



“Gecko Gaze” art and built environment workshop: “re- humanizing” healthy people

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Abstract

The objective is to present the importance of remembering people that **human beings need to be humanized to promote health and to prevent more mental health issues**. The art workshop aims to open people minds and reflect about the process of consciousness.

Humanization is considered to be the process of recognizing, valuing, and promoting the full worth, dignity, and inherent humanity of individuals or groups in a healthy balance. The benefits of bringing an art practice to incentivize humanization are various. An individual who encounter any kind of art at life, becomes a freer person to perceive what is happening to the person and, at the same time, can be more aware of your environment, your needs and in relation to other human beings, plants and animals.

According to Joseph Beuys (1906-1986) **‘to make people free is the aim of art, therefore art for me is the science of freedom’**. Freedom is not doing anything, on the contrary, it is about dividing your time to put your knowledge and experiences into practice and evolve. Doing nothing is also part of the whole, but it is a slice.

Art comes with the ‘Gecko Gaze’ art and built environment workshop applied through Mixed Methods using *‘Visual Poetics’*, which is in terms of the perceptual and cognitive resources at their disposal, in particular spatiality as a body-based semantics. It investigates the expanding role of 3-D space and of embodied visual ‘reading’. Combines methodologies from literary theory, art history, aesthetics, semiotics, psychology of perception, and cognitive linguistics.

Art comes as a creativity stimulator. **‘Gecko Gaze art and built environment workshop’ has already been applied to more than 180 persons at two universities in Brazil using exploratory sequential Mixed Methods study design.**

The purpose is to stimulate the gaze. Stimulate the body with a foreign look, unusual look, innovative, to be able to reach more oxygenated perspectives. Practicing art become less toxic to all levels people, spaces and planet.

People who consented to be part of the workshop are asked to respond to a questionnaire before and after the Gecko Gaze workshop. Questions are related to mental health and how they are feeling.

After an explanation of art and built environment influence to health, participants are asked to take photos with their cell phones metaphorically with the gaze of a lizard perspective, and not with a human gaze. Gecko walks on the floor, walls and ceilings. Perception of the world from several different perspectives are stimulated to observe the space with unusual curiosity and using imagination.

All qualitative and quantitative data were classified and analyzed as evidences based on scientific neuroscience literature. Workshop results shows unusual images composed by at least ten pictures taken by each participant. There are a lot of shapes contrast, textures, colors, abstract stains that represent people’s unconsciousness, since the expression come from the unconsciousness also. **More than 87% of total participants were satisfied with workshop results.**

Gecko Gaze workshop can be a useful tool to ‘re-humanize’ people. Creation leads to expansion of thought and contact with the subtle and sensible brain. **The workshop exercise can open doors for debate and expansion of thoughts, considering neuroscience based evaluations.**

Introduction

Art workshops are commonly used as a psychological or therapeutic assessment methodology for children and adolescents. In scientific literature, it is less common to use the art workshop for experiments with the elderly or even for teaching adults (FINOCCHIARO, L. IMBRIZI, J.M. 2017). The “Gecko Gaze” art workshop is innovative because it applies to all adults.

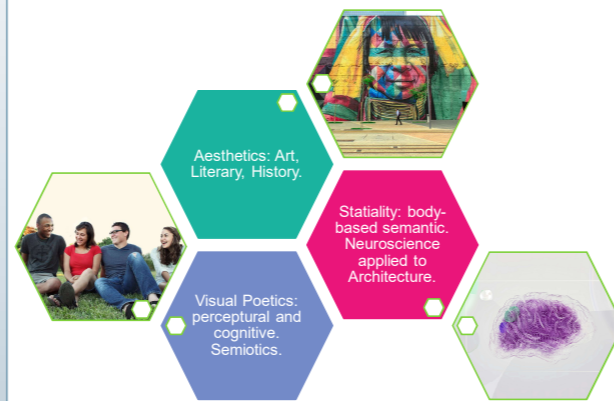
Looking is not a simple activity. Neurosciences explain biological and cognitive processes. Visual processing in humans encompasses multiple levels of integration of the brain and ocular system. Six neuronal control systems keep the eyes on the target (KANDEL et al. 2014). Each person has a different perspective and interpretation, as it depends on each organism. In society, views become even more diverse.

Humanization can transform a cold and impersonal environment into a welcoming and engaging one. Physical environments need to include works of art, lively and cheerful pictures, which can also positively influence the good -being of the multidisciplinary team that is working in a hospital.

