



## Editorial: 'Communitas'

Sheridan Linnell *Western Sydney University, ANZJAT Chief Editor*

Vic Šegedin *ANZJAT Arts Editor*

As we opened a copy of the 2017 edition of *ANZJAT* to orient ourselves to writing this editorial, a slip of white paper fell out from between the pages. Written upon it was a single word – 'communitas'. Here was our starting point. In the wake of the deaths of our dear colleagues, Adrian Lania and Kay Gravell, we are more than ever aware of the importance of a community of arts therapists and our close colleagues, a tribe that gathers together in times of trouble and of celebration, that honours and remembers its individual members, and yet is always more than the sum of its parts. 'Communitas' is what we make, what makes us and what sustains us.

This slip of paper bearing the word 'communitas' was one of a number circulated as provocations for elaboration by Stephen Levine as part of his keynote at 'Gather Envision Create', the ANZATA-ACATA joint conference held in Melbourne in December 2017. While Stephen spoke to the provocations offered from delegates, Ellen Levine, his partner in life and work, painted her response on a large canvas, so that the stage was awash not only with words but with colour, texture and movement, enacting the connections between creativity and discourse, making and meaning. This painting, which Ellen called *Sandals*, has become the cover for this double issue of *ANZJAT*.

Bettina Evans and Deborah Green's contribution to this issue documents their poignant keynote at 'Artful Transitions', the 2016 ANZATA Symposium held in Christchurch. It describes not only the experience and trauma of the earthquakes, but the extraordinary flowering of 'communitas', where everyone was equal in their experience of the destruction of the region, the trauma of repeated aftershocks, and the liminal space of recovery in which the arts played a central role. This submission led the editorial team to reflect on our own 'communitas', and the shared experience of gathering together at our conferences and symposia,



and to consider how to make this tangible. Our journal has grown from year to year, and our conferences have become larger in scale and scope; the editorial team felt there was a real need to recognise the valuable research and material coming out of these gatherings, and to encourage presenters to document their contributions and the conversations emerging from those attending.

It was decided that a conference edition of *ANZJAT* could provide a forum for this, and the team began to prepare for an inaugural Special Conference Issue to be published online in the middle of the year as *ANZJAT* Volume 13, Number 1. A call for papers was made and a considerable body of work was submitted. However, when we began looking at the submissions for the Special Edition, a different concept began to emerge. We found that we had a collection of short, situated contributions that together could form a vivid picture of our conferences, but also a smaller number of full articles developed from conference papers in such a way that they were indistinguishable, in genre and quality, from our usual submissions for the journal. We decided that instead of separating this material, we would publish a bumper edition in which both issues of *ANZJAT* Volume 13 were woven together. We would curate one, integrated publication with papers from both issues interspersed with other kinds of contributions, including reviews and snapshots of conference workshops and presentations, creative contributions, interviews and book reviews.

One of the unanticipated aspects of bringing together this bumper collection is that the work of the Journal editors is unusually well-represented. All the editors presented or co-presented papers at the conference, and as most of us are academics whose role and responsibility is to produce research, we dutifully worked them up into submissions for the conference edition. We have sought to keep the appropriate distance and anonymity between our roles as editors and authors, even though at times this was rather like a game of Twister.

As the editorial team assembled *ANZJAT* Volume 13, we began to curate critical and creative conversations between the diverse contributions, holding in our minds and hearts the memory of Adrian Łania's capacity to bring together philosophy and imagination, critique and creativity, hilarity and profound healing. We invite you all to wander through this 'exhibition' of research and reflections, of creativity and critique.

Catherine Camden Pratt poses ethical and political questions for the field of creative arts therapy, taking as her starting point an invitation to meet with US 'Second Lady' Karen Pence, an arch-conservative whose advocacy for art therapy raises the dilemma of how to position ourselves so that we are not co-opted into agendas with which we might not necessarily agree, but keep a critical dialogue open. Later in the volume, Ron Lay addresses ethics within community projects, and Sheila Lorenzo de la Peña reflects on the role that a daily art practice can play in community-building and nurturing our own resilience. In between, we tumble into the world of clowning, with Liz Dowling's poignant reminder of the layers behind the painted mask, the intimate relations between laughter and pain, our joys and our sorrows; the edge between fear and healing.

