

Comparing Effects of Ageism on Self-Portrait Expressions of Self-Worth with the Older Adult  
Population

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## ABSTRACT

By providing individuals of the older adult population with a non-verbal expressive opportunity, it is hypothesized that expression of social prejudice might more easily be expressed. Older individuals have more to contribute to society than the stereotypical views that the particular age range may indicate. Societal views on these individual's chronological age and not their capabilities promotes prejudicial outlooks such as ageism. This research seeks to test the hypothesis that actions of ageism negatively affect the self-worth and self-perception of older adult individuals. In this study the older adult participants were asked to complete two specific self-portraits, one of how the individual perceives him or herself and one of how the individual believes society perceives him or herself due to chronological age. Results are summarized showing a need for increased awareness of the effects of ageism on the perceptions of the older adult population in order to increase personal self-worth.

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## CHAPTER I

### **Introduction**

Contemporary social and cultural issues affect the older adult population through the prejudice of ageism formally through conducted research and informally through daily interaction. Ageism is defined as an unreasonable preconception against individuals simply because of their chronological age or perceived chronological age (Lee, 2013). By not recognizing societal ageism, the result is a pervasive lack of public awareness of and support for programs focused on the older adult population (Lee, 2013). With more attention, more knowledge about the effects of aging would be gained, which in turn could benefit the global population as a whole. The global population is witnessing a dramatic increase of growth within the population of older adults. Close to 40 million people currently make up this population of 65 years and older. This number is expected to double by the year 2030, which will make up nearly 20% of the United State's population (as cited in Lee, 2013).

### **Purpose of the Study and Objectives**

This pilot study reviews literature that expands upon the benefits of art for older adults and conducts a personal identity assessment within senior group therapy sessions. The purpose is to explore and expand awareness of the possible effects of ageism. There is a need for society to realize that the aging population has been rising exponentially and with the recent pressure of the aging of baby boomer generation in America, our society is facing a crisis: lack of adequately trained, and emotionally oriented, personnel to work with aging persons in various fields (Lun, 2010). This study is valuable to the care and considerations of the personhood of older adults in society due to expanding awareness of ageism and the need for a more positive societal view when it comes to the aging population. The objective of the study is to explore the hypothesis of

how the negative experiences of ageism affect the self-identity and self-worth of individuals within the older adult population.

### **Problem Statement and Significance of the Problem**

Society fails to recognize the stereotypes and misconceptions of ageism as they affect the older adult population, which may impact the quality of life, self-worth, and perceptual personal identity of these individuals in their later years of life. On the other hand, positive beliefs about and attitudes toward the older adults appear to enhance their mental health. Older adults exposed to positive stereotypes have significantly better memory, whereas negative self-perceptions contributed to worse memory and feelings of worthlessness (Levy, Slade, Kunkel, & Kasl, 2002).

One of the most relevant social issues impacting the field of art therapy and other helping professions is the reexamination of conventional views of aging (Crawley, 2005; Heise, Johnsen, Himes, & Wing, 2012; Kerr, 1999; Lun, 2010). Old age is commonly viewed as a time of undesirable physical, emotional, social, and financial losses (Lee, 2013). With these views come many stereotypical preconceptions of older adults including presumptions of loss of hearing, living in poverty, and suffering from depression or chronic illness.

Formally, most research on the aged seems to be obsessed with measuring the decline of cognitive, perceptual, and psychomotor functions (as cited in Kerr, 1999). Kerr (1999) stated, “We often approach the problems of aging for the commendable purpose of correcting them rather than finding a workable social and theoretical perspective to describe what is healthy and adaptive during this remarkable developmental stage” (p. 37). During the developmental stage of older adults, perceptions of future meaning, life purpose, and life control have been found to predict psychological and physical well-being (Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987). Therapy would

be more enjoyable and effective for an older adult client if the distinctive “culture” of the elderly in regards to their developmental stage is recognized and appreciated (Buchalter, 2011).

