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MATERIALS, TOOLS, METHODS

This section is an attempt to explore and personify the identities of various common materials used in art therapy. In order to clarify the nature of any relationship between or among separate entities, human or nonhuman, the differences and similarities of the participating forms must be recognized. The individual characteristics of each party in a relationship can then be seen as related to one another. The mingling and mixing of the characteristics of these participants occur in various patterns yet result in a new form that has qualities of each party present, but is a unique and separate phenomenon. The relationship yields more than the total of its participants.

Materials and tools are described as if they have human characteristics, as if they possess qualities that are as individual and unique as they are in people. Materials and tools are characterized as exhibiting identity, owning a “self”, and thus being capable of entering a relationship with another “self” either with the artist or with some other material or tool. These interactions possess symbolic as well as physical characteristics and will be described as exhibiting a variety of relational forms.
These connections can reflect unity, conflict and all the potentials that are available to two or more entities in relationships.

In human relationships, some of the most powerful forms of contact are physical. We are profoundly moved by touch in a variety of forms: loving, sexual, violent, and all the subtleties of these connections. In the making of art, our tactile and visual senses are aroused in symbolic ways by the actual physical contact of instrument to surface, and this contact is similar to human relational experiences. Many of the simple tools of art making can be seen as assertive or aggressive symbols in a simple physical sense. Pencils, brushes, crayons, chalk, knives, chisels and other tools are used to contact a receptive surface or material. The receiving material can be described as receptive in that it receives the instrument, and the relationship which follows is in some ways similar to a human relationship which begins with physical contact and, like art, can develop deeper and more abstract qualities. The instrument and the material influence one another and their relationship becomes as simple or complex as the artist is capable of expressing.

In human physical contact, the effects touch has on our emotions begins at the surface. A fly which lights on the skin's surface will arouse a reflex action accompanied by slight emotional discomfort. The hand of another human on our skin is capable of arousing pleasant or unpleasant feelings ranging from ecstasy to pain. Visual art such as painting, drawing, sculpture and other related expressive forms are capable of evoking the same range of emotion through symbolic form. The physical contact which is represented by the union of tool and surface,
for example, will express the sensitive nature of that contact. The intent, control, impulse and will of the artist determines the ultimate significance of the art. Art therapy begins with basic tools and materials within their own physical context that are guided by the artist to some consummation. In this sense, the artist/client, by creating symbols and relationships, can often attain a feeling of power and mastery which may be an important step toward the recovery of health and strength.
15" x 22" — Scribble, spill, draw and paint as if I were a child. One of a series that stimulated old memories.
Many adults who have not experienced artmaking since childhood tend to draw, paint and sculpt as if they are somewhere between the ages of four years through adolescence. The images which they express in art therapy are personal and generally honest attempts to communicate inner thoughts, feelings and fantasy. The ability and skills needed to communicate through imagery may be at a childlike, naive level, yet their expressions derive from the profound life experiences of adults. This gap is sometimes bridged through the use of simple tools and materials that are reminiscent of childhood, and techniques that are familiar and manageable. The relationship between artist and medium can begin in a simple, nonthreatening manner. The artist is inexperienced and naive, the material is ordinary, undemanding and inexpensive. The challenge of materials equals the skill level of the artist. The artist leaves his mark, his personal imagery, through the medium. The medium reflects the artist's experience and thus is no longer ordinary. It now has a unique identity which expresses the will of the artist. The artist also has the potential to be richer for the experience if the relationship with media is pleasurable, interesting, useful or practical in some way. This relationship can be compared to human relationships, and in art therapy friendship, love and pleasure are stressed rather than work or achievement. Ideally, the artist and the material will reflect the nature of their intimacy in a descriptive way.
description of materials

In order to understand the potential of a relationship between artist and medium it is important to know something about both. The unique personality of each artist is expressed through a variety of possible materials, each with its own special character. The following list describes common materials and tools used in art therapy sessions.

