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Editorial

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One of the key aspects of arts for social justice is the central recognition of its collaborative nature that foregrounds interconnectedness and empathy. The forum of a conference in the early stages of the development of the Art Therapy qualification at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) enabled both evaluation and reflection by situating student participants as dynamic partners. We engaged the first cohort of Art Therapy master's students to collaborate in designing the conference and website to share with the art therapy field and exchange practice with leaders in global change initiatives.

The University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice* focused on the training and practice of art therapy in social justice in the Global South. The keynote address by Dr Lireko Qhobela cautions us to be intentional about attending to historical wounds. Panel presentations included 'Art therapy in the Global South: Now and next' (Moon et al.), 'Research as storytelling' (Potash & Kapitan), 'Using the arts to work with refugees and displaced persons in times of crisis and war' (Speizers et al.), and 'Art therapy and social activism in community-based projects' (Myburgh et al.). A social dreaming workshop with the theme 'Deep diving towards a vision for social justice: A visual dream matrix' was a practical visualisation that included approximately 70 participants (Berman & Pule). The Art Therapy master's students published their research projects in the newly established *South African Journal of Arts Therapies* (SAJAT), which was launched as the concluding highlight of the conference. The students participated in critical evaluation through the peer review process and were encouraged to invite and engage with a range of leaders in the field. The students were asked to critically reflect on how they understood their own agency in the field of transformative art therapy practice and social justice using group and individual art practice and writing. Their comments and experiences are situated and textured to a local context and can be integrated and shared with future cohorts to enrich the field.

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Reflections on the conference for SAJAT

By Kim Berman with Art Therapy student voices

Introduction

In organising this conference, it became evident to me that the art therapy profession and its professional bodies have a contested position as "notably, Black individuals remain conspicuously invisible within the field of arts therapies" (Moonga 2024, forthcoming). The very skewed demographics persisted during the first four years of the Art Therapy training at UJ. While this Art Therapy programme is new and the first art therapy academic qualification on the continent, the programme is still finding its way. The sector remains primarily white, with less than 20% black student enrolment. Critical voices are vital for both hearing and amplification. It is essential for art therapists to envision identity and difference from an intersectional framework that regards race, class, gender, and sexuality as intersecting principles that shape everyday life (Talwar 2010) and what is required is "deconstructing our own positions of power and privilege [that lie] at the heart of a social model" (Talwar, 2015). Growing the diversity among the students and staff in the programme is fundamental to meeting the core principles of transformation, equity, and access. Further work is required to prepare applicants and access external funding to develop this programme.

Lireko Qhobela was the keynote speaker at the conference, and she called us to be intentional about attending to historical wounds. She asks: "*How can we, as creative arts therapists on the African continent, begin to unpack historical wounds together?*" Nsamu Moonga further notes in his draft reflections that "the wounds of historical inequality and exclusion through such mechanisms as colonialism and apartheid continue to fester, much to the discomfort and desire to move on with the more effortless and fun things of being an art therapist"(Moonga 2024, forthcoming).

This first Art Therapy conference with a focus on training for social justice seeks to promote coalitions, partnerships and initiatives that aim to interrogate a deeper understanding of social justice decoloniality as well as identify strategies to address these inequities and promote greater diversity in our training programme.

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Objectives of the conference

As the first formal art therapy postgraduate programme in South Africa, the first objective was to present the innovative research of the new art therapy students to the field. The second objective was to network with the broader community and the field to establish a position and to evaluate where we are going as a field. The third objective was guided by the funding received from the UJ for a conference focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of a traumatised South African society in response to the UJ mission of 4IR for community impact and UJ's call to Global Excellence and Stature (GES.4). Evaluation itself can be seen as a development strategy when it is inclusive and participatory, opening doorways to ongoing capacity building and social change. Insights and reflections from the conference can extend and inform evaluation processes to the particular needs of innovative systems change (Patton, 2010).

Pedagogy of social justice

UJ's Art Therapy programme is at a threshold of research and practice, which presents a unique opportunity to develop a new teaching and learning programme through the lens of how we understand decoloniality and social impact. Embracing a pedagogy of social justice in the Global South necessitates the development of a new curriculum that critically examines and challenges the inherent power dynamics and inequalities stemming from a history of colonialism and apartheid. Moreover, a pedagogy of social justice places a responsibility on educators to cultivate a critical consciousness among students, fostering a commitment to social justice. Developmental evaluation is integrated into the programme design and implementation. It can also deepen connections to important values shared by those involved (Berman, 2018, p. 87-127).

In my view, this new art therapy training has added a valuable dimension to social action research within the context of arts education in South Africa by advocating for social change through community processes with purposeful social impact. Higher education institutions can create safe spaces that help individuals engage with and identify approaches to alleviate the widespread anxiety and fear caused by the pandemic. Moving forward, the arts are valuable to apply these lessons in educational institutions, offering students –

as well as the communities they work with – coping strategies for navigating constant uncertainty and anxiety.

