# NEWSLETTER **2016 edition 2** INTERNATIONAL EXPRESSIVE ARTS THERAPY ASSOCIATION

Created as a product for Professional Orientation and Ethics, this piece represents the difference between mandatory and aspirational ethics in the field of counseling. As required by law and professional codes of ethics, mandatory ethics are the bare minimum ethical standards from which all therapists must practice.

Aspirational ethics, however, go above and beyond those of necessity. Therapists are encouraged to continually strive to function in the highest ethical manner possible to provide the greatest services possible to clients and society as a whole. In the field of psychology, correct answers to ethical questions are rarely black and white. These questions require self-reflection, openness to perceive your own biases or feelings that may hinder your ability to choose the best option for your client, the use of ethical decision-making models, and outside resources when needed.



Aspiration, by Jessica Kirby

In this piece, the figure transforms from a stiff but necessary foundation of wooden steps to an imperfect clay body and, finally, to valuable copper as she strives for an ever-rising aspirational balloon. Her mind is open to receiving the valuable insights required to make ethical decisions.

stoneware
clay
recycled
copper
wire,
re
purposed
wood
papiermache

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST:**

Jessica Kirby is a Georgia native who received her BA in Honors Psychology at Piedmont College and is currently earning her MA in Applied Psychology with a concentration in Expressive Arts Therapy at Goddard College. She works in various mediums, including sculpture, photography, poetry, and music; primarily drawing materials from nature or discarded and forgotten objects. Owner of Healing Manners Dot and Horse Therapy, she is also an Animal Behaviorist specializing in aggression and phobias. Additionally, she is a Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning, and board member at Butterfly Dreams Farm, a non-profit therapeutic riding facility serving people with disabilities. Her passion is to help people and animals join together to increase one another's well-being, self-expression, and overall healing through application and research. Jessica lives in Athens, GA with her two rescued dogs, Kafaka and Fakshasa, and two rescued horses, Chance and Luna.



### From the ECCs



Facing the tough winds of change in 2016, the stars of compassion and creativity are guiding our board to craft our vision and mission. After several months of manpower strains, we are now recruiting new board members and building our team. As an international community, we are grateful to have board members from different continents, expressing and sharing experiences through the arts, as we continue to grow and move toward our collective goals.

Some of us met up at Berkeley during the summer and brainstormed ideas to develop our organization and the expressive arts field. New initiatives for the upcoming year include bringing up members' voices, utilizing multimedia for promotion, the "Be a pART" video project about the work of our members around the world, and fund-raising projects. If you have any suggestions and are interested in joining our team, please contact us at ecc@ieata.org. You can also share your work and ideas in our publication, (this Newsletter and the eNews.) Your contribution is definitely important.

Our world is crowded by extr<mark>eme voices, fears, suffering, and uncertainties. It is also full of magic, possibilities, and creativity. As expressive arts practitioners, we are deeply committed to share arts, peace, and compassion. Let's collaborate solidly as we create a larger vision of IEATA.</mark>

Fiona Man-yan Chang Executive Co-Chair

#### **Welcome to our New IEATA Board!**



#### Deep Gratitude to our previous 2015 board members:

Executive Co-Chairs Mitchell Kossak and Lisa Herman; Secretary Patricia Rojas-Zambrano; Governance Co-Chairs Sarva Posey and Bonnie Cardell; Finance Co-Chair Louise Tarrier; REAT Co-Chairs Phil Weglarz and Aradhna Singh; REACE Co-Chair Kathleen Horne; New Professionals and Students Co-Chair Christina Hampton; Publications Co-Chairs Judson Davis, Claire Polansky, and Tawnya D. Smith; Social Action Co-Chair Cailin Turcotte-Good; Website and Internet Co-Chair Fiona Chang; Conference Co-Chairs Fiona Chang, Grace Cheng, Kate Donohue, and Pearl Tse; Part-Time Administrator Ben Kanter; Connie Gretsch, Public Relations Co-Chair.

Thank you for all your voluntary devotion and hard work!!!



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#### **Artist Contributions**

Cover: "Aspiration," Jessica Kirby

Contents: [3]
"Per Chance to Dream,"
R.P. O'Brien

Professional Exchange:
[43] provided by Fiona
Chang

Events: [74]
"Holi Mandala," Krupa
Jhaveri

Notes from the Field: [82] provided by Katherine Josten, Global Arts for Peace Project

Thank you, once
again, to
everyone
for sharing
work
heart
soul
&
dreams.

Roselle P. O'Brien Co-Chair Publications

#### **Elders and Ancestors**

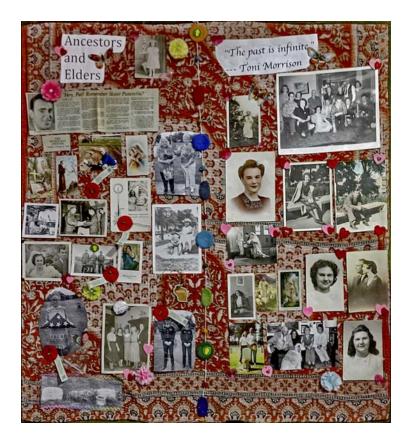
My last semester has been filled with visions of and dreams about elders and ancestors.

It all started with my writing for my personal and professional capstones about the Athabascan elders I was blessed to know in Alaska. I started thinking about my own elders and ancestors, finally understanding "the past is infinite."

My piece represents the deep love and gratitude I feel for all those who came before me and who still shape and guide me in the most profound ways.

The small acorn pins are the symbols—the Golden Acorn—of the 87th Infantry of which my father was a member.

The Veteran Buddy Poppies are in honor of all my ancestors who served in the military, most especially my father who served in the Army for 30 years and whose deep values of duty and honor he passed on to his children.



■ Beth Horikawa | student, Goddard College



#### **True Story**



True Story is an expressive art project born out of my thesis which addresses victim perception of covert (non-physical) abuse and the role of art in the healing of survivors.

My research focused on art produced by survivors using qualitative analysis to identify themes and essential elements of each. Three prevailing themes emerged through this process.

Holistic Truth addresses the contrasting and sometimes disharmonious parts within a survivor's whole self.

Metaphor in Motion speaks about the power of analogy in shifting self-perception.

Validation Need observes the importance of witness to survivors' abusive realities.

My thesis suggests that Expressive Art Therapy modalities which incorporate these themes will produce more transformative, healing therapy outcomes for survivors of covert abuse.

■ Charity Eugair recently earned her MA in Psychology and Counseling from Goddard College where she focused on domestic violence, sex and gender issues, and Expressive Art Therapy modalities. Her research has studied victim-perception of abuse as expressed through art. Charity's clinical practice is currently within her local domestic violence agency in central Vermont where she works in partnership with an exceptional team, strengthening the surrounding community. Textile arts have captivated Charity since childhood and she now incorporates this passion into her group and individual work. Charity lives in Pittsford, Vermont, with her two sons, Benjamin and Maxfield, their beloved dog and two cats.



#### **Professional Standards Committee: REACE**

Our committee is excited to share some of the inspiring REACE projects that are being offered around the world. We are also hosting a Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 ZOOM REACE *Expressive Arts Professional Inspirational Exchange*.

Warm regards,

Terri Goslin-Jones and Susan O'Connell, Co-Chairs Professional Standards Committee: REACE

#### Loving Your Life

Elke Riëlah Scholz, MA, RT, REACE, is a registered psychotherapist and an internationally certified EMDR Therapist with a practice in Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada. Elke's mission is to help people enhance their lives and build their resilience by empowering them with their innate creativity in the most loving and effective way possible

Many of her clients are at-risk youth and people suffering from trauma, grief, and loss. She has spoken and facilitated at conferences, on radio, and on TV. She sits as co-chair on the board for the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA).

Elke is a well-known author of the 2nd edition of Loving Your Life, an illustrated how-to book on becoming who you are and loving it through passionate, creative living—available on Amazon!

Elke has produced anti-anxiety, wellness kits that help employees, at-risk youth, and seniors in managing anxiety and depression.

Visit Elke's website:

http://elkescholz.com/

Client Centered & Solution Focused Therapy



#### Devotional Bookmaking & Mandalas

Karen Sjoholm, MA, REACE, Oakland, CA, is involved in using expressive arts to deepen spirituality and promote interfaith dialogue.

At the School of Applied Theology in Oakland, CA, Karen facilitated a workshop on Devotional Bookmaking that was open to the participants in the Sabbatical program as well as commu-



nity members. The course explored the book as a receptacle for personal and cultural sacred knowledge. The majority of participants had never accessed their spiritual practice through creativity. The combination of meditation, a writing exercise, and mixed media techniques inspired beautifully personal expressions of spirituality that were inspirational to all.

Through The Center for the Arts, Religion, and Education Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, Karen facilitated a semester course on mandalas. Each student personally explored their own interpretation of mandalas in a variety of media through a range of experiential exercises. The exercises focused on centering in Self, centering in Spirit, centering in Nature, and centering in Community. Students came from different religious practices and were able to share deeply and connect with each other through their creative processes.



# Abbey of the Arts Transformative living through contemplative and expressive arts

Christine Valters Paintner, PhD, REACE, lives in Galway, Ireland, and is the online Abbess for Abbey of the Arts - abbeyofthearts.com - a global monastery offering resources for creative expression and contemplative practice.

Christine is the author of 9 books on spirituality and the arts. She lives on the wild west coast of Ireland with her husband. Together they lead pilgrimages and retreats. Her passions include yoga, poetry, working with the landscape and nature through art and movement, conscious dance, friendship, and making time and space for silence and solitude.

Christine is launching a REACE project called The Earth Monastery Project - Abbey of the Arts which is rooted in contemplative practices from the monastic tradition, with the premise that the earth is the original monastery. Online retreats are offered using contemplative and creative practices to nourish more intimacy with nature and an earth cherishing consciousness. One day offerings will be expanded in a longer retreat in the landscape of Ireland for soul care practitioners to learn to bring creative ways of earth engagement into their service and ministry to others.

Learn more about the Earth Monastery Project:

http://abbeyofthearts.com/about/earthmonastery-project/

Visit the Abbey of the Arts website:

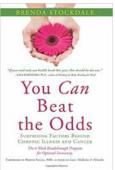
www.abbeyofthearts.com

#### **Professional Standards Committee: REACE**

(continued)

#### The Writing Cure

Brenda Stockdale, REACE, works in two medical centers in Atlanta, GA. She uses visualization and journaling methods designed with clients to overcome blocks and move forward in a heart-inspired way.



Stockdale's book, You Can Beat

the Odds, offers exercises for clients to continue the visualization and journaling process at home, found in the chapter called "Healing the Past in the Present." Clients apply "3 Steps for Moving On," and bring the core of their at-home experiences back to the group for further insight.

#### 3-Steps for Moving On (adapted from Interapy):

**Step 1 -** Write quickly and with abandon (ignoring spelling, grammar, etc.,) as you describe in detail the problem, disturbing event, or trauma. Uncensored, allow yourself to write anything you like to the person or people involved. Don't hold back, this isn't a letter you'll send! When you're done, engage in something relaxing or distracting; a walk or a hot bath, or read something uplifting. The next day move on to...

Step 2 - If your dearest friend or child had suffered the same, what would you want them to know? What advice would you have for them? What might they have learned from the event? Have they grown in any way or was there a benefit to the crisis?...Pretend you are responding to your friend or child and write out your words of hope, comfort, and advice. The next day move on to...

Step 3 - Symbolically take your leave of the past and move forward by composing a letter to yourself or to someone involved in the distressing event. Rewrite as necessary so the finished product is so immaculate and dignified that you could potentially mail it if you chose. It's not necessary to read or send the letter. You can burn it—symbolically releasing all that it represents—or bury it, or seal it away in a private place.



#### Regional/International Committee

The energy continues in Asia since the conference. Grace and her team are conducting workshops with abused children. Dominic, in the Philippines, ran an expressive arts-based workshop for children in the slums and victims of a fire in their area, as well as an exhibit of kids with autism and a series of sessions to families with members with mental illness, and they have plans for an arts-based camp. Another group has been using expressive arts and meditation and working with kids with cancer. There was an Expressive Arts Festival in Russia and a Bay Area Regional Gathering in Berkeley. We now have 64 regional coordinators all over the world. The first expressive arts therapy organization in the mainland China was launched in Wuhan (Fiona and I Skyped.)

Jacob Kaminker, Graciela Bottini de Barucca, and Winnie Fung, Regional/International Co-Chairs

#### New Professionals and Students Committee

We emailed the University of Hong Kong's Master of Expressive Arts Therapy Program and Expressive Arts (EXA) Institute of Hong Kong's M.A. in Expressive Therapies Program regarding having student and new professional representatives. The program director at the University of Hong Kong was supportive and suggested having one current student who is not graduating within one year and one recent graduate to be our student and new professional representatives respectively. One new professional representative has been identified. So far, we have not heard from the Expressive Arts Institute of Hong Kong.

We'd like to wish students good health and positive self care as the semester begins. Watch for U.S. student IEATA meetings to be held on your campus in the next few weeks. For all students, we invite you to submit an electronic image ( $5 \times 7$ ) of art you have been creating for inclusion on our Facebook Group page. Also, announcement for the online art postcard exchange will be released shortly.

Aleck Kwong and Diane LaRochelle New Professionals and Students Co-Chairs

#### Website and Internet Committee

Welcome to our new Website and Internet Committee Co-Chair, Lorena Fernandez!

The Website and Internet Committee is very happy to welcome Lorena Fernandez to our team! She will be working on updates and different projects on the website as our new Co-Chair! Welcome, Lorena - we are very excited to be working with you!

Lorena is actively involved in promoting the expressive arts practice, locally in Houston, Texas, and internationally through social media and other means. She and our new Secretary, Janet Rasmussen, co-organized the 2nd Person-Centered Expressive Arts Symposium in Sonoma, California this year. She is committed to contributing her computer, social media, writing, and event planning skills to our IEATA community. Her vision is to





#### Website and Internet Committee

(continued)

create connections, alliances, and professional development opportunities for IEATA members on the internet.

We also want to thank Fiona Chang for all her work during her brief time as Co-Chair. She helped us with updating our board member list, handling enquiries, the conference page to promote next year's conference, and more. We will miss your wonderful energy but are very happy to have as our ECC.

The symposium in Argentina, and next year's conference, are being promoted on our front page. We are looking forward to having more action on the website banner to promote different activities. Thanks to Cailin now being our part-time administrator, the website's mailing lists are being forwarded to the administrator mail to improve communication with the public.

Publications Committee will have back a page on our site. We are currently working on that and hope to keep making improvements.

Mayari Hernandez and Lorena Fernandez
Website and Internet Co-Chairs

#### Latinoamerica Regional Committee

Here, from the Latinoamerica Regional Committee, we share all our enthusiasm because of the organization of our next meeting! It will be October 28th, 29th, and 30th in Buenos Aires: "The Assembling of Flowing Rivers" — "Como Rios que Confluyen." The spirit of our meeting is that people from different South American countries who work through EXA will bring their knowledge, projects, and practices. IEATA opens this unique opportunity for everybody who believes that Arts save lives! Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Honduras, Republica Dominicana, USA will be welcome in Argentina. We're inviting to join IEATA!!! Visit our website www.ieatalatinoamerica.com

Prepared by Graciela Bottini Regional/International Co-Chair

#### **Professional Standards Committee: REAT**

I am very excited to introduce myself and make a meaningful contribution to IEATA as the new REAT CO-Chair! I currently live and work in Beverly, Massachusetts, ISA, where I teach as Associate Professor at Endicott College. I also maintain a small private practice as a music therapist, expressive arts therapist, and yoga instructor. In addition, I am a full-time single mother to a beautiful 2.5 year old boy, whom some of you may have met at the IEATA conference in Hong Kong. I began my term on the REAT committee in July 2016 and have been eager to grasp the REAT application and renewal process. I am grateful to Anin Utigaard, Phil Weglarz, Yousef AlAjarma, Karen Estrella, and Cailin Turcotte-Goode for being available to assist, answer my many questions, and thoughtfully ease me into the role of REAT Co-Chair. At the moment the other half of the Co-Chair position is available. Anin Utigaard has graciously offered to serve as REAT



#### **Professional Standards Committee: REAT**

(continued)

liaison until the second REAT Co-Chair position is filled. If you or any of your REAT colleagues are seeking service, please consider the position. I look forward to growing and contributing as an IEATA board member.

Krystal Demaine, Co-Chair Professional Standards: REAT

#### Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is proud to announce the introduction of a new membership category: *Credentialed Professionals*. Our professional members who hold a REAT or REACE can now renew both their credential and their membership with one click of their mouse!

The committee has been working hard over the past few years to reconfigure our membership applications and renewal forms so that you can easily join our terrific organization. Don't forget when filling out either form that the payment page shows up after you hit the "Submit" button.

Our membership in IEATA is strong! The Membership Committee would like to begin a project where we highlight our members! Please volunteer to help us. You can contact us at membership@ieata.org.

With the upcoming conference we know more people will join—get involved to make our organization an even stronger voice for the arts in healing!

Karen Estrella Membership Co-Chair

#### **Educational Resources Committee**

During the last interim we have continued our work providing information and guidance to those who make requests for educational resources via the IEATA webpage. If requests could be made directly to us via resources@ieata.org, the process would be even more efficient. We would like to explore this possibility during the next interim.

We imagined a blog that would allow us to share information about Expressive Arts training opportunities in a more personal way and with the help of the Publications Committee we were able to bring it to fruition: https://edresourcesconnection.wordpress.com. We published our first two interviews and information shared by Expressive Arts Florida and CELA and we completed an interview with TAE Peru! An interview with PCETI Argentina is soon to come as we continue interviewing around the world.

We have worked to create a standardized format for new and updated posts to the Educational Resources webpage. The required components can be fitted into a "Google Form" document that we will email to those who inquire about sharing their information on the webpage. We will prioritize posts from groups



#### **Educational Resources Committee:**

(continued)

whose goal is offering educational opportunities to the broader community versus programs that are operated by individuals and are solely profit-driven.

We have also worked to recruit new members to our committee. We are planning a fall meeting with interested persons and will be working on finding ways for committee members to support us by actively sharing in our workload.

Results and recommendations from "EXPRESS Earth Day":

- Missed opportunity—we submitted our "EXPRESS Earth Day" event in flyer format to an organization in Washington D.C., a well-established command central site with advanced search engine optimization, that, unfortunately, requires each participant to send in a logo for the purpose of being listed on their national site. This was a missed opportunity for IEATA. Next year collaborating more closely with our Regional Committee should promise greater promotion of the event with more participation worldwide.
- Social Action Committee has expressed continued interest in collaborating on this event in the spring.

Looking forward to working together!

Roxanne Daleo and Wendy Phillips Educational Resources Co-Chairs

#### **Public Relations Committee**

#### be a pART

Do you believe that the arts are needed in this world? Do you believe that global issues can be addressed with arts in communities? If you do then you are in the correct organization. We ask you to be a pART.

This world is full of people who want to measure the immeasurable, view the world as a broken machine, who want to find a singular cause or a reason for resolution before they will invest their time, their money or their commitment. We, the expressive arts therapists and consultant educators of the world know and understand that the unknown can be held, that the immeasurable can fit onto one page, that the gears of the world are oiled by the imagination, that order comes out of chaos.

#### **Teach Facebook that IEATA is important!** (be a pART of Social Media)

We are approaching 6,000 likes on Facebook. This has tripled in just over a year!! We are growing. Please 'like' and 'share' articles that you can. It is very important to creating a trend. Trending is the only way that we can get our posts viewed by all of those who like our page.

Facebook doesn't show you our posts unless you teach them that you like us. Also, Facebook won't show others who might like us if you don't teach them that this is important. Teach Facebook that IEATA is important!



#### **Public Relations Committee**

(continued)

#### Watch out for our Micro-documentaries (be a pART of the new voices)

IEATA is turning the camera around towards its members and producing short informational and persuasive media to circulate to the unknown. If you aren't liking us on Facebook then Facebook may not show you what you will want to know about; unique voices, different expressive artists across the world, special techniques. We will be releasing them on Facebook and posting them on Youtube (just search IEATA).

#### Join the Public Relations Committee (be a pART of carrying the heavy load)

We are scheming to expand our presence on Twitter and Instagram. We need people to help do this work. We need people to make memes, edit video, transcribe videos to Spanish, Mandarin, Japanese. We need to promote our conferences. We need people to promote our work at other conferences.

Write to public-relations@ieata.org. We will find a way that you can help.

Speak it. Sing it. Draw it. Dance it. Click it. Like it. Wear it. Share it. Do your pART.

David Eckelkamp
Public Relations Co-Chair

#### **Publications Committee**

Autumn finds us once again in the midst of change. Judson is leaving his position as Co-Chair of Publications and will be sadly missed. We wish you all the best and look forward to reading your book reviews and submissions in the Newsletters!

Let's welcome Maureen Boggie as our new Publications Co-Chair! Maureen is a Registered Nurse and an Intermodal Creative Arts Therapist (ICAT). She brings a wealth of experience as a senior technical writer to her new position on our Board. We are thrilled to have her!

Publications has been reaching out to REACE educators and consultants, actively seeking articles and creative work to include in our Newsletters. We have also been reaching out to students in expressive arts programs and new professionals - eager to hear and share their voices. Thank you to everyone for your submissions!

Check out the IEATA website - the Publications page will soon be returning! Here you will find the most current submission guidelines for the Newsletter and eNews, information for contributors in all submission categories, as well as updates about our ongoing projects. Thank you, webmasters, for your great work! We welcome any suggestions you may have for our returning web page regarding information you'd like to find, ideas you may have. Email: publications@ieata.org

Publications needs to update prices for advertisements in the Newsletter to reflect Member/Non-member status (less expensive for members as a benefit to IEATA membership): member prices stay the same; the non-member suggested prices are an increase of roughly the supporter level membership (\$45.00) to each advertisement category.



#### **Publications Committee**

(continued)

#### Publications current projects:

- Publications Gallery to showcase members' creative work in Language Arts a collaborative project with the Artists Committee. We hope to be sending out the call for submissions soon!
- We have begun conversations with ECC about IEATA publishing a book (every-other year on the even years) with juried submissions on a particular theme—to be available on Amazon. Stay tuned!

Your input is always welcome!

Roselle O'Brien, Co-Chair Publications



#### Congratulations to Mayari Hernandez!





Our Website and Internet Co-Chair just gave birth to a cute, handsome baby boy a few months ago. Our board is so happy for her and her families.

Mayari has been serving our board as the Website and Internet Co-Chair since winter 2014. We are all amazed by her lively design.

Visit our website at www.ieata.org for updates, news, and events!







Accessing our True
Potential through
Creativity!

Elke Scholz Speaking Engagements 2016:

Sept 22: Muskoka Lakes Public Library | 69 Joseph Street

Oct 13: Dwight Public Library | 1014 Dwight Beach Rd | Dwight, ON | 705.635.3319 | clairbairn@vianet.ca www.lakeofbayslibrary.ca

#### Anti-Anxiety: Be an Anti-anxiety Warrior: Lower Levels of Anxiety

An interactive workshop; educational & informative. Experience lowering your anxiety tonight!

Books & Anti-anxiety kits available - Use your \$20 admission as a credit towards books, journals, or kits.

**Elke Scholz,** MA, RP. REACE | Registered Psychotherapist | 705.646.2300 | www.elkescholz.com

# Through the Looking Glass: Using Imaginal Resources to Heal Shame A Workshop for Therapists

with Sheila Rubin, LMFT, RDT/BCT and Bret Lyon, PhD

Saturday & Sunday, November 5-6, 2016

When clients get stuck in shame, activating their imagination through Expressive Arts Therapy, Drama Therapy, Hakomi and Focusing can help them get unstuck and transform shame.

\$295 | Intern Discount | 13 CEUs (PCE #4456)

REGISTRATION: Send full payment or \$100 deposit (with email & phone) to Bret Lyon, 830 Bancroft Way, Suite 102, Berkeley, CA 94710. PayPal also accepted.

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~Certificates for Levels 1 & 2

"Pathways offered for REACE and REAT application

"Some courses open to non-certificate students







Level 1: Expressive Arts for Body, Mind, Spirit, , Oct 6-9, 2016 Scope of Expressive Arts January 19-22, 2017 Dive In to Expressive Arts, April 20-23

Level 2: Business and Profession of Expressive Arts, Oct 13-16
Foundations of Expressive Arts, January 26-30, 2017
Expressive Arts in the World, April 27-30, 2017

Check our website for online webinars and virtual workshops!

Register and sign up for a free e-book at:

www.expressiveartsflorida.com institute@expressiveartsflorida.com 941-366-9595







#### Kate Donohue, PhD, REAT

# Ripening Seeds: The Harvest of Approaches in Expressive Arts Therapy



I am delighted to share Krupa Jhaveri's contribution to the Ripening Seeds column. I grew to know and respect her as we were developing the India panel for the Hong Kong Asia IEATA conference in 2015. Krupa presented her work in a deeply soulful and creative way. She could live anywhere in the world, but has decided to live in India and share her gifts here.

This edition of Ripening Seeds will focus on India and the Sankalpa Art Journey of Krupa Jhaveri, an expressive arts therapist and art therapist, and her work in Southern India. Please prepare for a spiritual, creative, and generous journey and contribution to the field of expressive arts therapy.



Ripening Seeds My Sankalpa Art Journey: I am, I believe, I grow

#### I AM:

This incarnation of my soul is an intricate tapestry, woven between cultures with courage and color. Born in the US and of Gujarati (north Indian) ethnic origin, I was fortunate to receive better education and opportunities than my parents did in India. Their immigration to the US, to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, exposed me to a very unique though often challenging position. I was raised as a minority, often an outsider or new student as we moved often enough that I attended 14 different schools. It prepared me to observe larger patterns in humanity, to travel easily, to adjust and adapt to new situations and people later in life. Despite many privileges, I also faced hardship in the form of significant childhood trauma in physical and emotional abuse. It is a gift to have accessed and sourced my healing, to accept the experiences that sculpted who I am and what I am passionate about today. Art saved my life, paving the path to my survival and resilience.

I am the founder, international art therapist, and art director of *Sankalpa: Art Journeys* based in Auroville, South India. Sankalpa provides safe and supportive spaces, resources, and education for original self-expression, transformation, awareness, and connection across all barriers through art. With formal graduate training at the School





of Visual Arts in NYC, I have worked with children and women with HIV/AIDS, in child protection, cross-cultural exchanges, and as a Trauma-Informed Expressive Arts Therapy consultant. As an Ambassador to India for Art Therapy Without Borders, recent presentations have included themes around the therapeutic value of sacred and indigenous art forms throughout the US, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and India.

My story is unique yet universally representative of many stories of resilience which are happening through art around the world. I am simply blessed to recognize my journey and be able to share it. Returning to my roots in India to offer opportunities for meaningful self-expression is extremely fulfilling, and it is an honor to witness and facilitate so many stories of empowerment and growth every day. I am a living bridge between cultures, realities, differences, barriers, and dualities on many levels, all through the power of art.

For the 2015 IEATA conference in Hong Kong, I was fortunate to receive a sponsorship to attend and Kate Donohue connected various expressive art therapists throughout India for a very unique panel presentation with the prompt of sharing our soul's journey. The image "Soul Journeys" [previous page] is a layered and deeply meaningful exploration of my life using red kumkum powder, bindis, henna, embroidery, and on traditional paper that was made from recycled saris.