Informally, overprotection of the older individual, interpretation of his or her thoughts, and the expectation of the individual to accept the signs of aging are all aspects of ageism. Ageism is also casually reflected through one’s choice of words, actions, and responses when interacting with an older individual. Society as a whole fails to recognize the stereotypes and misconceptions as they affect the older adult population, which results in the failure to actualize opportunities to advocate for the needs of this population.

According to Buchalter (2011), many older adults are in need of psychological care due to anxiety and stress, fear of aging, loss, change in status and lifestyle, the economic crisis and concerns about safety of our unpredictable world. Art therapy is one way of treatment to help the older adult population to cope with their present situations. Art therapy allows for expression of feelings towards the stereotypical circumstances of ageism. Through creative expression, reflection on one’s past, present, and future can be achieved. The individual older adult has a sense of productivity during the creative process and will experience the possible increase of quality of life through the healing capabilities of art therapy (Howie, Prasad, & Kristel, 2013).

### **Definitions of Terms**

*Ageism* is the third great “ism” of our society, falling after racism and sexism (Palmore, 1999). In 1969, the term “ageism” was introduced by the first director of the National Institute on Aging, Robert Butler, defining it as “a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old” (as cited in Palmore, 1999). If there is a stereotype presumed in the mind of what it means to be old or what older people are like, then ageism already occurs and, as a result, the treatment of older people may be in a way that is

discriminating against them (Crawley, 2005).

*Discrimination* is defined as making an unjust distinction in the treatment of people (Palmore, 1999).

*Older adult* is a term that does not have the same meaning in all societies, so the definition is somewhat subjective. In most developed countries the term is related to retirement age, around 65 years of age (Dietz, 1996).

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem (Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997).

*Self-Perception* is the sense of the self. Perception is the way in which self and others look at each other (Nelson, 2002).

*Stereotyping* is a way of establishing what is typical about people. Research shows that there are nine main stereotypes associated with older people: illness, impotence, ugliness, mental decline, mental illness, uselessness, isolation, poverty, and depression (Palmore, 1999).

### **Research Question**

Will directed self-portraits based from two perspectives, both internal and external, exhibit negative societal views of the older adult population and portray the effects of ageism on the older adult individual's self-worth and identity?

### **Basic Assumptions**

Through society, the assumptions and stereotypes that exist in relation to the older adult population most commonly relate to progressive physical and mental decline, social isolation, asexual behavior, lack of creativity, and economic and familial burden (Angus & Reeve, 2006). These stereotypical assumptions create a misunderstanding when it comes to the reality that

older adults have the same needs as the other generations for participation within society, for example through creative activity and expression.

Through this study the basic assumption was that individuals within the older adult population would show a significant difference of personal (internal) verse societal (external) self-perception through the two portraits accompanied by self-discovery surveys. The researcher assumed that through this study individuals would express and report the negative impact of experienced ageism on the participant's self-worth. The self-discovery surveys were altered versions of Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1989) which measures self-esteem by asking the respondents to reflect on their current feelings and answer questions according to a Likert-type four-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The two self-discovery surveys were given to the participants prior to creating the accompanied self-portrait. It was anticipated that the two separate surveys would elicit a different response from the participants; the internal self-perception survey prompting more of a positive response verses the external self-perception survey prompting more of a negative response.

### **Hypothesis**

Individuals within the older adult population show significant difference of personal (internal) verse societal (external) self-perception demonstrated through two self-portraits and self-discovery surveys. Actions of ageism negatively affect the individual's self-worth due to a more negative self-expression elicited within the external self-portrait. This hypothesis is based on group discussion while processing the experience of creating the artwork and through evaluation of the self-discovery surveys.

## CHAPTER II

**Review of Literature****Characteristics of Population**

Old age is no longer considered a single life stage with distinct characteristics common to all individuals within the population. Gerontologists now differentiate between the young-old or “later maturity” (60-74 years old), the old-old or “old age” (75-84 years old), and the oldest-old (85+ years old) (Dietz, 1996). Even with these newer distinctions amongst the older adult population, similarities of development, stereotypes, and self-perception characteristics are seen. These similarities impact the aging-related attention received by individuals of the older adult population. Individual awareness of aging is triggered by the influences of the age-related “feedback” individuals receive from their social environment and the changes an individual perceives in his or her functioning as a result of getting older (Diehl & Vahl, 2015).