Part of the aims of the conference presentations was to share examples of ethical praxis and approaches that can accommodate the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of art therapy practice in a traumatised environment.

Value of student voices

It is important to encourage and listen to the critical voices of the students in how they experience the value of their training and the conference. All the honours and master's students attending the conference were asked three questions:

1. What are your reflections on art therapy and social justice - personally and in your training/professional development to date?
2. What do you feel has been the most useful part of your training to be an art therapist in South Africa?
3. What are your reflections on the conference, and what are the most significant take-aways of the conference?

The honours and master's students had various crucial insights into their own experiences, the programme, and the conference. For the purpose of profiling their voices, I have extracted quotes from their reflections that address some of the themes with which the conference engaged. While these extracts are not comprehensive, the selection addresses some of the themes of training for social justice, such as intersectionality, diversity, community engagement, participatory approaches, empathy, and the SDGs.

One of the speakers at the conference, Lynne Kapitan, pointed out the fundamental core values of embracing art therapy. In an earlier paper on 'Social action in practice: Shifting the ethnocentric lens in cross-cultural art therapy encounters', Kapitan (2007, p. 104) acknowledges that art therapists become social activists when they embrace awareness of the connection between suffering and social imbalance and actively commit to social transformation through advocacy for disenfranchised people. She points out both in her presentation and in the paper that to engage responsibly, "relevant ethical obligations that accompany professional activism must be identified, including (and especially) cultural competence" (Kapitan, 2015, p. 104). Her

call for "self-reflexive strategies for disrupting ethnocentric lenses" is echoed in some of the students' responses (Kapitan, 2015).

Ethical obligation

One of the honours students embraces self-reflexivity in her own positionality in addressing the question of how she understands social justice:

> I cannot avoid who I am in this work, and that my whiteness may limit who I can serve (especially when it comes to language). However, I am determined to fight for a rhythm that meets my own professional and activist needs when I am qualified as an art therapist. I believe this question is one I will be asking myself again and again. Engaging in this work helped me to explore and imagine the scope of an art therapist's work and to both expand this scope and to know when to reach its edges and avoid white saviourism. I hope that wherever I land on those questions in the future that it leads me to handle the stories of others with extreme care, sensitivity, and respect (*Tavia Viglietti*).

Another honours student understands her role in using art therapy to bridge divides:

> Additionally, the medium of art has the power to bridge divides and connect individuals from various walks of life, making it a valuable tool for fostering social unity and promoting positive change in the country. As South Africa continues to navigate its path towards equality and justice, art therapy can play a crucial role in supporting individuals and communities on their journey of healing and transformation (*Vanessa Tsao*).

Pedagogical strategies

Part of students' preparation for community engagement in the first term module is to engage critically with a range of methodologies such as appreciative inquiry (AI), participatory modes of practice, performance, and accountability reporting (PAR), among other methodologies. There is a core premise that reverses a developmental framework of deficiency that views under-resourced communities as 'needing help'. The assumption of neediness is a dangerous position that some students enter the programme with as this notion overlooks strengths and resources already present in the communities.

We discuss issues of exploitative research relationships of "doing research *on* people" compared with participatory practices "*with* participants" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). We explore storytelling, aspects of co-creation, and co-researchers as agents of their stories. The students explore Photovoice as a visual research method to better understand the power of participant-led research (Wang et al., 2005).

One honours student (from Botswana), understanding the value of participation, remarked:

> Promoting social justice requires understanding of and collaboration and connection with people whose worlds and experiences are different from our own. Art therapy can play a role in social justice by facilitating and fostering connection among people through the safe spaces it creates for sharing. It seems contradictory to be concerned with people's mental health and not with promoting a more just and equal society. Witnessing the art therapy-related work happening in other African countries, even without formal training, was particularly inspiring (*Michelle Groth*).

A second-year master's student who is in the process of experiential clinical placements also comments on cultural sensitivity to unequal power dynamics.

> Individuals who have had the privilege of receiving formal training in art therapy hold a unique position to advance the field and increase access for those who have not been similarly fortunate. This responsibility comes with the recognition of the power dynamic it creates. Dismantling barriers that limit access is crucial to redressing this power imbalance. Moreover, art therapists must acknowledge that formal training is not the sole measure of expertise. Lived experiences, cultural practices, and community-based learning can also provide valuable knowledge. The field of art therapy can be made more equitable and effective by embracing diverse forms of knowledge (*Kamal Naran*).

Issues of race and diversity have been a consistent challenge in building a new programme that has not managed to attract sufficient Black students with the combination of art, psychology, and the financial means to afford the course. In many ways, the burden of enlightenment on issues of race and exploitation falls on the few students of colour in the programme.

