

Artistic Resilience in Times of Crisis: Navigating Adversity Through Creativity

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Abstract:

Artistic Resilience in Times of Crisis: Navigating Adversity Through Creativity" explores the phenomenon of artistic resilience amidst challenging circumstances. This paper delves into how artists leverage their creative abilities as a means of coping and thriving during times of crisis. Drawing from interdisciplinary perspectives, it examines the mechanisms through which art fosters resilience, both at individual and collective levels. Through case studies and theoretical analysis, this research illuminates the transformative power of artistic expression in navigating adversity and promoting well-being.

Keywords: Artistic Resilience, Creativity, Adversity, Crisis, Coping Strategies, Well-being.

Introduction:

In times of crisis, be it social, economic, or environmental, individuals and communities often turn to art and creativity as a source of solace, inspiration, and resilience. This paper delves into the multifaceted nature of artistic resilience, examining how artists harness their creative capacities to not only survive but also thrive amidst adversity. By exploring the intersections of psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, this research sheds light on the mechanisms through which art facilitates resilience and fosters resilience in individuals and communities facing various crises.

Defining Artistic Resilience:

Defining artistic resilience encompasses understanding how artists, in the face of adversity, harness their creative capacities to navigate challenges and maintain their artistic practice. At its core, artistic resilience is the ability to adapt, persist, and even thrive in the midst of uncertainty, setbacks, and constraints. Unlike conventional notions of resilience that often focus on individual traits or psychological processes, artistic resilience extends beyond mere survival to encompass a dynamic interaction between the artist, their environment, and their creative process.

Artistic resilience involves a multifaceted approach that integrates emotional, cognitive, and practical dimensions. Emotionally, it involves the capacity to manage and regulate one's emotions in response to stressors, enabling artists to maintain a sense of purpose and motivation despite setbacks. Cognitively, it encompasses the ability to reframe challenges as opportunities for growth and learning, fostering adaptive responses and creative problem-solving strategies. Practically, it involves the resilience of artistic practices themselves, including the ability to innovate, experiment, and adapt to changing circumstances.

Artistic resilience is inherently relational, shaped by the connections between artists and their communities, as well as broader cultural, social, and economic contexts. Artists often draw strength from supportive networks, collaborations, and cultural traditions, which serve as sources of inspiration, validation, and solidarity in times of crisis. Additionally, artistic resilience is not a static trait but a dynamic process that unfolds over time, shaped by ongoing interactions between internal factors such as personal strengths and vulnerabilities, and external factors such as societal attitudes, policies, and resources.

Ultimately, defining artistic resilience requires recognizing the diversity of experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by artists across different contexts and disciplines. It involves acknowledging the complex interplay between individual agency and structural factors in shaping artists' ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. By understanding and supporting artistic resilience, we can not only cultivate the well-being and creativity of individual artists but also contribute to the resilience and vibrancy of cultural ecosystems as a whole.

Conceptualizing resilience in the context of art and creativity.

Conceptualizing resilience in the context of art and creativity entails understanding how individuals and communities draw upon their creative capacities to adapt, persevere, and even flourish in the face of adversity. At its core, resilience within the artistic realm encompasses not just bouncing back from challenges, but also undergoing profound transformations that stem from the creative process itself. Artists often navigate turbulent waters by channeling their emotions, experiences, and reflections into their work, thereby transforming adversity into sources of inspiration and growth.

Artistic resilience involves a dynamic interplay between personal agency and external influences, where artists harness their innate creativity to confront and transcend obstacles. Whether through painting, music, literature, or other forms of expression, artists engage in a process of sense-making and meaning-making that enables them to reframe adversity in ways that empower rather than defeat them. This conceptualization of resilience emphasizes the proactive role of creativity in shaping one's response to adversity, highlighting the potential for artistic expression to serve as a catalyst for personal and collective transformation.

