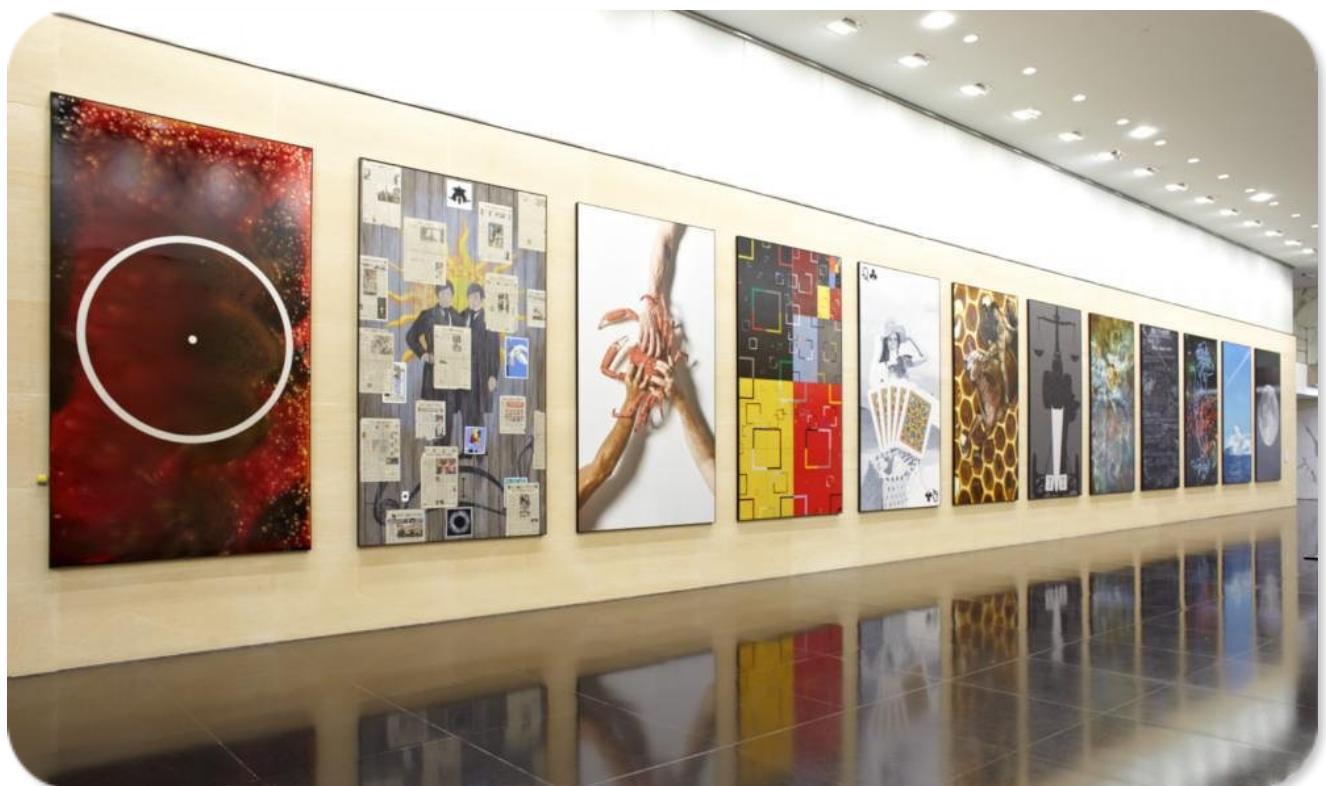


What are the benefits of having art in the workplace?

An investigation into how having art in the workplace can be beneficial to its employees.



(Fig 1. Deutsche Bank- 2013)

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Introduction:

The modern office worker spends around 8 hours a day at their workstation, and although these workspaces are normally designed to allow privacy and improve concentration, when this is a dull, grey cubicle, or desk surrounded only by more desks and plain walls, this can be a depressing environment, made worse by having to stare at a screen all day. In the modern workplace it is becoming increasingly common that employees are stressed, or depressed. This dissertation explores not only the relationship between having wall art in the office, and general employee satisfaction and wellbeing, but also how having art in the working environment can help strengthen a brand, and lead to a more positive working environment in general. It will also explore whether there is a preferred subject for the visual arts in the workplace, and how the human brain responds to looking at art.

Abstract: Aims and Objectives

Aims:

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether having fine art in the work place benefits its employees. This study will explore the relationship between having beautiful fine art in the work place, and the difference that including fine art on the walls could make to employees.

Can having fine art on the wall of an office reduce employee stress, and help induce relaxation? In recent years employers have started to recognise the importance of having well designed workspaces, rather than the traditional grey walled cubicle. This study will explore the possibilities that taking time out of your day to look at wall art rather than a blank wall can help to relax the brain, and momentarily disengage from ‘work mode’ which in turn could result in happier and more relaxed employees. This study not only explores the physical effects that art can have on the brain, but also the messages that having art in the office would send to employees and prospective clients, such as feeling more valued, and having a stronger brand image.

Objectives:

In order to achieve the aims, both primary and secondary research will be conducted on this topic. The primary method of research is a multiple choice survey consisting of eight questions to assess employees satisfaction with their work environment, and questioning whether they feel that the addition of visual art would enhance their mood and working environment, and make them feel more valued as employees. The secondary research is literature review collated from books, online articles, blogs and journals covering the subject of whether or not looking at wall art can help to relax you, and also the various benefits of having fine art in the work place. The literature selected for review features studies which have taken place in hospitals and healthcare facilities, where visual art has been included to see how patients and staff respond.

Research Methodology.

Primary Research- Art in the workplace- Employee Review Survey.

The 'Art in the Workplace- Employee Review Survey' consisted of 8 multiple choice questions based around how the employee feels about having art (or not) in the workplace. The questions were designed to not only find out how the employee feels about having art in the work place but also to see if having art in the workplace contributes to how valued employees feel at the workplace. The survey is anonymous, and all of the questions on the survey are optional, and can be skipped if required. There is no obligation to take the survey, and no personal details are taken for the survey at all- only the questions related to peoples personal opinions on having art in the work place. The survey was taken by a total of 22 participants. Once the questions were finalised, a link to the survey was emailed to a total of 40 participants, 22 of which decided to take part.