> Black art therapists entering a field historically dominated by white practitioners face unique challenges and opportunities. Despite potential barriers, their presence

challenges power dynamics, fostering inclusivity and equitable access to art therapy services. The presence of Black art therapists promotes cultural competence and challenges biases. Their unique insights inspire culturally sensitive interventions that address the needs of historically marginalised communities. Diversifying the profession builds trust and encourages more people from different cultural backgrounds to seek art therapy support (*Gugulethu Manana*).

Regarding training in art therapy, the students unanimously express enthusiasm for their embrace of this modality as effective in addressing some of the core challenges.

I am convinced that no other method can reach people and affect social justice as much as art therapy. Art and the image-making process are strong communicators, and working with the medium allows not only healing but also education and advocacy (*Madri Jansen van Rensburg*).

Art therapy's unique characteristics, such as its creativity, acceptance, and use of metaphor, make it an exceptional discipline for addressing social justice issues in South Africa. By embracing diverse artistic expressions, art therapy creates a safe and inclusive space for healing and growth (*Vanessa Tsao*).

Self-reflexivity

It is evident that students understand the importance of 'un-learning' their assumptions and to self-reflexively engage in critical reflections with community partners that take into account the social, political, economic, and cultural sensitivities and differences.

Art therapy has the potential to increase [meaningful exchange] between respective social identities. It has an ability to emphasise and enhance the overlapping factors, minimising perceived distinctions. Art therapy increases self-awareness and self-discovery. Simultaneously, it increases the awareness of and relation between the self, others, and the moment. It allows feeling others rather than thinking them. This wide-open space is simultaneously intimidating and motivating as aspiring art therapists are becoming pioneers in contextual research in almost any topic they are interested in (*Else Roos*).

> My voice is much more present, and I have much more confidence in what I want to say, but this is only because I am not certain of anything. I am always learning. The course has given me the voice of a leader and the humility of a student. I fluctuate between both, and this develops the way I think about people, stories, and what art therapy could mean in a South African context (*Denita Goosen*).

The importance of self-reflexivity has been a core component of the training. This was further reiterated by panel members Jordan Potash and Lynn Kapitan, who reiterated that the context of social action interrogates the self as an ethically responsible member of collective action. Both scholars emphasise self-reflexivity as crucial to broadening one's lens "because it allows one to pay attention not only to what one experiences across cultures but also, just as importantly, how one navigates the cultures internalised within oneself" (Kapitan, 2015, p. 108).

> The subjectivity and reflections have been an important part of my personal growth journey to becoming a better arts therapist. Additionally, the facilitation of important conversations and critical thinking has also been an important part of training, for me, so far. Social justice in art therapy is a vital part of the work we do and need to do. I believe that social justice needs to start within each of us individually and then we'll be able to apply it more effectively in practice. I believe the gathering of training and practising arts therapists globally and in a hybrid fashion is a very important and significant addition to the world of arts therapies (*Nicole van Wyk*).
>
> Being able to examine my own prejudice or assumptions and critically engage around these has been most useful, as it has trained me to be a more reflexive practitioner. We may be only at the beginning in many respects with regard to access to arts therapies and social justice but so much is already being achieved through the efforts of passionate individuals within their own communities. This is an inspiring, motivating take-away, as through little steps, we can create a ripple effect (*Jo van Zyl*).

Cross-cultural art therapy

International professor of art therapy Catherine Moon co-facilitated a cross-cultural panel on art therapy in the Global South, which included participants from Botswana, Chile, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. Each

panellist reflected on the potential benefit of cross-cultural art therapy as an opportunity to learn from one another and deepen connections and awareness. Moon posed a critical question:

> How do we disrupt the long-established and highly problematic pattern of treating the Global North as the producer and distributor of knowledge and the Global South as the recipient of such knowledge?

This question regarding the assumed role of the Global South resonated with some of the students and conference participants.

> To experience the work that is being done in art therapy throughout Africa was my personal highlight of this conference. To share this with a growing community of like-minded arts therapists, including drama and music therapists, created a larger community and added to the potential development of the arts in playing a vital role in mental health care. I felt supported and comforted to be a part of a bigger picture. It was wonderful to connect face-to-face with peers by participating in conversations, workshops, studio sessions, and social dreaming. This connectivity, especially in looking at the 'us', was beautifully held by all present in the space, aligning with the ethos of Ubuntu, where our humanness is related to being a part of belonging to a community of art therapists (*Sandra Greeff*).

> Training with a focus on social justice equips art therapists to address diverse populations' needs and advocate for positive change. Training as an art therapist in South Africa fosters inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. The art therapy training emphasises cultural sensitivity, integrating local art traditions and addressing unique challenges. This creates more relevant and meaningful therapeutic experiences for clients. The conference's emphasis on promoting the arts therapies as an Africa-centred hub of research and training for social impact aligns with SDGs. This initiative contributes to a more sustainable and equitable future for all, reflecting the dedication of the art therapy profession to social justice and positive societal change (*Gugulethu Manana*).