I am a woman born from a fiery karma, an old soul with a destiny for resilience. In my dawning years, the natural space of innocence, wonder, and play was a window very abruptly closed and shattered. I suffered but survived



repeated attempts (over many years) to control, break, and diminish my spirit. Somehow, I caught a glimpse of my reflection in those shattered pieces—and I became witness to my soul's potential. I picked up the pieces, and I picked up a pen, and I picked up a paintbrush. I released my anger through line, I mourned my childhood through color. In my journals, I found a safe space and I found healing. I found awareness, and I found solace unavailable anywhere else. I imagined and dreamt of a different reality, one filed with color, creativity, connection, and love—and now I live that life.

I learned that I was not alone, that this is not what all children experience. I then reacted with a fiery inner impulse, a defense, a refusal to be beaten down, to be quieted, to be told that I was worthless. By some miracle, I found the strength to put my hand up and say NO.

This was a rite of passage, a crossroads of transformation for my soul. With my freedom came confusion and many years of fragmented attempts to understand, to forgive, to be compassionate and to simply be. As I molded and nurtured grounding in my mind, my heart, my body and my soul—my life exploded with creativity. I connected to my inner source of that creative power and I have not stopped, it is my lifeline, so I cannot stop.

I am a bridge between cultures, differences, generations, ancestors speaking through me now through art.

Everything I do is an offering. I am grateful, humble, and I am aware that this is only another beginning.

#### I BELIEVE:

I believe art makes evolution visible.

I believe in empowerment through self-expression.

I believe in nurturing awareness through ritual.

I believe there is meaning in every gesture, every mark, every moment.

I believe there is no right or wrong when it comes to creating.

I believe nature holds profound wisdom to guide us through life.

I believe in the power of intention.

I believe life is art.



It was while designing books for children in NYC, I sought deeper meaning beyond the aesthetic surface level of creativity and volunteered with at-risk youth in an arts mentorship program, discovering the field of art therapy. I knew immediately it was my path and trained in the graduate program at the School of Visual Arts, integrating my passion for art, psychology, social service, and healing. Specializing in addictionology, my thesis work included facilitating art exchanges of recycled jewelry and collages between women living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda and Brooklyn, New York.

In 2008, after completing my degree, I traveled to Thailand for my first 10-day silent meditation retreat. In this space, I had such a clear and vivid vision of creating an art center in India that I wholeheartedly devoted everything in my life to manifesting this dream. Throughout my life I have been torn by the push and pull between my upbringing in the US and the seduction of my roots in India. I was catapulted back to the motherland to share art therapy, to embody all that was missing for me in service of others who are without safe opportunities to express and empower themselves.

In 2009, I embarked on a personal pilgrimage and a professional survey throughout more than 80 places in India









and Nepal over 7 months, on my own. It was a clear vision in meditation, and my own Sankalpa, to open an art center in India that still guides me. During the pilgrimage, I met children in remote Sirubadi, Nepal, facilitating their first expression with colored paints in a mural inside a mud village home. In Gujarat I met my sisters, the descendants of my ancestors, weaving art as therapy into saris and homes, telling stories and myths in patchwork, mirrors, and mud. In Auroville, I resonated with nature, spirituality, and the opportunity to offer art to those in need while remaining connected to the rest of the world.

Sankalpa is a Sanskrit word which can be translated many ways to mean intention, affirmation, determination, willpower, and/or a vow. This word and concept is integrated into almost all that I offer, particularly as I have experienced and witnessed profound transformation with the combined use of intention and artmaking. Another way to explain sankalpa is that it is a dream, wish, or goal which is useful to identify and express at almost any point in life.

Auroville was founded as an experiment 48 year ago to implement the vision of Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfassa (known as the Mother); to be a universal town with the aim of realizing human unity. Currently more than 2,300 individuals from more than 40 countries live and work together here intentionally. Both spiritual leaders have passed on, but the microcosmic community thrives at a large scale today with several generations of developments towards a sustainable and integral life.

My organization, Sankalpa: Art Journeys, has been based in Auroville since 2010 where I started as a volunteer and then decided to stay, given the rich opportunity to work with an entire slice of humanity including the surrounding village, the international community itself, and visitors from around the world. A guiding force in my work here has been the following quote written by the Mother, her dream vision for Auroville: "Beauty in all its artistic forms, painting, sculpture, music, literature would be equally accessible to all; the ability to share in the joy it brings would be limited only by the capacities of each one and not by social or financial position."

In order to genuinely meet the needs of the community while offering culturally sensitive applications of art-making and art therapy, it became clear that an initiative towards community art was essential for bridging the gaps between cultures and differences.



For the last four years, Sankalpa has hosted an official hub site for a global art revolution called Art Break Day. This movement was initiated by Art is Moving in California which sponsors, organizes, and connects 40+ sites hosting a simple community art event in which everyone is invited to sit down and take an "art break" to make art for free. Drawing and painting supplies are offered in each location on the first Friday in September, and each year has a different theme. This year over 300 people joined un in Auroville over two events on the theme of "believe."

We also have created a mobile Art Cart, open a few times each week in the community and full of art supplies, which travels in the surrounding areas for special events to help foster connection and creative outreach. Given the social stigma about psychology, limited access to art-making beyond a technical skill under competitive scrutiny, and the scale of the population in India, community art has proven to be very effective outreach to advocate interest and develop a foundation for art therapy.

The use of dolls emerged while working with adolescents from Edyanchavadi village in exploration of self, identity, body awareness, and storytelling. I published a 48-page book with photographs of the dolls stitched with affirmations inside, handmade by these children over months of work together. The stories, developed from the characters they created, are included in Tamil with English translations. Five years later, we have developed a kit for affirmation dolls which is sold internationally and supports our sustainability. The universality of this directive has many possibilities in various settings. The kit includes a pre-stitched doll (made by and supporting local women) with a small pocket and an affir-



mation slip to inspire the character, as well as all basic supplies needed to personalize it including needle and thread, fabric glue, fabric, sequins, beads, a marker, a space to sketch, and instructions, too.

Through many challenges I persevered and built a geodesic dome art center in Auroville, an ideal location close to a nearby village. This space was funded with an online crowdfunding campaign supported by over 50 donors in 10 countries. Every day except Sunday we have a simple mandala co-creation in our space. This is open to all to join in and use a variety of materials including seeds, flowers, leaves, string, beads, fabric, and many inspiring tactile and colorful mixed media items. This has become a ritual of silently working together to develop a metaphor for community, connection, cycles, and life. We follow the mandala with a brief meditation and sharing of words to develop an affirmation, shared with a photo, daily through our social media channels. We also host regular individual art therapy sessions, group workshops, and collaborate with expressive art therapists to share the full range of self-research and development through the arts.



In working with such a range of people living in poverty or extreme abundance, in early or later life, from a local village, or from almost any country in the world, I have discovered some essential commonalities expressed nonverbally through art. Language has never been an issue, working with universal and approachable directives and ritual hold the space for communication beyond words, and translation is always available for the moments it is needed. True empathy transcends words. It is held in the body, in energy, in connection through art. I am fortunate to witness what connects us, what so many are searching for. How many of us have experienced trauma (everyone!) and how important it is to simply offer a safe space and basic supplies to help people tell the stories waiting to be told.





#### I GROW:

"My life seemed to be a series of events and accidents. Yet when I look back I see a pattern." - Benoit Mandelbrot

Between September 2015 and May 2016, a steady group of 6-8 women from the surrounding villages were guided in a creative process to deepen and express aspects of themselves in collaboration with a life skills center called Life Education Center, in Kottakarai village.

The unique curriculum included a progression of learning technical art skills while gradually building towards telling a personal story through their art explorations. Meditation and visualization techniques were used to help create a group ritual and safe space for their expression. Beginning with color theory and mixing, the women had opportunities in each session to connect with color in their everyday reality, memories, and dreams and to put these into their drawings and paintings. Each woman developed a storyboard with an original concept of either their life story or a story with personal significance. Finalized, their story was translated onto a full-length sari (including drawing, painting, stitching, embroidery, and mixed media.)

An evaluation of the impact of this work is in progress for a book including their stories. Here are some initial notes and observations:

- Sense of mastery—almost all women involved demonstrate improved technical skill and confidence in art media;
- Original self-expression—long term curriculum reduced judgment, fear, and blocks to creativity and instead nurtured unique styles in each woman (a milestone as generally most individuals copy each other and cannot express originality);
- Self-esteem—all women are exhibiting an improved sense of self, each actively engaged in an empowerment
  process with a couple taking on role model positions helping to demonstrate open and free expression to the
  other women, and each woman taking on a leadership role in the group to have everyone rotate and work on
  their final pieces one at a time;
- Metaphor—several women began to develop symbols to represent people, emotions, and events in their lives, all connecting to a very important and often less understood aspect of traditional storytelling and artmaking (and art therapy);
- Emotional catharsis—several of the women bravely shared painful moments in their lives using art processes
  with awareness to help release emotion openly, to let go of the traumatic memories, and reported feeling
  relief afterwards. This is highly unusual and testament to the carefully developed curriculum for their safety
  and sharing;
- Gender issues—all women shared the various challenges of being a young woman raised in the local Tamil



culture, the frustration, fear, shame, and confusion - particularly surrounding first menstruation stories;

- Cultural relevance—the sari became the platform for familiarity, as well as the playful space to express resistances;
- Mindfulness—decreased anxiety, physical pain. Improved concentration and imagination through medication exercises;
- Empathy—improved patience and listening skills in hearing and connecting to each other's stories, working collectively;
- Bonding—with the regular students especially, a particular sense of sisterhood evolved in sharing of stories, (distinct from previous challenges with mixed age/ability groups at LEC,) filled with encouragement, humor, support, and affection;
- Sense of legacy—taking the time to carefully express their life stories in detail is an achievement to be shared.

The bilingual publication will be launched with an exhibition of the saris in early 2017. The objectives of this art therapy process include improvement of self-esteem, sense of mastery, empowerment, and self-awareness of strengths and creative capacities. Through metaphor, the women have successfully been able to explore topics such as emotion, life challenges, and resilience while also experiencing the joy of self-expression.

Sign up for our Sankalpa newsletter, read more and follow updates with daily mandala/affirmations, articles, and photos of our ongoing work at the links below.

May your art journeys be inspired, insightful and integral.

May color, connection, and creativity surround you always!

With love, light, and color, Krupa Jhaveri, MPS, TIEATC

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Ripening Seeds: a little gift & taste of my work





# Ripening Seeds: The Harvest of Approaches in Expressive Arts Therapy



"Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens!"

—Carl
Jung

Ripening Seeds contributions have spanned the continental United States, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, China, Japan, twice in Canada, and Ghana.

I hope we will have more offerings from our International community. We need to hear more voices.

Please email me with questions.

#### **Ripening Seeds Submission Guidelines:**

Please email questions, ideas, or your essay

Personal Story 500-700 words

Philosophy 500-700 words

Actual Work 1100-1500 words

Kate Donohue kate@kate-donohue.com



#### Student Q Mandalas

Inspired by a workshop called "Ritual and Self-care in Psychotherapy," I created six mandalas with pen and ink as reflections on the work I did with a high school student during my internship. I also wrote a poem for each mandala, as I value the power of multimodal work and reflection.

I see how these mandalas are one intersection between my client and myself. They represent that sacred space between therapist and client where creation occurs.

#### Poem: Weaving 1

Mother Mary, holding baby, Who holds you?/ Breaking open/Burning brightly, Warmth and dripping blood,/Fingers smooth and braid wild hair./Light in darkness./Dark in light./Clothed in sky and earth unbound./Daughter Mary, holding mother. Who holds you?



#### Poem: Weaving 6

I'm going a million miles away./All I need is my cloak of protection./I'm going to choke on outrageousness rather than get by on morsels of mediocreness./All I need is my hair tie./I'm going to leap and twist my cartwheel soul./All I need is my uncle (Frank)./I'm going to get away from being the youngest./All I need is a baby. I will be the mother she isn't.

#### Poem: Weaving 2

Flight of the bumblebee fingers./Landing on this cheek, this petal of rose complexion./Landing on that knee of worn denim, thin rolls at the bottom, flats to keep you grounded./Flutter again and searching with a tap on the temple. A temple of insight and confusion./The goddess of pollination carrying your weighted goods from one land to another./Zig zag flight with furious intention. Furious in your ability to change./One eyebrow raised, your sting is a direct hit.

■ Elizabeth Walker is a graduate student in the Psychology and Counseling Program at Goddard College, Expressive Arts Therapy concentration. Since beginning her graduate studies, Elizabeth has kept a daily journal of red work stitching, a form of embroidery from the late 1800s. By combining textile work with writing about the stitching, she is creating a truly multimodal practice. Through this practice she has been able to explore and expand her learning. She finds that the metaphors found in textile art, in particular the art of "mending beautifully," fit her theoretical orientation and her lived experience and help her to express and integrate all that she learns with her daily life as a creator, wife, and mother.



Join us for the Second Annual International Expressive Arts Retreat

#### The Unfolding Lotus - February 4-10, 2017 - Goa, India (Mandrem)

Without mud there would be no lotus. The lotus is an iconic symbol of beauty rising from adversity, in all its imperfections. This retreat will focus on the unfolding of your 'inner lotus'. You will explore what needs to be released, and cherished, and how to cultivate your 'imperfections'. We will be nourished by our beautiful setting, cross-cultural backgrounds, and the ancient wisdom and beauty of Indian culture. No previous art experience is required!

For more information see Google Drive here and here or contact Varvara Sidorova at varvarasi@mail.ru

Teachers:

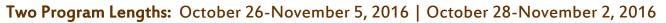
Belinda Rego (India) - Expressive Arts Therapist, Artist

Vavara Sidorova, PhD (Russia) -Head of the post-graduate program of Expressive Arts Therapy at Moscow University Sasha (Sally) Brucker (USA) - LCSW, CAGS, ART-BC

Chandini Harlalka (India) - Expressive Arts Therapist, Artist

#### El Colectivo Macondo

Join El Colectivo in Mexico for the celebration of "El Dia de los Muertos" & Multimodal Expressive Arts in Oaxaca, Mexico!



Taught by our Master teacher, Jesus Pastor, from Guanajuanto, Mexico, whose specialty is traditional Mexican Popular Art Practices. We will also learn from local craftspeople who are potters, weavers, embroiderers, and jewelry makers who live in the villages surrounding Oaxaca City. You will earn 60 Multimodal hours from the long program and 30 from the shortened program. Programs are in English and Spanish.

For more information: elcolectivomacondo@gmail.com | www.elcolectivomacondo.com

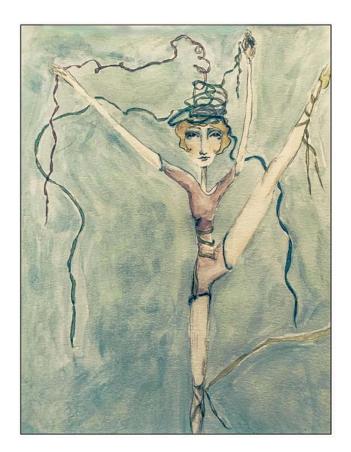


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In a somatic and expressive arts movement course, my creative process shifted to reflect the experiential practices in which I engage.

This playful dances is unraveling buried or shadow aspects of herself through intuitive movement. She is a reflection of one of many personal experiences I had with an expressive dance and movement practice. I have, however, felt the full range of enlivened experiences, both wanted and unwanted.

Trusting the bodily, "sensual wisdom" requires vulnerability and an authentic glimpse into the sensory experience, one that can be as much peaceful, playful, and free as it can be still and devoid of flow or attunement—edgy and disjointed.

The body doesn't lie. I've found through movement, sound, and breath that there are many moments when I don't love what I see or feel, and yet I am profoundly moved by movement and its capacity to move me from one state to another.

■ Natalie Hogge has earned her MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a concentration in Expressive Arts Therapy from Goddard College. The experience of parenting a child with an Autism diagnosis helped Natalie discover the power of creative process, which informs her way of meeting people uniquely where they are. Natalie employs expressive arts modalities as forms of communication that empower. This opens up avenues to voice in its many forms in lieu of the limiting and privileged language of dominant culture. Natalie continues to serve diverse populations through the empowering practices of expressive arts work in a trauma-informed approach. She believes in people's innate capacity to heal through the fostering of one's unique healing mechanisms. Natalie maintains her own visual and expressive arts practice to enhance her work and enliven her play ethic in this ever-creative and rewarding realm of therapy.



#### The Power of Performance Art Food Rituals to Transform (excerpt) by Sharon Hughes, MA, MDiv, BPS

A head bowed in grace giving thanks, a simple soft-boiled egg, a small piece of fruit, a six-ounce cup of hot black coffee, and a head bowed in prayer are essentials utilized in the breaking of fast. This is my daily food ritual, my quiet, gentle way of entering into the new day. I often ponder—why these particular elements? What meaning has my body given to them that it would require them daily? I believe these modest, unadulterated components which I take into my body along with the grace and prayer I speak into the world are carriers, symbols of information; informants nourishing both my conscious and unconscious states of being.

As I ponder these untainted emblems, they speak to me metaphorically, informing my mind and soul while preparing my body to withstand the unknown yet preordained events to come in the gift of the new day which is upon me. It is a setting of the stage. It is my daily ritual. It is my way to ready myself to engage this gift.

The egg symbolizes a newness, a gift from G-d, a new beginning; a fresh day. Each morning after a night of slumber, I open my eyes to a gift of opportunity, an occasion to begin anew. In the process of ending the night's fast and consuming my first meal of the day, I use this opportunity to set my intentions for the day. As I take the first bite of the egg, breaking through its white, slightly rubbery outer texture into the rich creamy smoothness of its yellow center, my actions symbolize the breaking of a new day. This is my first hint of sunshine suggesting great possibility.

The refreshing fruit taken into the body after the egg and before the coffee, sharing its lush bounty, symbolizes the sweetness of new life and new beginnings tucked away in the depths of the unconscious, waiting to surface at the appropriate moment to rejuvenate my soul with its natural sweetness.

The initial hot, smoky sip of the coffee, with its bold acidic bite, presents its attributes in stark contrast to the egg and fruit. It is a reminder that each day can bring harsh, inevitable events. The six ounces symbolize a finite-ness, indicating to the body that this harsh event will eventually give way to a warm then cool and, finally, cold finish; a lingering reminder that difficult events eventually burn themselves out, giving way to the breaking of the next fast.

The performance ritual opens with a bowing of the head honoring G-d, the great creator, giving thanks for a new day, a new beginning. Verbal expressions of gratitude are offered for the bounty which is provided. Provisions are taken into the body, piercing and awakening each of the five senses—sight, taste, smell, sound, and touch. The ritual closes with a prayer requesting G-d's grace, mercy, and remembering the less fortunate. This precise daily ritual prepares my body, mind, and soul for what the universe will send—good, bad, or indifferent. It is my ritual; my daily food ritual.

Since the beginning of time, food rituals have been a part of human celebrations, life passages, and holidays. Both the search for food and its preparation have influenced human history. We celebrate different foods at various times of the year. There are many types of foods that are celebrated with rituals around the world, for example, corn and tea.

The indigenous peoples of the world have rituals and use sacred foods and herbs for healing. One of the many examples of such sacred food rituals is the "Green Corn Ceremony." This is a religious and social rit-



(continued)

ual celebrated by many Native Americans of the eastern and southeastern tribes, to show gratitude to the Creator for providing food. The Green Corn Ceremony occurs in late summer and corresponds with the ripening of the corn crops. The ritual includes dancing, feasting, fasting, and religious observations. Consider also Britain's "high tea." The British have built their social lives around "high tea." Food was held in such high esteem that ceremonial eating practices evolved along class lines in French bourgeois restaurants and working-class cafés. The development of gastronomy, the science of eating, blossomed in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, forever changing the status of food in Western European culture. No longer was food for sustenance. It was elevated to an art, to be admired and held in high esteem.

Food can hold very personal meanings for each of us. Identities of individuals, families, and communities are shaped by the foods they select and the ways in which they prepare and serve them, as well as the time-honored rituals built around them. Food has the ability to bring to mind yearning for past times and sustain memories that can be nourishing to the soul.

Psychological approaches to the study of ritual behavior vary considerably, but tend to generally emphasize ritual's dual role in regulating an individual's impulse life and in mediating social relationships. Freud views some rites and ceremonies as manifestations of obsessional neuroses (Rook 1948). According to Rook, Freud also saw them as necessary prerequisites to the development of human civilization because they demand the renunciation of socially harmful instincts. Jung stresses the role of ritual in diverting "the libido from its natural riverbed of everyday habits," and in building dams and walls to "keep back the dangers of the unconscious," (Rook 1984).

Psychologists describe ritual as actions and gestures carried out in the form of ceremonies, (Hope 1988). These actions and gestures are performed in a specific manner or order. Psychologists further suggest that these actions and gestures may be automatic or compulsive patterns of behavior in response to a particular situation or stimulus. For example, I was told a story about a young woman who proudly accepted the ritual of preparing her grandmother's special Christmas ham for the family's annual holiday dinner. Knowing that she would be responsible for the preparation of the ham for the next year's dinner, the young woman shadowed her grandmother as she prepared what would be the making of her final Christmas ham.

Honored to be handed the torch, the young woman arrived at her grandmother's house on the day of the final event with notebook and pen in hand. The young woman watched every step in the preparation process with sharp eyes. She took copious notes. She took pictures. She checked the label on the ham, noting the poundage and the price. She copied the recipe word for word. Armed with all that she needed to prepare her grandmother's prize ham, she spent the year thinking about how she would follow the ritual to a "tee." Her big day came. She performed with the skills of a well-trained chef. The ham turned out perfectly. Her grandmother gave her the nod of approval.

A few years later, it was time for this woman to turn the roasting of the ham over to her daughter. The young girl asked her mother why she always cut off the end of the ham before she roasted it. The mother replied, "Because that's the way my grandmother did it. I guess it just tastes better that way." The grandmother arrived for the big dinner. The young girl was putting the final touches on the ham.

"It looks wonderful, baby," said the grandmother.

The young girl said, "Thank you. I followed your recipe to a 'tee'. By the way, Grandmother, why do we cut off the end of the ham before we bake it?"



(continued)

The grandmother replied, "I don't know why you all do it. I did it so it would fit in my roasting pan." The mother, many years earlier, felt compelled to follow the ritual of roasting the ham exactly the way she saw her grandmother preparing it, and she passed the ritual on to her daughter. I believe this is what psychologists mean by being compelled by a particular situation or stimulus. Depending on the transmitting source of the ritual, chances are it will contain behaviors that are not readily questioned.

Anthropologists define a ritual as an act of social practices that are repeatedly performed but not always associated with religious beliefs or activities. These rituals are not the same as the day-to-day normal tasks in which a person engages, but are more symbolic gestures performed in a specific manner and in a specific order, (Bell 1992). Regardless of differences in ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic circumstances, rituals are common to family life.

Three types of family rituals are easily identified. All families celebrate the holidays or rites of passage which arise from their religious, cultural, or ethnic origins even though the number and quality of the celebrations vary considerably, (Black & Roberts 1992). For example, growing up in my house, every Christmas morning the first Christmas gifts given out were a plain brown bag with one apple, one orange, a few assorted nuts still in the shells, and a very large peppermint stick. This was the traditional Christmas gift my mother gave to each person in the house on Christmas morning. This is a ritual from her childhood. Momma explained that when she was growing up, sometimes that was the full extent of Christmas gifts the children in the family received. Momma passed that ritual on to me. Now that she has passed on, I keep her Christmas memory alive by presenting each person in my home on Christmas with a fruit bag. I remember the first year my husband's mother spent Christmas with our family. Upon receiving the brown bag, she looked inside. I saw a tear roll down her cheek. She took her bag to her bedroom and tucked it away in her suitcase for the trip home; it, too, was a memory from her childhood.

All families practice traditions that symbolically represent their identity as a group and that connects them to previous generation, (Black & Roberts 1992). Our family gathers every two years for our family reunion. Often the reunion takes place at our hometown of origin, Childersburg, Alabama. Sadly, most of the elders have passed on. Gathering there helps us feel connected to those who have passed. Our ritual honoring the memories of those who have passed begins with a candle ceremony and calling the person's name.

The oldest member of the family, my second cousin, tells the family's history as the younger generation gathers around to hear how they came to be. We end with a big, old-fashioned country picnic with barbecue, fried catfish, cobbler pie, ice-cold watermelon.

Finally, all families report routines which most clearly reflect their unique interactions, (Black & Roberts 1992). An example of this is the ritual of family prayer before breakfast. In my family of origin, we gathered for morning family prayers before breakfast. Then and only then could we go out and start our day.

According to French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep, the lifespan of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one phase to another. Every change in a person's life consists of movements and responses to those movements. Shifts from relationship to relationship, and from one life phase to the next, are inherent in human existence so that over time a man or woman's lifespan becomes an aggregate of a series of phases whose milestones mark the paths with comparable originations and conclusions: birth, early childhood, middle childhood, late childhood, early adolescence, late adolescence, early adulthood,



(continued)

middle adulthood, elder adulthood, and death. For every one of these phases, there is what is known as a rite of passage whose main objective is to facilitate the individual's transition from one phase to the next, (Van Gennep 1960).

Van Gennep indicated that each of the rites of passage are marked by three phases: separation, transition, and incorporation. In the first phase, the separation phase, the newcomers are separated from their old identities through physical and symbolic means. The second phase, transition, is marked by a condition of elusiveness. The newcomers are void of identities, having been stripped of their old identity, and awaiting a new one. In the final phase, the incorporation phase, newcomers are symbolically confirmed in their new identity and community, (Van Gennep 1960).

Van Gennep further states that we encounter a wide-ranging degree of universal resemblance among rituals of "birth, childhood, social adolescence, marriage, pregnancy, fatherhood, motherhood, introduction into religious societies, an funerals," (Van Gennep 1960). He posits that an individual's life bears a certain resemblance to nature from which neither the individual nor the society in which they live is entirely separate. The cosmos itself is directed by regular repeating patterns which influence human life, with phases and changes, movements forward, and phases of relative inactivity. According to Van Gennep, we should therefore include among human passage those rituals prompted by "celestial changes such as the change from month to month - ceremonies of the full moon, from season to season - festivals related to solstices and equinoxes, and from year to year - New Year's Day, (Van Gennep 1960).

Our identities are informed by the foods we eat, physically, symbolically, individually, and communally. Food rituals are the other side of fasting. Through sharing our bounty, celebration, our cooking and eating special and sometimes religiously important foods, we chart in our mind's eye a path to the sacred, allowing the food ritual to fill us up with the Divine.

As a professional chef, I have come to understand that food is undeniably a powerful marker of identity. The human relationship with food is complex. It is a reminder of where we came from and where we are headed, in terms of personal and universal health. What we choose to each and how we choose to prepare what we eat can be an outward statement of who we are, as well as where we belong.

#### Air (Bread)

Recreating myself through the ritual of food preparation.

In order for the bread that I created to form its distinctive nature—my nature—it required wild yeast living in the air in my home, living in my environment. This wild yeast required the right atmosphere, the right warmth, the right humidity, and the right length of time in which to develop and grow. Each loaf is a part of my unique environment. I was intentional in guarding my mood as I kneaded and handled the dough, ensuring that only positive mental thoughts flowed through my mind and into my fingers as the dough absorbed my energy. I kneaded and shaped the malleable dough, my intention to feed and nourish my family and friends. The bread baking in the oven creates the scent of me; represents the love and care that went into its creation and transformation.

On this day, I created myself as Air in the bread I baked, the air that causes rise to my bread; causes rise to me. The bread I make is who I am—and I am the bread. I am each loaf. I carefully watch, pampering as if it



(continued)

were a small child or a beloved pet: feeding it daily, changing it, adding to it, caring for all its needs. I transform the simple ingredients of flour, water, and salt with my hands and my heart into the staff of life that will nourish my family and friends. The act of bread-making is a sacred ritual, a ritual of transformation.

