

# ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

**Editorial**

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In this 10 year anniversary issue of ATOL we are delighted to publish a wide variety of articles that not only present debates in contemporary art therapy theory and practice, but also reflect the cultural and political diversity the journal has promoted in the past decade. The launch and history of this first on-line, international art therapy journal is well documented in previous publications. As a contemporary international journal, with a growing readership, this special commemorative issue celebrates the journal's diversity as a professional resource. We have included commissioned articles by some founders of the ATOL Journal; Dr Andrea Gilroy, David Edwards, Dr Joy Schaverien and Barrie Damarell. By inviting these key contributors we hope their reflections underpin the ethos of the journal and at the same time provide a forward look to the future of ATOL as a platform for the ideas that inform and underpin the evolving practice of art therapy. Another invited contributor and founder member, Julia Meyerowitz-Katz, has chosen to signpost us to her recent publication 'Disquiet in the consulting room: everything/nothing that is said here is confidential' *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 2019, 64: 4, 565-586 an important and helpful exploration on how we as therapists manage the complex issue of confidentiality within the legal framework.

As we write, the world is grappling with the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented threat that has prompted a shift towards the delivery of all psychotherapies remotely across client groups. The representation of a range of digital media platforms has been relevant and present in ATOL's publications and this issue is no exception with the audio review of an exhibition by artists from Studio Upstairs.

As an open access international journal ATOL has enabled a cross fertilization of interdisciplinary debates encompassing art therapy, visual culture, politics and philosophy in the high quality of articles, reviews and submissions of art works (photography, video and reproductions); thankyou to the authors who have contributed over the years. The journal is produced using Open Journals Systems (OJS 3), which is an open-source software for the management of peer-reviewed academic journals. It's functionality is restrictive compared to a dedicated website and this is a limitation we accept in order to keep the journal within an open access, free economy. ATOL continues to build alliances internationally with the intention to reach towards the

challenges facing art therapy as a profession and a rigorous discipline in the current turmoil of global, political and ecological threats.

Albeit free from institutional restraints, the production of ATOL as an open-access resource is completely reliant on the voluntary work of the editorial board, reviewers and authors. Significantly at this time, we say goodbye to two members of the editorial board, Patricia Fenner and Dean Reddick, as well as founder and submissions editor, Tessa Dalley, who for ten years has worked tirelessly and been instrumental in the production of the journal. It goes without saying that without them ATOL would not have been the same. A very special thank you for the contribution of your time, wisdom and patience.

As a key founder of the journal Andy Gilroy was invited to contribute and, similarly to Schaverien, she provides us with an personal illustrated essay titled 'As if from another country'. With much conjecture about moving on Gilroy reminds us of ATOL's sustained remit as an '*international journal of art, therapy, politics and culture, and art therapy*'. She continues by reflecting on the process whereby art therapy and her intense involvement in Higher Education has drawn to a close and describes how these experiences have become for her now, to quote '*as if from another country*'. Along with letting go of professional aspects of her life, and as an ATOL member, readers who have followed Gilroy's many publications that focus on the discourse between art therapy and artistic identity will be able to enjoy her continued preoccupation with making, looking and thinking together, first explored in her 1989 Inscape article *On not being able to paint*. Here, in this issue Gilroy extends her discipline insights, but through the restoration of her own art making and personal images, towards a long held wish to discuss the relationship of text to image.

Barrie Damerell in 'Skin and Pigment: a glance back at the nature and use of oil pastel' has written an evocative reverie, remembering the beginnings of ATOL and the desire at that time to provide a platform that was as 'broad and creative as possible' for 'art therapy and its representation(s)'. His exploration on the history and use of the oil pastel looks at the notions of the 'ideal' and 'the broken', noting the discomfort we experience when things are 'tainted' and the tension between 'order and disorder'.

The invitation as a founding member of ATOL led David Edwards to reflect on his contribution to the subject of clinical supervision for art therapists. The article, 'Final thoughts on Clinical Supervision of Art Therapists' very clearly lays out what supervision is and isn't; he covers definitions, aims, tasks and also the limitations of supervision provided in the current risk averse culture of many organisations. The article highlights contributions made to this field in the past but also the need for further discussion and development specific to art therapy supervision and not just the adaption of psychotherapy/counselling models to art therapy. This article will be of particular interest and help to neophyte art therapists who will gain a concise overview of the subject, whilst it is a reminder for those not so new to the field, of the challenges and benefits of supervision.

