

A Review of the Therapeutic Effects of Art by Louise Bourgeois

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Abstract: In today's society, the public has higher requirements for mental health. Art therapy, as a multidisciplinary interdisciplinary field, studies artworks through research methods in disciplines such as psychology, biology, and medicine. This article takes Luis Borgia as an example to analyze the current research on the artistic healing of Luis Borgia both domestically and internationally and explore how to better apply artistic healing to artistic therapy and maximize its effectiveness.

Keywords: Louise Bourgeois; Art Healing; Research Review

1. Introduction

In recent years, art healing has become a very popular topic. Through the creation of paintings, sculptures, installations, music, dance, theater, and other forms, artists bring people positive emotional experiences and emotional power to help people reduce anxiety, depression, stress, and other emotional problems at the same time to help people improve self-knowledge, enhance self-confidence, improve social skills and other aspects.

Louise Bourgeois, a contemporary French-American female artist, is considered one of the most important artists of the 20th to 21st centuries, and it can be said that her family environment has contributed to her artistic achievements, and Bourgeois has spent her whole life gradually deepening her self-analysis and self-healing through her works of art, and her sculptures are typical representatives of the direction of research on the creation and study of art therapy sculptures. The retrospective exhibition of "Louise Bourgeois" held in 2018 and 2019 has made Louise Bourgeois more and more famous in China. At the same time, there is still a lack of systematic research and special investigation on the Bourgeois in China, and people's attention is mostly focused on the description of her personal experience or the appreciation of her works at a certain period of time, and there is relatively little research on the healing nature of her works, so there is still a lot of room for research on the art of Louise Bourgeois, and the research angle also needs to be expanded.

2. Domestic and international research status

According to academic standards, the translation of the given sentence is as follows: "This article uses the keyword 'Louis Bourgeois' to search on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) website. A total of 33 articles were retrieved, including 14 journal papers and 12 academic dissertations." Most of them mainly focus on Bourgeois' personal experience and interpretation of his works, or take emotion as an intervention point to explore the expression, role, and meaning of emotion in artworks, of which only 3 are directly related to healing; searching on Google Scholar, a total of 156 articles were retrieved, and the National Documentation Center of Philosophy and Social Sciences (NDCPSS) had 38 articles, of which only 20 were related to art healing, which shows that there are still very few studies on this subject. There is still very little research on this, and the perspective needs to be expanded.

2.1. Research based on art therapy for emotional expression

In recent years, some scholars have studied the works of Louise Bourgeois from the perspective of emotional expression, with a focus on exploring the embodiment, role, and impact of emotion in the

works. For example, In reference[1], Lin Jia explores how emotion is embodied in his works and the relationship between emotion and space; In reference[2], Fan Yumeng argues that Louise Bourgeois was bringing the emotional element of plurality into specific sculptural work. The above two articles effectively explore emotional release as an artistic expression of healing, but do not specifically explain artistic healing; In reference[3], Peralta, Cristina proposes Bourgeois' use of resentment as a notable modern form of emotion, exploring its expression for the emotional and psychological; In reference[4], Tang Weichen analyzes how different emotional stages have an impact during the process of art creation, points out the role of emotional trauma in the motivation of art creation, and effectively explores the healing power of art creation from the creator's perspective; In reference[5], Liu Wanjun also takes Bourgeois's sources of emotion as an entry point, pointing out the significance of emotional expression as it unfolds in his work, but does not provide an in-depth discussion of how artistic healing is carried out.

Some other scholars have deeply analyzed Bourgeois's artistic creation process from the perspective of emotional expression, arguing that his creations originated from complex emotions, which provides theoretical support for exploring how artistic creation can be psychologically healed. For example, In reference[6], Chen Dongwei analyzes in detail the process of Bourgeois' creative mind in his journal article. In reference[7], Wang Mengjia suggests that his creations come from his memories of his childhood experiences and the complex emotions and psychological illnesses in the depths of his consciousness brought about by them; In reference[8], Zhang Yixuan argues that the birth process of his works is also the same as the birth process of his works. In reference[9], Wang Guanzhu states that Bourgeois' creative process is driven by an introspective reality, namely the childhood trauma he endured; In reference[10], Teng Huibin analyzes the impact of psychological trauma and emotional change on creativity, exploring the lyricism of Bourgeois's affective moods in her works; In reference[11], Zhiyuan Zhang explores the impact of art healing on artists, analyzes the far-reaching impact of metaphorical healing in creation on Bourgeois through the details of his works, and effectively explores the metaphorical healing he accomplished in his creations.