paper

Paper is fragile. It can be torn, cut, burned, crushed and otherwise easily transformed. Paper can be attractive, plain, colorful and tactile. Paper is flat. It can be manipulated by folding, rolling, bending and otherwise changing it into a dimensional object, but in drawing the artist will alter only the surface of paper and the result of this alteration will be a two-dimensional image. The blank surface of the paper is framed by the outer edges, usually a rectangle, square or circle. These geometric shapes represent very secure and clear boundaries. The blankness of the surface, however, can simulate an illusion of vast, empty space. The naive artist is frequently unable to contemplate this "depth" and is limited to relating to the paper as a surface. A surface relationship, however, can be revealing, interesting and seductive in a sensory way. If a depth relationship occurs, it would imply a willingness to take risk on the part of the artist. For the novice to achieve a sense of three dimension on a flat surface may be similar to the sense of fear and adventure which could accompany a beginning swimmer's first
entry into deep water. Paper is responsive, vulnerable and open to change. It can be transformed from an ordinary material into a rich and beautiful object, or it can be used and thrown away. It is passive and receptive to manipulation.

other drawing surfaces

Any surface will accept some form of mark or alteration. Surfaces are generally passive, receptive and, with proper instruments, easily altered. Some surfaces are more receptive to certain changes and less to others. Each surface has its own preferences. Even a living surface like human skin can be tattooed. Water surfaces can be changed with oil swirls. Sand, mud and dirt can be drawn upon with a variety of instruments. Some surfaces will absorb liquids, some will repel them. Surfaces can be cut into or built up. Each plane will respond differently to different drawing instruments and will reflect the gesture, the attitude and the character of both the artist and the tool. Exteriors are smooth, slick, wet or dry, rough, abrasive, bland or colorful. The surface of a dimensional form is either representative of what lies underneath or it can be totally unlike its basic composition. For example, a wooden table may have a plastic cover. The clothing which we wear covers our true surface, our skin. A flat surface, a two-dimensional material like paper or cloth, has no three dimensional forms which support it. The flat surface, however, may be altered by a drawing to suggest more dimensional space than it truly has, or the drawing may simply reinforce its true two-dimensional qualities. A drawing should allow the outside to express its own inner qualities and, in fact, may use those qualities as
expressive aspects of the image. The union of drawing instrument and surface is an act which can reflect both personalities while creating a third through the image. The artist controls this act of creation by determining the nature of the union and its significance through the image which is left on the surface.

pencil

If paper is passive and accepting of marks, images and manipulation, then the marking instruments can be thought to be aggressive. The instrument touches the surface of the paper and leaves a mark which describes the quality of that union. The mark can describe speed, pressure, width, force and other characteristics which are directed by the artist through the tool and onto the surface.

One of the most common instruments used for marking is the pencil. The graphite pencil is familiar and was used by most people early in life for writing and/or drawing. The pencil leaves a gray mark that can remain permanent or can be erased. The gray color, depending on the softness or hardness of the graphite, lies somewhere between black and white, lighter or darker, but emotionally noncommittal compared to the feeling qualities attributed to most colors. Color pencils are capable of adding these further descriptive qualities but usually not as intensely as paint, for example. Yet a gray pencil mark is still capable of expressing a sensitive range of subtle feelings. The pencil can penetrate, stroke, scribble, record, limit, control, and otherwise effect a variety of symbolic images. The union of pencil and paper can be a
profound touch experience or it can be a playful and exploratory activity. The pencil can describe the illusion of depth below the surface and can fill that void with definitive marks or it can skim and move on the surface much like a skater, walker, or runner might move. Try making a variety of gestures while drawing with either hand. The gesture will leave its mark behind the movement on the page. The movement would be recorded exactly as the rhythms and direction occurred. To the naive, untrained and hesitant artist, a graphite pencil is relatively safe. It leaves a mark which can be erased and is not a permanent commitment. It is an ideal tool to stimulate experiment and effect images which range from spontaneous and intimate to cautious and formal. The pencil can be subtle and sensitive to the surface upon which it adheres.