In 'Spectral Houses: the Analyst's Drawings' Joy Schaverien reflects on her involvement with ATOL offering us a highly intimate and personal account of her retrospective response to a series of drawings she made while working with a patient who was diagnosed with a terminal illness and died during his analysis with her. This work has been published, and there is currently a new edition( by Routledge, in press) titled *The Dying Patient in Psychotherapy* with a new subtitle *Erotic Transference and Boarding School Syndrome*. The pictures were drawn by Schaverien during the final weeks of the analysis and as the therapeutic work drew to a close she increasingly drew between sessions. Initially the drawings were planned as a postscript to the new edition, but Schaverien has generously offered them to ATOL for our readership. As she looks back at the drawings Schaverien movingly recalls their meaning, and how the images of houses, swirling colours and rendered feelings provide potential new understanding to a therapeutic process of letting go. Letting go is common in all analysis, but here it has particular visual poignancy with the drawings meditating the powerful emotions Schaverien describes as 'countertransference bereavement'; through the images the psychotherapist is able to visually acknowledge the grief process and the final goodbye. Schaverien's contribution is another testament to the power of the image and its capacity to become 'retrospective data' (Schaverien 1992) thus allowing the reader into the therapist's unconscious explorations of an emotional analytic encounter. We hope this article gives you permission to engage in your own gaze and wonder about the therapeutic capacities needed when working with the dying patient.

'Bridging Art-Therapy and NVR: The Ramla Model for Domestic Resistance to Violence, forming a Resistance Laboratory' is an interesting exploration from Irit Braude who is based at the Centre for Early Childhood development in Ramla, Israel. Braude writes about her work with children who suffer from severe mental and behavioural problems and raises questions about the effectiveness of traditional conceptualisations of art therapy. She challenges us to think how we have privileged both the triangular relationship and the metaphorical meanings expressed through the art materials. Combining thinking and methodologies based on the Nonviolent Resistance Techniques (NVR) and backed by case study material, the article thoughtfully explores the evolution of a new working model that offers a 'resistance lab' in which conditions of practicing resistance to violence are used when working with parents and children in the same session. We think this article presents an interesting debate as to whether art therapy can be both theoretically and pragmatically integrated with the NVR approach and offer children a psychological boost in their experience of a sense of safety and wellbeing.

In 'A Frame that Bent' Sally Sayers writes such a timely paper looking at how change, specifically in this instance organisational change, can disrupt the therapeutic frame potentially rupturing the containing function of the therapeutic relationship. Sayers explores the parallel processes experienced by therapists and clients, the defences that come into play against change as it challenges the containing and holding aspect of the therapeutic relationship. She brings us to the idea of a 'flexible frame' that can withstand the change. A capacity for reflection becomes paramount to ensure fragmentation does not lead to rupture, both for the therapists within their own teams and for the clients in their process. This paper describes an unfortunately frequent experience of an organisation making changes without considering the impact systemically on the provision of therapeutic services. Several case vignettes demonstrate how can the therapists in the midst of this kind of change continue to provide therapy when they themselves have lost the frame that holds and contains them.

'A Tale of Two Launches: an arts-based, autoethnographic inquiry into decolonising art therapy in the context of (post) colonial Australia' continues the concerns raised in their recent book 'Art Therapy in Australia: Taking a Post Colonial, Aesthetic Turn'. Editors Gilroy, Linnell, McKenna and Westwood use images, words and stories of personal reactions, responses and reflection to give us a glimpse into their experiences of

launching their book in two different contexts in Australia. The authors take up the narrative structure of yarnning amongst themselves and with others. What results is a rich, meandering dialogue that, at times, feels like reading the entries of a personal travel diary, where the reader is witness to a crucial questioning of what art therapy is in this context and to how it might be a practice of social justice. The reader is taken along on a journey with the four authors into an ongoing inquiry into what is known and unknown, intimacy versus formality, acknowledgment of the devastation of colonisation and its ongoing injustices in the present. There is a straightforward naming of the often unspoken and/or whitewashed history of Australia, from this emerge ideas about identity, belonging and knowledge which are held foremost whilst the authors engage and grapple with their own process launching a book on art therapy in the Australian context.

‘Spacing it: Expanding perception of spatial relationships through art therapy’ written by Orit Dudai is an exploration of space in the context of art therapy as represented through maps. This exploration is related to neurological research and the work of Meltzer, Bick and Weddell in psychoanalysis and in art therapy that of Schaverien, Meyerowitz- Katz and Reddick. Dudai provides the reader with moving accounts of her work with an Autistic child and an adolescent experiencing agoraphobic anxieties. The case material is nicely illustrated with stimulating thought in relation to the ways in which an individual's environment and relationships can be explored and mapped in art therapy.

Continuing ATOL's international collaborations we are pleased to include an Italian translation of Dr Unnur Óttarsdóttir's article ‘Processing Emotions and Memorising Coursework through Memory Drawing’ first published in English in ATOL Vol. 9, No 1, 2018 and then the Icelandic version in Vol.10, No 1, 2019.

In this edition we have an audio review from Chris Brown and Alban Low of an exhibition by artists from Studio Upstairs, an arts and health charity, at the Three Colt Gallery in London. The title of the exhibition ‘Cos Every little Thing...’ was taken from a line from a Bob Marley song (...is gonna be alright). The exhibition showcases the work of over 25 artists who attend or work at the studio in Dalston, North London. Brown and Low reflect on the impact of context as it is provided to the viewer through the artists’

statements. They also talk about which images gain their attention and why in this exhibition. Themes include the impact of depression on creative expression, evocation of nostalgic memory and the public's response to viewing images that make political statements.