Resilience in the context of art extends beyond mere survival; it encompasses the capacity to thrive and flourish in the face of adversity. Artists often find solace, purpose, and even joy in their creative endeavors, even amidst challenging circumstances. By tapping into their creative wellsprings, individuals not only navigate crises but also cultivate resilience resources such as self-efficacy, adaptability, and emotional regulation. Thus, conceptualizing artistic resilience involves recognizing the profound resilience-building potential inherent in the act of creation itself.

Artistic resilience is inherently relational, shaped by the interconnections between artists, their communities, and broader socio-cultural contexts. Art serves as a medium through which individuals share their experiences, perspectives, and struggles, fostering empathy, solidarity, and collective resilience. In times of crisis, artistic expressions often serve as rallying cries, offering hope, healing, and inspiration to both creators and audiences alike. This relational

dimension underscores the importance of fostering supportive artistic ecosystems that nurture resilience at multiple levels.

Conceptualizing resilience in the context of art and creativity entails recognizing the transformative power of artistic expression in navigating adversity, fostering personal growth, and building collective resilience. By embracing creativity as a tool for resilience-building, individuals and communities can harness the inherent capacity of art to illuminate, empower, and ultimately transcend the challenges of our times.

Theoretical frameworks for understanding artistic resilience.

Theoretical frameworks for understanding artistic resilience encompass a broad spectrum of disciplines, ranging from psychology and sociology to cultural studies and anthropology. At the core of these frameworks lies the recognition that resilience is not merely a trait possessed by individuals, but a dynamic process shaped by various internal and external factors. One such framework is the socio-ecological perspective, which emphasizes the interaction between individuals and their social, cultural, and environmental contexts. From this viewpoint, artistic resilience is viewed as a product of the interplay between personal characteristics, such as creativity and adaptability, and the socio-cultural resources available to artists.

Building upon this socio-ecological perspective, the strengths-based approach to resilience theory posits that individuals possess inherent strengths and resources that can be mobilized in times of adversity. Applied to the realm of art, this framework suggests that artists draw upon their unique talents, skills, and artistic networks to navigate crises and overcome obstacles. By focusing on strengths rather than deficits, this approach highlights the agency of artists in shaping their own resilience trajectories and emphasizes the importance of fostering supportive environments that nurture artistic growth and development.

In addition to individual-level frameworks, theories of collective resilience offer valuable insights into how artistic communities and cultural institutions mobilize resources to withstand and recover from crises. Drawing upon concepts such as social capital, community cohesion, and cultural heritage, these frameworks highlight the role of collaboration, solidarity, and cultural continuity in fostering resilience within artistic ecosystems. By recognizing the interconnectedness of artists, audiences, and cultural institutions, these theories underscore the importance of collective action and mutual support in building resilient artistic communities.

Psychological theories of resilience, such as the resilience and vulnerability model, shed light on the dynamic interplay between risk and protective factors in shaping resilience outcomes. Within the context of art, this framework explores how factors such as creative self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and narrative reframing influence artists' ability to cope with adversity and maintain psychological well-being. By examining both individual vulnerabilities and strengths, this approach offers a nuanced understanding of artistic resilience and informs targeted interventions aimed at enhancing artists' adaptive capacities.

Overall, theoretical frameworks for understanding artistic resilience provide a rich and multifaceted lens through which to examine the complex interplay between creativity, adversity,

and well-being. By integrating insights from multiple disciplines, these frameworks offer valuable tools for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to support and empower artists in times of crisis.

The Role of Creativity in Coping with Adversity:

The role of creativity in coping with adversity is multifaceted and profound, offering individuals a unique avenue for resilience in the face of challenges. Creativity serves as a powerful tool for reframing adversity, allowing individuals to reinterpret their experiences and find new solutions to navigate difficult situations. In times of crisis, such as during pandemics, economic downturns, or personal tragedies, creativity enables individuals to transcend feelings of helplessness and despair by empowering them to express themselves in innovative ways.