Literature review.

How does the human brain respond to looking at art?

Wall art is very popular in all areas of life, particularly the home and workplace, not least because it enhances an interior and makes the surroundings more interesting and pleasant to look at, however, recent studies have shown that looking at artwork that is perceived to be beautiful actually stimulates the part of the brain responsible for pleasure, triggering a similar feeling to falling in love. This has proven to be directly related to how much the person likes the image. In a recent study by Professor Semir Zeki, who is the chair in neuroaesthetics at University College London. Participants were placed in a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner, to measure the blood flow to certain parts of the brain, whilst being shown a series of 30 images of artwork. The findings showed that the increase in blood flow to that part of the brain was directly related to how much the participant liked the image shown. Professor Semir said: "What we found is when you look at art – whether it is a landscape, a still life, an abstract or a portrait – there is strong activity in that part of the brain related to pleasure." (Mendick, R. 2011). According to Zeki, "The reaction was immediate. What we found was the increase in blood flow was in proportion to how much the painting was liked." - "It tells us art induces a feel good sensation direct to the brain." (Mendick, R. 2011)

Whilst in a stressful situation at work, studies show that taking a few minutes out of their day to gaze at a beautiful piece of artwork can engage creative parts of the brain that were not previously being used, and trigger relaxation. Viewing fine art can also be seen as a cognitive exercise, exercising the brain, and therefore making the employee more productive throughout the day, as it breaks up the monotony of staring at a computer screen all day, particularly when an employee is undertaking a repetitive task. This theory is supported by a recent study by Oshin Vartanian, from the University of Toronto Scarborough, who is an expert on the neuroscience and aesthetics of creativity. The study observes the different ways people observe and appreciate art on a neurological level. Oshin discusses the findings of the study with writer Don Campbell in the University News Publication 'U of T News'. During the interview, Oshin said: "The coolest thing we found is that areas of the brain involved in processing emotion and those that activate our pleasure and reward systems are also being engaged. We also found that the brain's default mode network – the area associated with internally-oriented thinking like daydreaming, thinking about the future or retrieving memories – is also activated." (Campbell, D. 2014.) This could be part of the reason that looking at art helps disengage the brain from 'Work mode' and helps people to relax.

Further studies show that even just looking at art can boost creativity.

Why do we like certain art?

Art has remained hugely popular for as long as it has existed, from the first cave paintings to the huge international art galleries we see in the largest cities. Almost every household displays some kind of visual art, be it photography, sculpture or a painting. There are many aspects to a piece of art that could be considered to be beautiful. When it comes to portraits of humans and animals, symmetry is considered key to the view finding beauty in the image. V.S Ramachandran, a neuroscientist at the University of California, San Diego, discusses these theories in his book, 'The Tell Tale Brain'. He says- "In the natural world anything symmetrical is usually alive. Animals, for instance, have symmetrical shapes." (Ramachandran, V, S. 2011) and exaggerated versions of these symmetrical forms can be even more pleasing to the human brain. Ramachandran also said, "I think you're seeing the same thing with all kinds of abstract art, it looks distorted to the eye, but pleasing to the emotional centre to the brain." (Ramachandran, V, S. 2011) Which could explain why the abstract works of Picasso, for example, have been so popular and pleasing to people: because the fact that our brains have to look at them and figure them out hyper activates our neurones, and draws us in. This evolutionary theory could also explain why we find it so pleasant and relaxing to look at paintings of bright, beautiful landscape views- this would have been something pleasant for our ancestors to see, as it would mean that they are in a safe position, overlooking vast acres of land. Similarly, darker images of small spaces can be found distressing by some, this could be because to our ancestors, it would represent a dangerous situation, where their view is obstructed, and they could feel confused, so even though the brain knows that what it is looking at is just an image, there is a deeper part of the brain that feels the fear, even knowing that it is an image. From these examples, it is clear that people tend to prefer art that makes them feel happy and safe, or impressionist and abstract art where the imagination is used, and parts of our brains that are not usually being used are activated.

"When we gaze at a wondrous painting or listen to a beautiful composition or lose ourselves in the rhythm of a dazzling dance, we feel truly lost, yet fully aware." -Surya Ramkumar, 2005.

Can art in the office boost creativity?

An article in The Guardian, “Art works: how art in the office boosts staff productivity”, discusses how having art and creativity in the work place can make employees more productive, and less stressed, as well as improving their general wellbeing. The article, written by Kirstie Brewer says- “Contrary to what your boss might say, being distracted at work is not always a bad thing. If the object of your distraction is a work of art, it can actually boost productivity, lower stress and increase wellbeing. This is according to Dr Craig Knight, who has studied the psychology of working environments for 12 years at the University of Exeter, where he heads a research group called Identity Realisation (IDR).” (Brewer, K. 2016) The article goes on to discuss how Knight and his team conducted an experiment to find out what the most effective type of workspace was by having the participants work for one hour each in four different style working environments. The types of working environment were:

- Lean: containing only the things necessary to do the tasks.
- Enriched: featuring art and plants which were already arranged.
- Empowered: the same art and plants but participants could choose where to put them.
- Disempowered: participants could arrange the art and plants themselves – but the experimenter then undid these personal touches and reverted to the enriched layout.

(Brewer, K. 2016)

Brewer (2016) goes on to say, “The team found that people who worked in the enriched office worked about 15% quicker than those in the lean office and had fewer health complaints – this figure then doubled for people who worked in the empowered space. As for those who’d seen their personal touches undermined; their productivity levels were the same as those in the lean space.” (Brewer, K. 2016)

The results of this study tells us that employees will be the most happy and productive if they are allowed the power to personalise their own space- this could mean that if an employee was allowed to choose their own artwork for example, they might feel even more comfortable and relaxed that if the artwork was chosen for them.

Does experiencing visual art reduce stress and anxiety levels?