With a rapidly aging population, it is important for society to properly acknowledge the aspects of development in old age. Erikson’s theory of psychosocial human development continues to be one of the primary frameworks for understanding development in old age (as cited in Stephenson, 2013). Erikson believed that throughout the human life span the individual’s unconscious goal is to achieve ego integrity. Ego integrity was defined according to Gruen’s (1964) interpretation as “a basic acceptance of one’s life as having been inevitable, appropriate, and meaningful” (as cited in Ravid-Horesh, 2004).

Integrity and despair are both expressed through the self-perception of individuals internally and how they believe they are perceived externally. To elaborate on this goal of ego integrity within the older adult population, Shore (1997), characterized integrity as acceptance of and belief in one’s own value and efficacy, while despair from older age is characterized by

hopelessness in the face of impending death and physical and cognitive deterioration (Shore, 1997). The struggle between the two contradictory forces has impact on the personal traits of older adult individuals and has influence on the way they perceive their lives. Erikson (1959) stated, if ego integrity is achieved the individual feels a sense of connection with younger generations and the need to share experience and wisdom with them (as cited in Stephenson, 2013). Through this ego integrity, individuals of the older adult population feel a sense of belonging to the younger generations within society, which, in turn, decreases the negative feelings and negative effect of ageism.

### **History and Significance of the Problem**

Ageism has contributed to the transformation of aging from a natural process into a social problem in which the older adult individuals bear the negative consequences. According to Butler and Crawley (2005), the problem of ageism has three interrelated aspects: 1) Prejudicial attitudes toward the aged, toward old age, and toward the aging process; 2) discriminatory practices against the elderly in social roles; and 3) institutional practices and policies which perpetrate stereotypic beliefs about the elderly, reduce their opportunities and undermine their personal dignity.

The field of gerontology has contributed to the study of ageism within society. According to Nelson (2002), over the years, ageism related research has helped to uncover not only the obvious forms of age discrimination such as birthday cards making fun of aging, but also the more subtle ways in which ageism manifests itself in the every-day life of society. From greeting cards to medical school, from advertisements to the workplace, it is clear that ageism is prevalent in society (Nelson, 2002). Negative stereotypes, even when they produce a chuckle as cartoons and jokes often do, are potentially damaging to the extent that those who subscribe to the

stereotypes act on them. The consequences of such actions may be relatively nonthreatening, such as when an offensive birthday card that makes fun of older persons is received, or financially devastating as when they involve the inability to obtain a job because of an individual's chronological age (Rix, 2006). Media within the society has played a big role and continues to be a powerful influence. In an examination of the portrayal of the older adult population through magazine advertising, there was found an increased use of negative stereotypes; included were "generalizations and over-simplifications of characteristics of elderly individuals that produce demeaning and ridiculing portraits of the group" (Miller, Miller, McKibbin, & Pettys, 1999). Stereotypes that cause ageism have become so embedded in our societal perceptions of human life that they are taken for granted and have become generally accepted assumptions (Angus & Reeve, 2006).

The psychological effects or consequences of ageism are very real within the aging population. Ageism has been called the ultimate prejudice, the last discrimination, and the cruelest rejection (Angus & Reeve, 2006). Within society, ageism forms a powerful part of our social and cultural environment in which people construct their views on aging. All older adult individuals are vulnerable to the effects of ageism. A countless number of social, cultural, biological, and psychological forces converge to shape ageism, and it would take a concerted effort to peel back the layers of ageism that have been woven into society (Nelson, 2002).

### **Art Therapy with Older Adults**

With the average life span increasing, the expansions of senior centers, assisted living facilities, and specialized nursing facilities have followed in order to meet the demand. Treatment and therapy programs for the older adult population have increased as well as the benefits they could bring to the aging population. Art therapy for the older adult population can

be therapeutically used for those who suffer challenges in every day life, such as those that stem from effects of ageism. These challenges include declined physical attributes, mental acuity, loss of identity (retirement from job), loss of respect from society, and increased dependence on others (Kite & Wagner, 2002). An art therapist can assess artwork in order to understand aspects of the individual that the older adult may not express through words. Creating art can aid this population in communicating with caregivers and family, promoting awareness and self-expression, relieving anxiety, and coping with transition, confusion, illness or discomfort (*Art in Senior Living*, 2013).