Creativity provides a means of emotional catharsis, allowing individuals to channel their feelings of distress, anxiety, or grief into artistic expression. Through painting, writing, music, or other forms of creative endeavor, individuals can externalize their emotions, gaining a sense of release and cathartic relief. This process not only facilitates emotional regulation but also fosters a sense of empowerment and agency, enabling individuals to reclaim control over their narrative and identity in the face of adversity.

Additionally, creativity fosters adaptability and flexibility, essential qualities for coping with unpredictable and rapidly changing circumstances. By encouraging individuals to think outside the box and explore unconventional solutions, creativity equips them with the skills to navigate complex challenges with resilience and resourcefulness. This adaptive capacity is particularly valuable in times of crisis, where conventional strategies may prove inadequate or ineffective.

Engaging in creative activities can cultivate a sense of purpose and meaning, providing individuals with a sense of fulfillment and connection amidst adversity. Whether through collaborative artistic projects or personal creative pursuits, individuals can find a sense of belonging and community, fostering social support networks that bolster resilience. This sense of purpose not only provides a source of motivation and resilience but also contributes to overall psychological well-being.

The role of creativity in coping with adversity is pivotal, offering individuals a transformative pathway to resilience and growth. By harnessing creativity as a means of reframing experiences, expressing emotions, fostering adaptability, and cultivating purpose, individuals can navigate even the most challenging circumstances with resilience and fortitude. As such, fostering creativity represents a valuable approach to promoting resilience and well-being in individuals and communities facing adversity.

How creativity serves as a coping mechanism during crises.

Creativity serves as a potent coping mechanism during crises by providing individuals with a means to navigate uncertainty, process emotions, and regain a sense of control. In times of crisis, such as natural disasters, pandemics, or personal upheavals, individuals often experience heightened stress and anxiety. Creativity offers a constructive outlet for these emotions, allowing individuals to channel their feelings into artistic expression. Through painting, writing, music, or other creative endeavors, individuals can externalize their emotions, offering a sense of catharsis and relief.

Engaging in creative activities during crises can serve as a distraction from overwhelming circumstances, offering moments of respite and joy amidst turmoil. The act of creating art requires focus and concentration, providing individuals with a temporary escape from their worries and anxieties. This diversionary effect can be particularly beneficial during prolonged periods of uncertainty, offering individuals a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

Creativity also enables individuals to reframe their experiences and find meaning in adversity. Through artistic expression, individuals can reinterpret their circumstances, finding beauty, hope, and resilience amidst hardship. This process of meaning-making can be empowering, helping individuals to make sense of their experiences and find a sense of agency in the face of adversity.

Creativity fosters resilience by promoting adaptive problem-solving skills and flexible thinking. During crises, individuals are often confronted with unexpected challenges and obstacles. Engaging in creative activities encourages individuals to approach problems from new perspectives, experiment with different solutions, and adapt to changing circumstances. This flexibility is essential for resilience, enabling individuals to navigate complex challenges and overcome setbacks effectively.

Overall, creativity serves as a powerful coping mechanism during crises, offering individuals a way to process emotions, find distraction and meaning, and develop adaptive problem-solving skills. By harnessing their creative abilities, individuals can cultivate resilience, navigate adversity, and emerge stronger from challenging circumstances.

Exploration of different forms of artistic expression in times of adversity.

Exploring different forms of artistic expression during times of adversity reveals the diverse ways individuals channel their creativity to cope and respond to challenging circumstances. One prevalent form is visual art, where artists use mediums such as painting, sculpture, and photography to convey emotions, provoke thought, and reflect on the human experience amidst crisis. Visual artists often utilize symbolism and metaphor to convey resilience, hope, and resilience, offering viewers a glimpse into their inner worlds and collective struggles.

Literature and poetry also serve as powerful outlets for artistic expression during adversity. Writers and poets craft narratives, poems, and stories that capture the complexities of human emotions and experiences during turbulent times. Through their words, they provide solace, inspiration, and catharsis to both themselves and their audiences, fostering a sense of connection and solidarity in the face of adversity.