I am air, I am bread.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Sharon Hughes recently earned her Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Goddard College. She resides with her husband, Cedric, in Stockbridge, GA, a suburb outside of Atlanta.

#### El Colectivo Macondo

Join us for
Women Who Run With The Wolves
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Multimodal Expressive Arts
in Cyberspace II

In this Groupwork via Skype, we will explore Clarissa Pinkola Estes' stories, symbols, and interpretations as we practice multimodally.

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Contact: Wendy Phillips dreamsandpsychotherapy@gmail.com 404-798-1061



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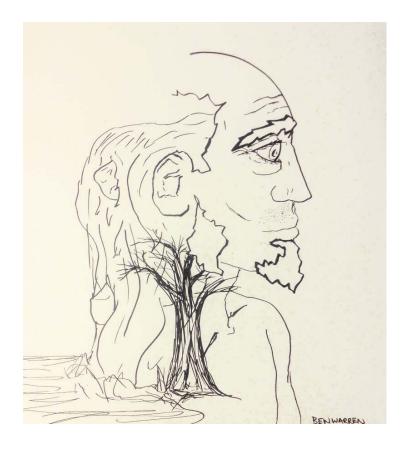
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With the Sun in the sky
the skin doth fry.
You may ask "why?"
Then you try
to think not of the mortuary.
You're thinking, trying to pry
the thought you thought.
You sigh...

"Is it me or is it getting hot?" Nervous laugh, defense mechanism:

Mind and body schism.

With draw you draw you dry

Thigh by

bye good bye:

I worked with a population dealing with the effects of Alzheimer's and dementia. While working with these persons I found a sense of both sadness in their loss of cognitive abilities but at the same time a sense of awe in what people are still able to do and have done throughout life. I wrote the poem to help me process.

■ Benjamin Warren | Lesley University '17

# Arts-based Research and Expressive Arts Modalities: Beyond Adequacy (excerpt) by Charity Eugair, M.A.

The role of arts in healing has been studied broadly. In more recent years, art has moved into a more respected light in the fields of psychology and research. The study of the human condition and human behavior has been approached through different research paradigms producing varying degrees of evidence. In consideration of the human experience as profoundly subjective and of accurate expression about lived experiences as critical to research on perception, art-informed and art-based research methods may produce richer and more comprehensive results than their more traditional empirically validated counterparts.

Non-physical intimate partner violence, or covert abuse, is a phenomenon which is multi-faceted in its capacity to harm and which has been recognized as such for a disproportionately small window of its existence. While more published research focuses on physical abuse, the last few decades have seen increased recognition of non-physical abuses as dramatically impactful to the quality of victims' lives. Physical abuses are not only better understood and validated by society, but surrounded by laws which protect victims and make their occurrence actionable. Conversely, non-physical abuses are significantly less visible, undervalidated by the society in which the victims live, and are far less legally actionable in the context of victims having agency over destructive dynamics in their lives.

I recently conducted a research project that utilized a qualitative phenomenological design examining existing survivor-produced art as qualitative data in an emergent research process—infusing the inquiry with the power of art as a way of knowing. The arts-informed study examined art in various forms, analyzed the art, and then used the data to explore how art may facilitate a process of abuse survivors reflecting on and describing their own lived experiences. The study involved a hermeneutical analysis of six different existing art-source data produced by abuse survivors to seek themes and meanings. Inferences were drawn between these findings and various theories of art therapy.

#### **Analysis of Artwork Examples:**

1. Analysis of *The Sea or May I be Compassionate* (2015) by Harlan Wallner

Harlan Wallner's powerful poem, *The Sea or May I be Compassionate*, is a deeply moving piece about the unknowability of the human condition and the vast capacity for variation and differentiation each person contains. His poem is both an account of a painful experience being judged and unsupported by a friend and also a beautiful exploration of humanity as measured against the metaphorical paradox of the sea as a living, conscious being.

My emotive response to the poem is reverence and appreciation for the astute observations he makes about the sea and its relatively human nature. I am able to relate empathically to the artist's experience of not being seen in totality; a sense of being unrecognizable in certain ways to people whose understanding of me is important. Wallner's poem asserts that a common flaw of human nature is to see only a small part of a person's entire composition and to base our knowledge about them, even judge them, on this minute fractal of the whole.

The ocean is used as a metaphor for the self—human nature—paradoxically made of vastly different parts



(continued)

and appearances yet always existing as one whole so large as to be almost unknowable, fully.

Imaginal dialogue occurs in this work. The sea is highly personified in its characteristics as it interacts with Wallner. It greets him with, "Hello," to which Wallner replies, "I have a hard time seeing you in your wholeness." Wallner is the sea with many agendas, functions, and parts—saying, "Hello." His friend is not able to see him in his wholeness and as a result judges him harshly with blame and rejection.

Themes present in this work include a paradoxical way of being and being misunderstood and failed by the invalidation. The dominant idea is that humans fail to see each other comprehensively and, through this failure, both witness and subject are harmed; the unknowable vastness inside a person and the unknowable vastness of the sea.

The paradox of close contact with the wave and the unknowable vastness of the sea stands out with particular relevance to covert abuse survivors. For many survivors, the way in which they are known in their outside lives is only a fractal, a small present piece of their whole lived experience. The "unknowable" vastness of the sea relates to the often "unspeakable" lived experiences about which survivors struggle for understanding and compassion from others. Wallner speaks of the distance that the waves have traveled to meet his friend only to be misunderstood. This may echo the experience of survivors who prepare to express for long periods of time, break their silence (as waves also break after long periods of time) and are not heard or understood. Validation comes from seeing the wave and the sea as one and the same. For survivors, validation comes from having their lived experiences understood in the context of who they are in their everyday life.

#### 2. Analysis of Stop Telling Women to Smile (2016) by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh

Stop Telling Women to Smile is a public and evolving art installation/activism display by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh. It is a powerful demonstration of women being fed up with syndromic abuse and taking an art-based stand in partnership with other abused women. Fazlalizadeh was inspired to create this public, counter-culture street art display after she grew weary of the experience of street harassment by men every day. Fazlalizadeh creates portraits of other women who have experienced the same, adds their messages to the drawings, and pastes large prints of them up all over New York City to push back against the pervasive harassment.

My emotive response to *Stop Telling Women to Smile* is gratification. The art series is a determined and brave push back against an abusive experience shared by many women. Knowing strong women are using art to combat abuse is deeply satisfying. I empathize with the artist's desire to create a public response to injustice.

The work asserts that women are not targets for unwelcome remarks that aim to devalue them. Each portrait that Fazlazadeh pastes around NYC offers a message in the form of imaginal dialogue to the would-be offender. Messages such as, "I am not here for you," "Women are not outside for your entertainment," and "You can keep your thoughts on my body to yourself," are incorporated into the posters and are aimed directly at the men who engage in this behavior. These are the retorts the women would like to speak back to their abusers.



(continued)

One woman spoke of the sense of entitlement that men who harass her seem to feel; that the women owe them something or should be appreciative of the attention. She expressed concern about this stating she didn't know how far they would go. Fear may prevent the retort in-the-moment, but *Stop Telling Women to Smile* projects the retort back through the imaginal realm. Metaphorically, women become their own public service announcements through being witnesses and being heard.

The themes emerging from this work are opposition and solidarity. Women who participate in the project are fed up with the socially normalized behavior of men verbally objectifying them, and they're acting as a group to combat it.

It is notable that Fazlalizadeh takes the art back to the place the abuse was experienced, the streets, with a message in response and installs it on a building wall. This may have significant impact on community conversations and perceptions around street harassment. When people view a reminder of abuse, with a face connected to the statement, it becomes less about an occurrence and more about a person.

Particularly relevant to covert abuse survivors in *Stop Telling Women to Smile* is the starkly expressed push back against unwelcome, non-physical attention. On some level, the practice of street-harassment is akin to sexual coercion. It is a bid on the harasser's part to coerce the desired response, in this case recognition and appreciation for the remark, that the recipient does not want to offer but may feel compelled to in order to stay safe or prevent a worsening of the violation. Through this project, women assert that non-physical harassment and abuse are equally as unacceptable as physical abuse.

#### 3. Analysis of *The Monument Quilt* (2016) by Rebecca Nagle

Rebecca Nagle is a sexual assault survivor who went on to take her rage and pain into activism with her revolutionary public art project, *The Monument Quilt*. Through this work, participants create quilt patches which are collectively displayed en masse at locations of legal and cultural significance. The blocks are typically arranged in a pattern which depicts the words "Not Alone" on a scale so large it has to be seen from above to be visualized. The project is a public healing space by and for survivors of rape and abuse, conceptualized and facilitated by Rebecca Nagle.

My emotive response to installments of *The Monument Quilt* was admiration. Witnessing a craft close to my heart used by many survivors together in a very brave expression is a powerful body of work that I admire. I feel empathy toward Rebecca Nagle and all contributing survivors and artists, and their need to be heard. Taking the art project beyond creation and reflection into a place of public testimony for the purpose of validating and liberating other silenced victims suggests a need to be witnessed. I can relate deeply to a need to have my minimized and difficult experiences seen and understood by others.

The project's installations in highly public and political places assert that not only are abuse survivors not alone, they are among an army of women taking a message of empowerment to places of power.

A dominant theme is the paradox of many individual experiences being a part of an enormous whole, yet not losing their individual significance. Rebecca Nagle organizes the work of survivors into a collective message that is so visually large it has to be photographed aerially. The metaphor here is that the whole of the installed quilt displays are representative of the importance of each individual experience on its own.



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The installations are also arranged in the shape of the words "Not Alone" which are so big one must get further from the whole to read it.

#### 4. Analysis of What Gets Left Behind (2016) by Natasha Vargas Cooper

Natasha Vargas is a survivor who blogs about a variety of unconventional women's life experiences, including an Expressive Art Therapy project for survivors of abuse called *What Gets Left Behind: Abuse Survivors Share their Stories through Art.* In this series, survivors created art representations inside suitcases and moving boxes to represent their process leading up to, and going through with, leaving an abuser.

The first emotive response to the works curated by Vargas is a sense of curiosity. It is clear that all the works of art are representations of departures from abusive relationships in the form of suitcases and moving boxes full of things, of messages and tokens. At first sight I felt like it was important to know what was inside, to understand what the artist was taking with them in the stark, final representation of leaving.

I feel an empathic response which is a mixture of fear and excitement. There is a sense of victory in getting away from harm, especially if it has taken a long time to summon the courage to do so, and especially if the destination is yet unknown. I feel toward the artists a sense of heightened anticipation around their unchartered journey. At the same time, I feel sadness about the finite space of these little suitcases and how much I imagine their lives hold which will not fit inside and go with them. I feel deep empathy toward the sacrifice each of the artists in this series must have made in order to begin their journey.

In each work of art there is a mix of good and bad, of beautiful and terrifying. The works seem to be asserting that nobody gets out unscathed or that there is no such thing as a seamless, clean-slate escape. There seems to be a message that if one were to wait for just the right time to pack, a moment to take only what is desired, that person might never leave.

A theme that I observed in this art series is that, while some artists created on the outside of the suitcases and boxes, most of the expression occurred on the inside where it could be closed away and kept safe for the journey.

Of particular relevance to covert abuse survivors is the complexity of leaving that is represented across this range of artwork. Many considerations and feelings are represented inside these works of art that tell what is often the most difficult part of the abuse survivor's story. From the outside, witnesses to covert abuse often do not understand the traumatic bond, the dependence, and the undermining of strength that goes along with non-physical abuses.

#### Interpretation of Emerging Themes in Art-source Data

The six works of art that were this study's data sources were each very different in their own right. Commonalities and prevailing essences exist throughout them which have been qualitatively observed: they share more characteristics than might be expected.

In reviewing these art sources and analyzing the content, meaning, themes, and relevance to survivors of covert abuse, three different themes emerged which address victim-perception of lived experiences and



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the process of developing self-knowledge through art. These three themes include: Holistic Truth, Metaphor in Motion, and Validation Need.

The three themes that emerged across the data are consistently present in each work and are highly relevant to the experiences of covert abuse survivors. In each body of art-source data, evidence is found that supports the notion that increased facilitation of self-knowledge and perception of lived experiences is achieved by engaging with, and often through witnessing, art.

In Wallner's work titled, *The Sea or May I be Compassionate*, the theme of Holistic Truth is seen in the way that he describes the sea as functioning differently at its different levels. The theme of Metaphor in Motion is also seen here in that Wallner begins by telling us his own experience but transfers to speaking in terms of what he finds to describe it better, the sea. Validation Need is seen at the end of the work when Wallner asks the reader directly if the sea should feel sorrow for the damage wrought when it storms, and suggests that thinking so is silly. Wallner wants us to see the difference between how the sea operates at different levels, and further, validation for that idea is achieved by the irrefutable truth that the sea, fundamentally, both destroys and heals.

In Tatyana Fazlalizadeh's art installation, Stop Telling Women to Smile, the theme of Holistic Truth is seen in the images of women placed—returned—back into the entirety of the sphere where they live, New York City. Images of the women become part of the landscape in which they are harassed, operating differently and pushing back with the strong messages other elements of their personas could not safely deliver. Metaphor in Motion, as a theme, is seen in the sense that portraits become billboards for public service announcements, denouncing socially normalized abusive behaviors. The Validation Need theme is present and well met in this work as the artist interviews each subject at length about their abuse experience and incorporates words of validation into the portrait to be seen by the world.

Rebecca Nagle's *The Monument Quilt* project shows the theme of Holistic Truth as highly evident in the sense that the parts—the individual quilt blocks—and the whole, entire public installations are equally significant; the parts intricately connected to create the whole. The individual representations, joined, culminating to create a stunning and impressive whole of display, is powerful. The massive scope of the project is a metaphor for the importance of each one lived experience. Participants become moved by this understanding to achieve the third theme, Validation Need. To bear witness to a public art installation of this scale and have one's own lived experience as a supporting part of it is highly validating.

The survivor-generated art series, What Gets Left Behind, organized by blogger Natasha Vargas, is demonstrative of the three perception-based themes that emerged across the data. Inside the artistically rendered portrayals of what each artist takes with them in leaving an abusive relationship, Holistic Truth is seen in the juxtaposed contents. Some items are clearly taken because they are desired. Others are included because the artist is not free of them. The act of leaving may be perceived as a decision by many, even the victim. The contents of the art reveals that it is indeed a process through which different parts of a person arrive at healing and freedom in different times. Metaphor in Motion is seen in the suitcases as metaphors for the self; what is contained inside, what can be closed away, what can be carried down the road. The things that there is not room for inside the survivor must be left behind. The artists in this series portrayed a Validation Need in the sense that the process of leaving could finally be expressed and represented as the complicated and burdensome matter it is, fraught with conflicting emotions and the grief



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(continued)

and loss that are so often overlooked in the process of leaving an abuser.

This exploration of art sources produced by survivors has demonstrated that engaging in art therapy is impactful and facilitative to deep healing and self-expression through many modalities. When we examine survivors of covert abuse, and the ways in which art facilitates their self-knowledge and enhanced perception of lived experience, it becomes exciting to think about developing, with greater purpose and intention, methods to shape and guide healing from non-physical abuse with art. The culmination of my study includes an Expressive Art Therapy workbook for use as a field measure of the ideas stemming from this inquiry.

Domestic violence is an area of study which has rightly commanded considerable attention from researchers across many schools of professional practice. Historically, research about abuse has focused on physical violence rather than verbal, psychological, emotional, economic, and coercive abuses. While research about non-physical, or covert, abuse has expanded in recent decades, relatively few studies have examined the phenomenology of how these victims perceive their experiences. The way the helping professionals perceive covert abuse is impactful, yet if the client's perception of their lived experience is poorly understood, a therapist's ability to help and a client's readiness for change may remain impaired.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Charity Eugair is a recent graduate of the Master's in Psychology and Counseling Program at Goddard College.



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## Imaging Hope



Sharon by Wendy

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of participating in the workshop Roselle O'Brien offered—Imaging Hope—for our Expressive Arts students during the Residency at Goddard College. One of our activities was to create a portrait of the person sitting across from us using colored paper we tore into pieces with only our fingers. I worked as the partner of Sharon, one of my advisees who graduated this semester. As she shared my portrait and her statement about the work, I learned more about our relationship. That she saw a strength in me. Also that she advised other students to keep up with me; that I moved very fast getting many things done!! (My portrait was a view of my back.) It was beautiful to hear her statement on the day before graduation; a lighthearted reflection shared between us as we prepared for her to move forward with her life and vocation.

Wendy Phillips, PhD, LMFT, REACE Visual Artist, Psychotherapist, Faculty Member IEATA Registered Expressive Arts Consultant Educator

To me this image represents Wendy's "energy" as "I" understand it. Wendy's involvement in the creative art process is that of a "mover," "a shaker," and "a doer." My image shows her back which is my vision of her pressing forward and onward, exploring new ideas and processes. Wendy is always there for anyone who is interested in learning about and participating in the creative process. The image reminds me of Wendy's ability and talent.

Hey Wendy, I see you up there, please keep pulling me along.

Sharon Hughes, MA, MDiv, BPS



Wendy by Sharon







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With a combination of free-motion machine embroidery and traditional applique techniques I used different textures and patterns of fabric on linen, as well as several different types of thread to create the images.



I created a series of applique quilt squares for my Human Lifespan Development course. Each of the eight squares represents one of Erickson's stages of psychosocial development. The squares represent a bedroom as it evolves throughout the course of an individual's life. I designed each room to include items symbolic of each of Erickson's stages, and to depict an idealized life where each stage is successfully navigated. The room I have chosen to display here is the 5th stage, adolescence, ages 12-18; Fidelity: ego-identity vs. role confusion. I felt connected with this room as I created it. It is a major turning point in most of our lives in which we work out our adult identities. In this room, I tried to recreate the chaotic feelings of adolescence as well as depict the sense of excitement and open possibilities that many of us experience through this stage of life.

■ Robyn Heidary | student, Goddard College





Hope Made Visible<sup>®</sup>: Sharing Flags among Cancer Patients, Families, Friends, and Caregivers from around the World by Alessandra Colfi

Child Sex Trade & Organ Harvesting in LA by Ericha Scott

Being a Bridge Builder by Tanya Kavicky-Mels

Re-Energizing through Integration by Kym Maehl

Authentic Movement in Nature as a Catalyst for Transformation by Mary Francis Hoffman

Nature's Aliveness: Ecopsychology, Embodiment and the Expressive Arts by Sophia Reinders & Laura Mitchell

> Recognizing & Understanding Environmental Illness by Roselle P. O'Brien

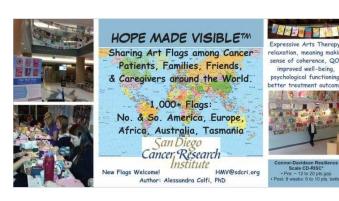
Soma's Sirens: Expressive Arts as Refuge and Regeneration by Natalie Hogge

Two Women Walk into a Bra: My Search for an Ethical Foundation by Judith Greer Essex



### Hope Made Visible®: Sharing Flags among Cancer Patients, Families, Friends, and Caregivers from around the World by Alessandra Colfi, PhD

This abstract was submitted and accepted for a poster presentation at American Psychosocial Oncology Society Conference 2016 www.apos-society.org





#### **Purpose**

"Prayer" Flags have been used throughout history, across cultures and traditions, to symbolically promote peace, compassion, healing, wisdom. Hope Made Visible<sup>®</sup> is a local and international Expressive Arts Therapy program transforming the conscious ness of individuals affected by cancer from co-dependency and disconnection to deep interconnectedness by raising empathetic awareness and restoring hope and resilience, essential qualities for humans to thrive.

Connecting with others locally and internationally patients become aware of being a part of something greater, have a purpose, lift their spirit knowing others are thinking about them, sharing their journeys and what helped them. Together they make hope visible.

#### Methods

Cancer patients have been engaging in guided relaxation, visualization, hands-on art making process to create personal flags made mostly of fabric, paint, trims, quotes, or personal messages. Self-assessment and self-reporting tools were provided and administered as surveys at the beginning and at the end of each 8-week segment for local groups; the principal tool is the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale of 25 items (CD-RISC), created by Jonathan R. T. Davidson, MD and Kathryn M. Connor, MD, to address post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and patients' resilience, alongside their concurrent clinical treatments and biological research.

#### **Results:**

CD-RISC surveys show improvements of 6 to 20 points over 100, showing reduction in various pain and anxiety symptoms, in patients' confidence in coping with the disease and in managing stress.

Participants' feedback shows improvements in fostering empathy and their resilience by making and sharing flags. Expressions of patients' feelings and emotions onto flags become catalysts for symbolic understanding and transformation.

More than 1,000 flags made by patients from all over the world have been collected

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and exhibited locally and internationally, and will be displayed at this Conference, adding another layer of patients' satisfaction, pride and feeling connected beyond cancer.

#### Conclusions

Expressive Arts Therapy as a process of self-exploration and self-expression is a valuable modality in comprehensive psychosocial oncology care. By practicing art making as a kinesthetic, esthetic, experimental and intuitive medium opens the door to using symbolic opportunities and narratives useful to create distance in facing often traumatic experiences of patients' cancer journey.

Overall patients' feedback and survey results highlight the need for simple, objective testing for stress levels in cancer patients and their immediate family members and friends.

Ongoing contributions of flags are always encouraged and future exhibition opportunities are being carefully considered.

# Research Implications\*

Research is needed on a double front:

1-Simple, low-cost tests to evaluate distress and anxiety in patients and their caregivers are necessary to identify and implement early intervention. Often patients seek complementary modalities on their own and after several months of their initial diagnosis.

2-ls 'a sense of coherence' what makes the difference in boosting patients' resilience? \*By the time this abstract was submitted, an important study was published and an additional research aspect emerged:

3-Is art making a catalyst for lower inflammatory response in the body?

#### Clinical Implications

In an integrated model of care, patients can safely access complimentary modalities. Clinicians often note higher cooperation by patients who are engaged in supportive complementary modalities like Expressive Arts Therapy.

Clinicians often report fewer pain medications prescribed and fewer visits to those same patients, thus reducing costs and increasing capacity.

Clinicians can use the survey results to better help patients in their clinical practice and integrated model of care.

#### Funding

Alessandra Colfi created Hope Made Visible<sup>®</sup> initiative in 2012 as a program supported by The San Diego Cancer Research Institute. In addition, UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center Patient and Family Support Services and UC San Diego Center for Integrative Medicine supported the implementation of the program in two clinics for local patients. Workshops and contributions of flags made by other clinical and private groups have been self-funded.

#### Learning Objectives

Participants shall be able to implement Hope Made Visible® as adjunct to their own clinical practice.



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Participants shall be able to analyze the efficacy of Hope Made Visible® to help patients identify, cope and manage distress and anxiety.

#### **Affiliations**

- (1) San Diego Cancer Research Institute, Vista, California, USA
- (2) UC San Diego, San Diego, California, USA

#### **Biography**

Alessandra Colfi holds a BA/MA in Linguistics, A Master in Fine Art, and a PhD in Expressive Therapy. She facilitates Expressive Arts Therapy program at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center and with UCSD Center for Integrative Medicine; Dr. Colfi is a member of San Diego Cancer Research Institute, a Faculty member and the Associate Director of the Expressive Arts Therapy Department at IUPS, a member of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association, Americans for the Arts, and Arts Health Network Canada.

Dr. Colfi has been using the arts and their therapeutic effects for over 15 years in private and clinical settings assisting oncology patients and their families. Dr. Colfi received numerous awards for her artwork and volunteer service, and in 2014 she received an Award of Excellence for contributing to improving the quality of life of cancer patients in San Diego County with San Diego Cancer Research Institute. www.SDCRI.org

\* 3-The effect of mindfulness on inflammatory health was shown in a study by David Creswell, PhD, that came out in February this year. This research showed changes in brain circuitry and reduced inflammation after three days of mindfulness training, while three days of relaxation did not have the same effect. Cresswell explains the difference in impact between mindfulness meditation and relaxation:

"We show that mindfulness meditation impacts measurable brain circuits more so than helpful relaxation practices, and that these brain circuit changes help us understand how mindfulness meditation improves health. Mindfulness teaches participants how to be more open and attentive to their experiences, even difficult ones. By contrast, relaxation approaches are good in the moment for making the body feel relaxed, but... harder to translate when you're dealing with difficult stressors in your life. This new work sheds light into what mindfulness training is doing to the brain to produce these inflammatory health benefits," (David Cresswell, 2016, Carnegie Mellon University).



This week I found the skin of a baseball with no insides, as if the innards had been ripped out by a malevolent hand. The crisscrossed red seams stand out boldly against the yellow cover, mimicking the appearance of surgical stitches.

I feel as if my heart has been torn open and sewn back together without anesthesia. I ponder the reason for such a visceral response.

I pick up and hold the piece of seemingly innocuous trash.

According to private conversations with various agency personnel, over a thousand children have gone missing from the LA foster care system within a year's time. They have most likely been kidnapped, traded, or sold into child sex trade or organ harvesting, or child sex trade then organ harvesting. It has been reported that gang members and traffickers are able to earn \$250,000.00 per sell of a child.

Robert Jay Lifton, in his book Nazi Doctors, speaks of how concentration camp scientists researching bone marrow transplants would hear shots in the courtyard to have the tissue samples arrive in short order.

How have we allowed ourselves to decline to such levels of depravity in the United States of America? Human slavery, which includes child sex trade and trafficking, is the second fastest growing illegal business industry in the U.S., second only to drug dealing.

Timothy DeFoggi, a former director of cybersecurity at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which includes CPS oversight, is now serving a 25 year prison sentence for using the dark web for profound child pornography and soliciting a meeting with a man so that they could realize their mutual fantasies to rape and murder infants and tod-dlers. Unfortunately, even after he was indicted for child pornography, his top secret security clearance was not immediately revoked. Timothy was in a perfect position of skill and power to identify and set up children within the system of CPS for kidnapping.

There is also an investigation regarding the illegal selling and improper adoption of infants via CPS staff members for a fee of approximately \$25,000.00 per sale.

I am a psychotherapist who has listened to child sexual abuse and torture for thirty years, and even I cannot bear this information, certainly not alone. Please consider donating your time and energy to reputable organizations who do their best to intervene upon this tragic and quickly growing phenomenon.

The eviscerated baseball reminds me that the organ harvesters take the heart last.



#### Being a Bridge Builder: A Journey to Shift Paradigms by Tanya Kavicky-Mels, MA, LMFT, CFTP

Amidst the growing, lush nature
I stand trembling with fear on my feet
The scent of unknown surrounding my toes
And uncertainty waiting around the corner to
greet me
With new experiences that will stretch, pull,
and yank
My to expand and learn of myself and
give the sacred space for others
to do the same

—Tanya Kavick-Mels "Starting a new therapy position"

On a rainy day in California, I stuffed my compact car with most of my belongings that could fit along with my cats, and made my way across the country to Wisconsin. My partner and I left in the middle of winter. Rain kissed us as we approached Lake Tahoe then we got hugged by snowflakes like an old family member you have not seen in years; tight and holding as we entered Tahoe. Passing the California border into Nevada, something strange came over me as if I was entering a different universe. At that moment I realized that I lived in a bubble studying Expressive Art Therapy at John F. Kennedy University and being surrounded by likeminded people. This realization was jarring. All in a moment I was a scared deer caught in bright headlights needing to make a choice.

The choice was to either let go of what I know or to boldly live by my new principles and values surrounding expressive art therapy in a conservative agency. Starting my new position in the Midwest was a tug of war of introducing expressive art therapy or to conform to the typical mental health approach. There was a huge shift in the way of thinking and I found myself submerged in a completely different paradigm. Perspective-taking, bringing in new ways of engaging people, and challenging the way we think about what is effective therapy is my current goal in introducing expressive arts therapy in a Midwest agency.