Stress is a huge problem in the modern work environment, a problem which can also lead to further health issues caused by high blood pressure, lack of sleep and anxiety. A study by Angela Clow, PhD at the department of Psychology, University of Westminster, measured stress levels of city workers before and after a lunchtime visit to an art gallery. The findings showed that the steroid stress hormone cortisol in the participants saliva decreased dramatically after a 35 minute visit to the gallery, “The observed drop in cortisol was rapid and substantial; under normal circumstances it would take about 5 hours of normal diurnal decline for cortisol levels to fall to this extent. We conclude that the gallery visit caused rapid normalisation (recovery) from the consequences of high stress.” (Clow, A. PhD. 2006). The fact that looking at beautiful fine art reduces stress levels could have many other benefits as a knock on effect from lower stress levels, as high stress levels can also seriously affect the immune system. High levels of cortisol have been associated with many other health problems, such as depression, anxiety, obesity, insomnia and premature ageing.

In a short film supporting the ‘National Art Pass’, Semir Zeki, Professor of Neurobiology and Neuroaesthetics at the University College London discusses the results of a series of experiments he designed in an effort to understand what happens in our brains while we are looking viewing Art. From the results of the study, Zeki concluded that when a person

views a piece of art they perceive to be beautiful, their brain is flooded with the pleasure chemical, dopamine, which gives the viewer feelings of intense pleasure- similar to feelings of love and desire. (Art Fund UK, 2011). Perhaps this intense pleasure, combined with the drop in cortisol would be enough to take the edge off a very stressful work day. A study by Dr Gillian Rice from the Bedminster family practice, Bristol, explores how an enhanced environment can affect Patients in primary care facilities. The Study, ("Enhancing a primary care environment: a case study of effects on patients and staff in a single general practice") followed patients of a healthcare facility before and after moving to a different, newly renovated practice. The original building was small, cramped and impractical, with only the most basic standards of comfort and decoration, whereas the new surgery had been well thought out and carefully designed for practicality and comfort. There was a lot more space in the new surgery, and one of the GP's even worked with an Art Consultant to carefully select artworks that would be beneficial to the patients and staff. The study looked at effect these changes had on both the staff and the patients, by issuing questionnaires to a 1118 pre-move and 954 post-move patients. The Surveys showed a significant increase in patient satisfaction levels, and a decrease in anxiety after moving to the new premises, and as noted by Rice (2008), "Patients highlighted the increased space and light, more modern appearance, greater comfort, and novel works of art in the new surgery" (Rice, G. 2008), and therefore concluded that the changes had been beneficial. According to Rice (2008), "Both patients and staff are affected by the physical environment in which health care is delivered, but very few studies have been carried out in primary care settings. This study suggests that enhancing a primary care environment is associated with an improvement in patients' perception of patient–doctor communication, reduced patient anxiety in the surgery, and increases in patient and staff satisfaction." (Rice, G. 2008).

Although this study does support the fact that art can be beneficial in the work place, there were other changes made to the environment at the same time, so despite the fact that the art had a positive impact on both the staff and the patients, it cannot be proven that the Art had any more of an effect than any of the other changes- although it can be said that the Art contributed to be benefits of the new premises. To prove this the art would have to be the only change within the space, and surveys or questionnaires would have to be taken before and after the changes.

Dr Rosalia Staricoff (2004) published a study called, "A Study of the Effects of Visual and Performing Arts in Healthcare for Chelsea and Westminster Hospital" which investigates the therapeutic effects of having art in the hospital environment. The Zigmond and Snaith's Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale was used to assess patients responses to the presence of visual and performing arts in the Medical Day Unit. There was a control group, a group that was played live music, and a group that was shown visual arts. The visual arts were displayed in the treatment room and the statistical results were as follows:

- 90% of patients noticed the display of visual arts despite their medical problems
- 79% of respondents gave a very high positive response to the issues concerning attraction and enjoyment of the pictures
- When patients were asked whether the art in the room changed their mood for the better, 80% of respondents were emphatically positive.
- Their response on the effect of easing stress levels was, 65% responded positively, 27% noted a moderate effect, and only 8% expressed indifference
- For 87% of patients visual art is considered a main factor in creating a pleasant environment.

(Staricoff, R. 2004)

The study found that the inclusion of visual and performing arts resulted in a reduction in depression and anxiety in the patients, as well as an increase in staff morale. The reduction in depression and anxiety of the patients was also followed by a reduction in some of the patients medications, and shorter stays in the hospital than usual. This study shows the clear benefits of visual arts in relation to stress and anxiety, and this could easily be implemented in the workplace, a place which can often be the cause of much stress and anxiety.

What are the dangers of stress in the workplace?

Stress seems to cause more ailments than anything else these days, and the biggest problem is, that it's such a common problem. Almost all work places give their employees some sort of targets to hit, putting the pressure on, and causing anything from a mild amount of stress, to an intolerable amount that can cause health problems, resulting in the employee having to take time off work.

Common symptoms of stress can include:

- Headaches
- Depression and Anxiety
- Heart Disease
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Gastrointestinal Problems
- Alzheimer's Disease
- Premature Ageing
- Premature Death
- Poor sleep
- Back ache
- Not being 'in the mood' for sex

These problems may start off being minor, but can quickly escalate and exaggerate other problems, so noticing them, and taking action early on is very important, and taking preventative steps even more so.

Apart from clearly being damaging to the person involved, an employee taking a lot of time off work can also hurt the company in the long run, firstly because it can cost the company money to pay for cover staff, and secondly because staff having to take time off work for sickness can put pressure on the rest of the team, meaning that some people might have to work extra hours to make up the loss- which in turn can lead to those staff becoming stressed, and therefore have knock on or 'Domino' effect. Having stressed staff in the workplace can also affect morale in general, as it can affect the atmosphere in the office.

There are so many problems that are caused or exaggerated by stress, that surely employers should be taking any preventative measures possible to make the workplace as pleasant and relaxing as it can possible, whilst still being productive. This will not only benefit the employees, but also the employer in the long term.

Can having art in the office strengthen a brand?

