

Color Healing the Balinese Mandala Color in Painting Practice



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ABSTRACT: Color is very essential in life; it is hard to imagine this world without color or only black and white. All colors appear between black and white because they exist due to the effects of light and energy. This article focuses on how to use color as a medium of healing. The color of the Balinese mandala in form of the circle color wheel, each direction has its color, meaning, gods, place in the body, day, and number. The color is related to balance human emotion and healing psychology. Psychology is part of the field of science and applied science about human behavior, mental function, and mental processes. At first, color healing is only considered as a discourse in the development of visual art, but over time, gradually the understanding of using color healing began to develop. Painting becomes a pleasure that is very useful in developing and exploring various layers of life, both physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The main methods of using color as healing are play, flow, and freedom. There are several steps I used to practice using color healing; (1) study the psychological level of feelings of the participant; (2) classify the problem and search for the methods of expression; (3) interpretation and analysis of the artworks produced by participants; and (4) interpreting the colors and interviewing according to the participant's needs. In this case, the aspects of generating internal awareness and high sensitivity within the participant become the main focus.

KEYWORDS: painting, color, and healing.

INTRODUCTION

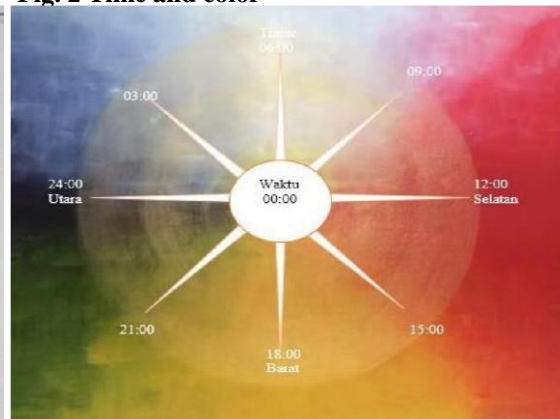
Color is quite simply, light, and none of us cannot live without it. The cells of our bodies react to it or the lack of it and this affects directly our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being (Norris, 2001: 8). Color is light and energy, color is visible because it reflects through all kinds of particles, molecules, and objects. There are various wavelengths that light can be categorized as, producing different types of light. Each color has a specific frequency and vibration, which many believe contributes to the specific properties that can be used to influence the energies and frequencies within our bodies. Certain colors that enter the body can activate hormones that cause chemical reactions in the body, then affect emotions and allow the body to heal. Color is known to affect people with emotional problems or brain disorders. Ngurah Nala (1996) in his book *Usada Bali* explained that the color of the *pangider bhuwana*, Balinese mandala color, is the nine gods that guard the eight wind directions within the eight directions of the compass with one god at the center of the circle, the mandala. The eight gods are namely Iswara - is white in the East, Dewa Maheswara - is pink in the Southeast, Brahma is red in the South, Rudra is orange in the Southwest, Mahadewa is yellow in the West, Sangkara is green in the Northwest, Vishnu is black in the North, Sambu is gray-blue in the Northeast, Shiva is multi-colored at the center.

Fig. 1. Balinese color wheel.



Source: Foto repro Wayan Karja

Fig. 2 Time and color



Source: Wayan Karja

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Color healing is related to psychology. Psychology is part of the field of science and applied science about human behavior, mental functions, and mental processes scientifically. It comes from the Ancient Greek, psyche which means soul, and the word logia mean knowledge. Psychology is the science that studies the soul. Psychology is part of the field of philosophy that has existed since the time of Aristotle as a science of the soul. According to him, psychology is the study of the symptoms of life. The soul is an important part as an element of life, Anima, every living being has a soul. Carl Gustav Jung was a famous Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. According to Jung, "The dynamic principle of fantasy is play, which belongs to the child, and as such it appears to be inconsistent with work. But without this playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever yet come to birth." Play is very essential, it helps to free the mind, to build and develop imagination and creativity. Color healing also allows for a more abstract form of communication the imagination. It is also verbal language to express feelings and overcome personal obstacles. Albert

Einstein in his quote, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand."