Introducing expressive arts to a conservative agency was very much like making a fermentation. You place all the ingredients into a vessel, your spices or whatever else will add to the flavor, and you let it sit for three weeks in brine water and tamper it down so that all the juices can create this delicious ferment with wonderful probiotics and get health benefits. It first started with my office. I turned off the florescent lighting and brought my art supplies, stuffed animal puppets, kinesthetic toys. People would comment on my office and would then want to sit and chat with me and ask me questions about my approach. I started to get assigned children whose behavior is seen as "problematic" in the county system. These children were labeled as defiant," "oppositional," and the families were seen as a nuisance. As I started to work with the clients I" gently introduced expressive arts therapy. Some children were a bit weary and some were waiting for this their whole life. I utilized drawing, painting, playdough, and movement during therapy and noticed the children felt understood and respected. As I reported back to supervisors, I noticed a sense of shock on their faces because I did not have the same experiences with the clients. So, like a good ferment, you let nature take its course. As colleagues started asking questions, a mutual respect formed around utilizing expressive arts techniques and seeing the benefit to using different ways of knowing in order to assist clients on their own journey. I am still utilizing expressive arts in my practice at this agency and I am hopeful that this will permeate and create ripples of change.



#### Re-Energizing through Integration by Kym Maehl, PhD, CRC, CCHT

I think that we would all agree that we are living in uncertain times. As someone involved in the healing arts for over 25 years, I have seen this manifest in increasingly high rates of mental and physical dis-ease within my clients, my colleagues, and my community. When not addressed effectively, these states of dis-ease can become problematic and even chronic, resulting in the inability of the individual to function in a "normal" or productive capacity. Every day within the helping professions we are faced with myriad conditions that prevent individuals from normal functioning and every day we are challenged to maintain our own vitality and well-being while providing a level of care that brings about the desired changes as efficiently as possible. That being the case, it is little wonder that frustration, illness, and burnout rates are at epidemic proportions for all helping professionals.

The question of how to address this issue has been discussed over and over again with little success. I believe the reason for this is that we continue trying to solve an energetic problem at a physical level. In doing so, we fail to address the degree of life-force energy required for healing and wholeness to occur. To increase one's life-force energy so as to facilitate the healing process, we must take a more holistic approach to our work, focusing not only on the mind and the body, but on the creative spirit as well. This involves opening to those practices that draw upon and integrate the deepening potential of creative expression.

As an artist, counselor, life coach, and clinical hypnotherapist, it is continuously my goal to bring creative expression and other alternative modalities into the mainstream and to dispel the fallacies that surround these techniques that step out of the traditional realm of therapy. In doing so, I have experienced first-hand the value of integrating creativity and alternative practices into all areas of my life, personal and professional. To that end, it was while I was working as an integrative practitioner in a vocational rehabilitation counselor's coat, that I had the opportunity to test the value of integrative practices and their impact on the well-being of clients who would have otherwise received only traditional services.

While different than most of my colleagues at that time, my work was governed by an holistic philosophy built around the benefits of approaching healing as a mind, body, and creative spirit experience. This was a new approach for most of my clients, so it was initially my goal to simply provide information that might open them to the idea that they consisted of more than just the injuries and limitations that seemed to define them. To do this, I would explain my philosophy of "wholeness" wherein the "self" consists of three primary aspects including the mind, the body, and the creative spirit. Additionally, I would explain that each of these aspects has needs or requirements that must be fulfilled before the whole self can function effectively.

I would then have them enter into a self-inquiry process, examining how they thought that they attended to each of these parts of themselves. As my caseload was quite diverse, some got the concept and seemed eager to learn more. Others were not as responsive, and some were uncomfortable or could not grasp the multi-dimensional nature of this approach.

For those who were interested, I offered the possibility of incorporating creativity and alternative healing practices into their programs with the hypothesis that by improving overall well-being and a sense of creativity and spiritual connection, long-term success would be more likely. Roughly one-third of my caseload chose to participate. Those who were not interested continued with their usual programs with added guidance on becoming more aware of attending to all their needs.



As I've mentioned, approximately one-third of my caseload chose to incorporate an alternative practice into their plan. These practices included introspective poetry, journaling, collaging, guided imagery, meditation, yoga, Bowen Therapy, massage, and energy work. Over a twelve-month period, the impact of integrating creativity, alternative practices, and spiritual focus into a traditional rehabilitation program was astonishing for the approximately 27 clients that chose to participate, with profound implications in regard to both short-term outcomes and the possibility for long-term success. To that end, I observe the following:

#### Affirming/Positive:

- 50% obtained employment in highly desirable and fulfilling jobs or were able to maintain their present iobs
- 60% felt more connected with themselves or others while doing the practice
- 20% had life-altering experiences in terms of self-awareness
- 35% had significant pain relief or reduction, one of whom has gone off pain medication; two others are able to walk more with less pain; another is able to sleep through the night for the first time in years
- 25% had the following individual healing experiences: one learned how to control a stroke-related eye
  condition with breathing; one began to reconnect with his/her body after years of disconnecting; one
  quit smoking; one dropped a legal suit that was causing him/her great physical and mental stress; one
  has found help in controlling manic behaviors and maintaining sobriety

#### Neutral/Negative:

- 10% did not finish a practice, one of whom dropped out of the program entirely
- 10% responded to the practices but were not able to maintain sobriety

I share my experience as a means of igniting interest in the possibility of integrating creativity and complimentary alternative practices into not only the rehabilitation process, but into any program for healing and growth. In this time of great uncertainty, finding an avenue for greater renewal and improved outcomes is nothing short of miraculous and making the mind, body, and creative spirit connection is paramount.

To do this, we must educate ourselves and our colleagues to what is available and how it can benefit mor standardized methods. This is not always easy as, in my experience, I have encountered fear, distrust, and even ridicule from colleagues who couldn't wrap their minds around the role that holistic practices play in wellness. However, with open communication and education the fear and distrust that naturally surrounds what is unknown or unfamiliar can be replaced with awareness and acceptance.

Awareness combined with willingness can set the stage for a paradigm shift within the client, the therapist, and the system, freeing us all from the existing belief that power or life-force energy comes from something external. With added emphasis on one's deeper nature as facilitated by complimentary alternative practices within an enlightened system willing to attend to the "whole self," empowerment becomes internal and the channels for healing open up. This is what re-energizing through integration is all about.

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#### Exploring the Lived Experience Authentic Movement In Nature as a Catalyst for Transformation (excerpt) by Mary Francis Hoffman, PhD, REACE, RSME

I recently conducted an inquiry which examines the lived experience of authentic movement within the context of nature as a catalyst for personal transformation. It offers an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the body moving and its connection to a transformative practice in nature. It is my belief that increasing an understanding of ourselves through the lived experience expressed in and through our bodies can open the doors for the reconnection between the mind and the body.

Authentic movement is a form of Dance Movement Therapy yet there are some very important differences. Authentic movement has a nonstructured format and the witness does not direct the movement of the client. The therapist waits for the client to be moved by his or her own intuitive body wisdom. This format offers a unique approach to the understanding of the body-mind connections. Another important element is that the practice does not begin with the end in mind or with the idea that the client has some pathology needing to be cured. Authentic movement teachers do not see the client as needing to be fixed, but engage the client and encourage identification of unconscious material in service to personal development of the body, mind, and the spiritual dimensions of the self.

I employed heuristic research in an effort to understand the lived experience of authentic movement within the context of nature as a catalyst for personal transformation. I recruited several individuals who are currently teachers in the field and collected, through them, a snowball sampling. I interviewed each research candidate using an explication method. This process uses open-ended questions and follows each coresearcher's responses to guide the interview, helping to create a natural flow that allowed for the development of rich and thick descriptions, themes, and categories of meaningful experience.

The interview began with a meditation and a 10-minute movement session in which I invited the participants to bring awareness to one specific example of their lived experience of authentic movement in nature. The participants were then asked to share about this one recalled specific example of their lived experience using authentic movement in nature. Seven sub-questions were asked after the explication of the lived experience. These questions helped unpack the deeper themes of the study:

- Has the practice of authentic movement in nature supported transformation for you?
- How does the natural environment influence the transformative nature of authentic movement?
- 3. How are emotions evoked through the use of this practice?
- 4. What challenges to transformation arise in practicing authentic movement in nature?
- 5. How have movement patterns, images, and intuitions emerged from the practice expressing a deeper sense of self?
- 6. How is it different moving indoors versus moving outdoors?
- 7. Is there anything else you want to say that is important to you that we have not covered?

#### A Deeper Look into the Core Themes

During and after the time I spent in immersion with the seven core themes, the power and presence of gratitude were constant. The coresearchers spoke about gratitude at the beginning, during, and at the end of each of their interviews. Gratitude was the container for the other six themes. Following is a review and my summary of the seven core themes. In the next section, I present the four areas that address the main ques-



(continued)

tion of this study, interpreting results in light of the relevant literature. Even though this summary is anecdotal, the four areas represent process and outcome of the use of authentic movement in nature and the potential for transformation.

Gratitude. All 13 co-researchers expressed gratitude for participating in the research. While sifting through this data, I realized that the theme of gratitude had several dimensions. There were two elements that nourished and empowered the essence of gratefulness: the use of authentic movement, and either being in nature or reflecting on a natural environment. Ten of the 13 co-researchers reported feeling gratitude as a result of using authentic movement in nature. The work offered a container for integration of self; allowed for transpersonal experiences that were both warm and deep; provided a healing context of natural beauty; elicited emotions that often included tears, a sense of hope; and allowed the co-researchers to flow freely and feel a part of everything. The phenomenon of flow or optimal experience (Czikszentmihalyi, 1990) was present within this small study.

Integration/Acceptance. All 13 co-researchers experienced and shared moments of personal integration and acceptance during the interview process. Moments were shared specifically about their personal awareness of how this process has helped in their integration of self. The interviews closed with each participant embracing a new level of acceptance. As I was conducting the interviews, I witnessed the process of a deep sense of rightness unfolding within myself. This unfolding felt very much like being in an alignment with the divine flow. This was spiritual and somatic simultaneously, difficult to verbalize, and felt very much like a peak experience. I found myself tearing up at the end of each interview with a deep sense of awe for the work.

The co-researchers acknowledged feeling a sense of internal integration happening while we were talking. They referred to things like freedom, sacredness, a graceful feeling of being a larger self, a sense of feeling more present to people, incredible oneness, a kaleidoscopic web of connection, expansion of an inner knowing that comes from years of practicing this work, development of intuition, and acknowledgment that this whole process was remarkable. One co-researcher concluded that a key outcome of using authentic movement in nature is the type of transpersonal experience that enhances the ability for integration. When Maslow (1976) looked at the religious aspects of peak experiences, he postulated several themes. Some of these themes are very close to what the co-researchers of this study verbalized. Some of Maslow's themes are integration, unity, and a profound life-changing meaning.

To perceive the universe is all of a piece and that one has his place in it—one is a part of it, one belongs in it—can be so profound and shaking an experience that it can forever change the person's character

-Maslow

I consider my personal experience of conducting the interviews a peak experience. The interviews were some of the best moments that I can recall. The sense of being one with the universe and having a deep connectedness with all was accompanied by the feeling that all was right with the world. At the time of the interviews, I assumed this was also the co-researchers' experience.

Connections to nature or nature elements. All 13 co-researchers supported and affirmed the power of nature and its transformative capacities. The energy of the earth, the sky, the trees, creatures, water, light, and



a sense of expansiveness offered the co-researchers a sense of belonging and added value to the movement practice. All of this allowed them to access different qualities within themselves, especially the desire embedded in our biology called biophilia. These included a sense of largeness of self and being part of something larger, a sense of oneness, awe and wonder, spiritual essence, love, feeling safe, feeling held, and the sense that nature was their witness. Nature was also seen as reassuring, healing, understanding, very moving and spirited, a deep embodied pulse full of light, accepting, and loving. The power of change was felt and seen as part of themselves through the witnessing of the changing seasons. Two co-researchers spoke about hearing music when they are in touch with a life-force of nature. Several of the co-researchers added that, to them personally, nature is a carrier of the truth and offers a pervasive consciousness of embodied wisdom along with a sense of community.

Divine/God/sacred-mystical-mystery/larger self. Twelve of the co-researchers perceived nature as a connection to God, a direct access to the sacred. In fact, for some, nature was the essence of the Divine/God. Nature was believed to have elements of mystery, awe, and wonder, and prompted all of the co-researchers to feel a connection with their larger selves. The belief that nature was also a part of their minds and bodies provided the experience of a deeper sense of self that was a part of a bigger self. Authentic movement provided the container for the Divine energy, light, and mystery to come forth. One co-researcher mentioned the preparation of her vessel, her body, for the meeting of the Divine. Two of the main qualities given for this theme were spacious and mystical, and these qualities reflected a spiritual sense. Some of the names given for these themes were the feminine, mother earth, goddess, divine spirit, divine flow, the holy, vast and infinite, healing mother, deep embodied pulse full of light, shimmer, spirited source of all creation, Sophia. The connections were clear that God was part of nature and, for some of the co-researchers, nature was God. The mystery of the natural world to many of the co-researchers was like having the Divine right in front of them, and moving in a natural environment brought them in closer contact with this mystery.

Grief and death. Eleven of the co-researchers expressed this theme as part of their movement experience. Movement provided the ground for grief to surface. One co-researcher suggested that while she is in a transpersonal space, her emotions are much more transitory and grief can come up and be washed away. Moving in nature provided many images for the projection of grief and death. This theme of grief/loss came as a surprise to me. I wondered if my perception of things at the time of these interviews brought this theme forward, since in my personal life I was experiencing significant losses. First, nature itself is a setting for birth, growth, death, and decay, and as such can stimulate memories and feelings related to loss. The time of the year the interviews were conducted could have been an influential factor as well. Seven of the co-year the interviews were conducted could have been an influential factor as well. Seven of the co-researchers spoke about the changing seasons and the cycles of life within nature. Another aspect of loss that was mentioned was moving with the memory of the death of a loved one. Five of the co-researchers talked about a parent who had passed away, while three others discussed a friend who was dying or had died. According to the coresearchers, working with these themes through movement in nature brought them deeper understanding and sometimes resolutions. It was also suggested that the mover/witness relationship acted as a safe container for the exploration grief and death. The memories they shared appeared as a part of the beginning moving meditation and needed no specific prompting from myself as the witness. One finding that could not have been predicted was a discovery that warrants future research in support of the connectedness to nature studies. This occurred when two of the co-researchers identified a sense of loss, prompted by the recognition that they had moved away from their connection to nature. This sense of loss occurred when they realized how long it had been since they had gone out into nature. This was a very deep personal awareness.



Finally four of the co-researchers discussed the fact that when recognizing the harm (as a culture) we have inflicted upon our planet, deep feelings of sadness came over them.

Joy/Surprise. Eight of the co-researchers mentioned moments of joy and/or surprise during the interviews. Joy, for this study, was understood as a sense of aliveness that came from the combination of moving and the memory that they were reliving in the present-moment discussion. Joy was described as being both conditional and unconditional. The co-researchers agreed that nature also provided the environment that prompted feelings of joyfulness. An important element that prompted a sense of joy was the ability to surrender into the body, and then to notice a sense of embodiment. The co-researchers expressed joy in their physical bodies and facial expressions as they spoke about the past moving experience and the present moving experience at the onset of the interview. Several of them acknowledged and shared their appreciation of being witnessed and how this brought up a feeling of joy. The recognition of the synchronicities and similarities in the work prompted a powerful presence of surprise. I think the degrees of surprise exhibited by the mature co-researchers was in direct relationship to the depth of trust in the process of authentic movement and in themselves.

The Transpersonal. Four of the co-researchers mentioned "transpersonal" as part of the content and process. The use of authentic movement in nature was regarded as a transpersonal process, a healing journey with a deeply archetypal transpersonal aspect. The moments in nature that felt transpersonal often elicited emotions that were subtler than the normal realm of emotions. One co-researcher said these types of emotions are more transitory and facilitate healing. Another co-researcher mentioned that these types of experiences bring with them a knowing that something major is about to happen or is happening. These energies also came through as imagery, sound, movements, and a pure flow of energy in the body and in relationship. This was depicted as a whole-body experience influenced by moving in nature.

#### Application of the Findings as Process and Outcome

Emotions as process and outcome. Three of the seven core themes consist of the deeper emotions that were shared by the co-researchers and described as being a part of the past experience shared (process) or part of the result of the interview process (outcome). These are gratitude, joy/surprise, and grief/death. These emotions were felt in the bodies of the co-researchers. When the registration of the emotions was described, this process affirmed the view that the body feels and the mind registers a cognitive awareness of the feeling.

The emotions of the co-researchers occurred both as a part of the process and during the discussion. The emotions that came forth were generally positive in nature; there were limited negative emotions from the co-researchers. Some negative emotions surfaced with one co-researcher as she discussed nature's wrath and her destructiveness. I witnessed tinges of anger when three of the co-researchers spoke about the collective need to stop destroying the planet.

The co-researchers described nature as influential on both psychological and transpersonal levels. Nature was acknowledged as being a witness, awesome, transformative, sacred, energetic, grounding, embracing, a healing mother, feminine, instructive, constant change and at the same time offering permanence thorugh the changing seasons, shimmer, an old friend, relaxing, the life force that feeds us, elemental, a lotion for the soul, accepting, loving, who I am; it also becomes a template for feeling that one is part of the larger



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world. However, nature was also seen as chaotic, angry, powerful, destructive, and unpredictable. When the powerful presence of nature was added as the container for the movement, it not only had the capacity to hold the energy, but also created energy. Interaction with nature, for some of the co-researchers, resulted in an increase in energy and feelings of being revitalized and inspired.

The co-researchers spoke about their deeper connections with nature. Several of the co-researchers said that they were *in* nature and at the same time aware that they were nature. Two of the co-researchers informed me that they normally do not go outside for their practice. One always uses her studio and the other goes out on occasion. This circumstance did not seem to affect or present any conflict in relationship to their sharing their love and understanding of being in a natural environment.

The study of the lived experience of authentic movement used within the context of nature revealed through the interviews and the data analysis a process and outcome suggesting this work can be transformative. All of the co-researchers communicated psychological, emotional, spiritual, and relational shifts that came while sharing their lived experience of using authentic movement in a natural environment. I relied on the fact that each of the co-researchers had an interest in positive transformative experiences. They each exemplified a transformative potential. Even though each individual had a different story about his or her "aha!" moments that occurred during the sharing, there were commonalities that offered transformative shifts. The four main categories and seven core themes discussed earlier expressed many of these shifts. In addition, the themes helped answer the main question: Does authentic movement in nature offer a transformative potential? I believe that transpersonal psychology is an appropriate theoretical umbrella for this study. This study is representative of one type of recovery practice that can be utilized for Westerners to reconnect to the land and to their embodied selves. The study was transformative for both the co-researchers and myself.

The heart of the findings uncovered an embodied resonance that occurred within the interview process and that I expressed through the skill of embodied writing in my creative synthesis. This connection manifested in me a level of embodiment that felt grounding and very much connected to the Divine. As the researcher/witness, I was struck with awe and a sense of mystery with each interview.

My lived experience of asking the co-researchers about their own lived experiences became a third experience, which was alchemical in nature. Because of this third experience I felt deeply aware of a sense of groundedness in my body. This embodied awareness confirmed for me the belief that all things are interconnected. The use of authentic movement within the context of nature is a unique practice offering embodied interconnectedness with the natural world.



#### Nature's Aliveness: Ecopsychology, Embodiment and the Expressive Arts by Sophia Reinders, PhD, REAT & Laura Mitchell, PhD

Sitting at my breakfast table in the early morning and looking out into the garden, a motion in a camellia bush outside my window catches my eye. My gaze, curios now, searches out the motion. And I see a hummingbird bathe in a gentle upward curving leaf of the young plant.

With a vivid nodding of its head and a quick swirling of its wings it gathers some moisture left over from the morning mists, and splashes droplets of dew over its whole body again and again. My eyes, delighted, follow the hummingbird's sensuous ritual. I am immersed in its unfolding with a feeling of wonder and joy.

As I continue to gaze, my experience of observing almost imperceptibly transforms. I begin to sense in my own body the bird's skillful movements, the lightly cradling quivering motion of the leaf, the freshness of the moisture, the pleasure of feeling it on my whole body, the well-being it evokes.

With my senses fully awake to the hummingbird's presence, my awareness is gently guided to a felt-sense of our shared dance of aliveness. Perception becomes participation. And this deep sensory-imaginal participation opens me to the ancient embodied knowing of the interwoven strands of earth's living fabric that includes me.

Our experience of nature is a participatory act. Our earth soul, ancient and planetary, is imbued with a deep knowing of the resonant affinity between our sentience and the sentience of the wild earth. Guided by our senses with their capacity for empathic resonance and by our symbolic imagination, our embodied being deeply recognizes and answers the call of nature's allurement. This understanding of the intimate intertwinement of the human and the living earth lies at the heart of Ecopsychology, melding psychology—the study of the human psyche—and ecology—the study of nature's communities of life and their manifold relationships—into a single perspective of the earth and its abundance of life's expressions.

As the very term *Eco*-psychology and its Greek root signify, the *oikos*, the home, of the human earth and its community of other-than-human life forms with whom the human is inextricably linked in deep kinship. Theodore Roszak's words are a passionate reminder of this inter-being of human and earth: "The person is anchored within a greater, universal identity. Salt remnants of ancient oceans flow through our veins, ashes of expired stars rekindle our genetic chemistry," (Roszak 2001).

This wider horizon of aliveness is the matrix in which Ecopsychology and its clinical application, Ecotherapy, conceive of human health and healing. Human thriving and fulfillment, as individuals and in community, cannot be understood within a purely human frame of reference which leaves out nature as its ground of being. Human health and healing, Ecotherapy proposes, can only flourish within a deep felt-sense of our kinship with all earth communities to which we belong.

This ancient kinship is inscribed in the very way in which our sense, psyche, mind, and body have developed in rhythm with the natural world with which they engage in a moment-by-moment unbroken exchange of mutual aliveness. It is inscribed as well in the multifaceted intimacies in which our breathing and sensing, our moving and feeling living body encounters the earth.

The essence of psyche and the essence of nature come into being in the living body, its sensory presence to inner and outer aliveness, and in its lived meanings. The living kinship of earth's community equally speaks



to us from the depth of our symbolic imagination. Our inner landscapes are patterned from the body's contact with the rhythms and textures, the sounds, colors, and shapes of the natural world. Drawing on our symbolic imagination and on direct sensory experience, Ecopsychology and Ecotherapy invite awareness of this living fabric of soul and world. They encourage and foster an embodied emotional-imaginal attunement to the intertwinement of all life forms in the earth's body.

It is through this attunement that we can enliven again an ancient sense of belonging, find our way back to a meaningful relationship with the living ensouled world, and strengthen healthful attitudes of trust, respect, wonder, and love for all life. The capacity for symbolic attunement and its expression is a facet of our creativity, deeply rooted in the body. For thousands of years humans have given it voice through ritual art, in a spirit of conscious symbolic communion with earth's mystery.

The expressive arts insert themselves into the lineage of symbolic creative expression. Especially in their articulation as Eco-Art or Eco-Art Therapy, they offer a creative methodology for evoking and strengthening an earth-cherishing consciousness as the matrix in which human-human and human-earth relationships can flourish.

What then would an expressive eco-arts practice look like—a path that reweaves us back into the earth? How might we proceed to re-embed ourselves into an earth-cherishing attunement and an embodied root-edness in the earth matrix? How might we align with a symbolic communion with earth's mysteries and processes? Let us follow an expressive eco-arts practice into nature's aliveness that offers portals into the living fabric of soul and world; one that trains our senses and attunes us to the dynamic processes of animate earth, weaving us back into her own sentient modes of being.

A small group of participants gathers at the edge of a wooded stream bed in the foothills of southern California. They each bring a small journal in which they have jotted down a query or intention regarding a life issue they wish to know more about. They will also use their journals to capture impressions of the experience in nature; word fragments, poetry, quick sketches—whatever impressions come as they move about in the woods. They are given the suggestion to "fully awaken and fine-tune your senses as you wander meditatively in the woods, noticing what attracts or calls to you, and become present to a mutual interbeingness with the denizens of the woods." At the sound of a bell they will reconvene at the Council Circle in the heart of the woods. We follow now the eco-process of one of the participants.

As I enter the woods, in the creek bed there is a perceptible an definite change from the heated air of the meadow to the cool intimacy of the riparian ecosystem. I silently breathe in and acknowledge both these mutual streams of aliveness.

Now the soft, mulched earth below my feet signals the teaming life of root networks, fungal webs, and microorganisms that live below our vision's ken. To my right, sunlight splashes upon a sycamore leaf's curled hands...and a faint humming vibrates through the spacious soundscape. I touch my journal and remember the scrap of paper on which I have written something like, "What holds me back from living more fully?" a lightly-held puzzlement. I let that go to seek its own way.

Entering the woods I am aware of the giant strand of sycamores that act as sentinels to this border-crossing into a new eco-range. This cluster of maybe ten trees is called Daddy Sycamore for short. This pause of rec-



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ognition and honoring allows me to shift gears, to become a humble visitor rather than a modern day dominant species I engage his animated being with respect; this is 'his' ancient lineage of riparian wetlands and the three million year presence of a highly evolved supra-intelligent community of chaparral habitat rising above the valley.

As I enter, I sense the shift of coolness and mystery that signals the domain of the keepers of the woods. I drop into a different mode of experiencing and sense the vibration of the soft, mulched soil rising up to meet the coolness of my bare feet. Faint scratch marks and footprints of beetle, lizard, and squirrel etch the trail. Sensorial communion opens into the flow of the rich permeation of life forms of which I am now also a mutual participant.

I find myself magnetically moving toward a nearby eucalyptus tree where the wet dew of the morning has moistened its trunk. Sensorially, I am riveted into the subtle tones and patterns of its slick, wet skin; a tapestry of multi-hued grays, mossy ochres, and subtle shades of greens. A symphony of sensation begins to organize into more coherence, a living perception...following the flow...drawn inward into the perceptual dance of shared presence.

Now more fully embedded and kin to the denizens of the woods, I enter a clearing. Overhead the spacious, laced canopy of sycamores, oaks, and native black walnut trees form a filigreed cathedral of patterned foliage, pulling my attention upward into its spaciousness. As I look up the laced pattern of the canopy is gently moving against the blueness of the sky; slightly expanding and contracting and rearranging itself in its dance with the air current and the breathing woods. Yet, the filigreed pattern remains fundamentally the same. This fractal repetition of difference in sameness stirs an emerging glimmering within me.

In a sudden flash a message jumps to my awareness, "Let movement and change happen without losing connection to the seamlessness of the whole." This living perception now comes together as a spontaneously arising insight answering the loose-ended query in my pocket about aliveness. Nature's aliveness is a perfect mirror.

I think about the Plains Indians and their concept of the smoky and clear mirror. When you look into the smoky mirror you see a distorted version of your reflection and a magnification of your fears. In the clear mirror there is insight. Nature is the perfect clear mirror.

The bell rings and we slowly gather at Council Circle taking time to write and reflect in our journals noticing what other parts of our journey want to be scribed and heard. Our group leader now invites us to share with a partner. We are then guided to find a movement that captures the felt sense of our experience of this moment, not that our journey into nature, our journals, and our sharing has gathered more layers. We share our movements with our partner and he or she mirrors it back. We then check to see if our own movement has changed. These interactions create new layers of dynamic meaning and move us forward.