A consistent theme throughout the conference was the acknowledgement of ethical practice in all cross-cultural encounters. Such encounters require compassionate professionals who recognise the potency of art therapy's capacity to negotiate complex encounters. The qualifying master's students all recognise the value of artmaking as particularly useful for critically examining and stimulating discussion about underlying power dynamics in cross-cultural

encounters. The master's students acknowledge that continuous critical thinking ensures that art therapy is delivered with integrity, cultural sensitivity, and empathy.

> The most useful part of my training continues to be the internship. This space provides experience working within our context that is wholly practical and in which you develop professionally as a therapist. The knowledge you gain and create working in these spaces is unique to the context and there are many places that can provide you with various South African experiences. This part of the course is practical and hands-on, and you are challenged each day personally and professionally in significant ways (*Vanessa Tsao*).
>
> As a future art therapist, I feel that our training has been aligned with creating a consciousness around social justice in addressing topics such as homelessness, foreign national refugee status in South Africa, rights, dignity of vulnerable communities, and food insecurities. This has been addressed and explored in supervision connected to placement sites where I have completed my required clinical hours. For me, the most useful part of the training has been the focus on empathy and how this plays forward. I am developing a 'good enough' therapeutic relationship with clients. Creating this in a 'good enough safe-enough space' has been the main part of the training that is essential as a clinician working in a South African context (*Sandra Greeff*).

Pedagogically fostered empathy

Interconnectedness and empathy are fundamental lessons emerging from the students' comments. When educators listen to students and guide them in their learning and analysis, students start to actualise their ambitions in ways that support their personal confidence and they feel empowered. The students understand the value of art as a vehicle for solidarity, empathy, and connection. Art facilitates storytelling in ways that lead to agency in addressing the challenges faced in times of trauma. Self-awareness includes examining one's values, worldviews, beliefs, assumptions, and biases and how these impact cross-cultural relationships.

> Personally, and in my training, I connect to art therapy's ability to foster empathy. Art has the unique ability to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers, creating a powerful tool for fostering empathy and understanding. The most useful part of

my training is the reflective practice groups and studio practice, where we engage with self-reflection and clinical work with clients in our training. These reflective spaces are where we can engage with the context that we live and work in, which includes all the intersectionalities that come with living and working in South Africa and in the art therapy (and arts therapies) field in South Africa (*Kamal Naran*).

Reflecting on the intersection of these disciplines allows us to appreciate the power of art as a therapeutic tool and as a catalyst for positive change in the pursuit of social equality and justice. Empathic behaviour is vital to fostering a compassionate and inclusive society. Art therapy's focus on self-expression and healing offers a potent tool to dismantle systemic injustices and promote holistic well-being. The entry of South Africa-trained art therapists, especially Black art therapists, into the field is a significant step toward diversity, representation, and cultural competence in the art therapy profession. Black art therapists' fresh perspectives and lived experiences enrich the therapeutic process, making it more relevant to the diverse needs of the population (*Gugu Manana*).

Conclusion

The use of art and art therapy potentially enables students to make positive contributions to their communities and society. By the time the students graduate as South Africa's first qualified art therapists, we would like to position them with a heightened sense of agency, preparing them to navigate the complexities of a traumatised society with an intentional capacity for positive impact. Social change and development for social justice require collective action and leadership that will embrace the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of art therapy practice and integrate the understanding that change promotes agency and resilience, as well as active healing and repair.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Nsamu Moonga for sharing his reflections on the conference, a version of which will appear in the forthcoming issue.

Thank you to the following students for sharing their reflections:

Tavia Viglietti, Nicole van Wyk, Michelle Groth, Madri Jansen van Rensburg, Else Roos, Denita Goosen, Vanessa Tsao, Sandra Greeff, Kamal Naran, Joanne van Zyl, and Gugulethu Manana.

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Conference images

Figure 1: Art Therapy students and staff at the conference, July 2023

Figure 2: Celebrating the launch of the *South African Journal of Arts Therapy (SAJAT)* with authors and members of the editorial board, July 2023

Conference:
Training Art Therapists for Social Justice

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University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023

Abstract

This opening address presents excerpts from the opening address of the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023. Key themes touched on in the address include the role of privilege, intersectionality, and trauma-informed practices in promoting equity and inclusivity within the field. It further examines the challenges and opportunities in addressing societal inequalities through art therapy education. This opening address aims to contribute to ongoing dialogues on social justice within art therapy pedagogy and practice.

Bios

Nataly Woollett is part of the core team of theory lecturers for the art therapy programme at the University of Johannesburg and also contributes to community and professional practice. Woollett is a South African therapist

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and researcher, trained and registered in the fields of psychology, play therapy, and art therapy. She is a senior researcher and senior lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand.

Dr Hayley Berman is an art psychotherapist and group analyst. She is part of the core team of theory lecturers for the UJ art therapy programme Johannesburg and contributes to community and professional practice. She is the author of *Dreaming Revolutions, Group Analysis Beyond Words – The Elaborative Matrix* and has been hosting social dreaming matrices since 2006, predominantly within contexts of political and social trauma.

