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COLLAGE

A BRIDGE TO COMMUNICATION

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It's hard to understand art, but you can gain a lot while studying art and its history. After all, as the famous psychologist Abigail Housen argues, not all spectators react in the same way in front of art pieces, and this has nothing to do with age, but with personal experiences and stimuli.

In this article I will talk about the art of collage and how this has been a bridge to communication between me and other people, which helped me to get messages through and express my feelings.

Collage is day by day entering the world of traditional art, showing that art is now moving from the paint brush only and starts to represent reality in a different way. The road of Picasso and Braque is followed by a number of other artists such as Max Ernst, Joseph Cornell, Jim Dine, Jean Tinguely, Henri Matisse, David Hockney, and Helen Black, but also a huge number of simple people, young people, like myself.

How collage influenced my own life

My name is Danae Antoniou and I was born in 29/8/86. Because of lack of oxygen during my



birth the doctors diagnosed cerebral palsy. However, thanks to the people that are close to me and love me all these years and based on the inner strength and courage I developed, I am today a student at the University of Cyprus. Meanwhile I have managed to find ways to express myself, other than verbal communication that I lack,

and ways to say what I feel, and lead a normal life. My needs are not different from other people. What is different is the way I am trying to express and respond to those needs.

I remember started using colours in the age of 3. Even though because of athetosis it was difficult for me, I started gradually drawing lines. Art was something that always calmed my

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soul. Always during the years, I was trying in various ways to express my need, my basic needs of safety and hug.

In the summer of 2007 during my occupational therapy session, I noticed a little child around 9 years old that was cutting and sticking faces of various actors from magazines, and trying to draw dialogues. I immediately felt that this was something I could use to start drawing my biography. I decided to present through collage the way my life has been described to me by my relatives and friends, and the way I perceive my life. Using figures out of magazines would be a way to utilise my own skills, since I love and I am able to do it. Then I would ask someone to write the dialogues for me, by showing them on my communication paper board, or even type them on my computer.

I loved my idea because it first of all helped me un-dig my needs and also discover new ones in order to respond to them. In addition this was the easiest and the most pleasant way for me to explain to other people what is cerebral palsy and how it influenced my own life. The technique of collage helped me general to get rid of anger towards people I thought as responsible for my difficulties, and hence its use became valuable for my life. It is a way that helps me create and express my feelings and experiences though pictures and colours. For me collage is a way to communication. It is a technique that serves my needs, based on my abilities, and by it I am creative and at the same time I am trying to be informative for the world around my, in order to get them understand my situation as well as the condition of other people with similar experiences.



This is the first time I have been devoted that much into something. I spend every moment of my free time in creating my biography, and it seems that everybody that has seen my work till today does really understand what I mean. After all, "a picture equals a thousand words". Before starting the work, I first chose the particular figures (famous Greek actors) that would represent the persons

of my life (parents etc). In this way, I could use any figures of bodies I needed and replaced the faces. Then, I was either typing or showing to a facilitator short dialogues which expressed the meaning of the picture.

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Now I am sure that the art of collage is a communication method. And as a teacher, I can use it in my own students' education. The attached power point is a fairy tale I created using collage, for my own students, during my practice teaching experience at the University. The tale talks about the "[Adventure of a letter](#)", and wants to pass the message: "When there is a will for communication there is always a way, regardless any obstacles". The letter has finally reached its recipient! Enjoy it!

PICTURES FROM MY BIOGRAPHY



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