

Editorial

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Nsamu Moonga, a music therapist whose doctoral research employs Indigenous research methodologies centring experiences, provides a critique of the University of Johannesburg Art Therapy Conference held in July 2023, focusing on the intersection of race, coloniality, and professionalisation within arts therapies. His reflections advocate for urgent structural reform and cultural sensitivity, promoting Indigenisation practices to dismantle exclusionary frameworks in the profession. Moonga's paper carefully positions the challenges of the sector and critically highlights the systemic barriers faced by minoritised practitioners and communities whose valuable contributions and needs remain marginalised in professional discourse.

Moonga's call provides a frame for arts therapy practitioners:

Moving forward, it is essential to dismantle these hierarchies and create spaces where both professional and non-professional artists and therapists can contribute equitably. These reflections serve as a call to action for art therapists to engage with community artists equitably in tackling these systemic barriers and actively work toward an Indigenisation and socially just practice.

This third issue of SAJAT takes some initial steps towards presenting emerging voices that start to engage this call and towards expanding contributions from drama and music therapies.

Masehlele Mashitisho, a current Master of Art Therapy student at the University of Johannesburg, shares her journey of setting out to investigate how art therapy enhances the private collective self-esteem of black South African students. She describes this quest as a response to her alienation as a student, questioning her race, value, and place within South African higher education institutions. She further found alienation and resistance to art therapy among the black students she approached. Her article presents her findings that using photographs and culturally appropriate or Indigenous materials can help clients struggling with resistance to artmaking. Mashitisho

asks the important question, “How do we become more inclusive in an overwhelmingly diverse and complex society such as our country?”

Nomfundo Ncanana, a recently qualified drama therapist, presents an aspect of her Master of Art Therapy study on how play awakens the inner child in black Indigenous African adults. She shares some outcomes of her workshops that utilise methods such as neuro-dramatic play and guided play as therapeutic tools to reconnect people with their past, promote healing, and enhance personal growth. Ncanana’s contribution emphasises play as a vital process for self-discovery and emotional well-being, which can be directed to support the mental health of black South African adults.

The article contribution by an interdisciplinary team of art and drama therapists working at Lefika La Phodiso, Sheri Errington, Kate Shand, and Rozanne Myburgh explores and expands the aspect of Lefika’s open studio approach, which Hayley Berman originally initiated. Through the participation of children as co-researchers in the project, the authors provide insight into how Lefika’s open studio may contribute to creating a child-friendly city for children residing in inner-city Johannesburg by providing a safe space for children to express their lived realities on their own terms.

Elize-Helé Kieser, a Master of Art Therapy student based at Lefika La Phodiso, explores three case study vignettes that showcase moments where six community arts counsellors reflect on their creative process and express meaning through personal and familial narratives and images. Kieser’s contribution lies in revealing self-compassion as a central component in developing self-awareness and empathy through narrative group art therapy.

Gillian Brollo writes about her findings drawn from her Masters in Drama Therapy-inspired workshops for grief work with women who are distressed after an abortion. Brollo describes a range of embodied creative activities that help women come to terms with their distress and imagine a future where abortion was in the past.

Kathryn Ann Magee presents her Masters in Drama Therapy literature review of existing theories and practices that explore drama therapy techniques such as dramatic ritual, role method, narradrama, and developmental transformations to address intimacy disruptions resulting from childhood trauma and how the intimacy disruptions manifest in adult relationships. Magee’s research makes a valuable contribution to trauma-informed care.

Vanessa Tsao, a current Master of Art Therapy student at the University of Johannesburg, expands art therapy materials to include baking as part of her research project. Her participants consist of unaccompanied art therapy trainees who bake and ice cakes in their respective locations. She maintains that baking offers art therapy trainees a novel and challenging experience, differing from their usual engagement with art materials. Tsao concludes that baking can provide a comprehensive sensory experience that facilitates emotional regulation, mindfulness, and self-efficacy.

Claire Woollatt draws from her Master of Art Therapy research study that explores attachment using a clay-based art therapy collaboration in a family affected by a rare disease diagnosis. She traces the journey of making a clay plate as a metaphor for the therapeutic representation of the family and their experience of accepting the concepts of brokenness and resilience. The art therapy processes explore the stages of the clay, from its initial malleability, its brittleness in the unfired form, its tentative strength as a bisque piece, to its stronger glazed form. The broken plate's repair using *kintsugi* led to her conclusion that an awareness of the family's strength and resilience was symbolised through the object's creation and repair.

Kate Shand, qualified art therapist, presents her own story of bereavement and loss and how her doll-making was soothing, comforting, and encouraging, as well as, at times, confrontational, reflective, and disruptive. Her reflections on her own doll-making practice provide a moving account which she convincingly extends to an understanding and practice of how art therapists can use doll making to support bereaved clients.

The final contribution is a book review by Sinethemba Makanya of *Empathy Pathways: A View from Music Therapy* by Andeline dos Santos (2022). The book is a comprehensive examination of empathy through the lens of music therapy that challenges conventional notions by emphasising relational empathy, cultural humility, and pluriversality. Makanya offers a reflective review pointing out the book's contributions and possible missed opportunities for deeper engagement with decolonial perspectives. One solution she identifies in this regard is for the author to decolonise her citational practice. She commends *Empathy Pathways* (2022) for offering fertile ground for developing new frameworks of empathy and relationality and providing a critical lens through which to explore its role in societal healing. She notes the contribution of a deeply embedded understanding of empathy in relational, cultural, and social

contexts, calling for a continued commitment to self-reflection, inclusivity, and intercultural sensitivity. By way of a conclusion, Makanya echoes the challenge posed by Moonga in his provocation. She cautions that students must remember that acknowledging one's positionality should not be the conclusion but the starting point for continued self-examination, systemic action, and deeper intercultural dialogue.

We welcome and look forward to Dr Makanya's leadership in this regard in her recent appointment as a senior lecturer in the Art Therapy programme at the University of Johannesburg.

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My sincere appreciation to art therapist Kate Shand, a recent alum of the Master of Art Therapy programme at the University of Johannesburg, for her sterling work as production editor and for securing many of these inspiring contributions in this Emerging Voices issue.

The 11 submissions to this issue required 22 reviews. We are indebted to the role of the Editorial Board, advisors, and reviewers for their commitment, time, and expertise in ensuring that the best versions of the submissions are available to the journal.

As always, thanks to the wonderful University of Johannesburg press manager Wikus van Zyl for his generous support, patience, and beautiful design and layout of each issue. And again, thanks to Tanya Pretorius for her careful copy editing and commitment to supporting publishable versions of new voices in the field.

We are very excited that the call is out for next SAJAT themed special issue ***Psycho-Spiritual Practices in Arts Therapies in Southern Africa***, which will be guest edited by Vasintha Pather, Lireko Qhobela, and Nsamu Moonga. This platform will further expand the reach and depth toward "an Indigenisation and socially just practice" of South African Arts Therapies.

The Call for Abstracts is open: <https://journals.uj.ac.za/index.php/sajat/announcement>