A large scroll of paper, watercolor paints, and the natural brushes we made earlier from sticks and fibers found in the woods are stretched out in the middle of the circle. We are invited to bring our movement into another medium of expression on the communal paper with watercolors. We first brush the paper with water so that the paints can flow easily and now carry the felt sense of our movement onto the paper. Painting together creates other currents of meaning and a communal intelligence emerges that informs and deepens



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#### our experience.

We next divide into two groups and decide which portion of the painting we want to move or dance to, while the other group witnesses. We switch roles as the witnesses become dancers. Again we add another layer of meaning and richness to our explorations.

To conclude, we go back to our circle and each person reads a phrase from his or her journal while our guide scribes the communal poem. As it is read back to us, the beautiful and poignant metaphors and images instill a sense of wonderment around the human-nature relationship. With a sense of completeness for now, we honor the woods—definitely a clear mirror! As we leave, we pause to send gratitude to the woods and Daddy Sycamore as its sentinel.

The practices of the expressive eco-arts are rich and evocative as they invite a transformation of experience at multiple levels. Creative a symbolic gesture in response to a palette of sensory-imaginal perceptions encourages a slowing down which, in turn, deepens the ability for presence. A deepened presence further refines perception. Each sense modality, sight and sound, smell, taste, and touch, opens into richer and richer nuances of experience. Responding creatively to the deeply sensate allure of nature further invites and strengthens the ability to focus attention and let it linger as sensory-emotional-imaginal presence. Body sensations, emotions, intuitive insights and images, prompted by the deep sensory immersion, may well up into awareness. Empathic resonances and sensory-symbolic attunement meld in experience and guide the creative imagination beyond the membrane of inner and outer nature.

Any medium may be chosen to give creative expression to the sensory-symbolic call-and-response between the nonverbal body, the nonverbal languages of nature, and the nonverbal or poetic languages of the expressive arts. The creative gesture makes this flow of embodied experiencing aesthetically visible and tangible in movement or image, in voice, color, poem, or symbolic enactment; in dance, clay, or found, natural forms.

As we engage the living earth creatively, we weave ourselves back into the web of life.

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#### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS:**

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Laura Mitchell, PhD, is the Director of Sky Mountain Institute for Ecopsychology and Expressive Arts, offering Certificate Training in Expressive Arts and Ecopsychology (CE available.) She maintains a private practice in Escondido, California. http://www.skymountain.org



# Recognizing & Understanding Environmental Illnesses: A Quick Reference & Guide for Therapists by Roselle P. O'Brien, LMHC, REAT, ICAT

Picture your human body as a clear drinking glass. You wake in the morning, the glass is relatively empty. You go to work, school, drive the car, walk, eat, go shopping, spend time with friends, go to a restaurant. As you move through your day, the glass fills with the chemicals you encounter through breathing, through foods, through touching and handling items, in the air, chemicals you absorb through your skin, eyes, and hair. A healthy person's body is able to process these chemicals more efficiently. A person with an environmental illness like mastocytosis or chemical sensitivities and MCS is not so able. The glass fills, and fills, and fills until it overflows. The way for the glass to empty is to avoid exposures to the chemicals that fill it. It is the job of every person with an environmental illness (EI) to keep their "glass" as empty as possible.

There is no cure for mast cell disorders, chemical sensitivities, MCS. Individuals with these diseases must avoid exposures to the chemicals to which they react. Repeated exposures cause more and more damage and harm. The person becomes more and more sensitized to the chemicals with every exposure. Their reactions become increasingly severe while being exposed to smaller and smaller amounts of chemicals. A client with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS) explained it to me this way:

I had to see the doctor. The doctor's office is in a hospital and this one particular hospital has horrible, horrible fumes. Worse than in any other hospital I've been in. Every time I go to see this doctor in this hospital, I run the risk of never, ever again being as healthy as I was just prior to the visit. It's happened. The hospital that my MCS specialist is in has the most fumes of any other hospital I've been in. Before I saw my MCS specialist for the first time, I needed only half a Benadryl for a reaction—tongue swelling, airway closing, difficulty breathing—once or twice a day, and not every day. I could wear my earrings. I could eat organic avocados and organic tomatoes. I reacted so badly from that first visit—I swelled so horribly, my feet up to my knees, my hands and arms way up past my elbows—plus not being able to breathe, that ever since I've had to take Benadryl in order to eat anything at all; a whole tablet, not a half like before. I became so much more sensitized to things that I was able to tolerate before the visit. That first visit was a year ago. I still take five, six, seven doses of Benadryl or more every day, whole pills, or else I can't eat, can't breathe. Plus hydroxyzine [for respiratory distress]. I used to be able to eat twelve things. Now I react to things I didn't used to react to before. I'm not able to tolerate things that didn't bother me so much before. My hands and feet never used to swell up before. It's awful, scary. Less and less makes me react worse and worse. And it lasts for longer and longer. Weeks. Months.

Individuals who have an EI, such as mastocytosis, MCS, MCAS or are suspected of having any of these mast cell related disorders present with myriad complaints involving multiple organ systems. They frequently feel unwell all the time. Els are often misdiagnosed or not diagnosed by physicians. Many doctors are unwilling to consider a diagnosis of an EI. The majority of doctors are not trained in recognizing the symptoms of an EI and are, therefore, unable to recognize them when a person presents with typical EI symptoms and medical history.

A client I worked with had a physician laugh in his face while telling him, "I don't condone or support your diagnosis. I don't even think it's real." This client had been diagnosed with MCS by an allergist who is an MD, and also by a pulmonary specialist, and was looking for a primary care physician as his had retired. Another client had a physician who, after reviewing medical records and notes from a specialist, forceful state, "What you need are intensive psychiatric interventions." This particular client not only has MCS but also has



Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS). The physician in question had access to the mast cell specialist's notes, had read them, and continued telling my client, "I will put a stop to these needless and unnecessary referrals." The doctor was wanting to put a stop to the referrals to the mast cell specialist who was treating the client's life-threatening reactions with anti-mast cell mediator medication that was showing positive results. Sadly, the majority of individuals with Els are mistakenly referred for psychiatric treatment and interventions for their poorly understood physiological—not psychological—illness.

There are many psychotropic medications prescribed in the treatment of anxiety and other psychological disorders, as well as in the treatment of insomnia, motion sickness, and vertigo, (e.g., Elavil, Xanax, Trazodone, benzodiaepines such as diazepam/Valium, clonazepam, lorazepan/Ativan, meclazine,) that are also antihistamines, have antihistamine properties, and/or can inhibit mast cell activity through various mechanisms of action, (see Yousef et al 2013, "The 1, 4-benzodiazepine Ro5-4864(4-chlorodiazepan) suppresses multiple pro-inflammatory mast cell effector functions;" and Hoffman et al 2013, "Inhibitory effects of benzodiazepines of the adenosine A(2B) receptor mediated secretion of interleukin-8 in human mast cells.")

Everyone has mast cells throughout their bodies, in all organ systems including the brain. When mast cells become active—degranulate—they release histamine and other chemicals into the body. It is the release of histamine that causes the reactions we commonly associate with allergic responses. People with mast cell activation spectrum related disorders have oddly shaped mast cells, too many mast cells, or mast cells that are over-active for unknown reasons. Research strongly points to a connection between Els and mast cells (see Heuser 2013 and the publications by T.C. Theoharides, MD www.mastcellmaster.com).

What this means is that a client with an El such as MCAS or MCS when prescribed, for example, certain antianxiety medications may show positive effects and decreased symptoms but the positive effects and decreased symptoms are not due to a psychotropic medication acting on and improving a psychological condition. The positive effect and decrease in symptoms are due to the client taking a medication that is an antihistamine, has antihistamine properties, and/or is a mast cell activity inhibitor. Although the individual may appear to be responding to an anti-anxiety medication, what is more likely is that the person is responding to taking an antihistamine and/or mast cell activity inhibitor, and the resulting stabilization of the mast cells and/or blocking of histamine is what is causing the reduction in symptoms. Symptoms decrease because mast cell degranulation decreases as mast cells are stabilized and also because of the antihistamine/antihistamine-like properties blocking histamine reactions. It is a case of a person being prescribed a right-acting medicine for a wrong reason, (see Hain 2013; Hoffman K. et al 2013; Stahl 2008; Yousef et al 2013).

The individual with an EI who comes for counseling and psychotherapeutic support may feel trapped into explaining a very real physical illness in psychiatric terms. Although these individuals may present as having psychological symptoms, it is vital to recognize that not all psychological reactions have a psychological cause. A very good example of this is anaphylaxis.

Anaphylactic and anaphylactoid are two types of life-threatening allergic reactions. A person who is allergic to bee stings, for example, and whose airway swells shut rendering them unable to breathe in a matter of moments is having an anaphylactic reaction. Anaphylactic reactions occur in people who have previously been exposed to a substance at least once and have become sensitized, through the exposure, to that substance. Anaphylactoid reactions, however, do not require prior exposure and sensitization. Anaphylactoid



reactions can happen following a first-time, single exposure to a substance. Anaphylactic and anaphylactoid reactions produce the same clinical signs and symptoms in a person and, medically, are both treated in the exact same way. The term anaphylaxis is used for both types of reaction, (www.emsworld.com).

Epipen injectors are prescribed for people who are at risk for anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis can be lifethreatening. Symptoms of anaphylaxis can include, according to the Epipen website, trouble breathing, wheezing, hoarseness, hives, severe itching, swelling of the face, lips, mouth, tongue, skin rashes, redness, fast heartbeat, weak pulse, feeling very anxious, confusion, stomach pain, losing control of urine or bowel movements, dizziness, fainting, passing out/unconsciousness. Another common symptoms is a feeling of impending doom.

The Environmental Illness Resource lists on their website several of the most common symptoms a person with an El such as MCS, mastocytosis, and MCAS may experience when reacting to an exposure including fatigue, headache, disorientation, dizziness, faintness, nausea, flu-like symptoms, irregular or rapid heart-beat, muscle pain, joint pain, gastrointestinal problems, short-term memory problems, mood disturbances, depression, anxiety, weeping, irritability, asthma, breathing problems, rashes.

Unless informed otherwise, a doctor or clinician may mistake symptoms of anaphylaxis, (e.g., anxiety, confusion, stomach pain, feelings of impending doom,) as psychological symptoms stemming from a psychological cause rather than, more accurately, as psychological symptoms stemming from a physical cause. The same is true with Els. Unless informed otherwise, a doctor or clinician may mistake the symptoms of an El, (e.g., anxiety, confusion, disorientation, stomach pain, irregular or rapid heartbeat, mood disturbances,) as psychological symptoms stemming from a psychological cause rather than, more accurately, as psychological symptoms stemming from a physical cause.

Any individual living with a chronic illness experiences loss, changes in lifestyle, changes in body concept and sense of self, sadness, varying degrees of isolation. A person living with a chronic illness can experience changes in mood as well as feelings of decreased worth, helplessness, hopelessness.

An individual living with a chronic El may be hit doubly hard, experiencing what are the normal psychological responses to having a chronic illness coupled and overlapped with the physiologically-based symptoms of their reactions that affect these same body systems.

The mainstream approaches and methods currently used when treating individuals with chronic illness are Behavioral approaches and tend to focus, to a greater or lesser extent, on what are looked at as maladaptive behaviors of the client. Although there are many excellent approaches when working with individuals who have more familiar chronic illnesses such as diabetes, obesity, nicotine addiction, or hypertension, none of these approaches are entirely suitable for working with a client who has a chronic El. These clients will experience symptoms when exposed to the chemicals to which they react. Unfortunately, they do not have complete control over their exposures because they can't control the behavior of others—renovation work in their apartment building, construction work or street paving in their neighborhood, pesticide use in offices and medical building, shampoos, soaps, personal care products used by another person in the room or next to them in line at the market.

The emotional and psychosocial needs of a person who has an El are intimately entwined with their physical



disability, perhaps more so than with any other chronic illness. Traditional avenues for healthcare are often inaccessible for these clients due to the symptoms of their physical illness, the severity of their symptoms, and their need for avoidance. In order to provide support and services, we need to be able to reach outside the therapy "box" for alternatives and changes we can make in our practice that minimize their exposures to triggers.

#### Modalities of Expressive Arts Therapy and Els

#### Integrative Healthcare

People with Els may feel that conventional medicine does not address their needs. It is common for individuals with Els to have negative experiences of heath care from providers. Eis are not well understood in the conventional medical and helping professionals' communities. The person with an El may feel angry, hurt, betrayed, or abandoned by doctors, as well as frightened and alone.

Integrative healthcare offers individuals the treatments and interventions of western medicine and the treatments and interventions of non-western medicine. Integrative healthcare focuses on the person and not the disease. It is an approach that is holistic and considers the whole person and all health conditions together and at the same time. Western medicine is traditionally highly specialized and compartmentalized. Els affect multiple organ systems, including the brain. Treatment approaches and interventions need to address all areas of impact. The integrative approach may be preferable for individuals with Els as there is not a single area of their lives left untouched by their illness.

#### Narrative Therapy

The individual living with a chronic EI is grappling with redefining who they are in terms of their illness, restructuring their life and future, and radically altering their dreams. Narrative Therapy is an approach perhaps ideally suited to the work of adjustment that individuals with EIs must go through.

In our society, a person's worth is based on what they do, nine to five. The person with an El may find themselves unable to work or able to work only limited hours after strict reasonable accommodations are in place. Regular schedules can be difficult to maintain due to fluctuating symptoms and the person's inability to sufficiently control their environments and their exposures to chemicals in the shared workspace. Narrative Therapy recognizes that the person is not defined by their illness and actively supports the positive separation of self from disease. Through Narrative Therapy approaches and techniques, the individual is able to re-author the narrative storyline of their lives and in this way move towards developing a new, better, and clearer understanding of who they are, their worth, and value.

#### Body, Mind, Spirit

The Body, Mind, Spirit approach in therapy begins with understanding that a human being is one whole unit comprised of many parts, and that health and well-being are states of the whole that involve all the parts. We are a system. We can't compartmentalize. All parts affect the whole; all parts are the whole. An event, circumstance, or situation that impacts a person at one level affects the entire system.



The Body, Mind, Spirit approach addresses a person's physical health, emotional health, mental health, spirituality and spiritual health and uses techniques such as meditation, mindfulness, imagery, breathing, authentic movement, yoga, visualization. The person with an El may benefit profoundly from these strengthdrawing practices. The client with an El has a very real need for calm. Strong emotions, whether positive or negative, as well as stress, can cause mast cell degranulation and intensify the severity of their symptoms and their reactions.

The client with an EI may need concrete things to do while they are having what can be life-threatening reactions and throughout the day in order to best manage their symptoms. Focusing, breathing, mindfulness practices, guided imagery, awareness of the body, meditation are all techniques of Body, Mind, Spirit that a client can practice and use effectively, more so perhaps than dance and movement as physical exertion of any type—even the most minimal such as getting dressed—can cause mast cell degeneration and a worsening of symptoms and reactions.

We go on because we have hope. Many people with an EI feel without hope. They may look to suicide as a viable option, (Gibson 2002), unable to manage or find relief from the symptoms and burden of having a chronic illness that spans the spectrum from somewhat limiting to utterly devastating. Suicidal ideation can also be a reaction to a chemical exposure. Many clients with an EI, especially in the moments when experiencing a reaction, are not able to separate from their reactions enough to tell themselves the spiraling emotional darkness consuming them is itself a reaction and will pass, and remove themselves from the environment and the trigger. It is important to consider the spiritual when working with these individuals as they redefine their understanding of who they are within the challenges of living with these chronic illnesses.

#### Ecotherapy

An ecotherapy approach provides an opportunity to include this particular "system"—our relationship with our environment and the natural world—as part of the therapy. The relationship a client with an EI has with the natural environment can be challenging. One vantage point reveals the environment as hostile, chemical-ridden, dangerous, harmful to one's health. A second, simultaneous viewpoint understands the natural environment as beneficial and cleansing, bringing us emotional, physical, spiritual strengthening and rejuvenation. Inviting the natural world to be part of the therapeutic process is especially significant when working with a client with an EI as they often feel alone, isolated, separated from all systems by the demands of avoidance and the symptoms of their chronic illness. Ecotherapeutic approaches in counseling help clients to reconnect and learn new ways of connection.

The challenge for the therapist working with clients with Els is finding a way of access to the arts. Many of these individuals are not physically able to touch and handle art materials without become sick. Still others react to electromagnetic waves limiting their ability to listen to music and use a computer. Some live in areas so toxic they are not able to go for a walk outside. Anywhere. The person with an El is living a life of disconnect. The creative arts are places and avenues of connection, giving voice to the silenced.

Let the art guide you. Expand your practice to include virtual sessions, telephone sessions, walks by the ocean. Think of your own array of chemicals applied out of habit, antiperspirants, soaps, cosmetics—make different choices. The creation of art is a profound experience of process. Through creating art, choosing a medium, choosing materials, we move through our interior stores giving expression and voice, analyzing,



understanding, emptying, to finally present to an audience—a witness—the tangible culmination of a living journey not yet over. People living with chronic Els can't always come to you. Go to them.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Roselle P. O'Brien, LMHC, REAT, ICAT, is the author of several books on environmental illnesses that include Understanding MCS: A Therapist's Guide to Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and Environmental Illness and Eco-Health & the Continuum of Care. Her book, Working with Clients with Environmental Illness: A Handbook & Guide for Care Providers, is geared for direct care providers and any person or professional (teachers, consultants, social workers, therapists, family, friends) working with and supporting individuals with Els, is due out spring 2017. Through CELA – The Center for English Language & Creative Arts, Roselle has created two online Certificate Programs in Eco-Health Care, plus an Eco-Health concentration for CELA's professional Intermodal Creative Arts Therapy Certification Programs.

celacare-ecohealth.us | www.celaonline.com





# Soma's Sirens: Expressive Arts as Refuge and Regeneration by Natalie Hogge, MA

Driving home from a meeting a few years ago, I found my somatic sirens over-reaching their role leaving me an unattended driver to my own vehicle. What caused this vasovagal, lights-out response that lasted minutes was a half mile stretch of road during rush hour, you might ask? An *audio book*. This was all simply a product of a passage from the book, *Infidel*, delivered unceremoniously through the unwavering voice of the author, who incidentally left me fleetingly unconscious. This autobiography led me into uncharted territory on more than one count. Ayaan Hirsi Ali enlivened the vivid, sensorial narrative of a very young Somalian child (her little sister) undergoing the ritual of female mutilation. Never before had I heard in great detail this cultural/religious tradition; never prior had I passed out from an audio book.

Why is this story relevant here, inked amidst the print of an expressive arts periodical? I share this story because it reminds me that the body doesn't lie; it conveys exactly what one's experience is. For helping professionals, somatic signals reveal not only what our clients' experience is, but our own. Unresolved, they will resurface. I again found my untamed soma interrupting my capacity to pore over difficult case histories of children of sexual abuse. Do we call this countertransference or the human condition? Are we supposed to condition ourselves to feel at ease in the bodymind when we hear/read/witness the unthinkable with our clients? As a person who was kept safe in my developing years, virtually free from trauma, I can't know exactly why my somatic reactions are so intensified. But the question of whether I can sit with a child, a survivor, or a family deeply concerned me after this incident, something that I knew had to be addressed, not cognitively, but through the soma and expressive portals of the psyche.

I read a particularly thick file from a child not yet in adolescence and found myself reaching to the very practices I employed with children of trauma. Once I was home, anchored by a room of pigments strong enough to express that which words left dim and unfulfilled, I could create with abandon. Angsty yellows and melancholy violets and blues met enraged and violated cad. reds. Precision of expression took hold through the lead mediums, sharp and deliberate, remind-



ing me of Malchiodi's controllable mediums for trauma narratives. Clay seemed to invite a dissambly of the wrong in the world, while smoothing it out again brought hope and renewal. Stream of consciousness writing let me extract what was unresolved so I didn't harbor that which can't possibly be contained. I wouldn't let the unsettled go toxic and dormant, finding false refuge within my soma, as was often the experience of my clients with complex trauma. I did mindful breathing in sync with the brush strokes and found my expressive multimodal practice diminishing the impact of these horrific narratives over time. Yes, I can do this work, I thought.

As helping professionals, we understand vicarious trauma and burnout is a risk. We read our ethical updates and know self-care is a practice that's baseline. And yet, with the intensity of work and time constraints, compound fractures can leave little left over to do what we need for renewal and joy, peace and





presence. For me, expressive arts are the most portable and sacred form of refuge, offering me the same qualities I witness in expressive arts with clients: a realm to express in many organically-emerging voices, that which is otherwise seemingly inexpressible.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Natalie Hogge, MA, earned her Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a concentration in Expressive Therapy from Goddard College. Natalie employs Expressive Arts modalities as forms of communication that empower. She continues to serve diverse populations through the empowering practices of Expressive Arts work in a traumainformed approach.





# Two Women Walk into Bra: My Search for an Ethical Foundation by Judith Greer Essex, PhD



This year I discovered that my beloved Wacoal bras are actually sewn in the Dominican Republic or Thailand. Both countries have poor human rights records, and a prominence of low wages and unsafe working conditions. Most garment factory workers are women, and not well treated. Somehow the very common intimacy of this garment, so close to my heart and my femininity, leads me to consider the lives of the women who make them.

So I began the search for a bra that is ethically made.

I found wonderful looking bras "Made in France." Upon digging, I discovered that while they were *designed* and cut in France, they were largely sewn and assembled in Tunisia, Madagascar, Portugal, China, Morocco, and Thailand. According to the company, this qualifies under E.U. law for the *Made in France* label. I suppose in these days of global economy, I shouldn't be surprised that nothing is made in one place. We are all connected. Even so, the place matters.

Because I am connected to the woman who makes my bra, I can't forget her life circumstances. I think of her weary hands, her long days, her impoverished life, her kids. And I keep looking, for a better, more responsible company to do business with. I can't participate in a system that enslaves her through low wages, even as it demeans her labor. This is part of the expressive arts philosophy—that our social and political environments affect us, and our simple actions can have far-reaching effects. If I am to take aesthetic responsibility, not only for my work but also for my life, then I must respond to the conditions of others I am connected to. As part of my aesthetic response I wrote this haiku to the woman who sews my brassiere in the Dominican Republic: You labor long hours/Your skilled hands working for me/My secret sister.

I am still on a search for a "perfect bra," one that serves the women who make it as well as those who wear it. Although they call bras 'intimates' I've come to recognize that my true intimates are the women whose handiwork crosses my heart each day.

Wanna Map Your stuff? You'll need a world map and sticky notes, or pins, etc. Check labels on everything you wear, carry, use, and eat. Put the name of the thing on a flag and put it on the country that claims its



manufacture. Use resources like this or like this to learn more about the place your stuff is made, and what it's made of. Write a small poem to the person whose handiwork has become a part of your life. Have a "Stuff Map" gathering of friends. You'll all learn something.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Judith Greer Essex, PhD, is the founder and director of the Expressive Arts Institute in San Diego, providing professional education in expressive arts therapy since 1998. Dr. Essex is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Registered Expressive Arts Therapist, and Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist. She is Adjunct Faculty at the European Graduate School and Alliant University. Trained as a dancer, she is also a published poet. Read her blog at www.expressiveartsinstitute.org

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I began making images of hands with my Holga (experimental) camera in response to the divisiveness and intolerance I felt in my city.

I thought about hands as something everyone has and that hands transcend ethnicity, religious affiliations, sexual and gender orientation, and disability status.

I photographed the hands of people in my community who identified themselves in varied ways.

I was drawn to working in boxes and used cigar boxes thinking of them as containers for ritual material such as the tobacco they customarily hold.

I placed objects that I felt drawn to intuitively in the boxes without creating a particular plan.

Afterwards, together with my Jungian analyst, I interpreted each box I had made as if it was a dream.

—Wendy Phillips, PhD, LMFT, REACE

Free Association Box 1





I realized that this box is about my great-aunt, Mabel. I never met her, but heard stories about her life.

I greatly admire her. The beauty and fine quality of the cloth in my assemblage honor her.

She was born in the small town of Scottsville near Rochester in western New York in the 1890s. Her father, my great-grandfather who left the south as a young man around 1883 and believed that a person could learn to do anything by reading a book. He helped Mabel learn to speak German fluently and to play the piano.

Mabel studied at the Normal School (teacher training) in Genesco, New York and also earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business at Syracuse University.

Per a family story, she and her sister, Gertrude, received a letter from a friend

who was working at Livingstone College, an historically black college in North Carolina, inviting them to come and teach. They moved there and joined the faculty. When I lived in North Carolina in 1986, I visited Livingstone and met a very old woman whose father had been an administrator there. The stories she told me about Mabel were exactly the same as the ones my family told me.

The essay about time in my assemblage comes from one of her books that I inherited. Time represents her brief life: she died as a very young woman in the pneumonia epidemic of the early 1900s.

Wendy Phillips, PhD, LMFT, REACE | Free Association Box 2



## Her roots run deep



Her roots run deep,
And her blooms of green
bear testament to her
undying spirit,
As she pushed through
dark times and reached
toward the light,

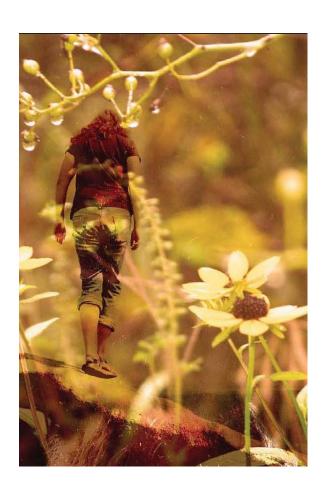
From the earth she nourished her soul.

This expressive arts project is a representation of my personal and professional growth influenced by my tenure at Goddard College.

We meet with the creative power that brings all reality into existence, and I believe it is the driving force of all change. I know I have changed along with it, alert and alive; in devotion and with love, agreeing and being disciplined; with great and small accomplishments, all at once, arising anew.

■ Desiree Brooker resides in the "Quiet Corner" of northeastern Connecticut with her husband, 5 cats, and their dog, Captain Tripp. She received her first Master's Degree in Consciousness Studies in 2012 from Goddard College, focusing on Thanatology and Exceptional Human Experiences. She is a recent graduate of Goddard College, obtaining her second Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, integrating Expressive Arts Therapy working with adolescents, teens, and adults. The next leg of her journey will be pursuing her PhD in research.





# What You Get Out of Me You Will Have to Pick Out of Chaos

This piece was inspired by my personal response to *Psyche's Veil: Psychotherapy, Fractals and Complexity* by Terry Marks-Tarlow and *Personal Mythology* by Feinstein & Krippner. It pulls heavily on ideas of chaos and complexity, randomness, inner story, and personal mythologies. The work combines artistic elements that were specifically generated for this project as well as older pieces that seemed to "fit" the pattern.

The final product is extremely referential with nods to mythology, shamanic traditions, popular culture, contemporary literature, tarot, and my own life emotions.

These are the elements I envisioned when creating the piece. It will interesting to see what connections other viewers make or take away from the work.

■ Becca Graffron | student, Goddard College





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#### **Announcements**

#### Russian Regional

We would like to inform the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association and friends about the Russian Regional Association Expressive Arts Therapy!

It was formed May 2, 2016 during a second visit of Paolo Knill and Margo Knill to Moscow. We had an opening ceremony with the blessings of Paolo Knill. The first President of the Russian Expressive Arts Association is Varvara V. Sidrova, PhD, REAT.

The 5th International Expressive Arts Therapy Festival took place in Moscow, May 27-29, 2016. This festival has the status of Regional Symposium of International Expressive Arts Therapy Association and had the theme, "Ecology of Soul."