Due to the fact that art is a great way to communicate without using words, thoughtful placement of fine art in the workplace can strengthen the brand image to both employees and prospective clients while visiting the workplace. The impact of first impressions is a lasting one, and having fine art related to the type of brand and brand subject on the walls

in the office sends a clear message of what the brand is all about, and tell a story about the company. The type of art displayed should reflect the brand, for example, if your company is a food and beverage related business, having some nice artwork depicting food and drink products would reinforce the brand, whereas having photos of buildings in the same food and beverage company would make no sense.

Using a brands colours within artworks can also help to strengthen a brand. Doris Anderson, an art consultant at D'or Art Consultants refers to this in her article ("5 Ways Art can Reflect Your Brand"). She writes, "Incorporating your corporate colours and values can reinforce your corporate culture. You can have a literal representation of your values, or you can have a Mural or other artwork to depict your values and culture. When your art is created specifically to your brand, it may then be incorporated on your web site, annual reports and gift giving." (Anderson, D. 2015)

If a company has very strong company values, such as being eco friendly for example, it could be useful to have art on the walls of Nature to reinforce this to employees and visitors.

A companies corporate heritage can also be reinforced by using art, for example, if a company was founded in London, and they are proud of the fact that they have always only stocked products made by local British people, it might be helpful to have art on the wall relating to this, such as iconic British Buildings or landscapes.

Branding is very important, and can help a company to gain loyal customers. Art can help to humanise a brand, and give it a personality, which can make it easier for a consumer to find the brand relatable and likeable. An article published in the Journal of Neuroscience in 2014- ("Are corporations people too? The neural correlates of moral judgments about companies and individuals") compares and discusses how people view corporations, and the similarities in the neural processing of the actions of corporations and people.

Participants of this study underwent functional magnetic resonance imaging, whilst being shown vignettes about corporations and people, to see how the brain responded. The study compared how people view corporations, people, and objects, and it found that people view corporations and people in a very similar way, which is very different to how objects are viewed. The study also finds that people look at and judge the actions of brands and people in a very similar way, which is why they responded positively to a more humanised brand, and it is the little things such as having art in the workplace that can help to do this, as it can reinforce, and add to the existing brand image. However, according to Plitt, Savjani, Eagleman (2014) "Both moral ratings and neural responses to these vignettes revealed a slight negativity bias toward corporations in which participants appeared to judge the actions of companies more harshly. Collectively, our results support our hypothesis that corporations are viewed as social beings." (Plitt, Savjani, Eagleman. 2014, p. 8).

Employees will feel more valued if they have a pleasant and attractively designed office, as this suggests that the management care about the wellbeing and environment of the employees, rather than just treating them like robots. In turn, clients visiting the office would see that the company employees are treated well, and that the company has good strong core brand values.

According to Arch (2010) "Fine Art has a profound effect on Public Relations; it reinforces investor and client confidence by conveying your pride in your organisation... Fine Art makes the working environment more pleasant. When Art is placed in public areas, people tend to gather, communicate, and share ideas. It gets people interested, curious and thinking creatively." (Arch, A. 2010)

What are the most popular art subjects?

A survey in Art Business Today (Art Business today, 2003) said that these were the top 10 best-selling subjects for paintings in the UK:

- 1 Traditional landscapes
- 2 Local views
- 3 Modern or semi-abstract landscapes
- 4 Abstracts
- 5 Dogs
- 6 Figure studies (excluding nudes)
- 7 Seascapes, harbour, and beach scenes
- 8 Wildlife
- 9 Impressionistic landscapes
- 10 Nudes

The fact that landscapes comes at the top of this list isn't surprising at all. Landscapes transport the viewer to another place, and can be very relaxing to look at. An article in The Wall Street Journal (Wang, S. 2011) supports this by discussing a study by Marc Berman, a post-doctoral researcher at Rotman Research Institute in Toronto. The study looks at how viewing nature, whether spending time interacting with nature, walking through a park, or simply looking at a picture of nature, can help improve cognitive function, and whether it can be therapeutic for people suffering from depression and anxiety. The study finds that cognitive performance did in fact improve after taking a 10 minute to look at nature, even if it was just a picture.

The second best selling subject is abstract, which could be popular because it can be so versatile in colour and mood. Abstract paintings can be a great way to liven up a space, as any colour scheme can be chosen so they an fit well within most modern interiors.

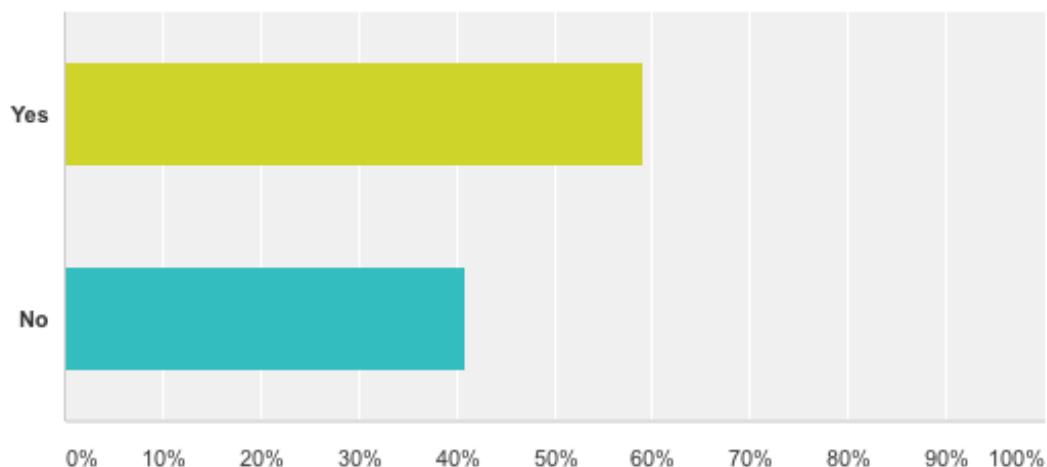
Results and Findings.

Question 1: Does your place of work feature any art?

Of the 22 people taking part in the survey, 13 (or 50.09%) said that their workplace does feature some sort of artwork. This is a positive response, showing that more than half of employers consider art to be an important part of the work environment.