Lynette Callaghan, Kathryn Marks and Stephan Marks and Kim Hau Pang contribute reports on their 2017 conference presentations that round out the sense of the diversity of arts therapy practice in our region, spanning the importance of collaboration across professions and approaches, the capacity of contemporary technologies to open up a space for hope, and again, the healing power of creative expression, and Caroline Miller encourages us to dissolve the binary between research and therapy through thoughtful practices of assessment.

The launch of 'Gather Envision Create' was held at the Dax Centre Gallery, and included a Poetry Jam in response to the Dax poetry collection. Two of the poems performed on that evening appear in this edition. Poetry also features strongly in reflections on 'Gather Envision Create', and in the arts-based research contribution of the Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design, 'The arts of making

sens/e'. The Art Therapy department at Western Sydney University illustrates the significance of contemporary art for the theory and practice of art therapy, presenting some of the works arising from the students' projects that integrate arts and therapy.

Atira Tan's paper on her work in Nepal underlines how an ethical practice of art therapy requires that ethical reflexivity walk hand-in-hand with passionate commitment to counter the forces of political violence. Nikki O'Connor shares her skilful weaving of the use of arts therapy in a Māori model, using visual methods to explore and share ancestry and story.

Spanning modalities and theoretical frameworks for practice across the generations, Vera Keatley combines cognitive behavioural therapy with art therapy to work with childhood trauma, while Joanna Jaaniste addresses the quality of life of people with dementia through dramatherapy. Māpura Studios in Auckland employs multiple modalities of the arts with mixed ability clients; Istvan Csata interviews two of Māpura's practitioners who have been working with a group of teenage clients with profound multiple disabilities.

Stacey Bush explores the idea of 'emergence' within relational interaction, that we as individuals are in a constant improvisational dialogue, and that the arts are particularly effective in assisting us to stay open to uncertainty and to stay with what arises, creating potential for new knowing.

Lastly, Kate Richards introduces us to a rich collection of perspectives edited by Hendry and Hasler that shows how complex trauma demands creative and collaborative responses that 'foster' both hope and healing. And Debi Green returns us to a consideration of 'communitas' through a situated and thoughtful review of the Levines' latest book.

As arts therapists, we work in close with individuals, and we reach out to collaborate with communities. We produce recognisable evidence for the effectiveness of creative arts therapies, and we expand what counts as evidence. We consider the complex intersections of place, culture, age and gender in our work with our clients, our students, ourselves; we attend closely to the voices and ceremonies of the traditional owners of the countries in which we live. We come together to create 'communitas', in our conferences, our workplaces, and in the pages of this journal and whatever it will become, as our reformed and unified creative arts therapies association ANZACATA grows and takes shape. We are a community of the living and of those whom we remember, who remain key to the membership of our lives.

Farewell, Kay. Dowidzenia, Adrian.

# anzjat

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF ARTS THERAPY

## Editorial team

**Chief Editor** Sheridan Linnell

**Co-Editors** Stacey Bush, Catherine Camden Pratt, Deborah Green

**Arts Editor and Editorial Assistant** Vic Šegedin

**Journal Coordinator** Rigel Sorzano

**Copy Editors / Proofreaders** Marie Shannon and Margo White

## Peer review

The editorial team wishes to thank all peer reviewers who have generously contributed their time and expertise to the peer review of this edition of *ANZJAT*.

*ANZJAT* is a peer-reviewed journal and as such all accepted submissions are reviewed by peer reviewers well-versed and respected in the subject of the submission. Full length articles 5, 9, 10, 15, 22 and 24 in edition one, and full length articles 11, 12, 16, 17 and 25 in edition two were double anonymously peer-reviewed.

Published by the Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapies Association  
ACN 072 954 388  
PO Box 303, Glebe, NSW 2037, Australia  
[www.anzacata.org](http://www.anzacata.org)

© Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapies Association, 2018

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** Vic Šegedin

**Printing** Tender Print, Geelong, VIC, Australia