**pen**

A pen is a powerful instrument. It is similar to the pencil in its aggressive potential but it makes a permanent mark in ink. The image in ink is fixed, cannot be undone without difficulty...it is a commitment. The power of the image is partly in the nature of this attachment to the surface of the receiving material. The pen leaves behind, in its contact, an even, consistent line that is fixed in its dimensions by the size, shape and material of the pen point. The ball-point pen, for example, can roll over a surface. It skates, twirls and leaves a thin but consistent line. The felt-tip pen leaves a range of marks from a fine to broad line. The mark is penetrating and rich in intensity. Color marking pens are no-nonsense tools. They are decisive, committed, and have a limited but
specialized potential for describing their relationship to a surface. The color in the ink is somewhat transparent and the potential for mixing is possible, although generally not in any deep or subtle connection. There are, of course, pens which have more flexibility and potential for variety. These pens can be fitted with a number of different points, each recording a unique character in the line. They are normally dipped into or filled with a finer quality of ink that adds to their sensitivity and range of expression. The use of a pencil can stimulate experimentation, but the pen seems to ask for more certainty and decisiveness from the artist.

color (crayon, chalk, etc.) in drawing

Whereas ink tends to soak into or dye the receiving material, other types of media normally adhere color to surface. The color may be chalk, wax, oil, crayons or other compounds that have mixed characteristics such as the familiar “Cra-pas” which have properties resembling both pastel and crayon. Color added to a drawing complicates the simple relationship between marking instrument and surface. Color is expressive of elusive, personal and hard to define feelings. The colors can be applied in layers, one on top of another or side by side. They can be blended by rubbing or shading. Waxy layers of color can be scratched through using a sharp instrument so that the underneath colors become revealed. Color application using the above instruments in various ways represent relationships with the paper or other surfaces that either flow easily from feeling to form or are more representative of conflicting forces. The color choices and means of relating
symbolize feelings of hot, cold, stimulating, relaxing, clashing, flowing, deep or shallow expressions and will, of course, be immensely important in defining the significance of the drawing. The addition of color and the texture left by the drawing tool create a new surface to the drawing: a slick, waxy or oily look, a chalky or dry quality or any other "look" that helps to define the meaning of the image, much like the surface clothing of a person may suggest the above descriptions.

other drawing materials

Any instrument that leaves a mark is a potential drawing tool. Any surface which will accept a mark is a potential drawing. The relationship between the surface and tool is intimate and may represent qualities which are familiar in human relationships ranging between those that produce tension and those that produce relaxation. Seeking instruments and surfaces for drawing can be a stimulating and creative experience. The use of familiar objects in unfamiliar ways or unfamiliar objects in familiar ways are statements about transformation, change and creativity.
TUESDAY — A painting in acrylic water color that incorporates mixed media: ink, crayon, chalk and writing.
Painting

Paint

Paint is a color-saturated liquid, thin or thick that can be spread over a surface. The pigment is usually a powder which is dissolved in the liquid. Paint can be spread over most surfaces, covering and adhering with a variety of results in the final appearance of the painted surface. Paint will either soak into a receiving surface and color it for as long as the surface remains, or it will stick to the surface for very long periods of time. The surface, being passive, receives the paint and changes itself dramatically. The paint color energizes, floods and charges a surface with feeling as well as with additional significance such as warm or cool qualities, movement forward and backward, as if the color exists in dimensional space or with harmony and conflict.

Water Color Paint

The surface that receives water color is porous. Water is the most basic medium that can be saturated with color pigment.

The surface is generally paper, which was discussed earlier. Water is a natural substance which is essential to life. It is a powerful symbol. Water will easily receive, absorb and saturate to various levels, the color which it receives. The water-saturated color is then transferred to the surface that is then transformed by the imagery the artist creates.
Water color paintings are transparent in that colors and shapes are visible through one another, and the unique intimacy of the relationship between water color and paper is apparent.