Music emerges as another vital form of artistic expression during crises, offering a universal language through which individuals can find solace and strength. Musicians compose songs, melodies, and compositions that reflect the emotions, struggles, and resilience of communities facing adversity. Whether through stirring melodies or poignant lyrics, music has the power to uplift spirits, foster resilience, and unite people across cultures and backgrounds.

Performance art, including theater, dance, and spoken word, also thrives in times of adversity, offering a platform for individuals to share their stories, experiences, and aspirations. Performers use their bodies, voices, and movements to convey messages of resilience, resistance, and

renewal, engaging audiences in dialogue and reflection on pressing social issues. Through performances, artists create spaces for healing, empowerment, and collective action, catalyzing social change and transformation.

Finally, digital and multimedia art forms have emerged as innovative means of artistic expression in the digital age, allowing artists to transcend physical boundaries and reach audiences globally. From digital painting and animation to virtual reality experiences, artists harness technology to create immersive and interactive artworks that resonate with audiences in times of crisis. These forms of expression enable artists to adapt and innovate, finding new ways to engage with audiences and amplify their voices amidst adversity.

Case Studies of Artistic Resilience.

Surviving War Through Art: In conflict-ridden regions like Syria and Afghanistan, artists have emerged as beacons of resilience amid chaos. Through mediums ranging from painting and sculpture to music and storytelling, individuals and communities have found solace and strength in expressing their experiences and emotions. For instance, the "Art Lords" movement in Afghanistan has transformed blast walls and ruins into vibrant murals, symbolizing hope and resistance in the face of adversity. These acts of creative defiance not only serve as therapeutic outlets for artists but also inspire resilience and solidarity among affected populations.

Art as Healing in Post-Disaster Recovery: Natural disasters often leave behind a trail of destruction and trauma, yet art has proven to be a powerful tool for healing and rebuilding communities. Following the devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015, local artists initiated projects such as the "Kolor Kathmandu" mural festival, which brought together international and local artists to beautify and revitalize earthquake-affected areas. Through collaborative art-making processes, survivors found avenues for processing their grief, fostering social cohesion, and envisioning a brighter future amidst the rubble.

Creativity in the Face of Oppression: In repressive political environments, artists face unique challenges in expressing themselves and resisting authoritarian regimes. Despite censorship and persecution, individuals continue to harness their creative energies to challenge injustice and inspire change. The "Graffiti of the Revolution" movement in Egypt, for instance, saw street artists using walls as canvases to critique government policies and demand social reform during the Arab Spring. These acts of creative dissent not only amplify marginalized voices but also embody a spirit of resilience in the face of oppression.

Artistic Responses to Global Health Crises: The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges to artists worldwide, disrupting livelihoods and limiting opportunities for public engagement. However, artists have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and resilience by leveraging digital platforms to share their work and connect with audiences virtually. Initiatives such as online concerts, virtual exhibitions, and social media campaigns have not only sustained artistic communities during periods of lockdown but also provided solace and inspiration to individuals grappling with isolation and uncertainty.

Art as Resistance in Socioeconomic Struggles: Economic inequality and social injustice often exacerbate vulnerabilities during times of crisis, yet artists play a vital role in advocating for change and mobilizing communities. In countries like Brazil, where marginalized populations face systemic discrimination and violence, artists use their platforms to amplify grassroots movements and demand accountability from authorities. Whether through protest art, community theater, or grassroots organizing, these creative interventions empower marginalized communities and challenge the status quo, embodying the spirit of resilience in the face of structural adversity.

Through these diverse case studies, it becomes evident that artistic resilience is not merely about individual perseverance but also about collective empowerment and social transformation. Artists around the world continue to inspire hope and resilience through their creative endeavors, demonstrating the enduring power of art to navigate and transcend adversity.

Examination of real-life examples of artists navigating and overcoming crises.

