

ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

Editorial

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From the early days of the profession, art therapists have been in dialogue regarding the meaning of the image or art work made in therapy. The debate centres on the extent to which the image is viewed as an aesthetic object in its own right or as a form of expression that conveys, consciously and unconsciously, the predicament of its maker that can be further explored and understood. This third dimension within the therapeutic relationship and the setting in which it is made has been the subject of continual scrutiny and debate particularly in relation to the transference issues not only to the image but also to the therapist. We are privileged to revisit this discussion in this Issue as once again these important issues are placed centre stage through a fascinating collection of papers, videos, exhibition and book reviews.

Firstly the paper 'Thinking versus Mentalization' by Robin Tipple enters the contemporary debate by arguing that mentalization is a poor alternative to thinking, as it promotes a narrow, intellectual perspective without attending to social and cultural aspects embedded in thinking which are necessary to everyday life and also in the clinical arena of art psychotherapy. In a closely argued paper, he explains that if a mentalization approach is adopted, the emphasis on use of words limits possibilities of working with the not-knowing and uncertainties of art making and creative activity which can be more fruitful areas for understanding and bring fresh subjective experience which in itself constitutes thinking.

The paper 'Shifting terrains: Art psychotherapists' testimonies and reflections on employment in austerity Britain by Emma MacKinnon, Alice Myles, Kristina Page, Taiseer Shelhi, Jill Westwood, explores the struggles of art therapists, once qualified, to gain meaningful employment in the current climate of cuts to mainstream services. There is an interesting juxtaposition with some of the findings in this paper from the experience of the authors with other contributions in this issue that introduce innovative work in different work settings. 'Why a picture can speak for a troubled child' by Nadine Wojakovski describes the work of the new Charity Atfc: Arts Therapies for Children, which provides schools with qualified and experienced arts therapists in order to help children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This service was pioneered in one school by Tim Anders and the model is currently being rolled out into others with much success. (This article was first published in the Jewish Chronicle in January 2017 and we are grateful for their permission to reproduce it here.)

An entirely different initiative is explored in 'Working with Uncertainty: The Soldier's Nightmare' by Steve Pratt (Text) and the accompanying video 'Big Stone and Rain' by Mark Edmondson and Steve Pratt both of which are about an Artist Residency at Tidworth Garrison. While the text describes, the video shows remarkable footage of a creative workshop using an undirected approach with a group of professional soldiers to produce something for 'exhibition' to be shown in the Young Gallery. This was an unusual and somewhat ground-breaking intervention as soldiers are trained to follow a set of rules and to know what is going to happen next. Anxiety is palpable as the group struggles to manage not-knowing and the uncertainty of non-direction. As the author describes 'it is as if the canvas itself becomes the site of conflict' and how much easier it is for them to use tanks to create images and be in control of areas of their expertise. This brings us back to Tipple's ideas on thinking and mentalization and how the unfamiliarity and uncertainty of the creative arena can promote thought and development of understanding.

When thinking further about foundations of art therapy and certain people who have significantly influenced our current discourse, D.W Winnicott has to be to

one of the most important. As a paediatrician and psychoanalyst, it is possible that Winnicott enabled the idea of art therapy to take shape with his pioneering understanding of the importance of the creative arena, play and his pioneering use of the Squiggle technique which encapsulated the idea of free association and thereby communication, opening a conversation through drawing with another. By placing emphasis on the relationship between caregiver and infant, Winnicott introduced key concepts such as 'transitional objects', 'the facilitating environment', 'good enough mothering', 'me – not-me' and the 'capacity to be alone', which enabled greater understanding of the internal world of the infant and the development of the self. The *Collected Works of DW Winnicott* was published in January 2017, the first collection of virtually all of his writings over sixty years. This unique publication is a seminal contribution to the study of child development, psychoanalysis and art therapy. We are therefore delighted to include 'A Collective Response to the *Collected Works of D.W. Winnicott*. With artwork and written responses from the Winnicott Wednesdays Artist Art Psychotherapist Collective' by Beth Hoyes, Helen Omand, Deba Anna Salim, who offer a rich and beautifully considered account of how Winnicott's work has impacted and permeated an understanding on them as both art psychotherapists and artists. The group describe how they oscillate between these two identities, and their visual responses reflect the intimacy and sensitivity of his therapeutic approach with both mother and child.

