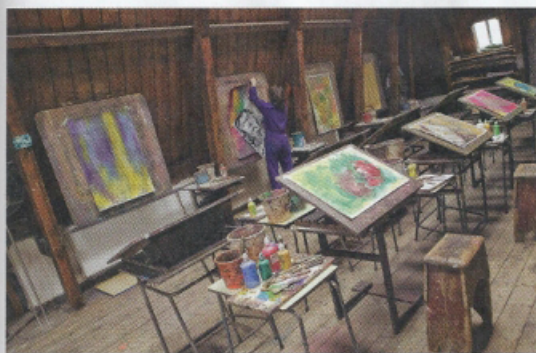


Well & good

Art of the matter



Looking to de-stress (and impress) *Anna Whitehouse* indulges in some art therapy at *Atelier Molenpad*

Over the years, attempts to locate my inner Mondrian have been many and varied, but the results have been uniformly crap. Sporadic bursts of creativity have resulted in a host of deranged-looking ponies and feeble stick men which, crushingly, even my own mother has declined to exhibit on her fridge. Before I headed to *Atelier Molenpad*, I'd decided that I might actually be an artistic vacuum.

'But that's where you're wrong,' said *Daniella Rubinovitz*, owner of the Amsterdam-based art therapy programme for those looking to 'unleash their hearts through art'. 'The problem is that you're thinking too hard,' she explained, pointing to one student, a 50-something housewife who was liberally slapping turquoise paint onto an easel like it was a fence. 'Don't think, just do,' she added.

Rubinovitz's weekly sessions cater for all sorts: stressed out mums, creatively frustrated art directors or career-frazzled lawyers. Housed in a former public school on the Canal Ring, it's designed as an escape from daily life rather than an after-work training camp for those with ambitions to exhibit at the *Stedelijk*.

'It's a way to channel your thoughts and, in doing so, find out about yourself,' said Rubinovitz. 'Both are subconsciously de-stressing and therapeutic.'

I was handed a stub of charcoal, plonked in front of an easel and told

to simply go with the flow. 'Let the materials express how you're feeling within,' urged Rubinovitz, encouraging me to sway from foot to foot, making bold, sweeping charcoal marks on the paper. While I may have resembled a Muppet with a paintbrush, any worries over the bulging 'admin' folder on my desk had quickly disappeared.

Nestled in the wooden eaves of this magnificent building, the smell of old paint and the sun flooding through the skylights was enough to transport me from snappy to happy. Swamped by a murky green overall and soon covered in the requisite splatters, it was hard not to feel the first buds of creative talent blooming.

I further slapped, dolloped and slathered red, blue, white and yellow paint on a fresh piece of paper. While encouraged to mix primary colours to form a more sophisticated palette, I shunned the advice and continued slathering like a giddy toddler.

'What do you see?' Rubinovitz asked as we surveyed the fruits of two hours of non-labour, explaining that colour often helps us understand our psyche, which in turn has a rather uplifting effect: 'Red, for example, could indicate anger, rage and frustration,' she said.

In front of me, I saw a mass of electric blue swirls, a few dramatic red splodges, a yellow handprint and a

dollop of white that looked like a big, fluffy cloud. 'That I'm a two-year-old child with limited talent,' I replied. But at the same time, it didn't really matter. I felt decidedly chipper. 'Sometimes all that's needed is a good, honest dose of play time,' said Rubinovitz.

Molenpad 17d (06 1091 5544/ateliermolenpad.com). A one-hour adult session costs €65.



floating in a unique form of relaxation in which one is lying on a cushion in shallow warm water kept at a constant temperature of 33.5°C. What does floating do? After a few minutes floating gives you a unique feeling of weightlessness. All the muscles and organs relax completely. Breathing slows down and the heart beats more slowly.

Afterwards you will feel relaxed



Float & Massage Centre

Haringvliet 121 • 1016 AW • Amsterdam

020 555 0 333

info@koanfloat.nl • www.koanfloat.nl

Open Monday - Sunday

10:30 - 21:00 pm

KOAN
FLOAT



MAIL & FEMALE
THE ORIGINAL SEX SHOP BY WOMEN!

www.mailandfemale.com

MAIL & FEMALE