A goal would be for individuals of the older adult population to adjust to age-related setbacks with the most positive outlook because having a positive outlook could help lower heart disease risk, improve self-esteem, and lead to less stress throughout the day (as cited in Vann, 2014). When they could not adjust to age-related physical, psychological, and social changes, they could take advantage of therapeutic interventions, both psychological and physical, by becoming actively involved in social activities and exercise programs (Nelson, 2002). As the older adult population increases, the need for both psychological and physical care increases as well. Typical perceptions toward therapy from members of this population show resistance. The resistance is partly due to the idea behind asking the younger generation for help. Most studies of older individuals reveal that fear of the loss of independence is the greatest concern associated with aging (Lee, 2013). Independence is highly valued in today's US society, which makes it sometimes difficult for an older adult to seek help especially with the additional impact of ageism taking a play on every-day life.

It is increasingly important to help make it possible for older adults to achieve a quality of life that maintains their health and is also meaningful to them. As programs are designed and

funded to assist older adults in realizing this goal, opportunities would grow for the utilization of art therapy with the older adult population. According to Cohen (2006), research has shown that participation by older adults in creative arts can improve self-esteem, well-being, and physical health (as cited in Stephenson, 2013). Through the expression of self-perceptions, art therapy can help increase the self-esteem of older adults and at the same time offer experiences that may develop aspects of their identities that have been unexplored elsewhere.

Ravish-Horesh (2004) conducted a study to portray if art therapy could enhance the positive outcomes of a life review in an individual's later life, leading to more self-acceptance and ego integrity. The study used a qualitative method by looking at three variables: individual's visual images, individual's behaviors, and verbal discussions between individual and therapist (Ravish-Horesh, 2004). Through the art therapy study, the individual was given the opportunity to experience a sense of purpose by sharing her lifetime memories with a supportive witness.

Dr. Raquel Chapin Stephenson committed her studies to improving the lives of older adults through the arts. Stephenson founded the program of New York University's Creative Aging Therapeutic Services (CATS), which is a community-based program that provided art therapy to older adults and those with dementia (Stephenson, 2013). The program was designed to promote wellness for the older adult population (Stephenson, 2013). Specifically, the program was administered to describe and show how art therapy supports a positive aging process. One of the most successful components of the CATS program was that it fostered in its participants a sense of identity as an artist (Stephenson, 2013). Identity can be an important means to gain access to a broader life experience. This is especially important for the older adult population, as they tend to counter social isolation and the negative impacts of ageism. Stephenson's program research showed that making art with others can counteract these negative impacts and instead

promote increased self-esteem, motivation and social connection, leading to improved health and well-being (Stephenson, 2013).

### **Summary**

Art therapy used as a means for treatment with the older adult population has proven to benefit the quality of life for individuals. Research has shown us that the population of older adults needs more attention and public awareness. Aging is a part of the life cycle, and there is a need for awareness and interest in the process and issues of aging amongst society. With more non-medical healing options such as art therapy, research has shown that the older adult cultural group of the US can receive the support they need to maintain the care and quality of life they deserve. With an understanding and acknowledgment of age-related changes and losses of the older adult population, therapists have helped and continue to help individuals maintain hope and quality of life despite physical, psychological, and/or cognitive losses (Wald, 2003). According to Stephenson, older adults are thinking more about quality of life and about remaining creatively active and socially engaged (Stephenson, 2013). Art therapy is a means to motivate the older adult population by building on the positive and on their individual strengths while they may feel as if their weaknesses are only noticed by society through experienced ageism.