**oils and acrylics**

Color is dissolved in a medium like oil or liquid plastic, both of which are thicker than water. The paint quality of thickness or thinness can vary by adding more or less of another element like turpentine to oil or water to acrylic. When these paints are very thin they behave much like water color, but when they are spread thickly over a surface they tend to change the tactile quality of that surface. Paint can make a smooth surface feel rough or a rough surface smooth with many layers of paint. This quality of density, combined with the greater intensity of color present in its non-thinned state is capable of dramatically redefining the receiving surface. This can be an actual or illusory change in texture. In the relationship between oil or acrylic paint and the surface which is covered, the original appearance of the surface can be profoundly altered so that the receiving material should be chosen more for its structural or functional qualities rather than its appearance.

The overwhelming power of this pigment along with the images produced by the artist demand a surface which does not compete with, but rather supports, the final appearance of the painting. To this end, various surfaces offer different qualities like porosity, rigidity, texture, shape, and other characteristics which affect the painting in more subtle ways. The internal dynamics of a painting, the interactions of
color, pigment, textures and image combine to create the illusion of life forces that describe the magic of painting.

**brushes and knives**

Whereas a pen or pencil will normally contact a surface at one point only, a paint brush, palette knife, or any other instrument that is used to spread paint, contacts a wider area. The bristle type, size and shape all affect the way a brush holds paint and the type of mark it makes. A knife or related instrument may be flexible or rigid and must be capable of picking up and spreading paint. The type of tool, its flexibility and shape, determines the appearance of the finished painting. Soft, rough or hard contact will leave marks that describe the nature of this touch relationship. The choice of instrument, the way paint is applied (i.e. smooth, rough, stippled) and the force, speed, pressure and control that the artist expresses will all effect the feeling and form of the final images.
THE FAMILY — One of seven large antelopes. A welded steel and copper skeleton form is "stuffed" with fabric and objects hardened with acrylic medium and painted.
Sculpture exists in the round, and possesses three-dimensional qualities of length, breadth and thickness. Mass or volume is a familiar characteristic which is reminiscent of external reality since much physical form which includes human as well as other familiar entities are three-dimensional, exist in space and can be seen from all sides. The feelings which are aroused by a sculpture are often strongly connected to our tactile sense as well as our visual. The relationships which exist between tool and material in sculpture can be more physically dynamic than in the more illusory and abstract considerations of flat or two-dimensional art forms. Space exists around and within a dimensional object and creates both open, penetrating and closed objects. The following section will deal with some of the characteristics of materials and tools that are frequently used in making sculpture with art therapy goals in mind.
clay and modeling

Clay always says "yes." It does not resist manipulation and in fact immediately records and reflects even the most subtle images of touch. From a finger print to poking, pulling, rolling and tearing, clay accepts and records all attempts to transform its shape and surfaces. This malleability, easy availability and enormous versatility makes this medium exceptionally valuable in art therapy. Clay has power in its history, mythology and earth origins which are reflected in its structure. It can be modeled, carved, poured in a liquid state, baked and made rigid. Sculpture of clay can even be constructed section by section. Clay is related in tactile ways to mud, wet sand, and other natural materials including even human feces. This familiarity of touch, accessibility to forming and link with primitive emotions allows the clay sculptor a rare and intimate experience which can range between pleasant to very unpleasant sensations. Clay work can stimulate relaxing, flowing and permissive behavior or it can create confusion and anxiety because of its lack of boundaries and resistance.