Examination of real-life examples of artists navigating and overcoming crises reveals the remarkable resilience inherent in the artistic community. One such example is the story of Frida Kahlo, whose life was marked by numerous physical and emotional hardships. Despite enduring debilitating injuries from a bus accident and facing personal turmoil, Kahlo channeled her pain into her art, creating powerful and evocative works that continue to resonate with audiences worldwide. Her ability to transform adversity into creative expression stands as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

Similarly, the music industry has witnessed numerous artists who have triumphed over adversity through their craft. Consider the case of Beyoncé, who faced setbacks and criticism throughout her career but persevered to become one of the most influential figures in popular music. Through her music and performances, Beyoncé has confronted issues of race, gender, and empowerment, inspiring millions with her resilience and determination.

In the realm of literature, the life of Maya Angelou serves as a poignant example of artistic resilience. Despite experiencing trauma and discrimination, Angelou found solace and strength in writing, eventually becoming one of the most celebrated poets and authors of the 20th century. Her autobiographical works, such as "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," not only shed light on her own struggles but also serve as a source of inspiration for others facing adversity.

Visual artist Ai Weiwei provides another compelling example of resilience in the face of adversity. Despite facing censorship and persecution in his native China for his outspoken activism, Weiwei continues to create provocative and politically charged artworks that challenge authority and provoke dialogue. His unwavering commitment to freedom of expression demonstrates the power of art to transcend oppression and inspire change.

These real-life examples underscore the capacity of artists to not only survive but thrive in the face of crises. Through their resilience and creativity, they not only overcome personal challenges but also contribute to broader social and cultural transformation, reminding us of the enduring power of art to inspire, heal, and uplift in times of adversity.

Analysis of the strategies and techniques employed by artists to foster resilience.

Analysis of the strategies and techniques employed by artists to foster resilience reveals a multifaceted approach rooted in both individual creativity and community engagement. Firstly, artists often utilize their craft as a form of catharsis, channeling their emotions and experiences into their work as a means of processing and overcoming adversity. This process of self-expression not only serves as a therapeutic outlet but also allows artists to find meaning and purpose amidst chaos.

Secondly, collaboration and collective action emerge as crucial strategies in fostering resilience within artistic communities. By coming together to support one another, share resources, and amplify each other's voices, artists build networks of solidarity that provide strength and resilience in the face of adversity. Through collaborative projects, events, and initiatives, artists not only bolster their own resilience but also contribute to the resilience of their communities.

Adaptability and innovation characterize the resilience strategies of many artists. In times of crisis, when traditional avenues for artistic expression may be limited, artists often demonstrate remarkable flexibility in adapting their practices to new circumstances. Whether through embracing new technologies, exploring alternative mediums, or reimagining spaces for artistic engagement, artists display a resilience born out of creative problem-solving and adaptability.

Storytelling and narrative construction play a significant role in artists' resilience strategies. Through their work, artists have the power to shape narratives, challenge dominant discourses, and offer alternative perspectives on crises and adversity. By reclaiming agency through storytelling, artists not only empower themselves but also inspire resilience and resistance in others, fostering a sense of collective agency and hope.

Lastly, advocacy and activism emerge as potent tools for artists seeking to foster resilience in themselves and their communities. By using their platforms and visibility to raise awareness, advocate for change, and mobilize support, artists become agents of social and political transformation. Through art activism, artists not only confront injustices and inequities but also contribute to the creation of more resilient and just societies.

The Impact of Art on Individual and Collective Well-being.

The impact of art on individual and collective well-being is profound and multifaceted, transcending boundaries of age, culture, and socioeconomic status. At the individual level, engagement with art in its various forms—whether through visual arts, music, literature, or performance—has been shown to promote psychological well-being. Art serves as a channel for self-expression, allowing individuals to process emotions, articulate experiences, and find meaning in their lives. Through creative expression, individuals often experience a sense of catharsis and emotional release, leading to reduced stress, anxiety, and depression.