## CHAPTER III

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This mixed methods study utilized self-portraiture as well as group discussion and surveys. It began with a pre-assessment survey in order to gain an understanding of the possible negative effects of ageism on the self-perception of individuals of the older adult population. Two surveys and two forms of self-portraits were used to collect data along with written records by the researcher. The written records documented significant statements from discussion of participants while processing the artwork and surveys. One self-portrait was directed as a depiction of how the participant views themselves (internal perspective), and the second self-portrait demonstrated how the participant believes they are seen by society (external perspective).

#### **Selection of Sample and Informed Research Consent**

To begin to orient potential participants, the study was applied to two groups of individuals of the older adult population (65+ years of age). The groups included 1-3 participants per group in order to reach a sample size of 5 individuals. The participants were informed about the study and consent forms were read aloud by the researcher for possible vision issues of the group members. The group participants were asked to sign the consent form prior to their voluntary involvement in the study. Two group members declined participation of creating self-portraits but still completed the surveys that were still collected for data purposes. The study's total participant involvement included three older adults, which pseudonyms have been assigned to for their identification protection. The researcher collected signed voluntary consent forms (Appendix A) and media consent forms (Appendix B) from all consenting participants. The

consent forms explained the purpose, design, and potential risks of the research study and all participants agreed to share survey responses, artwork and comments they created during the study. An art therapist supervisor oversaw the researcher while the study was being completed for purposes of participant protection.

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

Saint Mary of the Woods College Institutional Review Board and the facility where the study was conducted granted approval. Additionally, an art therapist supervised the researcher at the facility where the research took place. Before beginning the research the Consent form and the Media Consent form were both signed by the participants. Use of pre-test self-discovery surveys generated thoughts prior to each self-portrait art directive. The data collected from the survey responses were tallied up to create total records of the survey answers (Table 1 and 2). During the art making process and the followed group discussion time, the researcher recorded significant participant statements and field notes through the use of a personal journal. These statements and field notes were incorporated as a data collection tool in order for the researcher to provide documentation for the results section of this study.

### **Development and Distribution of Instruments**

The researcher designed two surveys (Appendix C and D). The surveys were adapted through rewording and shortening from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1989). Distribution of the surveys (Appendix C and Appendix D) took place before each of the directed self-portrait art assessments (Appendix E). The researcher read the statements aloud and gave the participants time to respond to each statement individually. There were not any participant writing or comprehension issues brought to the attention of the researcher or noted through the field notes during the survey completion.

## Data Processing

The researcher reviewed summarized descriptions from the participants about the expressions shown through the self-portraits, studied field notes from group discussion, and calculated answers from the surveys (Table 1 and 2) to evaluate and process the collected data. The researcher determined that the study found negative self-perception related to the effects of ageism expressed amongst the older adult participants. Responses to negative experiences of ageism showed to impact the effect on self-worth and perceived self-identity of the aging population, as perceived through the data processed from the surveys, observations of artwork, and participant discussion throughout the study.

Table 1

*Table measuring survey 1: Internal perspective*

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
#1	1	3	1		
#2	1	3			1
#3		2	2		1
#4	3	2			
#5		3	1		1

Table 2

*Table measuring survey 2: External perspective*

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
#1		2	2		1
#2	1	2	1		1
#3			2	2	1
#4	1	3			1
#5		1	3	1	

## CHAPTER IV

**Results**

The participants of the older adult population expressed significant difference of personal versus societal self-perception cued through the two directed self-portraits and pre and post group adapted surveys. The results showed that actions of ageism prove to negatively impact the self-worth of older adult individuals seen through more positive expression in the personal self-portrait rather than a negative perception through the societal perceptive portrait. Figure 1 and Figure 2 are the self-portraits painted by a 70-year-old participant, Tom. When discussing the two paintings, the participant acknowledged that his internal perspective self-portrait (Figure 1) portrays a younger version of himself. He stated that he feels like his abilities are still those of the younger 50 year-old version of himself. This participant discussed the difference between living his life based off of how old he feels versus his actual chronological age has allowed him to be more active and motivated to continue doing things he enjoyed.