Nataly Woollett and Hayley Berman

We would like to welcome you to our conference called *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*. It is a wonderful opportunity to be together, both in person and online, and to engage in some heady, and hopefully productive, dialogue around what social justice means within the context of training arts therapists.

'Social justice' is a term coined by Jesuit scholar Luigi Taparelli in the 1840s. It is a concept that elicits strong emotional responses. It speaks to redressing oppression, speaking out and challenging inequality and injustice. Frequently, engaging in dialogue around social justice can lead to fragmentation and conflict, defensiveness, and frustration. As such, we would like to invite that we all take care of ourselves and one another, entering a discourse where we honour one another's perspectives and voices. It is important that at this conference, we all speak from a place of positionality where we own our voice and experience and create a context of shared learning and understanding. Kindness matters in this regard.

We are aware, as the hosts and conveners of the University of Johannesburg art therapy training, that we are white, South African women speaking about issues of social justice and what that might mean. It is because of our privilege that we were all able to train professionally in other countries.

Both of us were clinicians within community settings before we stepped into academia. The course convenor Kim Berman, and us, in our personal capacities, co-founded the NGOs Artist Proof Studios, Lefika La Phodiso, and Lawyers Against Abuse, responsive to the needs of the community and redress, such as creating jobs, expertise, training, and sustainability. These endeavours require the commitment of many invested people and this level of commitment is required over the long term. Many people on the panels and

within the audience have created NGOs and community projects themselves, so they fundamentally understand what this entails.

The South African National Arts Therapies Association (SANATA) is another NGO that has responded to the needs of our community and has been beneficial to all of us. The value of civil society and the NGO sector in South Africa and generally in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) cannot be underestimated in catalysing systemic change and forging paths towards social justice.

The Master of Art Therapy training and qualification launched at the University of Johannesburg came about after many years of advocacy and determination of a group of people, not just those staffed on the programme. The training also drew from the expertise of trailblazers at other South African institutions that founded academic programmes before ours, namely the Music Therapy department at the University of Pretoria and the Drama Therapy department at Wits University. Leaders in our field here in South Africa have been grappling with creating curricula that are responsive to the realities of our context and that ensure graduates leave their training with ethical, reflexive, and long-term abilities to work meaningfully.

Our training at the University of Johannesburg has been underscored by a commitment to social justice and intersectionality (Berman, 2022; Crenshaw, 1989) with a trauma-informed and future-focused lens. We have found incorporating psychoanalytic and group analytic language useful to deal with the complexity of intergenerational oppression and repression. The language has core concepts of free association, free-floating attention, non-censorship of speech, containing, and holding of thoughts and feelings. In addition, the use of objects and images provides spaces of "cultural experience" (Winnicott, 1974) bridging disparate worlds. The enormous social and structural determinants that lead to poor mental health in our context are poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, HIV, violence, poor access to quality education and healthcare, and the unscrupulous corruption of the State (Coovadia, 2009; Jacobs & George, 2021) and all these were exacerbated by the pandemic (Nguse & Wassenaar, 2021). These determinants of poor mental health are deemed crucial to informing curricula and ensuring we make effective attempts to meet the needs of people living in South Africa. Mental health needs tend to be unrecognised and untreated, especially with those most vulnerable, and we as professionals are required to be reflexive

and responsive if we are to be of value. Whilst honouring our own truths and experiences, we need to be open to the truths of others and, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) warns, not be limited by the "dangers of a single story". We all carry many stories within us and many of those stories are only told when we feel safe enough to share them.

Nelson Mandela (1994) said that "as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest", and we would add 'be free'. While our skill sets cannot change all the challenges our clients endure, particularly in low and middle-income countries contexts, we can mitigate risk and respond to vulnerability and strengths through the way we are with others. Creativity plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges of biopsychosocial health.

There are a few pertinent questions that we all should try to problem solve and hold in mind. We need to consider access when it comes to training in art therapy and being remunerated for this profession. Not everyone has access to the education required to practice as a licenced and registered art therapist in South Africa. Not everyone has access to income to pay for services. Who has access has enormous ramifications for social transformation in the field.

As a point of reflection, according to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2021), 81% of Grade 4 children (ten-year-olds) are unable to read for meaning in South Africa – this is a test administered in our 11 official languages every five years and compares trends globally in student competencies in relation to goals and standards for reading education. As a comparison, Grade 4s in South Africa are three years behind Grade 4s in Brazil, a similar country in terms of GDP and inequity. Incidentally, the last time the PIRLS was administered, in 2016, 78% of Grade 4 children could not read for meaning (Roux et al., 2023), thus we are not 'catching up' over time. These kinds of statistics have grown over decades. The gap between those who are literate and those who are not is also currently growing exponentially in our country. What does this mean for us all? Having a course *available* does not mean it is *accessible* and how do we bridge these divides? This gap elucidates another concept of social injustice: "childism", which is an active prejudice against children (Sporre, 2021; Young-Bruehl, 2009; Wall, 2022).

