

anzjat

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF ARTS THERAPY

Editorial team

Editors Sheridan Linnell and Catherine Camden-Pratt
Journal Coordinator and Editorial Assistant Jill Segedin
Copy Editors Constance Ellwood and Belinda Nemeč
Proofreaders Rigel Sorzano and Belinda Nemeč
Research Sub-committee Chair Kirsten Meyer

International advisors

Andrea Gilroy, Ronald P.M.H. Lay, Jordan Potash

Peer review panel

Jan Allen, Annette Coulter, Karen Daniel, Jo Davies, Claire Edwards, Cornelia Elbrecht, Bettina Evans, Patricia Fenner, Esther Fitzpatrick, Fiona Gardner, Andrea Gilroy, Deborah Green, Jennie Halliday, Rainbow Ho, Jo Kelly, Adrian Lania, San Leenstra, Amanda Levey, Annetta Mallon, Shaun McNiff, Kirsten Meyer, Julia Meyerowitz-Katz, Nikki O'Connor, Jean Parkinson, Radhika Santhanam-Martin, Mariana Torkington, Carla van Laar, Jill Westwood, Sue Wildman, Daniel Wong.

The editorial team wishes to thank those members of the Peer Review Panel and others who generously contributed their time and expertise to the peer review of this edition of *ANZJAT*.

Published by Australian and New Zealand Arts Therapy Association
ABN 63 072 954 388
PO Box 303 Glebe, NSW 2037, Australia
www.anzata.org

© Australian and New Zealand Journal of Arts Therapy, 2016

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the publisher. The publisher makes no representation or warranty that the information contained in articles is accurate, nor accepts liability or responsibility for any action arising out of information contained in this journal.

ISSN: 1833-9948

Design and production Jill Segedin

Printing McCollams, Auckland, New Zealand and Documents On Call, Melbourne, Australia

The golden thread: Weaving together and sharing stories from our work

Toril Pursell and Nyrelle Bade

Abstract

How do we record the experience of an arts therapy workshop and offer it as a ‘golden thread’ to readers? In 2014 Toril Pursell and Nyrelle Bade co-facilitated an experimental workshop for a small number of arts therapy students and professionals attending the ‘Embracing ripples of growth’ ANZATA Symposium in Singapore. The workshop idea evolved over several conversations in Melbourne, Australia, where we (female Anglo or ‘third-culture’ arts therapists) both work with clients from refugee and migrant backgrounds. We felt a need to articulate our ideas about our respective practices, taking into account similarities and differences in our training, work contexts, and what we take from – and incorporate into – the use of arts therapy. It was important – particularly in light of the current global, social, and political situation – to do this by telling stories of diversity and relationship. We accompanied this with a collective weaving activity. This paper concentrates on the workshop itself and falls within the emerging tradition of arts-based presentations.

Keywords

Arts therapy, arts-based presentation, Australia, culture, performance, migrants, narrative, refugees, weaving.

The loom: Setting the scene

In preparing for a workshop presented at the 2014 ANZATA Symposium in Singapore – ‘Embracing ripples of growth: An international critical reflection on the discourses of contemporary art(s) therapy research and practice’, we discovered similarities and differences in our workplaces and our approaches as arts therapists. In broad terms, we are both client-centred, attachment-focused, and trauma-informed. We also both consider the body and somatic work an important focus in therapy. Our discussions and the process of deciding which stories to share highlighted variations between our practices, particularly the absence or presence of visual arts. The narratives presented here are based directly on our work with clients, and are published with their generous consent; we removed or altered

identifying information for the purpose of the workshop and further writing.

We decided that weaving was the most suitable format for the experiential arts component of the workshop. For us, weaving has a myriad of associations and meanings. The shape of the loom and the circle of participants mirrored the overarching theme and logo of the symposium – ripples of growth. We offered an activity that could be experienced kinaesthetically, had no set narrative, and required no image to be produced, so that participants could listen receptively while their hands remained active. The fluid and organic process of free-form weaving was intended to provide form and containment for the emotions that participants might experience while listening to the stories. Collier (2012) writes about using textile-based handcrafts as a way