequently to ensure you are attuned and compassionate when you witness the art making process of others.⁶





5

Provide materials and working space to allow free access to all participants

Creative expression is a human right. Access to art materials and art studio space is imperative for social justice.⁷

6

Foster connection to the space

...and attunement to the natural
rhythms and patterns around us.

Making art can be a way to explore our
ecological identity: the way we
understand our place in nature and the
world.⁸





7

Set the stage for liminal space to develop

Make space for not knowing.⁹

“If what is let out truly flows from our depths, then it’s flowing from [Source’s] depths too, and the divine creative energy...that alone inspires the universe is happening through us.”¹⁰

8

Consider offering a frame¹¹

Open with inspiring music, visual art, or poetry

Set intentions as individuals (eg. to gain awareness of what's real for me, right now)

Art making time: 1-2 uninterrupted hours is ideal

Response or witness writing

Option to share your work with the group if you wish—artist's choice

Close with gratitude and respect for each other



9

Each-one-teach-one¹²

Encourage participants to engage with one another in order to share skills and inspirations, if desired.

We all benefit when we take turns being teachers and learners for each other.





10

Promote the concept
that we're all creative

No one is more "important" or "talented"
than anyone else.

The art of women, racialized people, children,
the mentally ill, the economically
disadvantaged, and those otherwise
marginalized, has been ignored for centuries
for no valid reason. It's time for change.¹³

11

Advocate for each participant's right to their own individual process and experience

Some people are here to hone their visual art skills, or learn new ones.

Some people come to spend time with family or a friend.

For other people, the creative act is a form of deep listening, like meditation or prayer.¹⁴



12

Trust the process and
respect the product

Allow “not knowing what comes next” to be okay.¹⁵

If the outcome makes little sense—wait. Look again,
later on. Meaning may have developed.¹⁶



13

Teach by example

Move with what is moving and be still with what is still.¹⁷

Feel like you need materials, ideas, or inspiration? Ask.

Yearn for stillness and solitude? Make art in silence and those around you will respect that.





14

Above all, play!

Explore, pay attention, and be open to whatever comes.

“Out of awareness, organically, comes change.”¹⁸

15

Encourage the “no comment” guideline if art is shared¹⁹

Unless explicitly invited, it is respectful to leave art interpretation to the artist.

This fosters openness, inclusion, authenticity, humility, and compassion.





Practical Matters

Think of how you'll get the word out: posters, lawn signs, social media, partner organizations, etc.

Consider your publicity/invitation timeline

Work with a sufficient number of co-facilitators or volunteers

Compile your art materials list (see the next four pages)

Gather packing and organizing materials

Access pails to collect brush rinsing water

Access clean-up materials and tools

Allow time for set up and tear down



Essential art materials to have on hand

Include: art paper, watercolour paints, paint brushes, nontoxic coloured markers, pastels (water soluble and oil based), and painter's tape.

Art stores are a good source for these items.

Some people also like to work/play with tempera paints, pencil crayons, modeling clay, or sidewalk chalk.

Seek donations that will make your hive run more smoothly

Cardboard, printer paper, graph paper, glue, tape, scissors, rulers, clamps, garbage bags, egg cartons or paper plates for paint pallets, and yogurt containers for rinsing brushes will help.

Other helpful donations include fabric, yarn, cotton batting, beads, buttons, corks, old magazines, sewing supplies, twigs, sticks, acorns, grasses, dried flowers, spruce needles, seashells, feathers, and coloured tissue paper.

Some people come equipped with their own knitting, sewing, sculpture, woodwork, or metal projects, etc. Welcome them!





Invite your participants to bring special items

If you will be working/playing with fabric, yarn, simple weaving projects, mobiles, doll making, mandalas, sculpture, found objects from nature, or collage, you can give a bit of notice in the invitation that goes out in advance. Many participants will have items on hand at home that they can bring along to share and for their own use. Others will naturally gravitate to painting or drawing, followed by journaling or poetry, no matter what the planned activity.

Sometimes you'll want to offer a simple physical warm up or relaxation exercise, so it's also good to remind people to wear comfortable clothes.

Basic necessities

Individual water bottles and small snacks (like sunflower seeds, cereal bars, or popcorn) for the comfort of participants

A first aid kit—just in case

At least one facilitator with First Aid Training

Cloth, packing paper, or plastic sheeting to prevent tables from staining

Access to shade

Access to washroom facilities

Access to a utility sink



Workbook Component

ART HIVES: 3 POSSIBILITIES

Group art making that focuses on the creative process...

Creativity

Spirituality

Social Change

...and in turn to an expanded social consciousness.

...links us to the universal creative process...

LET'S EXPLORE! Brainstorming Session: What words and phrases do you associate with each of the key terms?

Creativity

Paint and brushes

Everyday creativity

Spirituality

A power greater than me

Love is all around us

Social Change

Live by the "Golden Rule"