At first, painting and color healing was only considered as discourses in the development of visual arts, but over time, gradually the understanding of contemplation and practice of using color healing began to develop. In addition to the practical process of applying color, the way to appreciate color is also growing, which is associated with traditional and religious beliefs into emotional and psychological needs. Paintings with certain colors and themes began to decorate the hospital rooms, apart from choosing the color of the walls, curtains, and furniture. It is believed that inner and outer balance can help to create and develop psyche health. Therefore, the questions that arose are: 1) Why does color heal? 2) How to utilize Balinese mandala color to heal? 3) What is the implication of color healing?

Understanding the Balinese mandala color allowed us to dig and develop the ancient concept into contemporary and multidisciplinary expression, include color healing. Color healing is a new field in the development of modern painting, therefore this small article is hopefully useful as a reference to enrich and develop painting and color healing.

METHODS OF PRACTICE

The method of how to use color as healing are three major actions such as play, flow, and freedom. In a session, these three steps follow by seven phases: 1) Life of Client, before the session; 2) Opening of session Bridge; 3) Art making or play; 4) Aesthetic Analyses; 5) Bridge or "harvesting"; 6) Closing of a session; 7) Life of client (Knill, 2005). The phases of building imagination are both art-making and non-art-making (non-verbal and verbal) utilize Balinese mandala color in painting practice at Karja Art Space, Penestanan Kaja, Ubud.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The common view assumes that only physical pain is the complaint, but it is the mind and heart. Visualization of mandala color is a vital part of training the senses in painting as a therapeutic function. Composition processing is related to the technique of balance, tone, rhythm, unity, and center of attention, all of which reflect the aesthetic impression and sublimation. Painting becomes a pleasure that is very useful in developing and exploring various layers of life. For artists, it is no exaggeration to say that painting is a primary need. The creativity of painting is related to the visualization of colors that from the eyes lead to inner needs. Color visualization can be said to be the staple food of the soul to see and feel more clearly the supernatural rays of the Higher Self. Efforts to understand and increase the sensitivity and awareness of subjective life, with visualization aimed at perfecting the human self from the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Only with intuition or sensitivity, the depth of creativity and spirituality can be achieved to the fullest.

In the tradition and religious belief system that God is depicted in the form of a human body.

It is a popular expression in the Sanskrit words "Tat Twam Asi," meaning "I am You," the relationship between the individual and the Absolute. The shape and color of God's manifestation form are described as the nature of human life. Color reflection of the macrocosm and microcosm as described by D.P. Ghadiali, a Hindu writer who worked in the United States in the early 20th century who formulated the scientific principles behind the effect of color on the human body (Norris, 2001: 15). Each organ has a specific aura, color, and function in the body. If in certain body parts the circulation is not normal, then building balance in the body can be done with the color healing approach. It is also related to the balance of the human self and the natural environment, the relationship between human contemplation and the universe.

Understanding the Bali mandala color can strengthen a sense of love for cultural heritage and high spirituality, including healing. The therapeutic properties of mandala color are the properties of the color that can increase the softness, smoothness, and harmony of taste. The appreciation of good and bad, healthy and sick is seen in black and white positions becomes clear. White as the end full of light and black as the position of the absence of light, dark. These two ends are polarities in opposite positions, binary system. In addition to color, healing is also done by observing, creating art, contemplating, and interpreting works of art.

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1. Color Healing

Our primitive ancestors were much in touch with the healing properties of color than we are today. From their observation of nature and the world around them, they learned to attribute certain properties to certain colors and these properties still hold good today. For instance, red was the color of the precious color that warmed their bodies and over which they cooked their food; it was also the color of the blood that ran through their veins. Red was therefore the color of life and so figured prominently in their art and rituals (Norris, 2001: 8). Interpretation and analysis of the artworks produced by participants; Theo Gimbel, a Bavarian living in Britain was heavily influenced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Rudolf Steiner. Gimbel formulates that there is a unique color approach, namely color healing which is associated with a system of learning about ancient esoteric systems. Gimbal sees color as part of a continuum, starting from dark and light then developing into sound and form. After researching for a long time, Gimbel founded the Hygeia College of Color Healing. This name is associated with the name of the Greek God of Health (Norris, 2001). Meanwhile, Rudolf Steiner explained that the therapeutic ideas regarding color are still being practiced in schools until now, the aim is to stimulate students in increasing their understanding in learning color and sensitivity.