Society needs humanization as a healthy balance has not yet been achieved. **Anxiety and depression increased by more than 25% in the first year of the pandemic alone, overwhelming health professionals, outpatient clinics and hospitals** (SOUZA W.C.I. KOZASA, E.H. 2023). Among several personal interventions to prevent and treat mental health issues are: stress reduction training, relaxation techniques, meditation, work-social life balance measures and personal measures (MOSS et al. al., 2016). **The “Gecko Gaze” workshop works as a practice and training to reduce stress, although it is not its main objective.**

Methodology

Exploratory sequential Mixed Methods study design



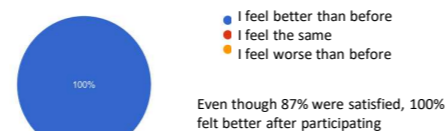
Results

During art workshop “Gecko Gaze” people were invited to open their minds and reflect on the process of individual and collective consciousness. The objective is to stimulate the gaze and understand the environment in which they find themselves. **Stimulate the body and brain connections with a strange, unusual, innovative look, to be able to reach new perspectives resulting from more oxygenated neural systems** (PEARCE et al, 2016).

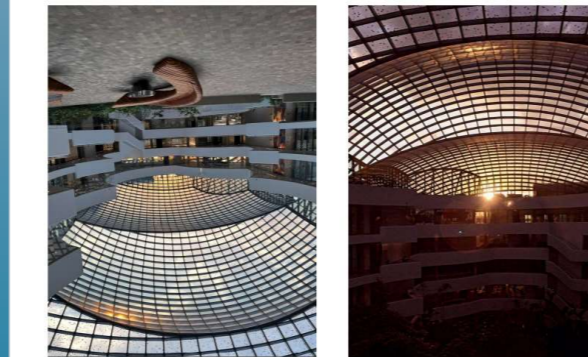
The art workshops were held in several different places, but always with the same purpose: to stimulate the eye. Activate the body while exercising the foreign look, like an unusual look. The objective is to reach more oxygenated perspectives, that is, the person is able to activate more regions in the brain, new synapses between neurons.

Images with a gecko’s perspective awaken feelings of empathy in a person when emotionally understanding an object or environment. **The feeling of compassion appeared when mentally participating in the possible unhappiness of others, which gives rise to an altruistic impulse of tenderness towards the suffering of life, the impulse is the action of taking a photograph and turning it into a work of art** (KLIMECK et al. 2013).

How are you feeling after participating at Gecko Gaze workshop?

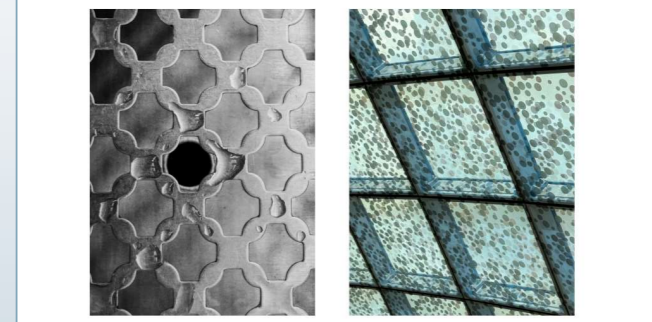
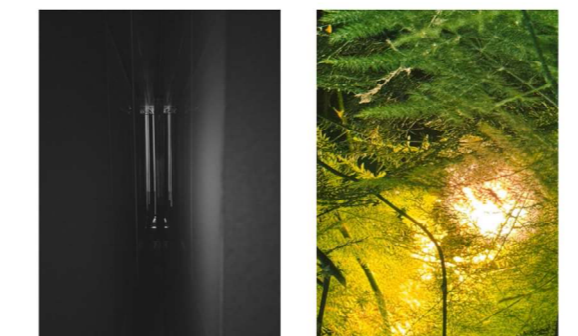
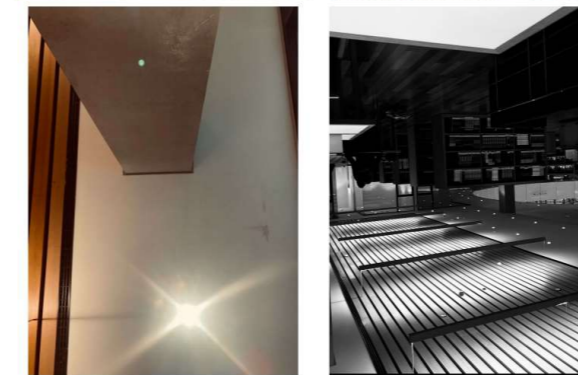


Examples of workshop results presented as an exhibition.



Results

More examples of workshop results selected by the authors.



Conclusions

The body and senses take into account the diversity of sensory registers and the recognition of bodily importance, that is, the perception of the experience of a set of situations whether in the **built, natural or digital environment** (ZIONI, 2023).

The ‘Gecko Gaze’ workshop connects to the mind and emotional state of each individual to exercise poetic images connected in forms of art. These are not controlled experiments, they are qualitative and personalized workshops that result in cognitive processes characteristic of each person and each brain to achieve humanization.

The “Gecko Gaze” workshop results shows it is simple, easy to apply, therefore a good tool to ‘re-humanize’ people and make them feel better and healthy.

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