Clay particles can be suspended in water or oil and the properties differ. Water-based clay will dry out if not kept damp. Oil-base clay will not dry and can be used indefinitely. Water-based clay can be fired in ovens at high temperatures and will completely change from the plastic and passive state to a rigid, hard and permanent form. Oil clay remains in a plastic state and can never retain a permanent and rigid quality. Clay allows for exploration, testing of limits, subtle to obvious expression and can be worked directly using the hands or indirectly with
various tools or implements which leave their marks. Clay is a medium which is open to a variety of relationships the quality of which depend on the desire and gesture of the artist and the nature of the material. Clay, as well as other modeling materials have physical growth potential. These substances may also be described as "additive" since they expand in size through the addition of material to the mass. Portions of clay can also be removed or shifted to another area of the piece. Any substance that exists between a liquid and a rigid state and has a degree of thickness, retains a shape, and can be affected by manipulation can be used as a modeling material.

other modeling materials

Familiar substances like dough, paper mache, cloth dipped in plaster, putty, modelling pastes, and even gauze impregnated with the type of plaster used in hospitals to make plaster casts for broken bones are available for sculpture. Of course, the identity and nature of each of these materials is somewhat different from one another and their response to the touch of the artist will vary as well as their final appearance. But they all share the plasticity of materials which can be modeled. They are accepting of change, nonresistant when wet and reflective of spontaneous as well as labored expressions. They personify qualities of behavior which reflect human passivity, submission, ease of change, flow, nonresistance, reflectivity and acceptance. These qualities allow the artist to express his or her power, create energy and a sense of control that is an especially valuable experience in art therapy. The
artist in a relationship with a nonresistant material is able to overcome his or her feelings of helplessness by acting upon a substance, altering and transforming its nature and by expressing a personal statement through the media.

construction

Materials which are suitable for construction ideally should be rigid and able to support weight. These materials are connected in some fashion and thus are built up or out. They form either structural shapes which are sculptural statements in themselves or skeleton-like shapes which will support a covering "skin" of another material. In art therapy the act of construction may symbolize the building and/or rebuilding of personal goals. Construction is a way of expressing growth, strength to support, dependency, unity, commitment and other values attributed to positive human experience. These characteristics of building are explored in sculptural construction and hopefully are translated into the actual life experience of the client/artist.

The materials that are used in construction are three-dimensional or at least are capable of forming three-dimensional objects. They include paper (rolled, folded and formed), wood (toothpicks, tongue depressors, scraps or found shapes), metal (wire, rods, sheets) and all kinds of found or manufactured objects. Natural materials, such as stone or driftwood, can also be connected to form sculpture.

The importance of attaching separate parts is a key element in con-
struction. Parts of the sculpture are connected and joined in various ways. Nailing, gluing, soldering, welding, folding, clipping and other joining techniques are utilized depending on the nature of the materials to be joined. The joints themselves are either permanent or temporary and express characteristics which define the nature of joining. Joints are places where separate things come together and thus become symbols of relating which are described by these connections. Construction is risky because each joined part can be a weak area if not carefully brought together and so demands some perseverance, attention to detail, problem solving skills and care from the artist. But heights can be reached, control exhibited and the fulfillment and accomplishment in a very concrete form is possible. Knowing the materials and relating them in sensible and appropriate ways is a guarantee of some success in this technique. A knowledgeable art therapist can aid in the decision-making involved in construction.

carving

The process which involves materials that can be carved may be described as “subtractive”. The substance which is carved loses material until the final chosen image is all that remains. Removing material to release the inner image generally implies that the medium is resistant to the tool. In fact, although materials like clay or even butter can be carved, we tend to think of carved sculpture as dealing with mass as well as resistant material (i.e.: stone, wood, etc.) and so it is not limited to merely altering surfaces but instead transforming the inner and outer layers of material. In the act of carving, the tools that are used
are often abrasive (files, rasps, etc.) and sharp (cutting chisels, picks
and knives). They tend to involve energetic and sometimes aggressive
movements such as hammering, sawing and penetrating. In art
therapy, because of restrictions in use of materials, space and tools,
more resistant media is sometimes not available and softer, more pas­
sive materials such as soap, plaster, balsa wood, or fine brick are substi­
tuted for traditional sculpture media like hard woods or stone.

