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# Museum visits for covid stress



Doctors in Brussels will be able to prescribe museum visits as part a three-month trial designed to rebuild mental health amid the Covid pandemic.

Patients being treated for stress at Brugmann hospital, one of the largest in the Belgian capital, will be offered free visits to five public museums in the city, covering subjects from fashion to sewage.

The results of the pilot will be published next year with the intention that the initiative can be rolled out further if successful in alleviating symptoms of burnout and other forms of psychiatric distress.

Delphine Houba, the alderman responsible for culture in Brussels, said she had been inspired by a scheme in Quebec, Canada, where doctors can prescribe up to 50 museum visits a year to patients.

In the Brussels pilot, accompanied visits will be prescribed to individuals and groups of in-patients at Brugmann hospital. "The Covid crisis, accentuating stress, burnout and other pathologies, has confirmed the relevance of such a project," Houba told the Belgian newspaper [L'Echo](#) [link to article in French].

The institutions involved will include the publicly funded museums on the Grand Place, Fashion and Lace on Rue de la Violette, the Sewer museum by Midi railway station and Manneken-Pis's Wardrobe, close to the statue of the urinating child. The Contemporary Art Centre on Place Sainte-Catherine is also part of the project.

Houba said she hoped that private museums and art collections would offer their services in future. “I am convinced of the capacity for solidarity from all Belgian museums towards vulnerable audiences to provide them with free access and support,” she said. “But the decision is theirs based on the results of our pilot experience.”


She added: “It has been shown that art can be beneficial for health, both mental and physical.”

*Image: Nestled in a former power station in the heart of Brussels, [CENTRALE for contemporary art](#) is the contemporary art centre of the City of Brussels.*

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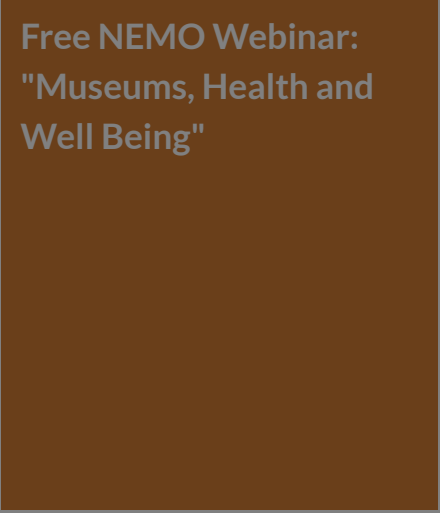
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