

THEART OF RESEARCH



Can art be medicine?

Creative arts-based approaches with vulnerable and disempowered people can result in empowerment for participants and rich answers for biomedical research.

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While biomedical researchers are searching for a full picture in their studies to generate reliable data, the participants in sensitive, culturally taboo biomedical research – particularly the marginalised – deserve a voice, an ear and a smile.

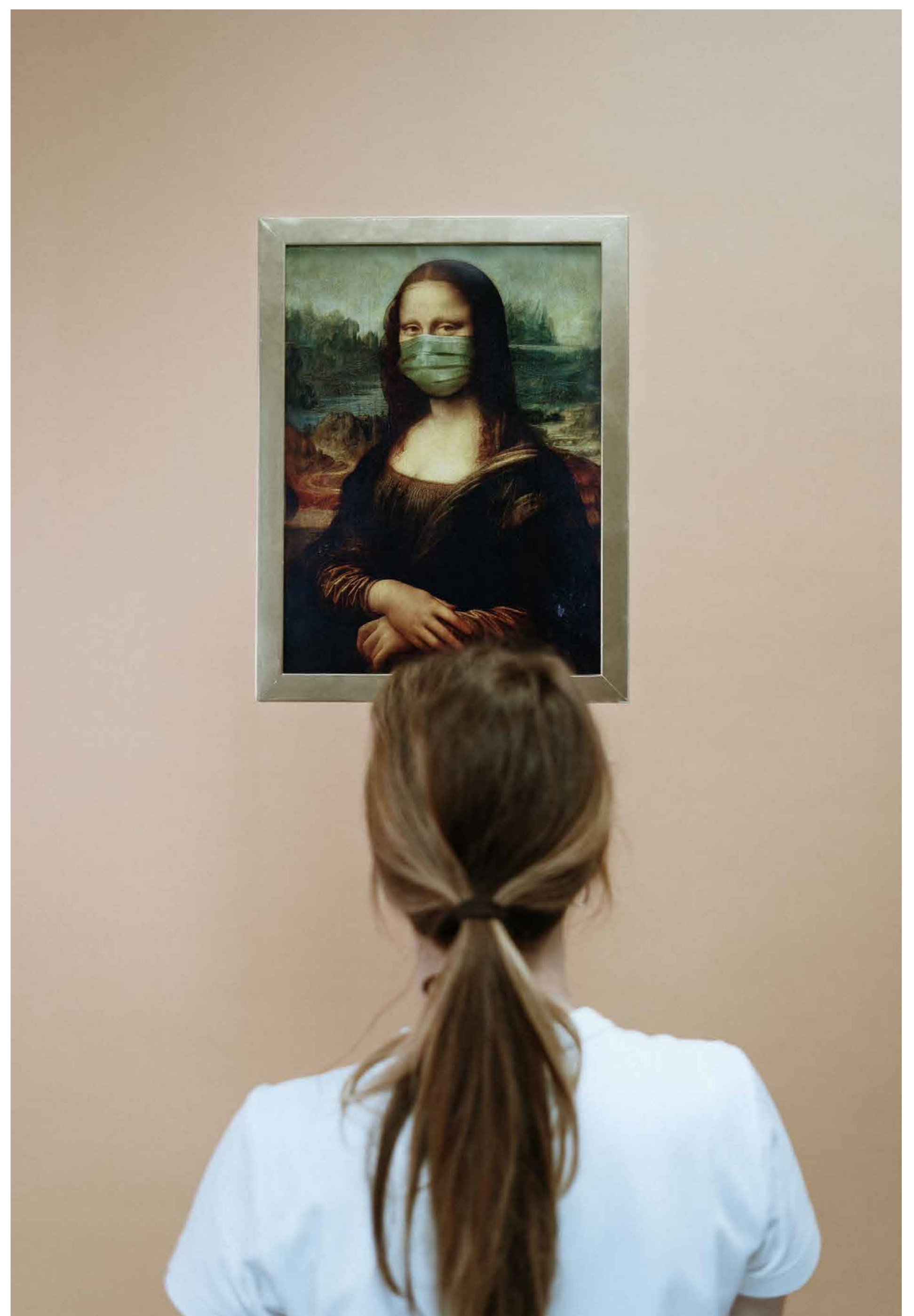
The qualitative researcher within biomedical research can assist in tailoring the research design and process so that the participants are given a voice, and are seen and heard as individuals.

By using visual arts-based methods, barriers such as language and cultural obstacles can be overcome, and the sensitivity of the revelation reduced, while enabling the participants to use their imagination, have fun and be part of the process of generating rich data.

“The great bonus is that creative skills are not necessary, and diversity and individuality are recognised and valued,” says Felicity Hartley.

By using this approach, researchers and institutions who gather sensitive information from vulnerable and disempowered people, such as young adolescent women in sexual reproductive health research, can do so with sensitivity in a creative and dignified way.

“This way, participants share confidently and co-operatively to co-create the research knowledge collaboratively, while benefitting from empowerment and empathy.”



The visual arts can assist in designing rich, rewarding research projects.

Presented in association with the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, this programme forms part of #theArtofResearch, an initiative of research communication specialists Jive Media Africa.

