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## An Arp a day keeps the doctor away

Web only

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Can art cure diseases? The The Behring Institute for Medical Research in Amsterdam is looking to answer that question with a long-term scientific research project that will study the influence of art on public health. According to the institute, “many studies indicate a positive outcome with regard to the treatment of patients and suggest that art can lead to the reduction of medicines used by patients, the shortening of patients’ stays in hospitals...and the improvement of mental health.” So as part of the experiment, they are calling for “art placebos”, in other words something that can “simulate art: it looks, sounds, feels, or in any other way manifests itself as art but it actually is not art. The placebo is a fake replacement, which is the fundamental non-sequitur in our proposition.” Right. Is it just us, or does this science experiment sounds suspiciously like a set up for a conceptual art project? Medicinally minded artists can submit their proposals by 1 January 2011. More info and details on how to apply are on the institute’s [website](#).

### Comments

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**Joni Cornell, Melbourne, Australia**

Somehow I don't think that giving the 'patient' a shovel or a urinal and baptizing it as 'art' will provide a placebo. I can't quite get my head around a placebo for art and I'm an arts therapist.