



12 Dragons Health

With art therapy on the rise, France's museums are beginning to take mental health seriously.



The 20th-anniversary celebrations of the Parisian Palais de Tokyo will come to an end this year with the opening of a new "care center" in December that will house initiatives that promote art as a potent source of well-being.

The 700 sq. The ground floor will soon house a pavilion with the name HAMO, which is pronounced similarly to the French term for hamlet, and was curated by Freaks Architects. It will serve as "a transformation chamber, a tool to better welcome spectators from all horizons, audiences with disabilities or from [community groups], even when there are no exhibitions taking place in the building," as per Tanguy Pelletier, director of public programs at the museum of contemporary art.

HAMO will comprise three primary venues and is partially funded by Hong Kong-based Sunwah Group chairman and arts supporter Jonathan KS Choi. Psychiatrists, art therapists, educators, and other professionals will convene in the "positive salon." In accordance with the planned activity, the walls of three modular, rotating constructions can serve as either blackboards or TV screens. To reach a mezzanine level designed as a laboratory with 3D printers and other technology, a spiral staircase, and a lift will be provided. Four to six public seminars can be held simultaneously in the pavilion.

The €1 million project, which will begin in late 2018, will build on the museum's prior collaborations with healthcare and social organizations with a special emphasis on mental health. Additionally, it is influenced by the 2016-founded art therapy studio at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. But according to Pelletier, the Palais de Tokyo has gained "far more" knowledge via its partnerships with regional organizations like France Alzheimer and the Salpêtrière, Paris's biggest hospital.

The Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille was the first to show interest in the topic; it is the only museum in France with a full-time art therapist on staff. HAMO is the first art and well-being facility to be created at a cultural institution in France. According to Juliette Barthélémy, the director of the museum's public programs service, Lille's initiative started in 2012 as a way to support autistic staff members. Pascaline Bonnave, an art therapist, "was such a valuable member of our team, we recruited her a year later."

In the meantime, the Louvre-Lens recently collaborated with two art therapists from the L'Art&Fact association to develop Louvre therapy, a series of group workshops built around the notion that visiting a museum may be therapeutic in and of itself. As the cultural mediator in charge of the initiative, Gunilla Lapointe says: "If only we could persuade doctors to prescribe visits to the Louvre-Lens like any other treatment." She points out that such programs already exist in Canada and Belgium.

Citation: <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/03/11/museum-therapy-on-the-rise-in-france>

Image Ref: https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theartnewspaper.com%2F2022%2F03%2F11%2Fmuseum-therapy-on-the-rise-in-france&psig=AOvVawOGyT01dF_-y2zuhMG4s15l&ust=1666160320204000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CA0QjRxqFwoTCOipwImR6foCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD