

art as an antidote

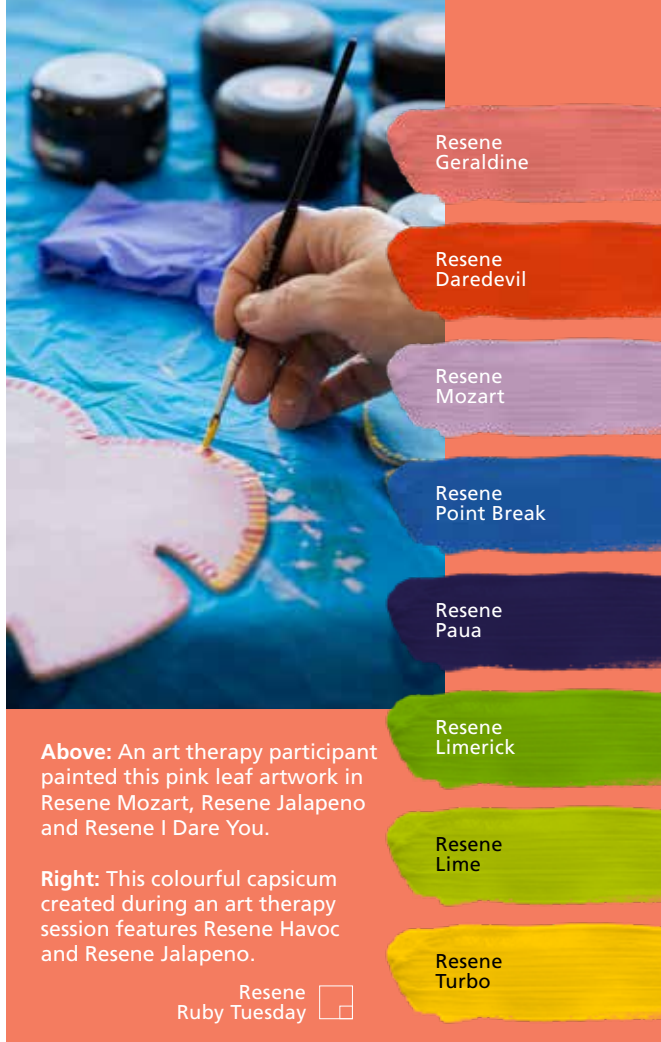
Colour therapy improves mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.



Above: Diversional Therapist Orquidea Tamayo Mortera with colourful works created during an art therapy session.

For many years, art and creativity have proved to be an effective outlet for self-expression and healing. With the rise in popularity of activities like adult colouring books, painting parties and *kintsugi* workshops – which teach the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending it with gold – we’ve been reminded that art has long provided a way for humans to work through the tricky ebbs and flows of life and offered creative relief in trying times. While many innovative and unique methods of therapy exist today, none are quite as colourful as art therapy – a technique that’s used widely.

Orquidea Tamayo Mortera, President for the New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists, uses the power of art therapy – and a range of Resene testpots – to help those under her



Above: An art therapy participant painted this pink leaf artwork in Resene Mozart, Resene Jalapeno and Resene I Dare You.

Right: This colourful capsicum created during an art therapy session features Resene Havoc and Resene Jalapeno.



care. Her work as a registered Diversional Therapist involves human-centric recreational programs aimed at enhancing wellbeing and supporting the development of core wellness dimensions, from social to intellectual, sexual, emotional, spiritual, cultural and physical.

Art therapy is also frequently used in aged care to support healing and fight against loneliness and social isolation – two common and debilitating realities for people in their advanced years. “People use art and media to explore feelings, develop social skills, manage behaviour, cope with addiction, become more self-aware, reconcile emotional conflict, reduce anxiety and increase self-esteem,” says Orquidea.

The power of colour in art therapy is monumental, with therapists like Orquidea favouring vibrant colours in order to bring about positive impact. “We do our best to influence our clients in using strong and bright colours that will have a powerful but positive effect on their emotions.”

Discussing the kind of tones that can enhance wellbeing, Orquidea finds bright reds, yellows and neon greens are particularly energising, which can help people feel more alert, whereas blues seem to be preferred by people living with dementia. These colours are applied to a number of mediums, from rocks to paper, without any expectation or pressure to achieve perfection.

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Resene Ruby Tuesday and Resene Point Break – all bright, beautiful and cheerful tones – are just a handful of hues preferred by Diversional Recreational Therapists. Having been born in Mexico, Orquidea is particularly fond of sunny colours and the positive effect they can have. She is currently loving Resene Paua, Resene Geraldine and Resene Lime.

With health and safety and infection control policies being a crucial part of aged care, Resene testpots are a great option. "The size is perfect and we don't have to be pouring out of big bottles. We also love the texture and also that they are safe to use."

The ways in which art therapy can help people varies depending on what struggles they're going through. However, as Orquidea adds, building a sense of wellbeing and function in day-to-day living are two great reasons Diversional Recreational Therapists utilise it so much. **H**

To learn more about the New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists' important work, visit www.diversionaltherapy.net.nz.

images Jessica Gernat, www.jessicachloe.com
special thanks to Summerset Heritage Park

