

# ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

**Editorial**  
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We extend a warm welcome to Vicky Nicholls, B. Ed, Grad Dip Child, Adolescent and Family Therapies, M. Art Therapy, AThR, as she joins the ATOL Editorial Board. Vicky is Senior Art Therapist at Austin Health's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and a lecturer at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia on the Master of Art Therapy training. We are sorry to say goodbye to Diana Collins from the Editorial Board and to thank Diana for her input into this issue of the journal.

The creative and diverse ways in which art therapists understand and use art are clearly seen in two papers published in this edition of ATOL: Art Therapy on Line. It reminds us of the power and potential of art to further our understanding of ourselves, each other and our contexts, both contemporarily and historically. Both papers are concerned with how art processes and art products can be understood and used to reflect upon and research complex questions and issues related to practice, identity, power and privilege; themes that are also present in the five reviews in this edition. The papers and reviews also share a common theme around collaboration, a process which is central to ATOL's ideology (and central to the endeavour of therapy) and which is especially important during a period where the contexts in which we practice continue to over-promote competitiveness and market-place ideology.

Dave Edwards and Barrie Damarell's paper, 'Curating Art Therapy: A conversation', is based on conversations between the authors around an exhibition in Sheffield in 2018, conceived and curated by Dave Edwards and titled 'A personal history of Art Therapy in less than 100 objects'. The conversation explores the reasons for the exhibition and the collaborative nature of the final show. The Personal History of Art Therapy includes reflections on retirement and the process of sorting through objects collected throughout life. We are reminded of the significance of objects, where 'certain objects may acquire powerful symbolic significance'. The authors look back at Edwards' long and distinguished career in art therapy by examining the meanings in, and of, some of these personal objects. The authors explore the role of the curator as a facilitator rather than an arbiter, with an emphasis on and invitation to the next generations of art therapists to develop and evolve the profession.

Helen Omand and Deborah Padfield's collaborative research paper, 'New Contexts: what art psychotherapy theory can bring to an understanding of using images to communicate the experience of pain in medical pain consultations', examines clinical consultations for people experiencing chronic pain using a set of pre-made images on cards. The images themselves are the result of a previous collaboration between the artist Padfield and chronic pain patients. Video transcripts of the consultations are researched using art therapy theories of triangular relating and the transactional use of images and by considering the images within a social and intersubjective frame. The authors develop rich understandings of the role and function of the images in the clinical encounters; they capture the complexity of the relationships between the patient, the clinician, the art work and the experience and diagnosis of chronic pain.

We are pleased to bring you three book reviews and two exhibition reviews: evidence of ATOL's commitment to inclusivity in the fields of art therapy and the visual arts.

The reviewed books and exhibitions, taken together, cover significant ground detailing the impact of colonialism, prejudice, power and marginalisation both at large and within the history and practice of art therapy, the arts and mental health.

David Berrie's 'Taming the Tide' is a thorough review of Farhad Dalal's book 'CBT: The Cognitive Behavioural Tsunami - Managerialism, politics, and the corruptions of science.' Berrie brings an incisive understanding to Dalal's much needed critique of CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), IAPT (Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies), NICE (The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) and the dubious economic and scientific ideologies that have allowed the so-called evidence-based tsunami to wash over so much so quickly.

Dr Sally Skaife reviews 'Art Therapy for Social Justice: Radical Intersections', edited by Savneet K. Talwar. Dr Skaife writes that the book 'gives voice to socially marginalised communities in a way that has barely been done before in art therapy literature'. The book challenges notions that pathology resides in the individual and contains chapters which focus on the complex relationships between health, care, marginalisation, prejudice and neglect. Dr Skaife complements the importance of these contextual understandings with a critique of the book's place within the history of American art therapy. She draws attention to the role and importance of the social unconscious in

relation to the book's criticism of psychoanalysis and a perceived dominance of deficit models of art therapy.

Arnell Ethrington Reader reviews, 'Art Therapy In Australia: Taking a postcolonial, aesthetic turn' edited by Andrea Gilroy, Sheridan Linnell, Tarquam McKenna and Jill Westwood. This in-depth review journeys through the fourteen chapters of the book which invite the audience to, 'gambol with the pictures, savour them, and wander through the text in any way you please'. Dr Ethrington summaries each chapter which tell stories of the impact of colonialism and trace the beginnings of art therapy in Australia through text, performance, and art. The chapters contain stories from Australian Aboriginal people, art therapists, art educators and immigrants and are likened to the concept of the 'Dreaming'.

We are pleased to bring you ATOL's first audio review. Chris Brown, Alban Low and Dean Reddick review The New Art Studio's 'Barriers' exhibition as the Studio celebrates its 5th year with an exhibition of 150 paintings. 'The New Art Studio is a unique therapeutic art studio for asylum seekers and refugees [that] provides a safe space to some of the most dispossessed members of our society.' <http://www.newartstudio.org.uk/> The review consists of a conversation between two art therapists and an artist, exploring ideas and reactions to the inspiring art works and to the important work of the New Art Studio.

Chris Brown's sensitive review of the 'Art of Caring' <http://www.artofcaring.org.uk/> exhibition at St Georges Hospital, Tooting, explores the imagery in this open submission, annual exhibition, led by artist Alban Low and the artist's co-operative Collect Connect. <https://collectconnect.blogspot.com/> Brown explores his response to the 200 plus images displayed on post cards and some written in wool. The review discusses the exhibition's themes of caring, of cuts to the NHS and of hope.

As part of ATOL's commitment to supporting the development of writing for art therapists and further to the Writing Art Therapy conference held by ATOL in October 2018, there was a follow up seminar in February this year. This smaller event was co-facilitated by Robin Tipple and Chris Brown who talked in more detail about the process

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of writing with writing projects being shared and problems discussed amongst participants.

ATOL continues to support emerging authors who wish to write about their practice and what interests them in their professional development. The next edition of ATOL is the 10th anniversary issue and we would be pleased to receive submissions with thoughts, reflections and areas of interest regarding the 10 year life of the journal.