Going further back in time, however, others might argue that Edward Adamson was the original founder of art therapy or certainly the first practicing art therapist in his studio at Netherne Hospital in the 1940's. Adamson apparently was 'not at home with art therapy's move towards psychoanalysis in the 1970's' and the thought –provoking review of an exhibition 'Mr A Moves in Mysterious Ways: Selected Artists from the Adamson Collection.' Peltz Gallery, by Christopher Brown, Jon Martyn and Sally Skaife reminds us of the issues regarding the aesthetic value of the image within a therapeutic context and raises again the question about the presence of the therapist and the setting in which the image is made. Another forthright and somewhat critical review by David Maclagan of 'Outsider Art and Art Therapy: shared histories,

current issues and future identities' by Rachel Cohen, is a further exploration of many of these issues. Maclagan suggests that the distinction between art as art and art within a strictly therapeutic boundary has been blurred and the aesthetic value of the art therapy images and the inner effects of exhibition on the artists themselves is not fully considered.

Two important art therapy publications are also reviewed.' Art Therapy in the Early Years: Therapeutic Interventions With Infants, Toddlers and Their families' edited by Julia Meyerowitz-Katz and Dean Reddick was simultaneously published in Australia and the UK and is reviewed by Beth Hoyes. The video of the book launch in Australia is also included. The event, moderated by Dr Sheridan Linnell, includes a contribution from Julia Meyerowitz-Katz and a panel consisting of chapter authors Pensi Rowe, Judy King, Celia Conolly and Julie Green in discussion with members of the audience. The British launch of the book took place at a conference to celebrate the event in London in June 2017.

Finally, 'Art Therapy for Psychosis: Theory and Practice' edited by Katherine Killick, is reviewed by Christopher Brown. This is an impressive publication and a new look at Killick's early work with contributions from international specialists working in this field.

One theme that emerges in this issue is that of founders and foundations in art therapy. This is particularly reflected in the recent retirement of three key art therapy educators who, over several decades had established careers in art therapy training within Higher Education. Dr Sally Skaife and Dr Robin Tipple have retired from the MA Art Psychotherapy at Goldsmiths, University of London and Philippa Brown has retired from her role as Programme Lead Art Therapy at the University of Hertfordshire. All three were from a generation of art therapists who developed an educational approach informed by, group analysis, the experience of therapeutic communities, and the Open Studio. Sally taught at all levels for over thirty years and was influential in shaping the training of art therapists as an experiential-based learning process through interlinked groups. Her PhD research subject was the

relationship between art making and interactive talking in art therapy groups and she has written extensively on art therapy groups. Robin will be known to many, not only for his teaching, but also through his work with children who have learning disabilities. His PhD research explored art therapy assessment with children who have developmental disorders (principally Autism and Asperger's Syndrome). Philippa, for over twenty years, kept the presence of visual art practice and experiential learning central to the students' training experience, while also supporting the development of art therapy as a discipline across the UK and Europe in countries such as Ireland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine. Both Robin and Sally are past editors of the art therapy journal 'Inscape' and continue to be involved with ATOL. The Art Therapy Large Group has been an important feature of the training at Goldsmiths for many years and Robin and Sally will now be offering this experience as a separate short course from October 2017.

An installation by Diana Velada and Chris Brown titled 'See Through' located in the studios corridor at Goldsmiths in June 2017, was made in response to the retirement of Sally and Robin. Photographs of the work appear in this issue.

We also want to acknowledge the departure of Barrie Damarell from the ATOL editorial board. Barrie was one of the original founders of ATOL and his contribution over the years has been profoundly thoughtful, creative, resourceful and inspiring along with a wonderful sense of good humour. As book review editor and also with his long term experience of working as an art therapist, he brought a new and vital dimension to the journal and he will be truly missed. At the same time we are delighted to welcome three new members to the ATOL editorial team – Susan Rudnik, Dean Reddick and Philippa Brown. There is some very good news that our readership has doubled in 2016/2017 and we continue to appreciate all submissions, feedback and other forms of contact, which include our Facebook page, for which Susan has kindly agreed to take responsibility.