Likewise, spiritual teaching is carried out with an understanding approach to cosmic colors. Although Steiner was educated as a scientist, from an early age Steiner had the experience of an inexplicable spiritual reality. Then Rudolf Steiner discovered anthroposophy, a school that aims to develop human spiritual perception and understand self-existence about the balance of the universe. Now in Rudolf Steiner's schools, the use of color healing is a way of knowing the stages of a child's development.

Art as medicine, color as a treatment, color healing is also related to personality characteristics, the color chosen has significant meaning for a person's behavior and personality, and is related to preferences, both mentally and physically. A Swiss psychology professor, Max Luscher, explains that color reflects a person's personality, for example, someone who chooses red reflects aggressive, strongwilled, and confident like the red color type. Likewise, those who choose blue, are a bit shy. The color of the clothes we wear, the paint of our homes, the decoration of the space and environment, the cars we choose, all reflect our character. Dark blue, or indigo, was the color of the sky under which they slept at night and dreamed to awake refreshed to another day. And green was the color of the wild plants that they sought out for food or as a medicine when they were sick or wounded. By eating, wearing, or surrounding ourselves to it in some way – we heal ourselves (Norris, 2001: 8-9).

2. Painting Using the Balinese Mandala Color

In painting practice, there is a belief that the divine spirit of creativity takes place in the process. In addition to the influence of the power of creativity is also determined by the power of the energy of the universe. The psychic realm has the power to describe a life that is far more extensive and beautiful than what we can see with the naked eye. The enormous and infinite nature is symbolized in understanding the mandala color. The color of the universe provides a very broad psychological understanding without limits as a huge circle. In Balinese tradition, all followed by the realm of symbol, fantasy, and imagination. The therapeutic function of the Bali mandala color is also associated with healing (Nala, 1996). In my solo exhibition, *Journey to the Unknown*, 2015, at The Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta, there are three main expressions to develop the therapeutic artwork, color healing: play, flow and be freedom (Karja, 2015). These three main expressions combined with the “architecture” of a session by a Swiss scientist, artist, and therapist, Paolo J. Knill. As a professor at Lesley University (Cambridge, Massachusetts), he also helped found the graduate program in Expressive Arts Healing in Switzerland. Knill's seven phases are as below:

- 1) Opening of session Bridge, connecting to the daily reality and guide toward art-making or play.
- 2) Art-making or play. Alternative world experience, decentering techniques, work-oriented, play or ritual oriented far from or close to the theme.
- 3) Aesthetic Analyses, recognizing the imaginary reality.
- 4) Bridge or “harvesting” recollecting the effective reality.
- 5) Closing of the session, connecting back to the opening of the session, homework.
- 6) The life of the client, habitual world experience is challenged (Knill, 2005:95).

In the beginning, to classified the problem and searched for the methods of expression. The concept to play, flow, and freedom is significant. The concept of configurations means form, arrangement. A term imported from the psychology of modern art criticism. Gestalt psychology was founded by Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka and Wolfgang Kohler, all experiences including aesthetic experiences are part of a very basic structure. Art can be traced from the *gestalt* theories, art facilitates participants to experience and express their awareness and perception, that through a behavioral approach the principles of reinforcement can be used to involve participants in healing. There are various ways color healing practice can be used to improve cognitive and creative skills by using the Balinese mandala color.