In order to place this training in context, the Foundation Course in Art Therapy was first developed and delivered in 1996 by Hayley Berman in the basement of the sculpture studio at the Technikon of the Witwatersrand

before it became the University of Johannesburg. This foundation course was a significant precursor to the Master of Art Therapy programme. Community art counselling evolved as a category of profession, bypassing the limitations of access to tertiary education that is still delivered by Lefika La Phodiso, parallel to this new Master of Art Therapy.

The programme aims to catalyse personal, social, and political change towards "a democratic way of life for good world citizenship" (Foulkes, 1964). Intermediate professional training in art therapy, as well as other creative arts therapies, and indeed in other mental health professions like psychology, were initiated to address the skills required to respond to high levels of trauma. This model is replicated in other contexts, especially in low and middle-income countries. Ideas of skills shortage and skills transfer are important in global arts and mental health sector responses, especially when governments do not take up the responsibility to invest in the mental health of populations in need. At this conference, we will consider what this means in hierarchical systems when professionals are not valued 'as much' in multidisciplinary teams, are not properly registered, and are not remunerated equally for their level of experience, skill, and commitment.

At the University of Johannesburg, our model is based on the inclusion of co-created arts-based participatory action approaches and visual research, allowing us to move beyond deficits, promoting people's agency and the strengths of what they bring. The creative arts also offer new and innovative ways of connecting. The COVID-19 pandemic offered opportunities to find imaginative ways of connecting globally. As John Dewey (1934) reminds us, we do not learn from experience; we learn from the way we reflect on that experience, and we all need each other to digest and metabolise those experiences. Our interdependence is implicated here. At the heart of it all is developing reflexivity, not only reflection. The creative arts offer powerful ways of doing this. This conference is a matrix representing the social unconscious of the creative arts therapies.

We will pose questions in these next few days to think collectively about a long-term commitment to addressing psychosocial needs with a social justice focus. Let us be aware of our positionality, stay curious and open, and engage gently and critically with this discourse. Group analyst Dick Blackwell (2003) suggests we need to confront our colonising and colonised identities, interrogate how and when we have become raced, gendered, and classed,

and "we need a space where we are allowed to let it come to the surface". Perhaps together it is possible to imagine a place where social justice might be realised more meaningfully and where a move towards democratic thinking and practice is implicit. This conference is a rich and fertile space for us to do this collectively.

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Training and research: Art therapy for social justice

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Abstract

This presentation is about decoloniality and reflective practice in relation to arts therapy training, research, and social justice. I assert that practising our profession is a great responsibility and an attempt to align that practice with the broader conversations happening within the Global South. A few more assertions are made from this initial one: firstly, that reflexivity ensures that we learn from ourselves, our past, and then move forward with an openness to being critical. Secondly, I acknowledge that social justice may not necessarily be achieved on a grand scale with reflexivity alone and therefore a more systemic approach may be necessary. Lastly, by acknowledging that social justice in South Africa is a continuation of the fight against apartheid and its legacies of violence, educators and students are invited to contribute to decolonising the ways they engage with training and practice materials in the classroom. The presentation concludes with a suggestion made in collaboration with other applied arts practitioners that education should move toward a critical contemplative pedagogy that encourages the transformation of destructive emotions for skilful action.

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Thank you to the Drama for Life department at the University of the Witwatersrand. I want to acknowledge the immense role it has played in my pursuit of a career in merging art with the humanities and social sciences. For a long time, the department was my home, and because of that, I have been able to nurture invaluable friendships and working relationships. I thank the multiple reading groups through which I have been lucky to connect with other thinkers, to be challenged and to grow as an academic. Many of the conversations in such spaces cultivated inspiration for some of the thoughts I will be sharing today.

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A keynote address

Scoping the history of art therapy in South Africa informed me of how much of a struggle it was to practice soon after apartheid ended. I have an idea of the struggle to practice based on my own experience after qualifying as a drama therapist in 2015. While preparing for my talk, I was struck by the number of art therapists who have published in and about the South African context (Solomon, 2006; Berman, 2011; Dalton, 2018). Today, what I will highlight is perhaps a reminder and a reiteration of what most of us grapple with within our various working environments. Without minimising the complexities that exist within our practice, I think we are at an advantage to critically analyse our progress thus far because we are still a growing profession. I will specifically be speaking about decoloniality and reflective practice in relation to training, research, and social justice. This is because I believe reflexivity is an important ethic when engaging in social justice work (Schön, 1983, 2017). Reflexivity keeps us in check. It ensures that we learn from ourselves and our past, and then move forward with an openness to being critical.