More than 120 people attended the 28 master classes, plenary report sections, different evening activities such as Play Back Theater, music, and dance. In this recent Festival there were international participants from the USA (Sasha Brucker), UK (Kit Loring), India (Chandini Harlalka and Belinda Rego), and South Africa (Amy de Wet). Russian circle dances were alongside Indian cultural traditional arts, clowning and drama, Clinique work, and drawing on the water. Many participants shared feedback with very warm hearts filled with the creative atmosphere and the very high professional level master classes by Russian EXAT therapists.

Expressive Arts are now actively proliferating in Russia—a growing community of Russian Expressive Arts Therapists!

June 5-7, 2017 will be the 6th International Expressive Arts Therapy Festival in Russia! You are very welcome to come and join our community; bring your skills and soul to share with Russian souls in Moscow.

Please contact Varvara Sidrova, organizer of the Festival and President of the Expressive Arts Therapy Association Russia, for more information.

varvarasi@mail.ru | exatfest@gmail.ru | www.artstherapy.ru



#### **Announcements**

#### The Create Institute

We have changed our name from ISIS Canada to The Create Institute.

The name ISIS (International School of Interdisciplinary Studies) was first adopted in Switzerland for the expressive arts training program founded there by Paolo Knill and others. ISIS is also the name of the goddess who healed her brother, Osiris, after he had been dismembered by the evil god, Set. For us, the arts have always been healing medicines for human suffering, as well as expressions of celebration and joy.

We liked the international connection in the name ISIS Canada, and were glad when we later affiliated the program with the European Graduate School in Switzerland, so that our students could get advanced standing towards an MA degree from EGS.

The name CREATE (Center for Expressive Arts Therapy Education) spells out clearly our mission—to educate students in the therapeutic practice of the expressive arts. What better way to differentiate ourselves from the path of violence than to honor the human creative potential to respond to difficulty by bringing something new into being? Creativity is our birth-right—we are proud to wear it publicly.

#### Congratulations, Aleck!

Aleck Kwong, our Student & New Professionals Co-Chair, will soon be graduating from the University of Hong Kong. Congratulations from our Board on your achievement!

My dissertation title is "Efficacy of Expressive Arts Group Therapy on People Living with HIV/AIDS: A Case Study." I really hope that more people can understand people with HIV/AIDS and allocate more resources and services for them. —Aleck Kwong



#### A performance piece related to integration



I made this piece for my class Cognition and Learning. Each brain domain is represented by a puzzle piece. Finding objects that symbolize the domains of integration helped me understand each one to a greater extent. The puzzle pieces represent nine aspects of mind integration: consciousness (oval magnifiers), vertical (a ladder), memory (a glued-together teacup), narrative (a fragmented self-portrait), state (the United States), interpersonal (two figures holding hands), temporal (a watch), and transpirational (a figure holding the world).

We each often exhibit dis-integration of one or more of the aspects portrayed by the puzzle pieces. Through the process of acquiring proficiency I each of these domains, the puzzle is almost solved. This work has shown me the areas we work on to bring about an ever-deeper integration of mind.

■ Kelli Wagers | student, Goddard College



#### Cribs and Coffins

Cribs and coffins; wooden boxes which contain.

Here, in the crib, early days are fraught with danger: nails and tacks protrude from unlikely places. A broken self reflected in broken, laughing mirrors.

Baby's mouth gouged out; the damaged orifice stuffed with tools and pretty ribbons she attempts to vomit out.

Eyes cry blood-red tears.

Here the washing line upon which baby clothes, nappies, and baby's sexy underwear hang.

A crucifix,

reminder
of suffering
unto redemption,
attaches to one end of the crib.
A mobile of baby parts
hangs from it,
strung up for playing with;
for consumption.

Love/hope tampered with wrong time/place—

the place where hearts atrophy.



■ Christine Isherwood, BA Hons UK, Dip Assert Tr, VMT-R, singer/ songwriter is director of the Voice Movement Therapy Training, Singing the Psyche, has taught trainings in Europe and USA. She has lectured and taught at Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts, and the International School of Interdisciplinary Studies, Canada. Christine is currently a graduate student at Goddard College completing her Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a concentration in Expressive Therapy.

The title
of this
piece is
"In
Preparation
for
Life
or
Death,"

created for: Theory and Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapies.







# Expressive Arts in the World by Kathleen Horne, MA, LMHC, REACE

Expressive Arts is work that people are hungry for. It is work that the world needs. It embraces the power of the imagination and asks that we bring our whole selves, our best selves, to our lives, to those we serve, and to the earth itself. Expressive Arts is all about engaging and following the threads of creativity, in service of wellness, healing, wholeness, connection, community, and social change.

Expressive Arts is also the work that is grounded in a spirit of generosity and in the power of the circle. It is not unusual to hear new students declare that they have "found their tribe."

The power of the practice assumes a spirit of sharing, of community, of connection and belonging, of engagement with the universal language of the arts.

As co-founder and core faculty of a training institute, my heart opens wide each April when we teach our course intensive: Expressive Arts in the World.

My partners—Victoria Domenichell-Anderson and Tamara Teeter Knapp—and myself invite guest presenters, pioneers and practitioners from around the world, to share a glimpse of their work with our students, and I am always amazed at the magic that happens—for our students, for the guest presenters, and for us as faculty. Since many of the presentations are via Skype, the beautiful connections that are forged are all the more remarkable.

We taught this class in April 2016 and witnessed and engaged in the healing power of this work as it brought light and hope into the lives of isolated seniors in rural Ontario, to families impacted by cancer here in Florida, to human trafficking survivors in Nepal, to at-risk pregnant women, and more. We opened our voices, our hearts, our senses, and our imaginations. By the time our students take this class they have engaged in some deep, personal work, learned the history of the field, have a working knowledge of some of the key approaches and foundations, and know the basic skills of facilitation and designing experiences. In this intensive we strive to expand their vision by exposing them to the global scope of expressive arts practice, and the myriad forms this work can take.

We look to our worldwide and local network of colleagues, and we ask for help. We are amazed at what happens in this incredible weekend! This year—our fifth time teaching this intensive—Stephanie Heidemann, Julia Riley, Deborah McKeever, and Patricia Manning joined us live in the studio and Markus Scott-Alexander, Fiona Chang, Fay Wilkinson, Chandidi Harlalka, and Belinda Rego guided and shared with us via Skype. Gloria Simoneaux sent us videos and inspiration. By "traveling" to India, Hong Kong, rural Ontario, Edmonton, and Nepal as well as learning from the vital Expressive Arts community right here in our own area, our students were enriched, inspired, and grateful.

All who participated in this intensive had the amazing opportunity to transcend borders, cultures, language, and challenging life situations



through live presentations—both in person and via Skype—from India, Canada, Hong Kong and Nepal. This wonderful experiential learning process provided the opportunity to expand both personally and professionally through the universality of expressive arts. - Patricia Manning, RN, BSN

**Julia Riley's** presentation on *Expressive Arts in End-of-Life Care* brought us into intimate connection as we traced one another's hands and shared stories from our lives. The arts offer a rich venue for legacy work and for family support at end-of-life, and Julia's wisdom and vast experience were gratefully received by our students.

**Fiona Chang,** founder of Expressive Arts Hong Kong, facilitated an Imaginative Tea Ceremony of mindfulness, reflection, and intention setting and shared her perspectives on expressive arts practice in Asia. Fiona blends Chinese metaphors, mindfulness, and traditional rituals into the western model of expressive arts therapy to actualize the self-healing potential of each individual.

**Stephanie Heidemann,** creator of *Authentic Voicework*, invited us to paint a collaborative land-scape with our voices. Eyes closed, our vocal sounds filled the room and we could each "see" the landscape we were creating. The purity and interaction of our voices was deeply moving. This modality empowers the authentic self through the voice, unravels fear, and invites new creative freedom.

**Deborah McKeever's** subject was Expressive Arts in a Mental Health Setting. She brought examples of client artwork and led us in making innovative "book puppets." We brought our newly created puppet personalities to the circle and she facilitated a group process—as she would do with her clients in a mental health setting at Centerstone. Speaking as the puppet means "one degree of separation" and easier self-disclosure. It was a lot of fun, too, and how wonderful it is to bring fun into mental health treatment.

One of the pioneers of the field, Markus Scott-Alexander, led us in a body-based expressive arts workshop via Skype from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, home of his training program, World Arts Organization. Markus is senior faculty at European Graduate School. In some very powerful Dance Theatre work, he assisted us in exploring presence, nurture, being reachable, and more. Looking over the notes from his workshop, this phrase stands out: "In expressive arts, we learn to live ordinary lives in an extraordinary way."

Fay Wilkinson delighted and inspired us as she Skyped in from her *Creative Cocoon* studio in Eagle Lake, Ontario, Canada. Her *Visible Voices* video will move you, as it did us, and her *Open Studio* project is such a wonderful example of the inclusiveness of the arts. The scope of Fay's work is quite remarkable, and we love having her with us!

**Patricia Manning** brings expressive arts into her work as a childbirth educator with at-risk pregnant mothers, providing these women with an opportunity to deepen and strengthen their relationships with their unborn baby. Patricia, who is also our Healthcare Liaison, recently brought an expressive arts process—celebrating interconnectedness—to the American Holistic Nurses Association conference.

Chandini Harlalka and Belinda Rego joined us from Bangalore, India. I first met these two ladies in Ghana as part of Kate Donohue's 2014 Expressive Arts Journey to Ghana and reconnected wit them at the 2015 IEATA Conference in Hong Kong. Connections spanning continents! Their presentation which was



titled, Rangoli—Threshold Meditations, brought exquisite beauty and contemplative presence into the final days of our intensive. Drawing upon the traditional arts of India and weaving them into expressive arts practice, Chand and Belinda guided us with loving presence to make traditional patterns with sand, embellish them with flowers and leaves, and then release our creations and our intentions back to Mother Earth.

Gloria Simoneaux's international work with Harambee Arts brings expressive arts to provide healing and empowerment for survivors of human trafficking in Nepal. This short video from Kenya and Nepal will inspire you! Although Gloria wasn't able to be in the studio with us, we felt the spirit of her presence and her profound work.







I felt like I had truly taken a journey around the world. Each presenter not only shared their rich knowledge and specialization, but also facilitated an experience for us so that our class had an international series of expressive arts practices over our four days in Sarasota. I felt so filled with wisdom and inspiration from the array of globally recognized facilitators! The weekend truly enriched and sparked an amazing excitement in joining the expressive arts facilitation community. I can't imagine a more expansive global exposure to expressive arts. A true blessing!

Dana Kuehn, MS, LMHC, LPC

On the Friday evening of the intensive we facilitated some collaborative community art at the Towles Court Art Walk, engaging gallery visitors in art-making. Even making a mark on the visual art piece can be intimadating if you believe yourself to be "not an artist," and learning to facilitate others as they rediscover their creative self is a heart-opening experience. The students did a fantastic job!

During the art walk I was able to experience a profound moment with a gentleman who worked on the community mandala. I was able to be fully present for him as he made his pattern around the circle. He was moved by the experience and I was moved that something so simple as sitting with him and turning his paper so he could continue his work had impacted him so deeply. We both left changed from that experience and I will never forget it. - Liz

A signature component of all our training sessions is what we call a "visual arts container." Each student works on a piece of art throughout the weekend in response to each process with which they engage. For this class the visual arts container is a "map" of sorts. After each presentation the students have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned and add to their map. At the end of the weekend they have a tan-



gible piece they can take with them that holds the energy and learning from everything they have experienced during the intensive.

I found the map container to be the perfect metaphor for this class. Each time we connected with someone from the global or local community, the map gave me a chance to reflect. It's a strong visual recollection of the experience and I'm still mining insights from my map. More than anything I was blown away to see the strong connection Expressive Arts Florida Institute has with the global expressive arts community and how willing all the presenters were to share their experiences and time. Thanks to all.

Debra

We all, students, faculty, and guest presenters, left this class experience with open hearts and expanded vision. The light of this work shines into the lives of individuals in therapy, patients in a healthcare setting, people at the end of life, community members looking for a safe place to explore their creativity. It addresses an array of social issues such as human trafficking, isolation of seniors, and the loss of indigenous arts in modern culture.

I didn't find Expressive Arts until I was in my forties. I am deeply grateful for the path it has opened for me over the past 25 years. It has been, and continues to be, both an inward journey back to my authentic self and an outward journey spanning cultures. It is a path that embraces our uniqueness and our connections—a path of interdependence.





#### Planning the Second Person Centered Expressive Arts Symposium by Lorena Fernandez, PhD



Planning the Second Person Centered Expressive Arts symposium began the last day of the first symposium, when, with the support of several amazing person-centered expressive arts sisters (sisters through passion for this work!) who encouraged us, my dear friend Janet Rasmussen and I said we would do it, one sunny afternoon in Sonoma, California.

It began that very day when I reserved the same week for two years later, in the ranch where we were staying. A few days later we began telling our community, through email letters and social media that the second symposium was coming!!

Planning the Second Person Centered Expressive Arts Symposium was a learning curve, about the nuts and bolts of event-planning for an international community that traveled to Sonoma, California from South Korea, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, England, Mexico, Austria, Hawaii, Texas, Minnesota, California, Saint Louis, New Mexico, and other places. Technology was big in planning the symposium, We used Email, Skype, FaceTime, Facebook, PayPal, cell phones, online insurance service, wire-transfers, the postal service, Constant Contact, MailChimp, MS word and spreadsheets. Thousands of emails were exchanged, hundreds of payments were received, at different times, through different avenues, they were put on spreadsheets, revised, doubled-checked and confirmed. Food requirements were collected, and revised, (Vegan, vegetarians, omnivores, glutenfree, dairy-free.) Birthday celebrations were planned.

Strategic cabin arrangements were made; juggling the set format of the cabins at the ranch, with the friendships and preferences of the participants.

Planning the symposium helped me defeat irrational fears, like the fear that someone would ar-

rive and there would not be a bed for them, even when we triple-checked to avoid that scenario. Or the fear that nobody would come. Instead we ended up at full capacity at the ranch, and some participants



even stayed in nearby lodgings! Or the fear that the manager of the beautiful wine country ranch where many of us have been meeting for years would not give us good lodgings, delicious, healthy foods three times per day, (including desserts) every single day. But they did! Or the fear that at the last minute we would have problems transporting the art materials to the ranch, because both Janet and I live out of state, and without art materials we could not do the symposium. But we had help. We had art materials. We had the symposium.

Planning the Second Person Centered Expressive Arts Symposium was an emotional roller-coaster, because nine months before the symposium, our dear founder, friend and teacher Dr. Natalie Rogers left her physical form, and even when she forever lives in our hearts, and her wisdom we seek that it should forever live in our intellects, our bodies and our spirits, and her books live in our libraries, it is very hard to go to California and not see her loving face, and not hear her caring voice.



While planning the Second Person Centered Arts symposium with my dear friend Dr. Janet Rasmussen, we met once per month, or so, for two years on either Skype or Facetime, after heartfelt and always fun sharing about our lives, we worked together diligently, on the confusing, rugged and fun parts of the process. And so, the symposium happened!

At the end of the symposium, seeing the joy in people's faces and hearing about their gratitude for our work made this process not just a learning opportunity but a wonderful, deeply bonding experience for us two, and for our global Person Centered Expressive Arts Community.

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#### Human Slavery and Bondage of the Human Mind by Dr. Ericha Scott

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I can remember the first time I heard about human bondage. It was in 1987 when I was working as a new counselor in Park Cities near Highland Park, a Dallas community I call "The Malibu of Texas." An extremely bright, middle-aged client with a successful career as a lawyer began weeping in a hysterical panic. Shaking and covering her face she said in a child's voice, "And, and, and...he put a loaded gun in my vagina and said he would kill me if I screamed or told anyone." At that moment the oppressed scream from 45 years earlier emerged with so much childlike angst I had to concentrate in order to suppress the urge to burst into tears along with her.

A few months before, Renee Fredrickson, PhD, the co-owner of the counseling center where I worked, had warned me that I would hear about bondage. As she spoke, my mind drifted to consensual adult pseudo-sadomasochism. Renee, sensing that I had missed the point, looked me in the eye and said, "Of children." I swallowed and said quietly, "Oh." Even then I truly had no idea what she meant.

How can it be that one of the most wealthy, prestigious, "proper" Christian neighborhoods in the world harbors this kind of criminal activity outside our sight and awareness? And what does bondage mean when it involves the mind, not just the body? In the book, *Incest-Related Syndromes of Adult Psychotherapy*, Dr. Richard Kluft reveals a conversation he had while he was a young soldier stationed in Italy with a man in a



bar who revealed to Richard that he was a pimp. The pimp volunteered, in a braggart sort of way, that the best prostitutes, like the two sitting with him, had been initiated to the world of sex by their fathers.

Yes, this is very shocking, but in fact, research supports the pimp's comment. The large majority of prostitutes, as many as 80%, were sexually abused as young children, not necessarily by their fathers, but by a much older and often trusted person. Even without physical restraints, the mental bondage of early child-hood sexual abuse enslaves the mind.

Many prostitutes acknowledge that the early abuse has restricted their life choices but they do not feel as if they have alternative options to prostitution due to such correlational problems as lack of education, self-esteem, early pregnancy, poverty or addiction.

I have heard prostitutes, a few were my clients, vehemently deny that prostitution as a career choice was associated with their early childhood abuse. Once, a very sophisticated call girl, when disclosing her profession for the first time, explained to me, insisted really, that she was in charge, not the Johns. While she was speaking, I could not help but notice the lack of congruence between her words and dress. She wore tiny pink plastic barrettes in her hair, black patent leather Mary Jane shoes that pointed inward as she fidgeted, and a plunging and very revealing decolletage.

The chains of her early trauma seemed to have kept her mind stuck in childhood even though her body was aging. If this is so, then how is prostitution a choice? The long-term effects of early childhood sexual abuse, which happens long before the body, mind, and hormones are ready to be sexual, limits an adult's capacity for choice and undermines escape as if time has warped and stood still at age five. This is why crimes against children can happen and adults can become victims of human slavery and we do not see it. The prison bars of the mind are invisible, but more powerful than steel.

According to the Director of Homeland Security in Ventura County, California (2013), San Diego now has the worst human slavery problem of any city in the world. In the United States, the Human Slavery problem is the second fastest growing illegal industry in our country. It is easy to dismiss this statistic as an issue of children and women from the other side of the U.S. border, but in fact about 70% of the victims were born in the United States.

According to the Global Slavery Index, there are 29.8 million people enslaved in some form of bondage around the world. Government statistics are clear that victims come from all socio-economic groups, so education, wealth, and privilege do not always provide the protection we wish for our children.

If one person is enslaved, then, morally and spiritually, none of us are free.

Please take action by calling The National Human Trafficking Hotline (answered 24/7) at 888.373.7888 or contribute to Freedom Road Project. For information and awareness events on human trafficking and the many ways you can contribute please visit www.FreedomRoadProject.org or call 310.341.7340.

For questions about this article please contact Dr. Ericha Scott, licensed as E. Hitchcock Scott, PhD, LPCC917 at 310.880.9761 or visit her website at www.artspeaksoutloud.com | www.facebook.com/ErichaScottPhD | linkedin.com/in/ehitchcockscott





# Planetary Dance: A Ritual Dance for Peace by Maria Luisa Diaz, Tamalpa Institute

I feel that a healthy community is one that can find a way to create together. The Planetary Dance aims to awaken people and mobilize them to take concrete actions toward the social, political, and environmental changes we need.

Anna Halprin Co-Founder Tamalpa Institute www.annahalprin.org

The *Planetary Dance* is a dance with a purpose—an intention. It is a dance for peace among people and peace with the Earth. Originated by Anna Halprin, and with the advice of Huichol Shaman, Don Jose Mitsuwa, the *Planetary Dance* embraces the needs for healing and peace within different communities throughout the world. The dance, originated and performed each year on Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County, California since 1979, has spread to communities in Europe, Australia, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa as well as throughout the United States. People from many cultures, people of all ages and abilities from young children to seniors have participated in this dance.

You may remember the *Planetary Dance* as the closing ritual of IEATA's 9th Biennial conference hosted by TAE in Lima, Peru. That was the first time that the conference was hosted in a Latin American country. The theme of the conference was "Living with Uncertainty: Multiplicity as a Pathway through Expressive Arts." In this dance we learned about "Ayni," which is a Quechua word that refers to reciprocity and well-being. Two Tamalpa practitioners, Peruvian Claudia Cuentas and Argentinian Rosario Sammartino, led the dance whil Sikouris, traditional Andean musicians, were hold the center—the pulse. Our common intention was protecting the native seeds and independent food sources. The South American body gave this conference a unique rhythm, allowing for a multicultural dance to emerge.

The *Planetary Dance* is a way of rediscovering the lost language of dance. It is not the expropriation of traditional ritual dance. Rather, the Planetary Dance is a new creation that utilizes the principles of ritual dance in order to create something that has the power of the old dances but grows out of and addresses our current reality.

On June 5, 2016, some 200 people gathered to celebrate the 36th Annual Planetary Dance on Mt. Tamalpais. The day began with the traditional sunrise ceremony and walk around the peak of Mt. Tam led by members of the Planetary Dance Committee, Marguerite Etemad and James Nixon. It was a morning filled with inspiring offerings such as Jahan Khalinghi's sung poem - www.youtube.com/watch?v=FU6EsLyd2Y8 - sung by recent Tamalpa ArtCorps scholarship recipient, Tariro Mavondo, who later explained that this song "was a cry for peace for Zimbabwe." A highlight of both the sunrise ceremony and the main event in Santos Meadow was this song - www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQLVXFnBPSc - created by Juztino Panella, in collaboration with the Justice Arts Collective from Chabot College in Hayward, to honor Oscar Grant and all of



the other people of color whose lives have been taken by police violence.

At the main event, after Anna prepared people for the Earth Run, participants joined in a procession led by Barbara Borden, Jahan Khalighi, and Dohee Lee, moving to the field and creating the outer circle for the run. One by one, people in the outer circle declared their intentions and joined the dance by running, walking, or simply standing in a series of concentric circles until the whole field became a moving mandala filled with adults and children of diverse ethnicities, ages, and abilities.



Daria Halprin took an active role in the leadership, welcoming participants, orchestrating the run, and bringing it to an inspiring conclusion. "At the heart of the *Planetary Dance* is the Earth Run, a simple dance that everybody can do," explained Daria Halprin. "As we all move to the steady heartbeat of the drums, we become one collective body. Each step upon the Earth becomes a call for peace."

Special acknowledgement goes to Anna Halprin's efforts to take the *Planetary Dance* worldwide and to the Planetary Dance Committee who, for decades, has organized and supported the event on Mt. Tamalpais. In addition, we thank Eva and John Vigran for their support and remarkable photographs.

This year's event was a wonderful realization of many of our hopes for the *Planetary Dance*. Tamalpa is honored to follow in the footsteps and grow the tradition!



When enough people move together in a common pulse with a common purpose, an amazing force takes over...a power that can renew, inspire, teach, create, and heal.

- Anna Halprin



# The 1st International Person-Centered Expressive Arts Symposium: Creative Connection® Beyond Words by Fiona Chang



How precious for our PCEA practitioners around the world to get together and share our work! Thank you, Judith Balian and Anin Utigaard, for your great effort in organizing the 1st International Person-Centered Expressive Arts (PCEA) Symposium!

The PCEA Symposium was conducted at the Westerbeke Ranch in Sonoma, California. It's a wonderful retreat site with an abundance of lively and nourishing spirit from nature. Dr. Natalie Rogers, the founder of PCEA, has been co-teaching with different faculty members for several certificate programs there. The Ranch feels like our home that embodies the creative journey of PCEA learning as a person, an artist, and a therapist/practitioner.

It was the first international PCEA symposium ever. Natalie rang the Tingsha meditation bell to kick-off the event and welcome our creative connection journey. After viewing her video on Creative Connection®, thirteen faculty members took turns telling their stories of experiencing PCEA and founding training programs in Japan, Argentina, South Korea, Hong Kong, as well as workshops in many other countries. I was touched by each unique voyage. I also shared my own pathway of studying PCEA in the US and then pioneering expressive arts therapy training in Hong Kong. It's amazing that the Person-Centered philosophy and the integrated concepts of different art modalities are very much in line with Chinese culture.

The symposium was very different from other conferences and training events. We did not have a schedule beforehand. In the morning on the second day, a classic community meeting was facilitated by Shellee Davis and Mukti Khanna to allow all voices to be heard, shaping a collaborative event. A variety of events emerged including morning exercise and chanting, expressive arts workshops, creative adventures in nature, art/music/dance jam, personal creative time, PowerPoint presentations, research sessions, discussion groups on special topics, reading corners, news board, and closing ritual.

We were 57 participants in total. Most came from the US, one from the UK, one from Argentina, one from Canada, two from Hong Kong, three from Japan, and seven from South Korea. We sometimes spoke different languages to honor our own culture and respect each other on equal footing. I was thrilled, being with Natalie and our folks who share a united belief in PCEA. We are a supportive community practicing genuineness, compassion, and unconditional positive regard in the expressive arts field for healing, therapy, personal and social transformation. We feel like a family.



We are shaping the vision of spreading and watering good PCEA seeds around us. We treasure the profound of a Person-Centered approach in empowering people to create, to express, to speak, to heal, to transform and grow. Arts are much more than medicine. They are unfolding evidence of the healing potential of creativity alive in each individual. A Person-Centered approach creates a space for this to happen with respect and compassion for every individual.

We are now co-creating different platforms for making connections with each of you. Recently we set up a "PCEA Circle" on IEATA's MemberClicks. You can log in to the IEATA Membership Management System and join us. You can also check out our Facebook page, "Person-centered Expressive Arts Therapy." Judith Balian and Marta Ockuly-Davidovich are now setting up our new PCEA website.

Let's stay connected and support PCEA practice.





# Shakti Samuha (SS) & Harambee Arts Partnership presented by Sarala Tamang



The partnership of Shakti Samuha and Harambee Arts has been running Expressive Arts Exercises projects with survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence since 2012. The main objective of this project is to heal the trauma and anxieties of survivors through the arts, and to discover their inner gifts and identity.

Shakti Samuha is the first organization in Nepal to be established and run by survivors of trafficking. Since 1996, Shakti Samuha has been organizing and empowering returning trafficking survivors.

In the African language of Kiswahili, Harambee means, "Let's Pull Together." All around the world, using the arts, Harambee Arts is transforming and improving the lives of women and children who have suffered the devastating effects of trauma caused by violence, illness, poverty, trafficking and other crises. "My work draws from three sources—a profound love and respect for children, an understanding of the powerful benefits of art and play as healing tools and a belief that everyone has something of value to contribute to society and deserves an opportunity to give back." —Gloria Simoneaux, Founder of Harambee Arts, Let's Pull Together.

#### Training:

After providing TOT to the seven women of Shakti Samuha, trainers were mobilized to facilitate the workshops and orientation. Refresher trainings by the facilitator of Harambee Arts was provided to enhance the skills of facilitators under the Harambee Arts project through the Director and Founder of Harambee Arts, Gloria Simoneaux, empowering seven women at the national and international levels.

The Trauma Resource Institute had organized Community Resiliency Model (CRM) training with the objective to train the trainers. During the training, six skills of CRM were received for the community resiliency: Tracking; Resourcing & Resource Intensification; Grounding; Gestures & Movements; Help Now; Shift & Stay.

After CRM training, Shakti Samuha organized Expressive Arts Exercises throughout the Harambee Arts Project with the survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence, using healing processes through the arts and CRM methods.