Does your place of work feature any art?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



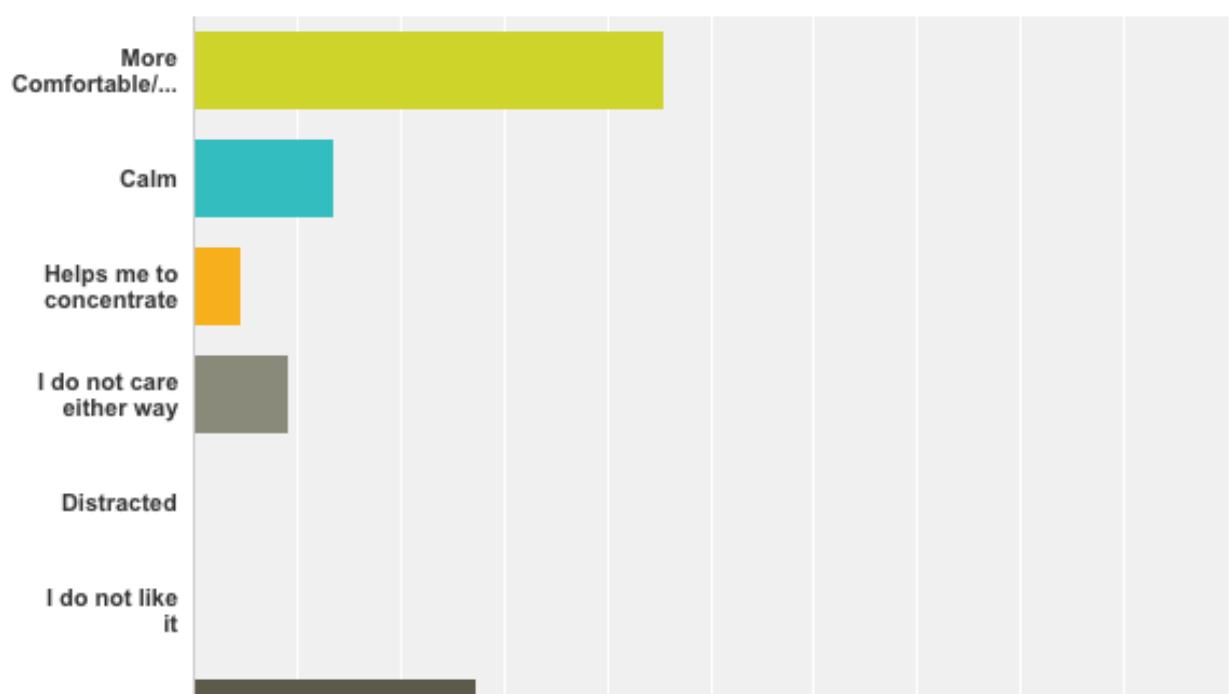
Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Yes	59.09%
▼ No	40.91%
Total	22

Question 2: How does having art in the workplace make you feel?

In this multiple choice question there were 7 possible answers to choose from, ranging from positive to negative. Out of the 22 participants, the most common answer to this question was that art in the workplace makes them feel 'more comfortable/at home'. This answer was selected by a total of 10 of the participants, making a total of 45.45% . Six participants do not feature any art work in their office at all, three said it makes them feel 'Calm' and one person said that it 'helps them to concentrate' Only two of the participants said that they do not care either way, and no one who took part in the survey gave either of the negative answers, that it could make them feel distracted, or that they don't like having art in the workplace. The answers to this question show that having art in the work place doesn't seem to cause any negative feelings towards it, and that it seems to have a positive effect on the majority of participants.

How does having art in your workplace make you feel?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



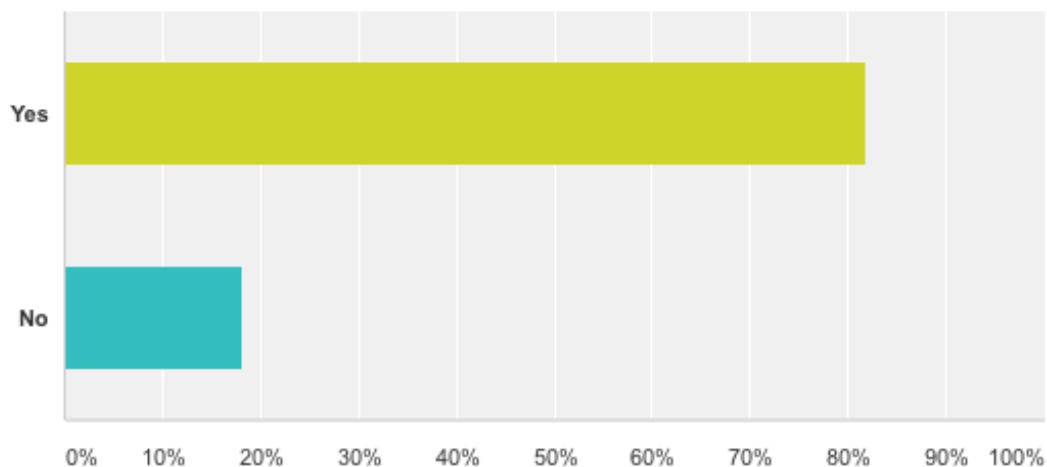
Answer Choices	Responses (%)	Count
More Comfortable/At home	45.45%	10
Calm	13.64%	3
Helps me to concentrate	4.55%	1
I do not care either way	9.09%	2
Distracted	0.00%	0
I do not like it	0.00%	0
n/a I do not have art in my workplace	27.27%	6
Total		22

Question 3: Do you think a workplace that features art, values it's employees more than somewhere that doesn't feature any art?

A large majority of the participants answered 'Yes' to this question, agreeing that a workplace that features art does value its employees more than one that doesn't. This could be because having art in the workplace implies that the employer cares about the working environment of its employees, having taken the time to choose art, and create a pleasant workspace, and this in turn could make them feel more valued.