Eliminate systemic racism

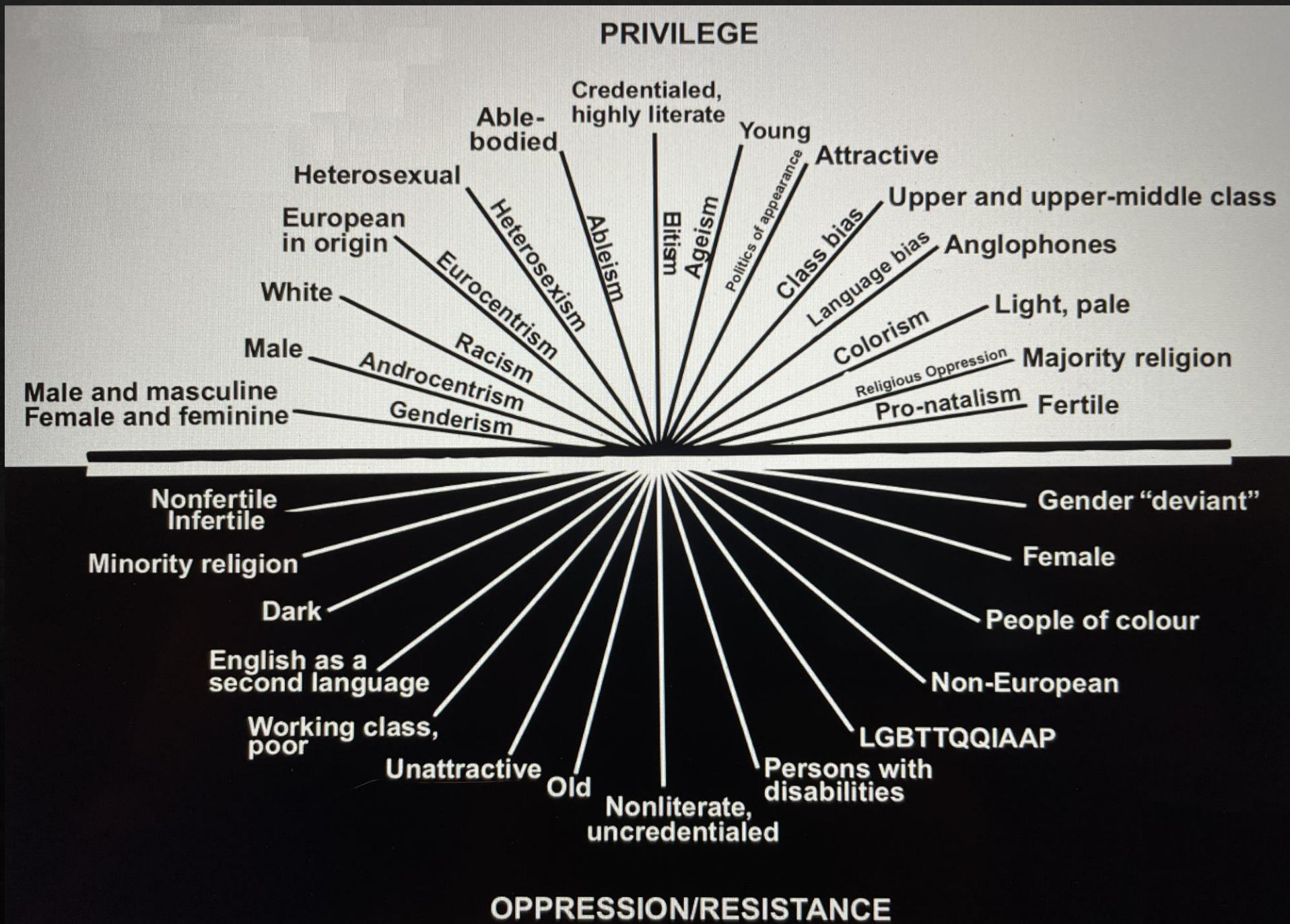
Comparing Art Therapy and Art Hives

Art Therapy

- ◇ Believes the creative process involved in the making of art is healing and life-enhancing²⁰
- ◇ Utilizes the creative process during sessions with individuals, couples, families, and groups
- ◇ Sees art making as an opportunity for expression of self, soul, spirit, Source, an idea or feeling, and so on
- ◇ Requires an awareness of one's unconscious biases as a therapist and an ongoing effort to address and equalize the power differential between therapist and clients^{21, 22}
- ◇ Opens up clients to new possibilities

The Art Hive Movement

- ◇ Also believes the creative process involved in the making of art is healing and life-enhancing
- ◇ Builds a creative process community of art makers
- ◇ Sees art making as all this, plus “an occasion for unselfing”²³ and an opportunity to bond with people we have just met
- ◇ Builds an awareness of systemic racism and xenophobia, and makes an explicit, conscious effort towards wiping out white supremacist attitudes²⁴ and ideas of human exceptionalism²⁵
- ◇ Opens up communities to new possibilities



Sharing physical space peacefully with diverse others and making a point of truly seeing and hearing one another through silent appreciation of each other's art...²⁶

...gives us a chance to influence each other's nervous systems in a soothing, harmonious and positive way.

"Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives."²⁷

What worldview do art hives come from?

- ◇ Do you think art hives could exist within any other worldviews?
- ◇ What's your current worldview?
- ◇ Do you have friends or family whose worldviews are different from your own?



What can art making do?

Far from revealing a single didactic truth, the creative process can:

Open up discursive space

Encourage self-reflective practice

Celebrate difference ²⁸

What to expect on an individual level

A sense of joy, fun, wonder, and peace.

Experiences of agency and confidence. A sense of accomplishment.

Increased creativity and resilience.

A gradual widening of focus to include others.

What to expect on a community level

Deepening connections with others.

A sense of belonging. New friendships.

The opportunity to express and receive gratitude.

The opportunity to develop, maintain, and enrich social consciousness and community resilience.

If dreams could come true: What we can hope for on a societal level

Consciously choosing the kind of world in which we want to live.

Applying common intention: With our art, we build the world.²⁹

Increased understanding of, and appreciation for, diversity—within ourselves and among others.

Q: What else would YOU hope for?

Thank you for working
through this manual!

Have questions or feedback?
We'd love to hear from you.

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between 2016-2022.

“Where art is recovered as
being an essential human
activity, ecstasy returns.
And wonder. And surprise.”

Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing*. 1983. (p. 186.)

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