Carving and its unique relationship between tool and medium is a more
aggressive experience than most of the art forms previously discussed.
Cutting away and removing material is essentially a destructive act.
The fact that creativity arrives out of this “violence” is an experience
which allows the artist the unique opportunity to express hostile and
angry feelings alongside the loving feelings associated with creating art.
Carving represents a relationship that combines opposites and so it can
be described in some ways as an act of reconciliation. It is also a battle
between an aggressive tool and a resistant material that ideally results
in a unity of forms and feelings. The artist benefits from this experi­
ence by expressing his power over the medium and by releasing the
image from its “prison” of substance. Through this process, the final
sculpture can be seen as a symbol of freedom and creativity.

casting and mold making

Casting is a process where a negative space is filled with a liquid that
hardens. The positive form is then removed. This, in a simple way, can
be described when a slab of clay is pressed in one section and a nega-
tive valley is created. The valley is filled with, for example, liquid plaster. The plaster hardens and a shape is removed which reflects the negative shape in reverse. A “hill” is now formed in plaster. Molds can be created from various forms and materials to reproduce shapes either singly or in quantity over and over again. A metaphor can be seen in the statement “he is cast from the same mold as his father”.

AIRLESS — A stuffed, sewn and crushed face in a plastic box surrounded by a variety of found objects.
fabrics and fiber

Weaving, knotting, sewing and other methods of working with fiber and fabric may result in objects that combine qualities of dimension. Cloth, for example, is woven and designed as a two-dimensional form, but may ultimately become an article of clothing and thus cover and define a three-dimensional form. Fibers, like yarn, rope and string may be knotted, sewn and frayed to form sculptures, both hanging and even free standing. Images can be sewn, drawn, printed and painted on fabric, and by crushing, folding, tying and dipping into color dyes, free form and spontaneous images can be created. Fabric hardeners may be used to soak cloth which dries into rigid shapes. All these methods can then be combined in various ways.

These materials are familiar to most people, and client artists are able to create interesting and unusual forms with relatively simple skills. Although the final product in fiber and fabric is important in a visual sense, the making of the object involves a strong tactile connection as well. The texture of cloth can be stimulating and even sensual. The texture of yarn or rope can be intimately reminiscent of human hair. Weaving, sewing and tying are activities which stress integration so that these experiences symbolize the coming together which results in unity. Working with fiber and fabric, particularly for people who are fragmented and confused, can be a most satisfying activity. It can be sensual, integrating, and may also result in the making of practical as well as aesthetically pleasing objects.
The materials used in these activities share certain physical qualities. They are soft, flexible, fibrous and when draped over a solid form they follow its general contours. These materials offer little resistance to cutting and shaping. They can be held together in various ways, including sewing, tying and lacing.

**mixed media**

Scrap, found, fabricated, old, useless, worn, inexpensive, abundant, commonplace objects and the printed image are all potential art materials. A single object may sometimes be chosen for aesthetic reasons by the artist, it can be removed from the flow of life, set apart and described as art. An object may be reshaped, changed in some way, or combined with other objects and be seen as art. This potential for transforming the objects of everyday experience, the ordinary, into the unique or extraordinary is a valuable art therapy concern. These materials are generally preformed but are changed in their new relationship to the artist or to one another. The client/artist is often able to identify with this process of change from the ordinary to the unique. It is a familiar experience for people who themselves feel helpless, useless, worn, old, sick or simply anonymous to wish, like Cinderella, to be transformed into a thing of beauty. This process can be symbolized through the use of found material as art media. The magic of the art experience may be most intensely felt by people using scrap materials in art who might otherwise be intimidated by more traditional media that are often associated with special skills and achievement.
The use of mixed media is an exercise involving sorting, selection, judgment and arrangement. Often, the objects used are not altered but simply chosen and committed to connections with one another or to a surface. The results of mixed media can be two-dimensional (collage, montage) or three-dimensional (sculpture). Three-dimensional objects or flat materials can be attached by various methods ranging from less permanent (paste, glue) to more permanent (screws, nails, soldering or welding). The nature of this attachment represents a need for confidence in making those decisions that represent varying degrees of commitment. For client/artists who exercise their decisiveness, to risk commitment, even symbolically, can be a beneficial experience, especially when guided by a sensitive art therapist. The use of aluminum foil to make basic shapes was further developed by this author when he discovered that the shapes could be taped together and otherwise joined. The tape (preferably duct tape) could then be painted and flexible sculptures created. Many artists will collect things and arrange them in various ways thereby creating installations that transform an environment.