Do you think a workplace that features art, values its employees more than somewhere that doesn't feature any art?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



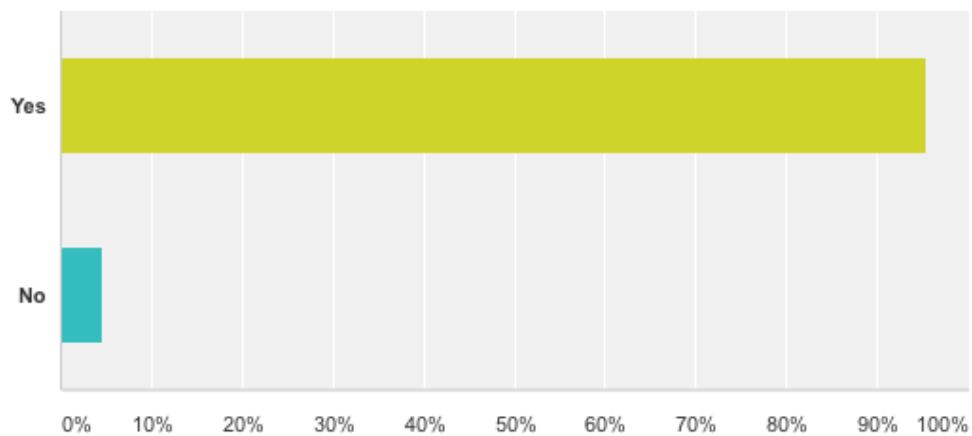
Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Yes	81.82% 18
▼ No	18.18% 4
Total	22

Question 4: Do you think that having art in the office makes for a more pleasant working environment?

An overwhelming majority of participants answered ‘yes’ to this question, with just one participant answering no. This shows that it is very likely that having art in the workplace will only improve the working environment, and that most employees would prefer to have some art in their workplace, rather than no art at all.

Do you think that having art in the office makes for a more pleasant working environment?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



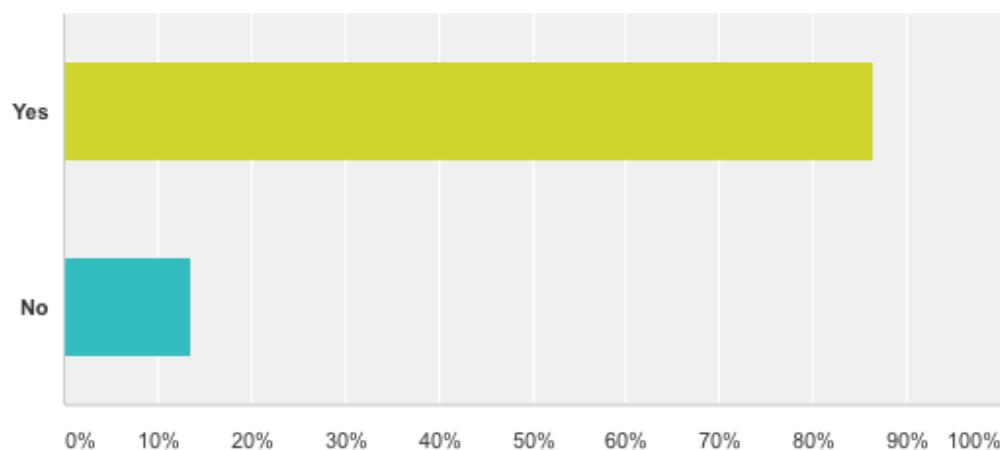
Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Yes	95.45%
▼ No	4.55%
Total	22

Question 5: Do you think that having art in your workplace enhances an employees sense of pride in their workplace?

Once again, a majority of participants have answered positively to this question, confirming that they do think that having art in the workplace would increase an employees sense of pride in the workplace. This could perhaps be because if an employee provides a pleasant environment for employees to work in, they in turn will take better care of it and be proud of the place that they work in.

Do you think that having art in your work place enhances an employees sense of pride in their work place?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



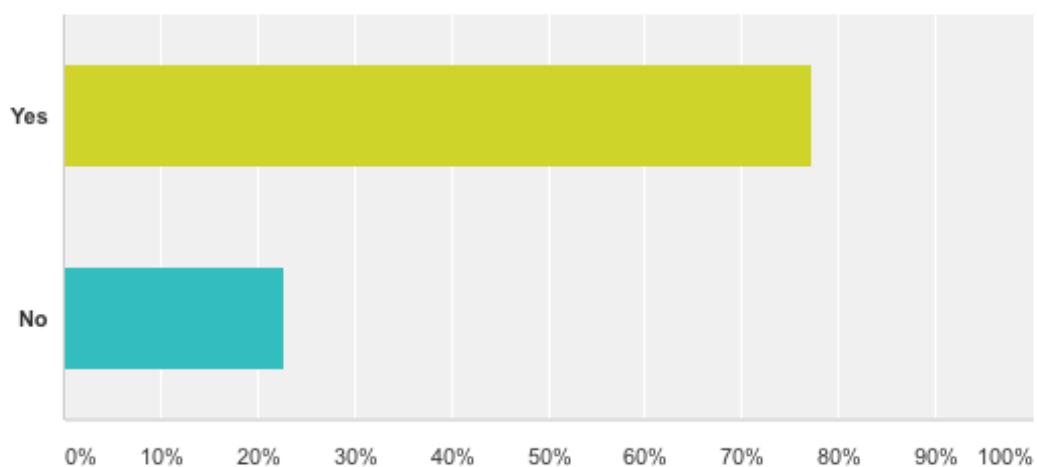
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	86.36%
No	13.64%
Total	22

Question 6: Do you think having interesting art or sculpture in the workplace could enhance employee creativity?