2.2. Healing research based on psychological theories

2.2.1. Psychological Theory-Based Research on Healing - A Self-Healing Perspective

Theories of the subconscious and ego defense mechanisms introduced by psychologist Sigmund Freud in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* provide theoretical support for the therapeutic self-healing of Louise Bourgeois' sculptural creations. In reference[12], Fang Shuwen analyzes Bourgeois's creative impulses through psychoanalytic theory and explores the use of body symbols in her works; In reference[13], Feng Yuan yuan and Ye Zi plumbed Bourgeois' creative journey from the psychoanalytic theory of the subconscious and explored the healing nature of Bourgeois's artistic creation; In reference[14], Xu Hai argues that he or she is using metaphors to relate his or her own experiences, redeeming himself or herself from the depths of the spirit, and reconciling with himself or herself with this unique act of art. Based on psychological theory, the above articles put forward effective theories on how art creation has healing properties, but they do not explore the healing elements of Bourgeois' art creation in sufficient depth. In reference[15], Wu Wei analyzes Bourgeois's psychoanalytic treatment process, analyzes Bourgeois's work from the perspective of the conscious and the unconscious, and argues that it was psychoanalysis that helped Bourgeois to learn how to create, transforming Freud's concepts into an observable and practicable artistic process.

2.2.2. Psychological Theory-Based Research on Healing - Healing Others Perspective

The theories of personality structure and personality development presented by psychologist Carl Gustav Jung in his books *The Red Book* and *The Secret of the Golden Flower* provide theoretical support for the author's discussion of the healing of the healing others in the sculptural creations of Louise Bourgeois; *The Jungian Handbook of Psychology* compiled by scholars Renos-kPapadopoulos (2019 edition) and *An Introduction to Jungian Analytical Psychology* compiled by Scholars William McGuire and Sonu ShamDasani (2019 edition) further analyzes Jungian Analytical Psychology Theory in order to develop a theoretical analysis of the healing nature of Louise Bourgeois' sculptural creations based on that theory.

In reference[16], Huckvale, K, & Learmonth, M. Scholars of innovative interventions in art therapy based on art therapy theory provide important theoretical support for the study of art healing and the healing nature of Bourgeois' work; In reference[17], Scholar Jeremy Holmes illustrates the discussion of how communicating feelings and meanings with facial expressions through reflections on the work of

visual artist Louise Bourgeois, revealing the ways in which therapists can help their patients to identify their emotions and enhance their self-awareness, broadening the avenues of healing through art; In reference[18], Ossentjuk, Robin Scholars discuss the intersection of exposure therapy and art therapy in the work and careers of Deborah Orloff, Tracey Emin, and Louise Bourgeois, as well as their own work, making an effective exploration of a new approach to art healing.

In reference[19], BoLinL, Shen M. focuses on expressive art therapy in visual art forms [Expressive art therapy in visual art forms is a therapeutic modality that utilizes visual art forms such as paintings, sculptures, photographs, and fabrics to promote physical and mental health], taking Louise Bourgeois as an example, exploring her works presented to the audience in the form of autobiographical stories, reproducing trauma and self-repairing the pain of childhood through artworks, summarizing the clinical psychological research on expressive art therapy based on virtual reality; In reference[20], Philippe Courtet, in the context of the collective psychological impact of the New Crown epidemic, raises the issue of "art on prescription", discusses how Louise Bourgeois responded to the major stresses of her early years by creating art that permeated her entire body, and concludes that her autobiographical works of art were a way of dealing with her emotions, conveying personal feelings through metaphor. conveying personal emotions through metaphor. The above articles all study the specific works of Louis Bourgeois based on psychological theories, explore the healing nature of his works, analyze the specific embodiment and practice of his works in art therapy, and provide theoretical support for the unfolding of the theoretical analysis of the healing nature of art in Bourgeois's works. The above articles all study the specific works of Louise Bourgeois based on psychological theories, explore the healing nature of his works, analyze the specific embodiment and practice of his works in art therapy, and provide theoretical support for the unfolding of the theoretical analysis of the healing nature of art in Bourgeois's works.