Balinese mandala color is the local-universal color, one of the most essential cosmic symbols. In color healing practice, the participants live it as part of their imagination and knowledge of the balance of the appearance of the color. The mandala color is an important part of people's lives in which has been inherited since ancient times. The existence of this color healing also causes painting forms to be inspired and well preserved until now. The philosophy of the Hindu religion is an important part of the development of artwork because in religious life activities there is color healing as part of the ceremonies that always involve art as

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symbolic meaning as part of the ritual procession. That feeling of happiness arises from following the procession and the practicality of the ritual which is color healing then expressed in painting. Philosophy, ethics, and ceremonies are inseparable parts. Similarly, in art, it is known as ethics, logic, and aesthetics. Fundamentals of philosophy that are very fundamental make the strength for the development of color healing in painting. Likewise, with knowledge of cosmology and astronomy, astrology can provide an overview of the colors and characteristics of human beings.

In religious beliefs, almost all nations in this world have colors as a form of certain symbols related to their beliefs. The color mandala is associated with the symbolism of the universe, or macro and microcosm. The artists relate the visualization of the presence of color healing within, the color of the chakras, as a representation of the microcosm of the universe. In the art practice, painting sessions are scheduled to last between 60 and 90 minutes. While the process of painting can be extremely elaborate in terms of the media and tools available. In addition, to enrich the practice we often use nonart material such as collage. We use tools like brushes, knives, rollers, fingers. The material like watercolor, acrylic, crayons, oil sticks, finger paint, charcoal, and pencil.

There are several steps I used to practice using color healing; (1) study the emotion level of stress and the burden feelings of the participant; (2) classify the problem and search for the methods of expression; (3) interpretation and analysis of the artworks produced by participants; and (4) interpreting the colors and interviewing according to the participant's needs. In this case, the aspects of generating internal awareness within the participant become the main focus.

Fig. 3. Play, flow, and freedom.



Source: Foto repro Wayan Karja

Fig. 4. Consultation



Source: Foto repro Wayan Karja

Participant 1 (Monika Kiraly):

“During the art class “I deeply love playing with the color in Karja’s workshop – creating the balance of Dark and Light with minimal use of color.” Simple instruction is sometimes the best inspiration. On a wet surface, I drew a dark blue and black stripe with acrylic paint on the bottom and top edges of the canvas. Then I let the paint live its own life. I was fascinated by allowing the play of colors to run toward each other. This mysterious encounter finally created the theme that came to the fore, which I completed with my imagination. The simple evolution of colors took place before my eyes, according to the paint and my inner law. This spontaneity made an unspeakable and deep impression on me. The colors invented their forms and conveyed a message without words.”

Participant 2 (Dr. Vijoleta Braach-maksvytis):

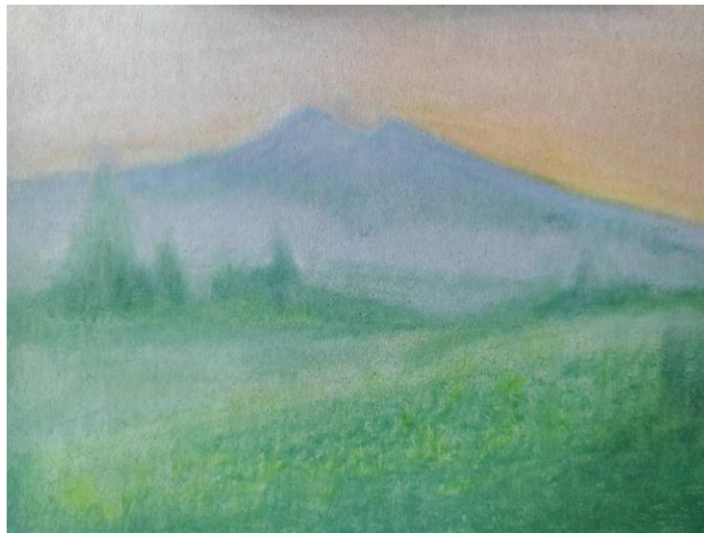
“It opened up new places in my thoughts and feelings, experiencing color as a continuum between me and the earth and the divine. Karja’s encouragement to play when painting helped to see the constraints that one builds around oneself and that it’s ok to let them go”

Fig. 5. Art session.