I speak as a drama therapist, but I hope we can all find ourselves in the examples and case studies I will be presenting today. When Kim Berman[1] asked me to talk about my research and the conference themes today, I wanted to weasel my way out of it and find a reason for her to choose someone else. However, a friend of mine reminded me of what I had been aware of since the time of my graduation in 2015: that, at face value, our professions appear to lack the diversity they seek. In other words, more representation of professionals coming from marginalised groups is still needed to make their presence felt in the field: the 'Biko Blacks', the queer and differently abled bodies. In this regard, I thought perhaps that the idea of transformation and social justice would be one I could speak about from the viewpoint of individual and collective reflexivity within our practices.

I was made aware of this during my doctoral research when one of my participants, a white woman and a drama therapist, shared with me that when she worked with a group of Black children in a township, she could not help but wonder about the degree to which her whiteness became coercive. In other words, she *felt* as if the children participated in the drama activities to please her. Scholars who have investigated the dilemmas of working in South Africa acknowledge the ways in which the country's violent history continues to influence the present (Barnes & Cooper, 2014; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2015; Cooper & Ratele, 2018), and I thought this example was one of those ways.

Anecdotally, it has not escaped me to notice that practitioners who look like me (Black), after training, become somewhat invisible within the structures that try to hold the professions together. Of course, I've had private conversations with my Black peers before, and the invisibility I speak of appears to connect to a deeper historical wound. To this, a question I might ask is: how can we, as creative arts therapists on the African continent, begin to unpack historical wounds together?

I trained as a drama therapist, registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), and practised professionally for two years before deciding to pursue a doctoral degree in theatre and performance studies. I found comfort in running workshops *as* a drama therapist instead of strictly calling my workshops *drama therapy*. This was not because I lacked

1 Kim Berman is a visual arts professor at the University of Johannesburg and the convenor of the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023.

the confidence to call my work drama therapy, but rather, I found that a collaboration with other social justice workers asked for a negotiation of space, expertise, and boundary setting. And so, as I did my drama therapy-inspired work, my comrades—and here I am deliberately speaking about drama therapists of colour—would reassure me that the work was necessary, important, and indeed a form of drama therapy. It was in practice that I really began to see how the work thrived in communal settings; that the therapeutic space could extend beyond the confines of a room one leaves behind at the end of the day.

My research as an entry point

The awareness of my practice with other collaborators allowed me to think about the politics of place, space, the body, and healing within our creative arts professions in South Africa and, dare I say, on the continent. My doctoral research, therefore, began to develop an enquiry about the experiences of drama therapists and applied drama and theatre practitioners working in South African contexts. This was aimed at understanding some of the ways in which their working environments impacted them. The information served as a barometer for the kinds of support they may need in the future. In order to understand their experiences, I viewed the wider South African context as a complex web of interactions that places practitioners against competing forces or what Honig (1994) calls dilemmatic spaces, a complex web where dilemmas interact. The findings suggested that the complexities of various working environments go beyond spatial and relational dimensions to include an embodiment of space (Qhobela, 2023). Knowing the experiences of practitioners was preliminary to a study that considered how to resolve what was dilemmatic about their experiences, as well as expand awareness of the emotional labour engaged by them.

I had not seen it then, but I think the research offered various points at which we can explore reflexivity as creative arts therapists. When I speak of reflexivity, I am not only speaking about the conscious mind reflecting on self and others. Instead, I also include the history that is embedded in the walls of buildings, the materiality of objects, and how that history 'enters the room'—if you will (Gordon, 2008; Legg, 2013). The beauty of our work as creative art therapists is that our various media allow us to transform spaces and offer approaches that are not confined to normative ideas of health. These

approaches are clinical and also consider the socio-cultural health injustices experienced by various communities in South Africa. For example, I turn to a workshop I ran with another drama therapist at the Groote Kerk in Cape Town last year (Qhobela, 2023, p. 12-14, 16).

The workshop reflected on the possibility of re-imagining historical sites and archives as therapeutic points of departure. It was based on the real-life story of Krotoa, later baptised and renamed Eva. She was a Khoi-San woman who lived in the Cape in the 1600s. I would now like to borrow a few excerpts from that reflection[2] to demonstrate what I argue to be an opportunity to listen to the echoes of violent histories and historical trauma for re-imagining how we use space in our professions as a form of social justice.