A large majority of the participants answered yes to this question, with only five people answering 'no'

Do you think having interesting art or sculpture in the workplace could enhance employee creativity?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



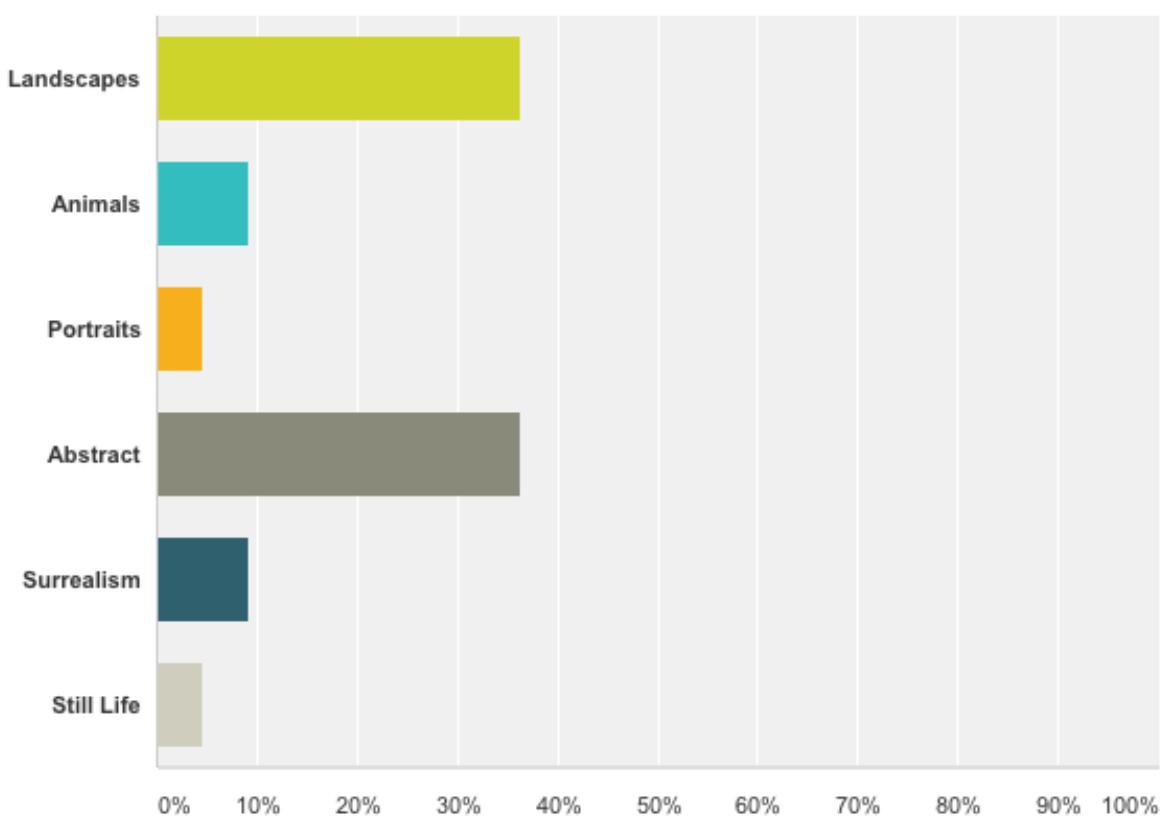
Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Yes	77.27%
▼ No	22.73%
Total	22

Question 7: What subject would you prefer the art to have in your workplace?

This question features six subjects for the participants to choose from. The favourite answers were 'landscapes' and 'abstract' with a total of eight (36.36%) of the participants for each answer selecting these as their favourite choices. They outnumber the other choices by far, clearly showing that they are the most popular themes for art in the workplace. This is perhaps as they are quite impersonal and relaxing subjects which appeal to a lot of people whereas the other answers, particularly 'portraits', which received one of the lowest responses, can evoke a different response. A portrait, for example in the workplace, could be unnerving to employees, as they may have a feeling of being watched!

What subject would you prefer the art to have in your workplace?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Landscapes	36.36% 8
Animals	9.09% 2
Portraits	4.55% 1
Abstract	36.36% 8
Surrealism	9.09% 2
Still Life	4.55% 1
Total	22

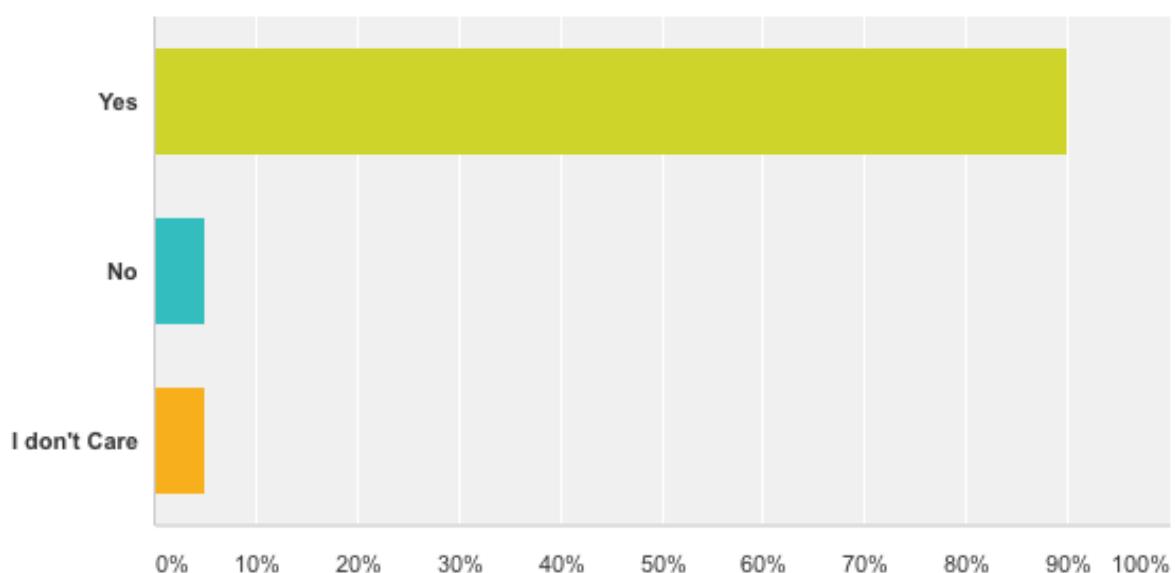
Question 8: If you do not have any art in your workplace, would you like to?