Art has the power to foster personal growth and self-discovery. By engaging with different artistic mediums and exploring diverse perspectives, individuals can broaden their understanding of themselves and the world around them. Artistic experiences encourage reflection, introspection, and empathy, enabling individuals to develop a deeper sense of self-awareness and

compassion for others. In this way, art contributes to the cultivation of resilience and adaptive coping strategies, equipping individuals with the tools to navigate life's challenges with greater resilience and efficacy.

Beyond its impact on individuals, art plays a crucial role in promoting collective well-being and fostering social cohesion. Artistic endeavors often serve as a catalyst for community engagement and dialogue, bringing people together across diverse backgrounds and fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity. Through collaborative art projects, community workshops, and cultural events, individuals are given the opportunity to connect with others, share experiences, and build meaningful relationships. These collective experiences not only enhance social support networks but also contribute to the creation of inclusive and vibrant communities.

Art has the capacity to address social issues, raise awareness, and inspire positive change. Artists have long been at the forefront of social movements, using their platforms to advocate for justice, equality, and human rights. Through their creative work, artists challenge societal norms, provoke critical thinking, and spark conversations about pressing issues facing society. By amplifying marginalized voices and promoting social justice narratives, art has the potential to catalyze transformative action and contribute to the creation of more equitable and just societies.

The impact of art on individual and collective well-being cannot be overstated. From promoting psychological resilience and personal growth to fostering social cohesion and driving positive social change, art serves as a powerful force for healing, empowerment, and transformation. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, nurturing and supporting the arts is essential for cultivating thriving individuals, vibrant communities, and a more compassionate and equitable society.

Challenges and Opportunities for Artistic Resilience

Artistic resilience confronts a myriad of challenges in its pursuit to thrive amidst adversity. One prominent obstacle lies in the accessibility of artistic resources and opportunities during times of crisis. Economic downturns, social upheavals, and environmental disasters often exacerbate existing inequalities, limiting access to education, materials, and platforms for artistic expression. Additionally, societal perceptions of art as a non-essential pursuit can undermine support for artists and cultural institutions during times of crisis, further hindering their resilience.

However, amidst these challenges lie opportunities for innovation and transformation. One such opportunity arises from the digital realm, where technological advancements have democratized access to artistic tools and platforms. Through online communities, virtual exhibitions, and digital collaborations, artists can transcend physical barriers and reach wider audiences, fostering resilience in the face of adversity. Moreover, crises often serve as catalysts for creative reimagining, prompting artists to explore new mediums, themes, and modes of expression that reflect the realities of the times.

The intersectionality of art and activism presents a potent opportunity for resilience-building during crises. Artists have long been at the forefront of social and political movements, using

their creativity to advocate for change and amplify marginalized voices. By engaging in art as a form of resistance and solidarity, individuals and communities can harness collective resilience to confront systemic injustices and effect meaningful transformations.

Partnerships between artists, policymakers, and philanthropic organizations offer promising avenues for supporting artistic resilience in times of crisis. By investing in cultural initiatives, funding artist-led projects, and advocating for policies that prioritize the arts, stakeholders can strengthen the resilience of the creative sector and its capacity to contribute to societal well-being. Additionally, interdisciplinary collaborations between artists and researchers can yield valuable insights into the role of art in fostering resilience, informing evidence-based interventions and policies.

While challenges abound, the pursuit of artistic resilience in times of crisis is imbued with opportunities for growth, innovation, and social change. By addressing barriers to access, embracing digital technologies, leveraging art for activism, and fostering cross-sector partnerships, we can empower artists to navigate adversity and contribute to a more resilient and equitable world.

Summary:

This scholarly article explores the concept of artistic resilience and its significance in times of crisis. By examining the interplay between art, creativity, and resilience, it elucidates how individuals and communities harness the power of artistic expression to navigate adversity. Through case studies and theoretical analysis, the paper demonstrates the transformative potential of art in fostering resilience and promoting well-being in the face of various challenges. Ultimately, it underscores the importance of recognizing and supporting the role of art in building resilience both at individual and societal levels.

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