*Figure 1.* Tom's internal perspective self portrait



Figure 2 shows Tom's external perspective self-portrait expressing an older version of himself from Figure 1. This external perspective was mostly focused on appearing aged through the use of painting white hair and a white beard. The participant stated that because of his older adult appearance, he frequently gets offered a helping hand while out in public. During discussion Tom stated that this does not bother him because he views it as a sign of respect for the older adult population.

*Figure 2.* Tom's external perspective self portrait



Other group members agreed that they have been offered more help while out in public due to their age. Some members of the group discussion stated that the frequent offerings of help tended to frustrate them because they realize it is an action of ageism within the community. Dan, a 67 year-old group participant, painted his external self-portrait (Figure 3) showing a figure in need of help. The figure he painted was described as a person trying to do something as easy as picking a lemon from a tree. Dan stated that he believes others perceive him as not being capable of achieving simple tasks, such as picking fruit from a tree, due to his chronological age. When discussing his particular painting, he stated that picking fruit from trees is something he

did in his younger years while living on his family farm. Dan stated that it was a daily activity for him and now he feels like he is perceived as not being able to succeed at such a chore. Dan stated feeling put down by others for not being given the opportunities to conduct simple tasks for himself anymore due to others always offering their help.

*Figure 3.* Dan's external perspective self portrait



Saundra, a 74 year-old participant, stated when she thought about her personal self-perception she identifies herself as the matriarch figure of her family. Before Saundra began her internal perspective self-portrait (Figure 4) she closed her eyes to think. She stated imagining herself in the kitchen with her apron on. Saundra stated that she does not perceive herself as an old woman. She stated that she understands others see her as just another older adult, but she still feels like a young, strong woman that has the job of holding her family together.

Figure 4. Sandra's internal perspective self portrait



After conducting this research, the results show that the internal perspectives of the older adult population exhibit more positive expressions than the external perspective self-portraits. According to the pre-test self-discovery surveys, the group participants expressed more positive answers to the internal perspective survey rather than the external. The differences between this data collection showed that the participants have more positive internal views about themselves than how they believe society and other perceive them. Through group discussion and observable artistic characteristics within the self-portraits, the older adult participants within this research study expressed feeling like a younger version of themselves internally than what meets the eye to society physically, or externally. The effects of ageism are apparent due to the many assumptions society makes of older adults in response to the appearance of aging and the ageist associations attached to chronological age.

### **Conclusion**

The results indicated that the older adult population likely feels their identity is seen by society based off their chronological age. From the research findings, feelings of self-worth and

personal identity among older adults are impacted due to verbal and physical acts of ageism from societal influence. The research study supports the hypothesis that ageism negatively effects the self-worth of individuals within the geriatric population as evidenced by differences within self-perception portraits, verbal dialogue within group processing, and self-discovery surveys. This study demonstrated an effective way for older adults to benefit from personal expression through art therapy. This study concludes that awareness of the impact ageism has on the older adult population is needed within society.

### **Discussion**

Increasing knowledge and information about successful aging is a way to influence older adults' views of aging in a positive way. What is needed is a strategy promoting more positive self-perceptions of aging. This would be a viable option if it is sure that the effects are universally positive, that meaning at both a societal and personal level (Kotter-Gruhn, 2015). The overall goal of this research study was to gain an understanding of the culture of older adults and how their self-perception and sense of self-worth can be influenced by societal acts of ageism. If this can be further proven and awareness can be passed along, benefits of positive aging can influence the quality of life of individuals within the older adult population.

The results found through this study compliment the success of Stephenson's CATS program in that it showed that making art promoted increased self-esteem, and motivation and social connection amongst the older adult group members (Stephenson, 2013). The study of this research did not expand upon any new findings, but it did increase the necessary awareness of the impact societal ageism has on the self-worth of older adults.

**Limitations and Recommendations**

It was difficult to administer this study within one time block, so it is suggested that this study be conducted within two sessions. With this, it should not dismiss the idea of having multiple groups within the allowed time period for this study. In addition, due to the characteristics of the older adult population, creative desires and capabilities, cognitive functioning, and possible handicaps are yet to be determined.