Tracking, Resourcing, and Grounding was very helpful during the workshop. It helped participants to come out from the stress and brought them balance by taking back in the previous situation at resilience zone.

#### Hong Kong:

Through the huge invitation from the IEATA Conference Committee, and with funding support from the Charity Concert Committee of the Art in Hospital, women facilitators of Shakti Samuha, under Harambee



Arts Project, got the opportunity to participate as presenters during the conference.

Fiona Chang, Meko Ng, and Beatrice Yip came to Nepal from Hong Kong in 2013 to participate in a 5-day workshop on Expressive Arts Exercises under Harambee Arts Project and seven facilitators facilitated the workshop. Through this collaboration, seven women were invited from the IEATA conference to be presenters from Nepal with the objective to teach and to gain knowledge, and to share our deep experience with the participants.



On October 3, 2015, seven women of Harambee Arts—facilitators—left Nepal for Hong Kong. The team arrived in Hong Kong and was welcomed by Fiona Chang and Beatrice Yip. The team was taken to site visits by volunteers full of affection, and gained information about the Buddha temple and museum, historical customs, and the life story of Bruce Lee. It was a refreshing and informative visit that we enjoyed a lot.

During the pre-conference, our seven facilitators led several expressive arts exercises and shared personal stories and experiences. The CRM training methods helped to facilitate at the conference. Time tracking, Grounding, and Resourcing were applied to several arts exercises. The pre-conference boosted participants to learn more about self-healing processes through the arts exercises and CRM methods. During the Tree of Life exercise, participants received information about grounding themselves through the roots of a tree, making them stronger from the inside.

The first day of the conference, the Harambee Arts team from Shakti Samuha welcomed participants by performing a dance on anti-trafficking issues. Scenarios of human trafficking in Nepal were included in the performance. During the dance, most of the participants became emotional and couldn't stop their tears. Encouragement from everyone was received for the continued campaign against human trafficking. After the performance, a presentation regarding Shakti Samuha and Harambee Arts work was given, including the objectives, completed work, sustainable model, and future plan. Participants were excited to know more about the work and plans of Harambee Arts Project in Nepal. At the conclusion, Maya Tamang shared her personal story about how Harambee Arts changed her life. It was so touching and an inspiration to oth-



ers. Participants gave large applause for the deeds of Shakti Samuha and Harambee Arts.

It was the dream of seven facilitators of Harambee Arts Project to attend IEATA's conference together in Hong Kong. The dream came true through the hard and empathetic work of the entire team of IEATA, Gloria, Susan, and the rest of the supportive hands who played vital roles to make it possible. Shakti Samuha is so thankful to the entire supportive hands for their team and individual initiation to support seven women Harambee Arts Nepali team.

It was a huge opportunity to participate in the international platform, being a presenter from Nepal, and to share about the arts and healing exercises with the survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence, along with personal stories and experiences.

#### Learning:

Innovative ways to spread strength, power, and positive thoughts between each other were deeply learned and acknowledged for further work in Nepal through Harambee Arts Project. For example, during the preconference one of the participants drew a bird and scattered glitter from her bird to everyone's head and gave a positive shower. It was so powerful and spiritual.

From the Arts Journaling for Social Change session, we learned to make a journal book as our courage in life and its importance.

Through the stories of dance performers, they shared personal stories regarding the domestic violence faced by a girl and demonstrated in an innovative way—through making sounds with their feet on the stage and amazing body steps. This was fabulous for social awareness.

The team of Harambee Arts from Nepal learned healing processes through several different practices from different countries such as by music, arts, singing, meditations, and work with breast cancer patients.



Sarala Tamang, Nepal Program Team Leader, is a trained Social Worker, an Expressive Arts Facilitator, and Project Officer for Shakti Samuha, the first anti-trafficking organization in Nepal. She has deep compassion for serving survivors of trauma. Her goal is to develop her skills as a humanitarian on a global platform.



# Life. . . Set Path or Possibilities by Julia Balzer Riley, RN, MN, AHN-BC, REACE



In a 3-hour University of Tampa nursing elective, Expressive Arts in Healing: Health Promotion through the Arts, undergraduate students complete an "Arts in Healing" assignment using expressive arts with clients or as part of their own journey of self-discovery. This article illustrates an Arts in Healing project of a senior nursing student who was an Iraq war veteran. He created a set of three paintings (above) representing life before, during, and after Iraq to express his emotions, outlook on life, and paths he saw open to him in each era. He used neon orange tape to trace paths.

The Project: I chose to reflect on how my life changed during and after my experiences in Iraq. The first portion chronicles the life-altering events. The second portion describes the three specific pieces of art [arranged together here as a photo collage of the student's three pieces] and what they represent.

#### Part 1: The Story of Life-altering Events

Life tends to be a process, a path of events that shapes who we are and how we become. These paths tend to be linear with various pathways that represent our choices in life and how those choices can shift the pathway. Some people have more choices in life than others, more options. The number of options through life are influenced by the choices we made previously and the education we receive. The path life tends to take, regardless of decisions made, is somewhat predictable. We all grow and mature at a relatively set rate which allows for the interpretation of what we learned and the integration of that into our mindset. There comes a time in some people's lives where movement along that path takes a sudden and drastic increase in speed. We go from maturing slowly to being forced into a situation that requires us to mature fast in order to survive. For me that day came on 1 Feb 2003, the day I shipped to Iraq.

Growing up had been very normal for me. I got into my fair share of trouble and did all kinds of stupid things but overall I was a happy kid who had a bad attitude. I loved life but I loved getting into trouble more. I could take any situation and turn it into an "adverse event." I did not respect authority and I did not care about the impact of my actions. I spent most of high school getting into trouble or getting away with things for which I should have been punished. I wasn't worried about where my life was headed and I sure as hell didn't care about how I affected others. I did have one love and that was the military. It was the only thing I took seriously and I knew my life was destined to begin in the military.



I got off the plane in Kuwait in camp Arifjan where we assembled our gear and headed for BPW (Beach Point West) where our mission was to assemble the largest wartime pipeline ever in order to provide fuel to the invading forces as they moved across Kuwait to Baghdad. The mission was simple enough, however the toll it would take was not. I got off the plane an 18 year old boy and two days later woke up a 35 year old man. The first time we heard, "GAS, GAS, GAS over the line," training was the only thing to respond. We suited up to MOPP level 4\* and rushed to the perimeter. In my mind I kept trying to think of all the signs of the various gases that could be used against us and what we had to do if we were to survive. The atropine sat in my pocket, a terrible reminder of how little protection we really had out here, 60 miles from the border, in a 15-man unit with no support. This would be the first of hundreds of encounters where I literally watched my life flash before my eyes. All I could do was sit back and pray I would one day get off another plane to see the country I was fighting so hard to protect. My time in Iraq was a terror-filled experience where hate and anger began to rule my life. I had such an intense hatred for the Muslim culture, the people and all they represented. They were killing fellow soldiers and all for some backwards interpretation of their religion. The blackness engulfed me, changing how I saw life and other people and how I responded to those people. As time passed I began to gain control of these feelings and eventually was able to suppress them enough to function in a semi-normal manner. Iraq made me grow up. It made me see that feelings I had, regardless of how strong they were, could not be my defining characteristic. It had to be my resolve to do the right thing, to be the man I knew I must. Iraq changed me, in ways that will haunt me forever and in ways that made me the man I am today.

I stepped off the bus in Fort Lee, VA, in 20-degree weather after flying home from 130-degree heat. The shock was astounding as I tried to not shake. I was home. I had made it through something no one should ever have to experience, and yet I knew that without it I would never be the person I knew I could be. A year later I left military service looking for a new way to serve. I found my way to nursing, quite the opposite of what I had been doing before. My outlook on life had changed quite a bit as well. I slowly lost that anger and hatred (or in some cases controlled it so well it seemed to have been lost) and began to see life for the happy event that it is. I grew up in the desert and came to understand how important decisions I make are and how they will affect me for years to come. I stepped off the plane in Iraq with few paths in front of me and stepped off another plane into a country I love with the whole world open to me. My joy in life returned, my happiness, my respect, my pride. Today I embrace all the world has to offer...today my paths branch into infinite possibilities.

\*(Mission Oriented Protective Process Level 4: Over-garment; over boots; mask and hood; and gloves.)

#### Part 2: The Art and What it Represents

These three pictures represent my life before, during, and after Iraq. We start with the person I was...

Before the military and Iraq I saw life through different eyes, eyes with blinders. I only saw a small portion of the world and truthfully that portion of the world was very safe for me. It was ironic that even within that safety I found myself experiencing feelings of anger, despair, disdain, but also more normal feelings of happiness, humor, and excitement. I was what many would describe as a normal teenager but not as normal as many would think. I was set down a path of self-destruction, one that I had put myself on and one that I consistently pushed myself along. The colors in this piece reflect those feelings: black for disdain and depres-



sion; red for anger; blue and green for sadness; yellow and orange for happiness, hope, laughter, pride, euphoria, and the hundred other positive emotions teenagers have. You see that the majority of this is covered by those darker colors. This was a hard and challenging time for me. Also you see the bright orange lines running throughout, some with branches, but notice there are not many branches. These lines represent the options I felt I had in life, the things I could do: go to college; go into the Army; or go to work in a Joe Shmoe kind of job. The lines don't branch often because at this point in my life I was limited either by my own lack of motivation, lack of desire to further my education, or a severe lack of experience.

#### Then came the military...

There are few colors in this piece, only two in fact. My time in Iraq had me experience many feelings but mainly focused on two, anger and disdain (or hatred. I was in a country where I was told who my enemy was, what they were fighting for, and why. I was told not to trust anyone. It was always a life or death situation, mine or theirs. I came to a world I knew nothing about and was forced to face people who in my understanding were stupid, ignorant people who spent all their lives killing or planning to kill others. I spent many nights wondering if I would be coming home or if this godforsaken desert would be the last thing I saw. For that I coped in the only way I could. I became angry and focused on my anger for the people who had forced me to this country. I went where I was told, and did what I was told.

Leaving that country would prove to be one of the happiest days in my life.

In my final piece you see the colors actually shift from the same dark colors you have seen before towards brighter colors. This is the most important of all the pieces I have done because it is with this piece you notice the shift from that dark, destructive nature towards a happier, more understanding nature. The time I spent in Iraq woke up the side of me that knew I had to make a difference, the side that knew I had so much more in life to offer than death and destruction. It took many months but as I looked back on the things I survived, the times I should have been seriously injured yet walked away completely unharmed, I began to see that I was looking at life wrong. I had to stop focusing on the negative things in life and see the positive ones, the things that make living and fighting worth it. As this understanding came to me so did a lighter, happier feeling towards life. I came to appreciate the things I had and to embrace life as it came to me. Gone were the days where anger and hatred were the only feelings I knew. Now it is rare to see me angry or even sad. With all these changes in my perspective on life came more options. No longer was I destined to follow one of the three main paths, paths that had few branches and even fewer opportunities. Here was a path filled with branches, filled with opportunities, each richer than the last. My experience in Iraq made me the man I am today, a man with the drive and determination to be anything he wants.

Faculty Commentary: Much of the language of the project are the student's with a few changes for clarification. Throughout the semester, this student presented as the class clown, sometimes disruptive but well-liked. At his presentation, his classmates were silent and spell-bound, as was I. There were many tears in this sacred environment where his journey was honored and appreciated.

He wrote that keeping a mixed media journal throughout the semester, dreaded at first as just another time-consuming assignment, became: a tool for relaxation and self-soothing in his battle with ADHD; a better way to clear his mind and control his thoughts than counseling and medication; and an inspiration to offer the expressive arts to clients who are overwhelmed.



My work as a Registered Expressive Arts Consultant and Educator is informed by my education and work as a holistic nurse educator. This course is part of meaning-making in my own journey to promote self-care for nursing students and nurses. In holistic nursing we say that holistic self-care of the nurse is the foundation of holistic nursing. Being fond of pithy prose, I say, "We cannot give what we do not have." Expressive arts invitations offer processes for self-discovery, for wellness, and for healing. Sometimes a student touches my life and affirms that this work is part of my legacy. The student whose work this article recounts is one such student.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**



Julia Balzer Riley, RN, MN, Advanced Practice, Board Certified Holistic Nurse, REACE. Julia was part of the Pilot program for REACE registration, received the designation in 2007, and is a reviewr of REACE applications. She is the author of Art in Small Spaces...art at the bedside, a guidebook, 2012; Communication in Nursing, Elsevier, 2016, 8th edition; and From the Heart to the Hands...keys to successful healthcaring connections, a book of I-Thou moments of connection in nursing. Julia is an Adjunct Nurse Faculty member at the University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida; Faculty for Certified Sage-ing® Facilitators through Sage-ing® International; and taught in the Arts in

Healing Certificate Program at the Ringling College of Art and Design, Sarasota, Florida. Julia is President of Constant Source Seminars. Email: julia@constantsource.com

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# Global Art Project for Peace by Katherine Josten

The Global Art Project is an International Art Exchange for Peace. The mission of the Global Art Project is to joyously create a culture of peace through art. The Project celebrates diversity and multiculturalism while expressing the idea: We Are All One.

Here's how the project works: participants create a work of art in any medium, expressing their vision of global peace and goodwill. The art is displayed locally in each participant's community. Global Art Project then organizes an international exchange by matching participants—group-to-group and invidivual-to-individual. The exchange occurs biennially in April, resulting in thousands of people sending messages of Peace around the world at one time—visions of unity simultaneously encircle the Earth. The art is sent as a gift of global friendship and exhibited in the receiving community.

Participants may send documentation of the art created and of the people who came together to create art to the GAP Art Bank. Global Art Project exhibitions, books, slide presentations, and the GAP website give people an opportunity to experience visions of peace and unity created by individuals from diverse cultures around the world.

#### From the 2008 Project:



### Love and Peace to All Living Things

Women's Art Therapy Group with the direction of Jyoti Thomas Daylesford, Australia

"We are a group in rural Australia participating in the Global Art Project. Just letting you know we are absolutely loving working on this project. I work as an art therapist with a group of women suffering with depression and they have so embraced the task. As we work on our piece of art together there is a wonderful feeling of togetherness, easiness and creativity flowing and it's just feeling really special. Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to be a part of this fantastic, wonderful idea. Not only is it sending out peace but it also brings peace to those participating. Very special." - Jyoti Thomas

This group received two Medicine Necklaces from the Tucson Bear Circle Creative Cooperative. The necklaces have been used by the Art Therapy Group as part of their healing sessions.











#### From the 2016 Project:

#### Healing Art - Doodles

Community Connections Healing Workshop with the direction of Francoise Durham Moulin Cowichan Intercultural Society Duncan, BC Canada

Healing Art sprang to life as the brain child of C.I.S.'s (Cowichan Intercultural Society) Community Connections Coordinator, Francoise Moulin. Francoise's vision of Art as a healing medium has connected people in need of giving, or receiving, comfort and companionship. The word Doodles just happened one day as the natural evolution moniker of the group. Wednesday afternoons at Mill Bay's South Cowichan Library are a very enjoyable way to cement the friendships we have struck because of Healing Art.

Our latest creation has been the 2016 Global Art Project for Peace. We have produced a Doodle version of our vision of global peace and goodwill. If you look closely, you will find all sorts of creatures, human, animal, or other, all getting along seamlessly. You will discover French, English, and Spanish words and phrases. Let your imagination roam, let your eye wander off-focus and discover shapes unknown...

Our project will find its permanent home in Morocco as part of an exchange with our paired country. We are looking forward to receive their vision of Peace in our world.









### Middle Gate Mural Project, Newtown, CT by Susan E. Rosano, MA, REACE

I was contacted by the Middle Gate Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, to write a proposal to create nine painted murals with students and their families in an after school family support program. The school was interested in decorating the newly painted blank white walls of their large cafeteria. They wanted a project in which the entire school could participate; that showed, as a community, they are moving on from grief.

When the shooting tragedy happened in Sandy Hook, I volunteered to work with the community on any type of healing arts projects that were happening at the time. There were people from all over the country involved in those projects and initially I was never called to help. When this opportunity came up, I was very grateful to have been asked to be the lead artist for this project. Middle Gate School was one of the schools that took in students from Sandy Hook after the shootings.

In October of 2014, I was notified that my proposal was chosen by the school and they would be seeking grants for the project. Once the grant money was awarded, the project started in January of 2015. This project turned out to be the best thing I did all year!



The first part of the project involved creating themes for the murals and then designing the murals. The school wanted to use Newtown's Core Character Attributes as themes for each mural, which are: Friendship, Caring, Peace, Love, Hope, Respect, Kindness, Perseverance, and Citizenship.

Once the mural themes were established, I asked the art teacher, Jeanne Walter, to send me some student drawings related to each theme. When I received the student drawings, I was able to design each mural us-



ing student artworks as basic imagery. It wasn't easy for students to create images that represent each of those nine words, but they did a great job. From my end, those student drawings made it easy to put together a mural design that would shout each word as a way to live your life.

During the winter and spring of 2015, I commuted to Newtown, Connecticut, one day each week to work with Middle Gate Elementary School students and their families to paint the murals after school. February 10th was the first session of the school's Community Mural Project. All the mural backer boards had been delivered to the school before I got there. When I arrived each week, I drew the mural design on the backer board with pencil so the students and families would have a basic design to follow with lots of room to add their images and creative designs as the painting progressed.

The first week, I met with about 15 students and their family members to create the "Friendship" mural. As students and their family members stood around a table with what would be the first mural laid out before them, I explained I had already outlined a drawing and the words, "Be A Friend." The drawing showed people, tall and small, holding hands and smiling. The students, parents, and friends were all charged with painting in the mural. They did a great job!

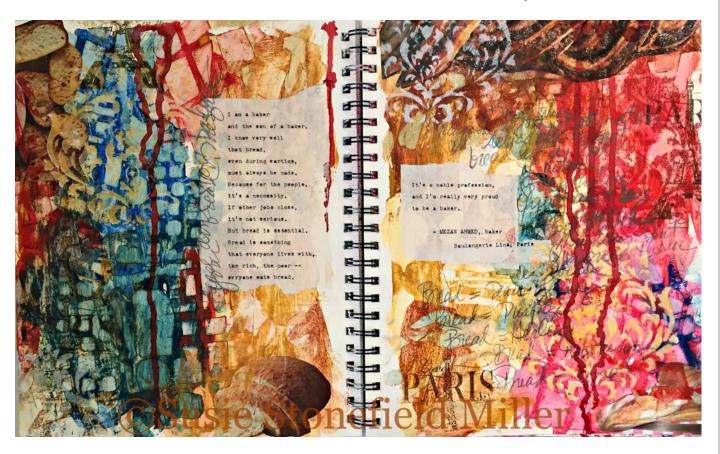
Each of the nine murals are now on display in the school's cafeteria. Seven of the murals are 4 by 5 feet, and two of the murals are 10 by 10 feet. I was told over 200 people had participated in painting on one of the murals during the 9-week session. The school, its students, and their families are very proud of the murals.



Susan E. Rosano, MA, REACE | Master Teaching Artist | www.newenglandexpressivearts.com



# Healing the World One Art Journal Page at a Time by Susie Stonefield Miller



Last November Paris was attacked by terrorists. The whole world, it seems, watched in horror as the news came in. My heart was at once broken and fearful. My husband, Mark, and I had made plans to visit Paris in the coming year and we wondered, would there be more violence? How would Paris recover?

As I drove to my studio to teach art journaling the next night, I listened to NPR and Robert Siegel's piece on the aftermath. He spoke about the day of mourning planned for the Monday following the attack and he talked, in depth, about a baker he had spoken with who had been in the center of the terrifying chaos. The gunfire had hit his shop yet no one had been harmed there. But other, more unfortunate people, had been murdered right outside his boulangerie. The baker, Ahmed Meziane, said that he'd thought about it and had decided that the would stay open that day, despite the bullets, the broken glass and the blood-shed. He said:

I am a baker and the son of a baker. I know very well that bread, even during wartime, must always be made. Because for the people, it's a necessity. If other jobs close, it's not serious. But bread is essential. Bread is something that everyone lives with, the rich, the poor—everyone eats bread. It's a noble profession, and I'm really very proud to be a baker.

I heard his words that night and they brought me to tears. I agreed with him, bread is essential. And I've also always believed that bread is one of those things that you can find in every culture. It's a unifier. It's a commonality amongst all peoples. And so, this baker really touched my heart that night with his bread/peace/love offering and he gave me some hope for Paris, and for humanity.

When I got to the studio I made a page in honor of him, with his words right on the page. I found images of bread from magazines and collaged them on. I used stencils of maps and flourishes. I even used a stamp of Paris that I had bought just that day for the studio. And I used red ink drips down the page...a fairly graphic representation of the bloodshed from the attacks.

Creating that page was cathartic for me. But it was also my plea to the Universe. Heal us.

When I shared the page that night with my students they encouraged me to take it to him when I went to Paris in the spring.

And so...



I did.

Actually, I almost didn't.

For some reason, I sort of lost my nerve. It was one thing to plan to bring the pages. It was another thing to track down the baker and present him with the piece. What if we couldn't find the boulangerie? What if he wasn't there? What if he was offended by my art? What if we couldn't communicate? What if he didn't understand my offering?

I hemmed and hawed. And Mark, my greatest cheer-leader, said, "I'm not telling you what to do. But, I'm just wondering how you'll feel if you don't do it?"

So yeah, I needed to do it.

It was our last day in Paris. We searched the internet, reread the piece on NPR's website, searched Google maps. (This was one obscure little boulangerie!) Finally, Mark found it and I worked out the Metro ride there. Before leaving our flat, I wrote out a message to Monsieur Meziane in English and then translated it into French. It appeared, from the piece on NPR, that he did not speak English. And all I can say in French is "Parlez vous Anglais?"

We packed up our bags for the day and headed out.



The bakery, Patisserie-Boulangerie Lina, is in the 10th Arrondissement, in an area not much frequented by tourists. We entered the shop and I asked for M. Meziane. We waited and waited. And when he finally came in from the back I was shaking with nerves. I greeted him and said:

Je suis artiste du California. This est pour vous.

I handed him my phone to read the message I had written.

Monsieur Meziane Ahmed,

En Novembre, apres l'attaque, j'ai entendu une entrevue avec vous sur la National Public Radio en Amerique.

Mon coeur se brisa pour Paris—et le monde que ce qui est arrive. Mais tes paroles ont ete une source d'inspiration pour moi. J'ai donc cree cette piece d'art.

Il est la peinture et le collage et vos mots de l'interview sont sur la page ainsi.

En amitie, Susie Stonefield Miller

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Mr. Meziane Ahmed,

In November, after the attack, I heard an interview with you on National Public Radio in America.

My heart broke for Paris—and the world—that this happened. But your words were inspiring to me. So I created this piece of art.

It is paint and collage and your words from the interview are on the page as well.

In friendship...

And then I handed him the piece.



(continued)

He looked at it. He smiled. He put his hand to his heart and then gave me a big hug.

The rest is history, as they say. I mean, there were more hugs and tears held back and more smiles. There were attempts to communicate through hand movements and broken English and French. There were also delicious tiny cups of espresso. He showed us where the bullets had hit in the shop. And then more hugs.

I'm not sure what it meant to him that I arrived on his doorstep with this offering. But I know that as I left the shop that day I felt tremendously light.

I had connected with a stranger, I had shared from my hands and my heart my art and vision, and I had done my little part to heal the world.

Note: Before we left Boulangerie Lina, M. Meziane gave us a flyer with his photo on it and went into great detail (in French) about something. We weren't sure what it was, but when we got back to our flat that night we found an email from him inviting us to the launch (that night!) of his crowdfunding campaign to help repair, remodel and begin to serve Moroccan food and breakfast at his bakery. It also included this message: "Thank you very much for the beautiful picture you painted for me!" We have donated, and hope that you will too! Wouldn't it be amazing if this became a viral thing? *Here* is the link.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

A lifetime of making art and over thirty years teaching and creating healing community has lead me to the work of expressive arts; using creative expression to unveil the threads of our existence for deeper clarity, understanding and transformation. My BIG focus these days is on building creative, healing community in person and online. Whether sitting around a table piled with art supplies, fingers wet with paint, or sharing-photos and insights across the digital universe, my goal is to create a nourishing space for people to own their voices and manifest their dreams.

Susie Stonefield Miller | www.susiestonefieldmiller.com





# On Being a Horse Chestnut

They call me, eyes shining. They watch. The days grow shorter. until they look the other way, then fall, crashing down and down and down through the leaves, from the tallest branches, cradled in my spiny world, to hit the earth below They call me; push away leaves, rip apart my casing, and I don't mind. How else would I see the harvest moon glow low and bright; its enormous, perfect circumference. I don't mind the warm hands, day after day, holding me, rubbing gently my smooth, drying skin.

R.P. O'Brien

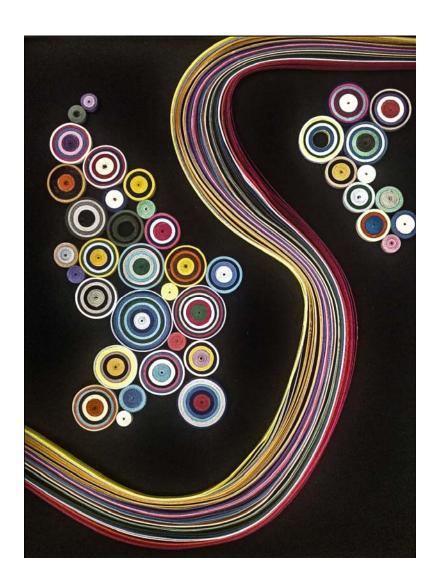
# Cycle of change

For some, change comes slowly as one beings to recognize destructive patterns that have emerged in their lives as a result of living unconsciously. Others are stunned into consciousness. Either way, these humbling experiences are at the center of our own self-discovery. When we finally see the patterns and become aware of the forces that shape our choices and behaviors, it is as if we have stopped viewing the world through rose-colored glasses and can now see our lives—and the lives of others—through Waterford crystal.

The biggest gift we can give ourselves, and to future generations, is to take a closer look at our lives; risk comfort for the unknown and break the disparaging patterns that haunt us.

quilling papers and other papers

Spirals represent Prochaska and DiClemente Transtheoretical Model or cycle of change



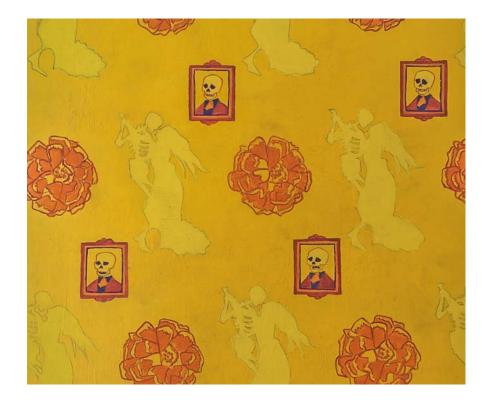
■ Deanne Brown | student, Goddard College



#### Motif

This piece was intended to be a wallpaper pattern. I have always been interested in visual patterns as well as intrapsychic patterns. I was drawn to the idea of a wallpaper designed with a death and bereavement motif.

Wallpaper lives on the walls of our homes. Living with these images is a way of maintaining intimacy with death, as is done in many cultures around the world



Whether they are dancing with the bones of those who have died, having dialogue with photographs, or keeping bodies at home for long periods of time, people sustain a sense of immediacy and relationship with those who have passed away.

Although there is loss and sadness, there is also celebration and ritual. Families continue to feel complete.