Source: Painting art class

Fig. 6. Dialogue, aesthetic response.



Source: Painting art class Participant 3 (Ni Made Liatini):

“I enjoyed watching the sunrise, sunset, mountain, rice field, reflection in the clear water, and all the beautiful things in nature. Karja has introduced the depth of each color and how it affects well-being. I started to use color in my contemplation and each day is different and it depends on what state I was in. I use a lot of rice fields green color on contemplation to calm my mind when I felt discomfort because green has a strong cooling effect.”

3. The Implication Color Healing

Color healing and the art practice using the Balinese mandala color reduces the psychological level of stress and burdens of the participant. The reason for practice and deepening the connection between art and psychological healing is because, in part of the cultural background, the influence of economic burdens and other life factors often results in psychological stresses. It was found that painting using the mandala color is very effective in healing emotions. Artwork is not only interesting in appreciating the final result, but the creative process is equally helpful. Images are created as a result of the game of color and lines, for example, the blue sky is an infinite space, and the green of nature is very refreshing. Contemplating a blue sky stimulates the imagination and sensing a green space of nature (rice terraces) opens the mind. This is a good method for painters in contemplation to explore themselves.

A participant's needs are understood through interviews. In this case, internal awareness within the participant becomes the main focus. Imagining the mandala colors builds an understanding of how the micro and macro cosmos work and how to balance the mind with silence. The universal color wheel is one of the most essential cosmic symbols in Balinese tradition. It helps

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participants find knowledge and balance of the universe. The mandala colors are an important part of people's lives and have been used for centuries. This color tradition has existed for a very long time and the painting forms inspired through its use have well been preserved until now. The philosophy of the Hindu religion is an important part of the development of artwork. In religious life activities ceremonies always involve art as symbolic meaning as part of the ritual procession. Feelings of happiness arise from following the procession and the practicality of the ritual is then expressed in painting. Philosophy, ethics, and ceremonies are inseparable parts. Similarly, in art, it is known as ethics, logic, and aesthetics. Likewise, with knowledge of cosmology and astronomy, astrology can provide an overview of the colors and characteristics of human beings, color affecting someone to feel healthier, happier, and more relaxed.

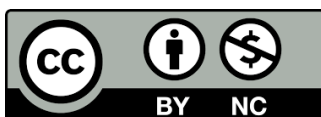
The Balinese mandala color contains nine rays of the visible spectrum. These are associated with different qualities which we all have to a greater or lesser degree therefore; 1) white is pure and it contains all the colors of the spectrum. White is pure and is also associated with spirituality and provided space to explore our inner self. 2) pink is associated with feminine and unconditional love. 3) red is a very powerful color and should not be used if one feels angry, or is upset as it will only overstimulate. Using red however can help a participant, who suffers from low blood pressure, cold, or low energy. 4) orange is associated with positive thinking, health, and vitality. It also has a tonic effect which is needed to boost the immune system, ward off cold and chills. 5) yellow helps to eliminate negative thoughts and feelings that can undermine our sense of self-worth. 6) green is the color of nature and it has the qualities of calming the mind and soothing the heart. Green can also be used to calm an emotionally unbalanced person. 7) black confers dignity and power. It has the effect of protecting as a barrier between ourselves and others. It can however in some people lead to feelings of isolation and even depression. 8) grey is the color of intelligence however it can induce a feeling of being non-committal. 9) multicolor, using all colors has the effect of balance.

CONCLUSION

Color not only create sensation but also conjure energies. Color is light and energy in the Balinese mandala has a microcosmic dimension that penetrates our body and helps in overall rebalancing. According to the process of art, practice using the Balinese mandala colors as healing, lead to three main methods used to relax the participant. These methods are play, flow, and freedom. These methods were implemented based on a participant's needs. The practice focuses on centering and balancing the self by using the Balinese Mandala color. After the art practice, the participants can be experiencing a transformation of clarity, serenity, and a desire to apply color healing in daily life.

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