

# Nickova Behling

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I am the founder of Artahead, providing opportunities for people to engage in visual art processes, including people with mental health problems and learning disabilities.

My work is grounded on the theory of art as an expression, which for me means the expression and communication of emotions in an abstract, informal way, using colour, forms and textures in their pure essence.

I work with a variety of media including acrylic paint, ink and natural pigments such as sand, soil, coffee grain and ashes. The work is abstract and informal, expressing ideas, memories and emotions. I see my expressions as a dialogue with my inner self and the experience of the outer world.

I believe in the:

- Power of self-expression through art
- Unlimited possibilities to explore
- Freedom, openness and joyfulness of visual expression

I love the sensuality of paint; the colours running, slurring into each other, the creamy textures, the layers and transparency, the beauty of the pure essence of textures, mark-making, the tint, the shade, the abundance, the simplicity...

I would like to feel it, touch it, lick it, drink it, swim in it, be fully emerged in it – colour; in all its variations of luminosity, glow, gloom, obscurity and insignificance.

As long as we can see, it is there; we are always surrounded by it. Colour carries emotion and arouses memories, similar to music.



My approach as artist and facilitator:

- Being playful
- Experimenting
- Working in large scale
- Empowering, giving people control
- Being non-judgmental
- Exploring individual expression

When facilitating workshops I am aiming to provide a space where people are allowed to express themselves through the painterly process; letting go, engaging playfully; touching, splashing, brushing, mixing, exploring, finding oneself and getting lost again... developing interaction through, and with, the creative process.

Collaboration in paint – it's like playing improvised music or non-verbal communication: we react to each other's mark-making, choice of colour, brush stroke... There can be outcries, indulgence or silence. There can be withdrawal, softness, astonishment, surprises, assertiveness... The outcome – a painting – speaks for itself.

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