■ Pilar Gizzi did her undergraduate work in textile design in NYC. She later spent two years post-graduate studying to be a midwife, working in the home birth community of southern Maine where she currently lives. She is in her second year of the counseling program at Goddard College. Pilar is open to the power of healing found within various practices and orientations. However, she is most focused on the significance of metaphor that lies within our personal stories and the opportunity for growth that exists in times of transformation. Pilar will begin her internship this fall doing bereavement counseling through Hospice of Southern Maine.



#### **Sky Above Clouds**

by Wendy Miller and Gene D. Cohen

A Book Review by Michael C. Patterson

Dr. Gene Cohen's goal, in co-authoring *Sky Above Clouds* with his wife Dr. Wendy Miller, was to add their own saga to the anthology of instructive case stories he used throughout his career to advocate for patient-based care and a creative, asset-based approach to aging. His stories put a human face on aging, illness and the healing power of creativity. With *Sky Above Clouds*, Gene and Wendy recognized that the faces would be their own. The narrative would be their personal and intimate story about living with Gene's diagnosis of terminal cancer.

On their second date, Wendy Miller, the artist, and Gene Cohen, the scientist, were eager to share stories about their day. To their surprise, both stories concerned the game of cribbage. Gene had just applied for a patent for a new scoring system and design for cribbage and was eager to explain why it made sense to get a new patent on an ancient game.

When Gene finished his story he turned his full attention to Wendy. Both were barely beyond recent divorces, yet Wendy felt safe enough with Gene to recount a strange and compelling dream in which a guardian angel figure gave her solace and encouragement that ended with the advice to "play cribbage." The guardian angel figure in her dream probably represented a close childhood friend with whom she played a nightly game of cribbage.

In a sense, cribbage became a metaphor for Wendy and Gene's short, intense and passionate relationship. Cribbage is a fast game, one that packs its action and complexity into a condensed period of time. What it lacks in length, it makes up in intensity, depth and scope. Gene and Wendy decided to write *Sky Above Clouds* as a way to process their emerging relationship as they responded to the unexpected appearance of a deadly disease.

Gene's diagnosis of metastatic prostate cancer soon after they met forced Wendy and Gene to live in bursts of hope. Life became a kind of intense cribbage game. Gene was not given long to live. At the end of each month Wendy and Gene held their collective breaths as they read the fax with PSA test results that could signal doom. Yet, month after month, they were offered a reprieve and the chance for another 30 days of hope and expectation. This monthly game of chance was replayed for a full thirteen years.

Gene equated the constant threat of death to the Sword of Damocles that hangs from a slender thread above the patient's head. There is no telling when the cord holding the sword will fray, unravel and release the deadly guillotine. Living under the sword elicits an ever-present, fight-or-flight response. Wendy and Gene felt like vulnerable prey being pursued by a relentless predator. The innate protective response of fight-or-flight once protected us from ancient animal predators, but now their predator was cancer.

During their time together the artist and the scientist learned how to meld their complementary mindsets and their unique approaches to life. The scientist explored his creative and artistic side; the artist discovered the beauty of the scientific approach to life.

Gene Cohen was the guru of creative aging, a tireless and fearless defender against ageism and ageist stereotypes. His body of work established the asset-based mindset about aging, in which creativity, growth and development define maturity as much as do decline, disease and debility. And here Gene was, fighting for his life, confronting the dark clouds of an illness that arrived unexpected and too soon. Wendy



(continued)

and Gene were keenly aware of the irony of the situation. They needed every ounce of personal and psychic creativity to craft a meaningful and vital life while battling the insidious presence of a killer disease.

Gene, ever the creative scientist, became the subject of his own experimentation. He explored all possible methods of fending off his cancer. With Wendy's urging, perhaps insistence, Gene began exploring alternative and integrated medical approaches. She signed him up for a weeklong residential cancer help program at Commonweal in Bolinas California. Commonweal was founded by Michael Lerner, author of Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer.

Gene learned at Commonweal that lowering ones intake of dietary fat by 90 percent might slow the course of his prostate cancer by starving the cancer cells of the fat they craved for growth. He adopted a low-fat diet, in spite of a love for chocolate mousse, and continued with it throughout the unexpectedly long duration of his survival. As Wendy notes, more important than the diet itself was a new willingness to, "open lines of inquiry, consideration, and deep reflection," about living with disease. Gene turned his creative capacity towards his own life and towards the goal of flourishing in spite of the disease.

Gene had a previous confrontation with a deadly disease in 1991 when he was misdiagnosed with ALS, known more commonly as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS is a degenerative neuromuscular disease, characterized by progressive atrophy of the muscles, typically leading to death within 3 to 5 years. Gene experienced an emotional roller-coaster ride for two years before the misdiagnosis was discovered. Nevertheless, the two years of emotional upheaval caused Gene to undergo a fundamental reevaluation of what he was going to do with his life. He began inventing award-winning games as works of art, set up a new research center and refocused his studies to concentrate on creativity and aging.

Since that time, Gene felt like the mythical Phoenix that cycles through periods of death and rebirth. The Phoenix bursts into flames and crumbles into ashes only to miraculously reanimated and soar with new enthusiasm and purpose. The misdiagnosis of ALS was Gene's first such cycle of rebirth. Then, after the diagnosis in 1996 that prostate cancer had metastasized into his bones, Gene was again confronted with a deadline for death.

He found creative regeneration by focusing his creative energy around the production of his book on creativity and aging, *The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life*. His third Phoenix cycle occurred when the cure for his cancer became the problem itself, when his bones became brittle and vulnerable to the slightest twist or turn. Having learned the value of writing during his previous crisis, Gene used this new medical challenge as an impetus to write his book *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain*. And then, as he said, "with both the cancer and the bone-altering drug presumably still in my body," he began to work with Wendy on *Sky Above Clouds*.

Wendy reflects that Gene was tapping into a powerful will to live; a concept that she feels is widely misunderstood. The will to live is a powerful medicine that is rarely administered by doctors. It is a mode of healing that we have to intentionally administer to ourselves. It is a psychic muscle that needs to be exercised and trained to activate at will so that it can help mobilize our body's ability to heal itself.

Wendy equates this will to live with creativity, which she calls "an extraordinary medicine." She got to see it in action, "as Gene, so intimately, so dearly, so courageously, engage it." The will to live is more than will power and determination, although these skills are required.

For Cohen and Miller, the will to live became "the creative alchemy of living" It is the magic of "orchids



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growing in skinny places." On a trip to Machu Picchu in the Andes Mountains, Miller was struck by the heroic determination of "orchids with only thin air to breathe growing out of stones tightly fit together."

To Gene, "the creative faculty fully engaged is what defines a life of meaning, purpose and accomplishment." Gene and Wendy were determined to lead meaningful lives that would be fertilized by this illness and, through the will to blossom, could transcend the fixation on disease. As cancer threatened to suck the air out of their world, Cohen and Miller found strength in creative expression. Like the Macho Picchu orchids, they were determined to push through the hard terrain they inhabited and stretch toward the sun, no matter the struggle.

Gene did not want his illness to become pubic knowledge. He chose not to be defined by disease and decline, but by the creativity and developmental maturity that comes with age, qualities that he displayed in abundance. Gene asked Wendy to honor his silence about the disease, and she did. But that silence took its toll, eroding her own voice and her relationship with others.

When Gene died, a numbing grief compounded her silence. Wendy was devastated by Gene's death. But as the dark clouds of grief lifted, Wendy gradually reclaimed her voice. Released from the vow of silence about Gene's illness, her voice has burst forth producing a poetic reflection of her life and love with a truly remarkable man. Together they crafted a magnificently creative relationship.

As Wendy acknowledges, her book is complex. It is a narrative constructed as a dialogue with Gene that reflects their separate selves as well as the unity of their relationship. It is exploration of the a new self that Wendy had to discover in Gene's absence. It is part philosophy, part practical guide, part memoire; a hybrid genre invented by Miller and her editor Teresa Barker, to accommodate all she and Gene discovered through each other.

She describes how she and Gene had different languages that arose out of their own unique orientations to life. The scientist needed organized scientific explanations to feel grounded. The artist felt constrained by organization; she was much more comfortable with stream of consciousness, more trusting in the power of imagery. Their journey together took advantage of their disparate strengths and through the alchemy of crisis helped them forge an enhanced ability to live their lives through creative exploration and growth.

The foundation of *Sky Above Clouds* is Wendy's writing, with samples of Gene's words sprinkled generously throughout. As a reader, I initially felt more comfortable with Gene's writing. I am delighted by flights of the imagination, but I need the stability of proven biological mechanisms to anchor my understanding of human behavior. As I worked my way through Wendy's writing I found it necessary to inhabit each page long enough to absorb and ponder the complexity of what Wendy was saying. I was reading philosophy and psychological insight that arose from intuition and from the depths of feeling. Wendy's words demanded deep consideration and the patience to unravel their imagery.

Then, at a certain point in the book, I realized that I was reading poetry. Because of my orientation towards science I am, at times, uncomfortable with poetry. It frustrates me. I wonder why poets are so coy about their meaning. Why not say what they mean, rather than cloak their message in beautiful but mystifying language? But, with Wendy's poetic writing I began to relax and started to read without analysis. I let the words wash over me, trusting that somehow I would absorb the deeper emotional meaning of her explorations.

There are many profound intellectual insights to be found throughout the book. However, the deeper and



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more meaningful experience of reading *Sky Above Clouds* is the gift of being invited into Wendy's inner world of feelings. There is no gift more generous than vulnerability and the willingness to open one's heart to another. With *Sky Above Clouds*, Wendy offers this gift to all her readers.

There are numerous times in the book when Dr. Wendy Miller, the therapist, takes center stage. I found one such section, her description of her Phase Diagram, to be particularly useful. She has used the Phase Diagram in her clinical practice for over two decades and she posits that there is an internal healing process that follows predictable steps. By mapping this process she explains that we can begin to recognize coherence in the riot of experiences, both internal and external, that surround an illness.

Exploration of this internal healing process has been a focus of her work for over thirty years, growing out of her own experience with chronic fatigue syndrome. She visualizes the healing process as a layered relationship that includes emotional, biographical, biochemical and spiritual components. Each of these layers has its own distinct life, but they all must be brought into harmony or congruence with one another.

"Over the years," Dr. Miller explains, "I have come to understand that this is not only a diagram of moving through an illness; the Phase Diagram gives us a portrait of what takes place as our inner and outer worlds arrange and rearrange themselves to create integration between them and, in so doing, tap our resources of both creativity and healing." I suspect that *Sky Above Clouds* is a chronicle of Wendy's ongoing journey to find a new congruence in the absence of Gene.

The book had a number of working titles including, "The Phoenix and the Fairy," "The Crucible of Time" and finally, Sky Above Clouds.

Wendy and Gene spoke of their new, post diagnosis life as being lived within the crucible of "Illness Time." When the end of life suddenly has a due date, time contracts. The horizon that defines the expanse of one's life seems dreadfully close. In a sense, Illness Time thrust Gene into his own Liberation stage of development. When describing this phase Gene would say, with his pixie-like smile, "If not now, when?" And maybe these words begins to explain why so much of Gene's most creative work occurred in the short period of time after his diagnosis. The crucible of illness time forced Gene and Wendy to call upon their collective creative energies to sculpt a life together that looked nothing like what they initially imagined.

One of Gene's creative ambitions was to write a fairy tale for Eliana. Gene was frightened that he would die before his cherished daughter could form lasting memories of her father. He wanted to leave her a story that would always remind her of the father she lost too soon. In the fairy tale he created, he was the Phoenix whose body was consumed by the flames of deadly diseases, only to find rebirth, first with the misdiagnosis of ALS, then through his remarkable ability to thwart the death sentence of the metastasized cancer. Wendy was the magical fairy who protected the Phoenix and his family.

The final title of Wendy's new book, *Sky Above Clouds*, is a reference to the famous series of expansive canvasses by the painter Georgia O'Keeffe. Those paintings provided Gene with one of his favorite metaphors about aging. At a key point in a lecture, Gene would grab a cherished umbrella that, when opened, revealed O'Keeffe's painting with its billowy white clouds floating within an expanse of baby blue sky. "Yes, there are always clouds with age", Gene would make clear, "but we must never forget that there is always clear sky above the clouds." *Sky Above Clouds* was a perfect metaphor for aging and for a creative response to illness.



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Gene and Wendy were well aware of the clouds that unexpected darken our horizon. But, they lived with an intention to see life from an optimistic and positive perspective. They chose an asset-based mindset about life, development and death. They learned how to soar together to discover the glorious expanse of blue sky beyond the clouds.

Wendy recounts, in often-poetic prose, and always with deep insight, how she and Gene manages to share a vibrant, productive and meaningful life in spite of Gene's diagnosis of imminent death. It is a story of personal heroism, survival and recovery with lessons for all of us. Sky Above Clouds is a book about using creativity to cope with adversity and loss. Wendy Miller's beautiful book should be read, absorbed, and savored by every expressive arts therapist and caregiver.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Michael C. Patterson is an author, writer, speaker, and gerontologist specializing in brain health, creativity, the arts and longevity. Patterson is an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University where he has taught courses on the prevention and treatment of dementia, the creative arts and brain health. He is an executive board member for the National Center for Creative Aging and serves on numerous advisory boards including the Research Center for Arts & Culture. Patterson ran the award-winning Staying Sharp brain health program at AARP, developed numerous projects for PBS, and was a founding member, actor, and director with Bear Republic Theater.

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# Art Based Group Therapy: Theory and Practice, 2nd Edition

by Bruce Moon, PhD, HLM, ATR-BC

A Book Review by Claire Polansky

Bruce Moon has just issued the second edition of his 2010 book, *Art Based Group Therapy* with updated insights into the transformative, magical realm of art therapy with groups. Moon's unique approach to groups have been instrumental to my growth as an art therapist since the days he offered his attentive, almost fatherly-like guidance to the students in his classroom as narrated his personal accounts of the existential experience that lies within the studio--from the individual to the collective experience. Now, we can relive the stories through his insightful book and learn to be "good enough mothers" (or fathers) ourselves in the art therapy studio through his painterly words. While he does not discard the progenitors of group therapy, Irvin Yalom (2005) and Marianne Corey, Gerald Corey, and Cindy Corey (2013), he demonstrates the unique dimensions art-based group therapy in an accessible format for both the layperson and the experienced therapist with colorful illustrations and case vignettes that brings the group art-making process to life.

Moon begins by directing the reader to the thirteen essentials of group art therapy with a particular emphasis on the individual versus the collective experience. He notes that there is a fluid combination of the group experience juxtaposed against the solitary artist within the group who faces his or her ultimate existential concerns with a reference from his 2009 book, *Existential A rt Therapy: The Canvas Mirror.* He asserts that while art-making is a solitary endeavor, external nurturance within a supportive environments is still a vital part of the human condition regardless of diagnosis, socioeconomic factors, or cognition as exhibited as early as the paintings within the caves of Lascaux. This statement seems to override the collaborative works within the theater or mural project, but even group projects consist of individuals who undergo their own process of meaning-making which can only be ascertained through a relationship to others. Moon (2016) claims that "change happens in the context of a multilayered weaving of engagement with materials, artistic processes, intra and interpersonal relationships and experiences" (p. 8). The art therapist is ultimately responsible for holding a safe, ritual space where the group can illustrate their ultimate concerns within a supportive community through a shared experience as they take turns as the artist and witness.

He furthers this discussion by exploring the role and responsibility of the group facilitator in chapter two by not only fostering a safe space, but making creative expression "contagious" through their commitment to making art. Moon tells us that "the art therapist uses tone of voice, facial expressions, body movements, energy level, personality, and charisma in order to convey creative fervor in the group" (p. 12), which may make one wonder how the subdued, more ethereal leader would achieve this style of group leadership. But he later acknowledges that the ultimate goal of the leader is to be an exemplary role model committed to endless struggle of personal growth alongside the clients, regardless of their personal leadership style. He astutely gives the reader to chance to explore their internal compass with self-disclosure through painful missed opportunities or sharing a personal "gift" that one was not ready to receive. Ultimately, the art therapist maintains a healthy ambiance for healing and change to take place by modeling, affirming, responding, compassionately confronting, and empathizing, to problems within the group setting.

In chapter three, Moon (ibid) considers the responsibility of the therapist to establish a safe space for group members in the milieu through ritual-like activities or "enactments of metaphors performed in a set, ordered, and ceremonial way" (p. 50) that brings about group cohesion. These rituals include the proc-



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ess of preparing the space, welcoming members, making art, a period of group reflection, and a closing ritual. Moon briefly highlights symbolic spiritual practices in order to build his argument much like Shaun McNiff (1992, 2004) has done in the past with his comparison of art therapy and shamanism and Sheldon Kopp (1974) did in his parallels of therapist and spiritual teachers, however he differs from his predecessors in that he focuses on the group ceremonial aspects of art therapy, while they focused on the individual's healing journey. And they are not alone in their experience of witnessing a mystical transformation within the art therapy ritual space. I, too, have been astounded time and time again by transpersonal transformations within my office through the aid of art.

The proceeding chapters pinpoint specific themes that emerge within the group through a series of reflective vignettes. Chapter four illustrates the group's acquisition of life affirming faith and hope for the art making process, others, and themselves by learning to accept the realities that we face collectively and individually. Chapter five compares weighs the benefits of non-verbal artistic expression against conventional talk therapy whereupon he notes that not everyone is able to communicate their feelings verbally. The talking about the art in the art therapy environment is merely "icing on the cake" (p. 82), according to Moon (2016), but the primary therapy or main course lies within the metaverbal art-making process. Chapter six juxtaposes our existential "aloneness" against the need for community and meaningful relationships. Moon offers art therapy as the modus operandi for achieving a bridge to community, which sets the art therapist apart from therapy groups that rely on words. The art serves as the focal object for the group--a jumping off point to facilitate the group process in a non-threatening way like a transitional object. Chapter eight identifies the sensual nature of art making that helps facilitate a mindful, presentmoment focus. In the subsequent chapter, Moon identifies how art making within a group setting can foster a feeling of empowerment as group members work together to change their situations--both metaphorically speaking and on the page. In chapter ten, Moon explains how the art therapist models a personal regard for others by respecting and honoring a group member's art. In chapter eleven, he reminds us that regardless of one's personal struggles within the group, making art just feels good. Moon returns back to existential themes in chapters twelve and thirteen as he considers ways in which art helps facilitate selftranscendence and work through the ultimate concerns of existence (e.g., freedom, death, isolation, purpose, etc). Afterwards, he focuses on the healing power of being witnessed by both the group and the facilitator.

Moon finishes the book with concluding chapters on conventional materials and new contemporary media to add to the artistic toolbox, ethical considerations within the group setting, and planning the group activities and structures. Overall, Moon's work provides an excellent framework for the budding group art therapist, albeit I have some slight issues with its organization. For instance, the existential-oriented themes would fare better together, I would like to see the sensual themes merged, and I believe that the concluding chapters seem more appropriate at the beginning alongside the other chapters that instruct the reader on how to set up and facilitate the group. In essence, Moon achieves his manifesto-like goal to bring the art making back to the forefront of group therapy rather than as an adjunctive modality, which art therapists are often forced in order to keep a foothold in the competing mental health market (e.g., social work, counseling, psychology, etc).

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#### **Transformation**



An expression of the culmination of self-transformative work during the exploration and writing of my thesis, "The Power of Performance Art Food Rituals to Transform."

This piece depicts images of the classical elements used(fire, water, air, and earth) and the foods I produced.

Also included are images of elements that represent personal changes.

glue paper

Air-bread making | Fire-cooking with heart | Water-braising & boiling with pots | Earth-fermenting

■ Sharon Hughes recently earned her MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Goddard College. In her work, Sharon uses a holistic approach to counseling and integrates body, mind, and spirit with a focus on nutrition, spirituality, career, work life, and healthy movement. She holds strong to the belief that balance in those key areas will aid in creating and maintaining well-being in one's life. Sharon incorporates ritual work and multimodal art practices in her work. She resides with her husband, Cedric, in Stockbridge, Georgia, a suburb outside of Atlanta.

ribbon
acrylic paint
rocks from various trips
that were
transformative
mandalas
sage purification
food
cooking methods
photos
stamps
lettering
symbols
ink



# Mask of the Collective Psyche



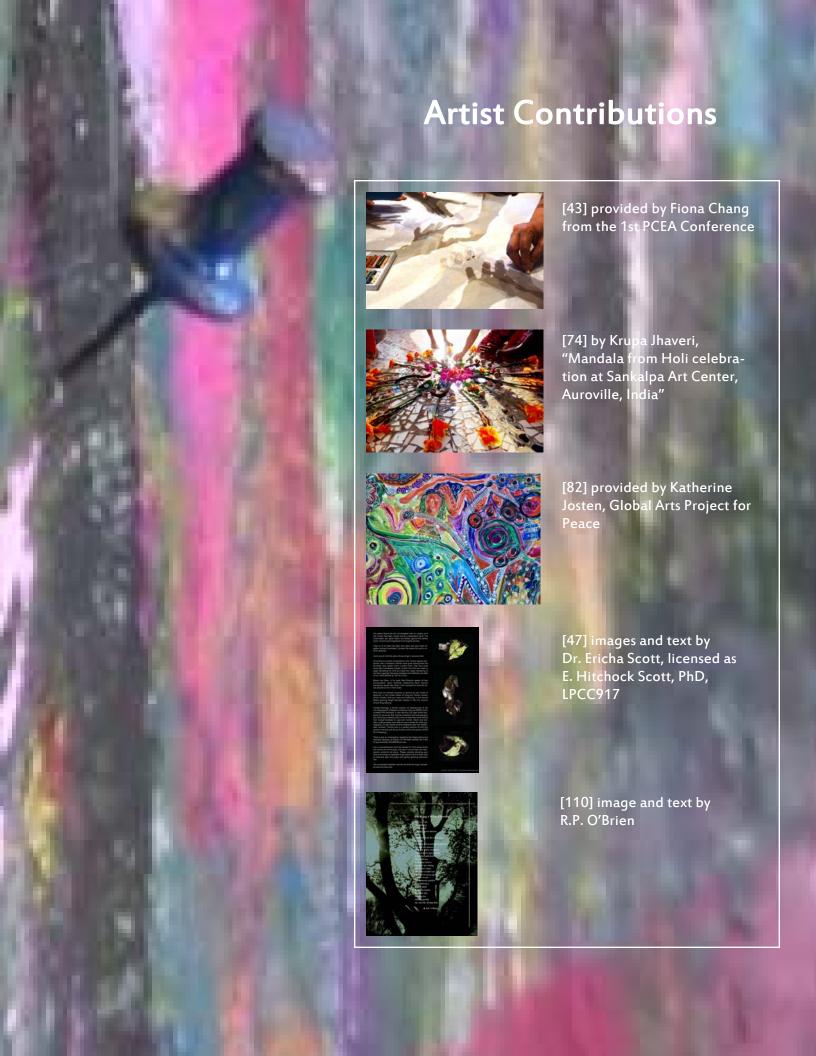
■ Julie Puttgen | student, Goddard College

A series of four images was produced as part of "Theories of Personality" coursework.

As I read, I made note of visually rich passages in *The Personality*Reader, the anthology of primary sources I was reading. Once I had completed all the readings, I went back and made rough, immediate sketches of the passages that most interested me, and then chose a body of eight sketches to develop into more finished paintings on paper.

Each piece attempts to balance my own particular interests as a reader and artist with concern to produce imagery that in some way reflects the theoretical landscape of the writer who inspired my work.





# International Expressive Arts Therapy Association®

#### **Newsletter Submission Guidelines**

The Newsletter is a forum of IEATA professional, student, and supporting members to connect, exchange ideas, network, and stay current on the latest developments in the field of expressive arts. It is published twice a year by the IEATA Publications Committee. Submissions are welcome from any current IEATA member and from those in the larger expressive arts community upon committee approval.

Submission deadlines: edition 1 | March 1st □ edition 2 | September 1st

We accept submissions for:

- Notes from the Field reflections or commentaries concerning the process of engaging in the expressive arts from the viewpoint of artist, student, intern, consultant, educator, therapist, client, activist, etc.
- Student News, Views & More reflections or commentaries concerning issues, views, and the perspectives of those currently enrolled as students in expressive arts programs.
- Professional Exchange professional reflections or commentaries concerning new approaches, certification, professional development, trends, historical reflections, ethics, and other developing issues from practitioners, educators, and consultants.
- **Professional Development -** postings for workshops, classes, programs, grant information, calls for papers and submissions, career news and information.
- Book Reviews short reviews of new books in the field of expressive/creative arts and related to topics
  that provide both descriptive and critical commentary concerning the book's relevance to expressive
  arts practice.
- Ripening Seeds column highlights different approaches to expressive arts as depicted by those
  nested within particular cultures or regions of the world. Ripening Seeds contributions have spanned
  the continental Americas and Asia, and each column has been shared in the author's native language
  as well as in English. Diverse perspectives from around the world are included in order to promote intercultural understanding.

>> RIPENING SEEDS: If you would like to submit to Ripening Seeds, please contact Kate Donohue at: kate@kate-donohue.com for submission guidelines.

We welcome artistic contributions in single or multiple modalities that inform or depict expressive arts work. Contributions may include: visual artwork, poetry, creative writings, audio, video.

#### How to send us your work:

All submissions must be digital. We do not accept hardcopy submissions. Email your submission as a pdf/jpg attachment to: publications@ieata.org. Please inform Editors if it is a simultaneous submission.

All submissions must have "Newsletter" and the category of submission, (e.g., "Book Reviews") as the subject line of the email. Inform Editors if submission has appear previously in another publication.

Specifics: lengthe (maximum 3000 words); images (must be submitted as jpg); audio/video (provide URL); language (written submission must be in English).

Editing: all submissions are subject to editing for length and content at the Editors' discretion. However, if a submission requires a more extensive edit, contributors shall be notified by the Editors prior to finalization.



### International Expressive Arts Therapy Association®

#### **Newsletter Submission Guidelines**

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\$30.00—business card size \$50.00—1/4 page \$100.00—1/2 page \$200.00—full page

Advertisement submissions must be pdf or jpg (recommended for text and images) formats and should be emailed to publications@ieata.org

**Payment** is due at time of submission. Remit to: International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA), P.O. Box 40707, San Francisco, CA 94110-9991

#### eNews Submission Guidelines

IEATA's eNews is a forum designed to promote connections within the expressive arts community and to share news and upcoming events. The eNews is published twice a year, in June and December, and is distributed by email to members and friends of IEATA.

#### We accept submissions for:

- Regional Group News regional networking events and announcements from regional groups.
- Committee News announcements from the Committees including openings for IEATA Board of Directors Co-Chair positions
- Career News job postings, internships, career fairs, networking events
- **Professional Development News -** postings of workshops, classes, group therapy, programs, grant information, calls for papers/submissions
- Good Reads book release information
- Other News any other time-sensitive information that may benefit the IEATA community.
- >> Announcements are limited to 175 words and may be edited for clarity and placement purposed.

#### How to send us your submissions:

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- All submissions must have "eNews" and the category of submission (e.g., "Career News") as the subject

#### Important submission information:

- Due to space constraints only a very limited number of images can be published in any eNews edition.
   URLs can be submitted with text for associated visual content.
- Video and audio content will be published as embedded links in the text of message only
- Please make sure to include complete URLs
- Some submissions may be redirected to the website bulletin board, MemberClicks forum, or the Newsletter as appropriate



# **International Expressive Arts Therapy Association®**

#### **Mission Statement**

The International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA)<sup>®</sup> exists to support the professional use of integrative, multimodal arts processes for personal and community transformation. Expressive arts are those activities in which creative expression fosters psychological, physical, and spiritual wellness. We strive to establish recognition and growth of the field of expressive arts. We provide a global forum for professional dialogue and promote guiding principles for professional practice among expressive artists, educators, consultants, and therapists.

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