printmaking and related techniques

These activities in art therapy involve relatively simple techniques for reproducing and/or transferring images from one material to another. A typical printing procedure involves first creating an image by gouging and removing material from a flat surface such as metal, plaster, linoleum, wood or any material which can be carved in this manner. The material is removed in such a way as to leave raised (uncut) and
lowered (material removed) surfaces. Ink is then rolled over this "plate" and the image is then transferred to paper or another surface by applying enough pressure to the imaged substance to allow the ink to adhere to the new surface. Objects such as gum erasers, potatoes or wood scraps can be carved in this way and, like rubber stamps, they can reproduce the same image over and over using ordinary inked stamp pads. Printmaking expresses certain physical characteristics of the material on which the original image is created. For example, a woodcut will leave traces of wood grain on the print so that even the original experience of creating is reproduced on other surfaces. Printmaking and stamping involve the client/artist in some important activities. The fact that an image is created by literally penetrating, gouging, and scratching and otherwise altering a material is not only a physically expressive act, but one in which an image can be reproduced. The reproduction of an image suggests longevity which in turn can be reassuring to a client/artist who may respond to the repetition as a symbol of continuity.

Many soft surfaces can be scratched into, gouged, or raised, such as linoleum or styrofoam which may be used for printing. Ink can be rolled onto a plastic or glass surface and marks scratched into the ink will leave a negative image. A paper then is placed over the image, pressed and then raised to reveal the printed surface. Power and control over the material and in addition a sense of continuity and confidence in the future are symbolic experiences which the act of reproduction fosters. Stamping is a familiar, repetitive activity that can aid in releasing certain physical tensions.
Another related activity is the making of rubbings. Paper is placed over a surface which possesses interesting textural qualities. Crayon or chalk is then rubbed over the paper. The imprint of the surface is left on the paper. This experience involves the artist in an intimate experience with the surface being rubbed. The tactile quality is enjoyed and the accuracy of the image produced connects the visual sense to the texture. Better sensory integration (visual and tactile) aids the client/artist in achieving an identification with the "real" world, a sense of rhythm and flow, fresh perceptual experiences and the pleasure of "possessing" the surface which was reproduced.

photography, video, filmmaking and computer graphics

The use of technology in art therapy reduces the need for manual skills in the production of images, but emphasizes instead perceptual and conceptual relationships. The client/artist may need only know how to push a button (as in Polaroid instant photography) to achieve a complete and accurate image. The ease of manipulation focuses attention on the picture itself. What am I seeing? How are elements relating? What does the picture say? These questions present themselves to the artist and the picture itself answers them.

Because film and video are capable of presenting accurate, recognizable images of life activities, still or in motion, the potential for the viewer to identify with these images is present. People are able to see themselves and others in ways that are often revealing and helpful. The environment can be a source of treasure when an image seeker is
searching for pictures.

The camera “shoots” a picture. The photographer “captures” an image with the camera. The quality of possession is evident. In a magic way we “possess” the reality when we have a photograph. Motion pictures and videotape adds still other elements to the sense of reality. Movement and sound become additional sense experiences. Computer generated images are another source of power for the client/artist who can manipulate electronic media and, with the click of a mouse, produce astounding results.

The use of these techniques are often limited in art therapy. There are economic, space and many technical drawbacks—even legal restrictions on the use of equipment in certain settings. But creative art therapists have found ways to overcome many of these obstacles and the image making potential of these technologies is enormous.