In reference[21], Xu Daixiang based on the theory of art healing, takes the sculpture creation of Bourgeois as a case study, analyzes the healing embodied in his sculpture creation, and comes to the conclusion that his healing is the characteristic of healing the self and other people based on the basis of art healing. This article brings new thoughts to the research direction of art healing sculpture creation, and also broadens the research path of psychological rehabilitation therapy; In reference[22], Niu Meiyu explores the deeper reasons and purposes of Bourgeois' creation of self-confessional art works, and takes the artist's self-reflection and self-confession of traumatization reproduced in his works as the basis of the research, and argues that Bourgeois was a traumatized artist in his own right, and that he was a self-proclaimed artist. Based on the artist's self-reflection and self-confession in reproducing trauma through artworks, the study concludes that Bourgeois created artworks through self-exposure of trauma after facing up to his own trauma, and showed the unconsciously repressed "objects" in his heart to the general public through artworks, thus generating a series of self-healing artworks.

3. Healing research based on artworks

In reference[23], Xu Yanbing explores the process of Bourgeois's stylistic transformation and the formal content of his works of art, and discusses Bourgeois's use of childhood memories to give vent to his self-emotions through specific works of art; In reference[24], Gu Yunqian started with Bourgeois's artworks and explored his artistic style and painting language, which provided a reference paradigm to support art therapy but did not further delve into the metaphors behind the artworks in terms of their therapeutic qualities.

In reference[25], Pan Yue start from the angle of the evolution of spider images, and select the most representative spider images for research and discussion; In reference[26], Guan Yue proposes that the spider image is the compiler, creator, and protector, argues that Bourgeois's art has always been a profound reflection on personal experience, and argues that the spider, as a metaphorical symbol of healing embodiment, represents an important significance in the process of Bourgeois's self-healing Significance. Taking the image of the spider as a starting point, it proposes that the spider image is the compiler, creator, and protector, and argues that Bourgeois's art has always been a profound reflection of personal experience and that the spider, as a healing embodiment of metaphorical symbols, represents an important significance in Bourgeois's process of self-healing; Martin Sundberg's journal article, "Pillar - A Gateway? On a Work by Louise Bourgeois and her Relationship with Art History". takes one work, Pillar (1949), as a starting point to illuminate Bourgeois's relationship with art historical writing, providing an art historical perspective on the healing nature of Bourgeois's work.

4. Significance of the study

4.1. Make "art therapy" more widely used in the field of psychotherapy and rehabilitation

With the rapid development of the economy and technology, people's psychological pressure has been deepened under the "fast" pace of life, which has led to a series of social problems, so it is particularly important to pay attention to and treat the individual's mental health problems. The study of the healing nature of Louise Bourgeois' sculptures is of great significance to the concrete practice of art therapy.

4.2. To broaden the future outlook of "art therapy" and the development direction of psychotherapy

Under the concept of "pan" art, the way of sculpture creation is flexible, and the materials used in sculpture creation are various, so the healing object of sculpture creation is more extensive than that of flat painting, which can make psychotherapy more normalized. The sculpture creates a unique visual and psychological three-dimensionality and authenticity, which enables the viewer and the art worker to vent the repressed subconscious part of the undesirable without interfering with the defense function, thus enabling the healed person to reduce stress and realize positive growth: to make life more fulfilling and to sublimate the psyche.

5. Conclusions

Most of the research on Louise Bourgeois focuses on writing about his personal growth experience and artworks, or taking emotion as the intervention point, exploring the expression of emotion in artworks, the role and significance of the display; at present, there are relatively few articles in China that take art healing as the perspective and explore art healing based on the theory of art healing, and the angle needs to be expanded. Therefore, it is possible to start with Bourgeois' artworks and conduct research from the perspective of creators and audiences.

In this research direction, it is possible to explore in depth how Louise Bourgeois's artworks provide emotional support and psychological healing for individuals, to explore the role and significance of art creation in psychological healing, and how the healing effect of art creation is perceived and experienced by the audience. At the same time, it can also explore the relationship between the healing effect of artworks and factors such as artistic techniques and creative purposes in the process of art creation, as well as how the healing effect of artworks can be utilized to promote mental health and psychological healing in society.

In addition, some unique artistic elements, such as confrontation, rebellion, and self-expression, can also be found in Bourgeois's artworks, which are also an important part of her healing art creations. Therefore, the study of Bourgeois's artworks can not only explore the relationship between art creation and personal psychological growth but also delve into the healing nature and value of artworks.

In conclusion, an in-depth study of Louise Bourgeois's artwork can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between artistic creation and psychotherapy, expand the theoretical study of art healing, and provide new ideas and methods for practice in the field of mental health.

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