It is recommended to apply this study to participants of the older adult population whom are not already seeking therapy. It is important to remember that there would be some possibility of limitations due to cognitive, physical, and mental handicaps. With this, for purposes of validity and control variables in this research study, it is appropriate to consider medications taken by the participants and the possible side effects of those medications. It is recommended to have a supervisor or nurse if needed in attendance while this research study is taking place for the protective safety measure of the participants. Continued research of the therapeutic benefits of creative expression among the older adult population would help expand knowledge and awareness of the impact of present-day societal ageism.

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## Appendix A

## Informed Consent Form

The purpose of the research is to explore the possible effects of ageism on the self-worth of members within the geriatric population. A sample size of 3-5 individuals will be selected to participate through the use of self-reflecting surveys and self-portraits. The importance of this research is to explore and expand awareness of societal actions of ageism and how it potentially creates a negative aging experience for individuals. This study is a requirement of the class, AR590 – Research Methodology, for Kathryn Medford, a graduate student majoring in Art Therapy at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.

The procedure involves minimal risk for the participants and the completed surveys will not be identifiable. The benefit of participation will be self-expression through art. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the completed survey forms and the forms will be maintained for a maximum period of three years.

The participants have the right to decline participation in the surveys and art assessment by reporting to the researcher. In addition, participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, by notifying the researcher.

This study was approved by the Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) on \_\_\_\_\_ .

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher, the researcher's supervisor, or the chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

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**Chair, IRB**

Dr. Lamprini Pantazi, PhD.  
Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board  
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My signature below indicates that I have been informed about this study, I consent to participate, and I have received a copy of this consent form.

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Signature research participant

---

Date

---

Signature Co-researcher

---

Date

## Appendix B

## Media Consent Form

Thank you for your participation in this research project of how acts of ageism can affect the self-worth of individuals within the geriatric population. This study is a requirement of the class, AR590 – Research Methodology, for Kathryn Medford, a graduate student majoring in Art Therapy at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. As part of this project, you may choose to allow yourself or your self-portraits to be photographed. Please indicate below if you are willing to consent by placing your initials in the corresponding blank. Initial the item that best suits your level of comfort. There will be no negative consequences for refusing to be photographed. The results of this study may be presented in educational settings, scientific journals, popular press or newspapers, professional conferences, or the media. The researcher agrees to only use the materials in ways to which you agree.

I give approval for my artwork to be photographed.

Please initial

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ or No \_\_\_\_\_

I give approval for my image to be photograph.

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ or No \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that I can withdraw my permission to be photographed at any time without prejudice and with no explanation required.

I have read the above and give my consent for the use of the photograph as indicated. I certify that I am eighteen (18) years of age or older and that I have been given a copy of this form for my own records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature research participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Co-researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C

## Survey 1

Please answer the following questions by circling one of the options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Personal Self-Perception survey with questions based from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

3. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

4. I take a positive attitude towards myself.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

5. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

## Appendix D

## Survey 2

Please answer the following questions by circling one of the options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Societal View Self-Perception Survey based from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:

1. Through others perception, I feel that I am a person of worth.  
Strongly Agree    Agree            Disagree            Strongly Disagree
  
2. I feel that others perceive that I have a number of good qualities.  
Strongly Agree    Agree            Disagree            Strongly Disagree
  
3. People of society believe I am able to do things as well as most other people.  
Strongly Agree    Agree            Disagree            Strongly Disagree
  
4. People take a positive attitude towards myself.  
Strongly Agree    Agree            Disagree            Strongly Disagree
  
5. On the whole, I am satisfied with how others treat me.  
Strongly Agree    Agree            Disagree            Strongly Disagree

Appendix E

Self-Portrait Art Making Inquiry

Title of Research: Effects of Ageism on Self-Portrait Expressions

Study Investigator: Kathryn Medford

Research Study Site: St. Vincent's Stress Center

Participation Releases: Informed Consent and Media Consent Form

Participants will be given acrylic paint, varied sized brushes and a small canvas to create two self-portrait art pieces that reflect responses to the following prompts:

1. Depict a self-portrait that represents how you view yourself (internal perspective).
2. Depict a self-portrait that represents how you believe you are seen by society (external perspective).