Only 20 out of the 22 participants chose to answer this question, and the majority of participants answered 'yes' with only one person selecting 'no' and one person selecting 'I don't care'

The response to this question shows that most people would prefer to have some kind of art in their workplace.

If you do not have any art in your workplace, would you like to?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	90.00% 18
No	5.00% 1
I don't Care	5.00% 1
Total	20

Conclusion.

An interest in the arts seems to only boost employees mental health and wellbeing, therefore having art in the work place can be beneficial in very many ways:

Having art in the workplace reduces stress and anxiety.

Helping to support employee health and well being can benefit the company, as their employees will have less time off for health problems, as well as there being a generally more positive feeling in the office, which in turn leads to happier employees. The research in “A Study of the Effects of Visual and Performing Arts in Healthcare for Chelsea and Westminster Hospital” (Staricoff, R. 2004) found that patients in the new hospital premises which had been thoughtfully designed experienced a reduction in stress and anxiety. The artwork in the consultation rooms had been carefully selected by an art consultant, and the patients had a significant decrease in anxiety compared to when they were in the old health care facilities.

The study by Angela Clow, PhD at the department of Psychology, University of Westminster, showed that participants who visited an art gallery during their break at work experienced a significant decrease in cortisol levels, showing that even the act of observing art can decrease stress and anxiety levels.

Question 2 of the ‘Art in the Workplace- Employee review survey’- supports this statement, with the question, “How does having art in the workplace make you feel?” the most popular answer was “More comfortable/at home” with over 45% of participants selecting this answer. The fact that the participants feel more comfortable will in turn reduce stress and anxiety.

Having art in the workplace boosts creativity and productivity.

The study by Craig Knight proved that workers preformed better in an environment that was enhanced by artwork and plants, and even better when they were allowed to arrange and the space themselves. The act of arranging the plants and artworks made the workers feel more at home in their work environment which in turn boosted productivity.

Having different types of art displayed in the workplace could create a more inspiring environment for employees, as looking at art causes parts of our brains that we don’t normally use to activate- which could result in more creative work.

Having art in the work place makes employees feel more valued.

The fact that employers have made an effort to think about the decor of the office, and make it a pleasant environment to be in but taking the time to select and put up art work can make employees feel more valued. The results from question 3 of the ‘Art in the Workplace- Employee review survey’- “Do you think a workplace that features art, values its employees more than somewhere that doesn’t feature any art?” were that over 80% of participants agreed that a workplace that features art DOES value its employees more than somewhere that doesn’t feature any art.

Having art in the workplace can strengthen a brand.

As well as enhancing the environment, having art on the walls in the workplace can create a lasting first impression for any prospective employees or clients who are visiting the workplace. Having visual art displayed in the workplace shows that an employer cares about its employees, as they have taken the time to make the working environment more pleasant. Art can help to humanise a brand, making the brand more likeable to future employees or clients, this is particularly important, as the study published in the Journal of Neuroscience in 2014- (“Are corporations people too? The neural correlates of moral

judgments about companies and individuals") shows that people view corporations in a very similar way to the way that they view people.

If a corporation has particular brand values, it could use art in the workplace to support this, for example, if the company is an aeronautical company, it would be a good idea to display art or photography featuring the stars and space, similarly, it wouldn't make any sense at all to display art featuring nature or animals in a business like this. Having art work that relates to the brand will give anyone who walks into the building a reinforced impression of the brand.

Having art in the workplace can improve employee retention and enhance an employees sense of pride in their workplace.

If an employee is happy and comfortable in there workplace with minimal stress, they are more likely to stay with the company than look for another job elsewhere. The simple act of adding art to the offices will show the employees that they are cared for and make them feel more at home. Having a pleasant working environment will also increase an employees sense of pride in their workplace, because if they see that their management care about the working environment, they are more likely to care about the place as well. In question 4 of the 'Art in the Workplace- Employee review survey'- "Do you think that having art in the office makes for a more pleasant working environment?" An overwhelming majority (over 95%) of participants agreed that having art in the office DOES make for a more pleasant working environment. If employees have a pleasant working environment they are more likely to feel comfortable and become attached to the place-and therefore be less likely to leave.

In the 'Art in the Workplace- Employee review survey' for survey Question 2: "How does having art in the workplace make you feel?", not one participant said that having art in the workplace would make them feel distracted, or that they 'do not care either way'. This shows us that having art in the workplace does not really have any negative effects at all, and can only be beneficial to employees.

The best type of artwork for an office would be traditional landscapes, abstract paintings, or impressionist paintings.

The reason abstract and impressionist art would be ideal for an office environment is because when looking at these types of visual arts, parts of our brains that are not normally used are stimulated when looking at the image, this is because the brain is trying to work it out, as the images are not clear. V.S Ramachandran said, in his study 'The Tell Tale Brain' that "I think you're seeing the same thing with all kinds of abstract art, it looks distorted to the eye, but pleasing to the emotional centre to the brain." (Ramachandran, V, S. 2011) This could be particularly helpful in an office environment, as it can give the brain a 'rest' from work, whilst using a different part of the brain.

Landscape paintings or other artworks such as nature photography are also particularly good in an office environment that might be stressful. This is because the act of observing nature, whether it is a walk in the woods or park, or simply looking at an image of nature, has been proven to help people relax.

Employees would prefer to personalise their workspace by choosing selecting their own artwork.

Due to the fact that every person perceives certain art slightly differently to the next, it would be beneficial for employees to select their own art. This would not only make them feel more comfortable and in control of their work space, but having the opportunity to select their own art could cater to their specific needs. For example, if an employee is feeling stressed or anxious it might be helpful for them to have art work featuring

landscapes or nature, and if an employee wanted to feel more creative or inspired, they could select a piece of art that specifically inspires them. It would be a nice idea if each employee was allowed to select, or bring in to work one piece of work that they like, to place in, or nearby their workstation. This would not only make the office a more colourful and exciting environment to be in, but it would spur conversation between employees, as each person would have their own opinion on each piece of art. This could help with employees being social and bonding with each other, for example, if an employee saw a piece of art that they liked near to a colleagues workstation they might stop to ask questions about it or compliment it.

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