> Our role was like that of an "outsider witness" (Dunne, 2009, p. 174). Meaning, we were there in part, to honour the attendees' insider knowledge about Indigenous culture, their connection to Krotoa's history and her burial site. Of course, being Black ourselves, we were not entirely outside of the process as far as being implicated by the fabric of colonial intrusion. I refer here to Steve Biko's definition of Black, which embraces everyone who is not white (Epstein, 2018).
>
> After watching a performance of *Krotoa, Eva van die Kaap*, the task was to run a post-performance debriefing session with audience members who were invited specifically for the conversation afterwards. We led the process using story, poetry and, for a short while, song. Singing and poetry have a long history in South Africa and can serve as personal and political expressions of identity (Lepere, 2021; Vogt, 2009). According to Shapiro (2004, p. 175) "poems provide a uniquely critical position from which their authors may 'interrogate' salient life experiences". Poetry speaks to the interior of the human experience (Shapiro, 2004, p. 172).
>
> A few hours before the workshop, Refiloe and I made our way to the church. Upon entry, we could not help but feel the cool air trapped inside the gothic structure and the dark corners that made for a mysterious scene. It was quiet. We were welcomed by massive pews that made us feel even smaller. To our left was a majestic pulpit hoisted by two lions carved out of wood.
>
> Immediately in front of it was an open area with a large carpet on it. It would be the place where the attendees would congregate. One of the ministers at the

2 The excerpts were drawn directly from this article: Qhobela, L. (2023). Embracing dialogue as breathing: Exploring drama therapy as a tool for facilitating uncomfortable historical conversations. *Drama Therapy Review, 9*(1), 9-22.

church, an Afrikaner man whom I will call Hendrik, allowed us to walk around the church to take it in. He would later tell us that the church was founded in 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck came to South Africa, making it the mother church to all other Dutch Reformed branches in the country. For Hendrik, the church was part of the narrative of Krotoa from the beginning and continued to the present day. He went on to share that Krotoa was first buried on Robben Island before her remains were brought to the Groote Kerk. Other governors, such as Simon van der Stel, had been buried there as well. Hendrik was disappointed that the story of Krotoa was never taught to him at school. Not only were we in one of South Africa's oldest churches, but we were standing on a burial ground. It was in that moment that I became aware of my breath. It had slowed down at the realisation of where we were standing. Although Krotoa's bones could not be located accurately beneath the church grounds, we knew we needed to tread respectfully.

The second time we walked into the church, the attendees joined us. This time we were greeted by their chit-chatter. The room was filled with people working on various projects; the director and writer of the play were also present. The space was occupied by members of the Groote Kerk congregation, staff, and students from the AVReQ centre, representatives from the Cape Town interfaith dialogues, as well as representatives from the South African Women in Dialogue. As the first speaker, Hendrik opened the dialogue session with a few provocations. His plea was that the church needed to reflect on what was to be done with Krotoa's story; what was the congregation's role in restoring the history; and because the church was very exclusionary towards Black people during apartheid, he felt strongly about making it inclusive. Eventually, Refiloe and I would be introduced as drama therapists who would hold the space and allow the group to dialogue. We had not planned an embodied process with the group because of the limited time we had with them. Instead, we decided to use elements of the play as metaphors that would serve as entry points into the discussion. We wanted to remain as close to the play's themes as possible and usher the conversation in a direction that would allow the attendees to share their experiences. We therefore worked with the metaphor of a table—a significant reference that came from the play that became a symbol of sharing experiences in the dialogue session. It represented a meeting place of different stories, tied together by the same reference to history. Krotoa's story resonated with the room and inspired more personal stories from the participants.

The Dutch ambassador specifically connected to the moment in the play where the actor playing Krotoa confronted the actor playing Jan van Riebeeck about his

white guilt. That, for the ambassador, was a reminder that he needed to be in the room and sit with the discomfort. He was especially moved by the ramifications of the legacy of his ancestors and felt embarrassed that they lacked the knowledge, almost wishing his people would apologise for their wrongdoing. Volkas (2014, p. 58) notes that:

> "What may impede the healing process in collective historical trauma encounters is that the descendants of perpetrators present in the room are not themselves responsible for the atrocities, and the inheritors of the trauma know this. […] By repudiating their own ancestors, the descendants of perpetrators are placed psychologically with the descendants of victims, who together pledge to repair the damage and ensure that it will not happen again".

The church, bearing the longest history, stood as a symbolic space that contained contested histories and hosted a conversation that brought to the fore uncomfortable truths associated with it.

The Dilemmatic Space as a Therapeutic Space

Part of what the dialogue at the Groote Kerk was attempting to do was to consider some of the ways in which drama therapy can participate in alternative spaces and with alternative topics. Along with a clinical view and a therapeutic theatre view, it can also function as a space for talking about legacies of historical trauma and coloniality. The novelty of the process we ran that day was perhaps that the Groote Kerk served as a physical space that presented complexities related to historical injustices. It stood as a paradox that embraced both pain and hope. As per the play, it presented the dilemma of being judged for its cruelty towards Krotoa—and later Black people during apartheid—while trying to embody godliness.

Similarly, the attendees of the dialogue embodied fragments of that narrative. When we think of therapeutic spaces we often think of non-threatening and arguably places that are semi-neutral to facilitate healing. Drama therapy, like most [creative art therapies], can occupy contested spaces such as those in war zones (Woodward, 2012; Thompson, 2009) and other non-conventional settings. It would be remiss not to acknowledge how the representation of the church stood out as a white monument within the larger heritage of Black South Africans (Meskell & Scheermeyer, 2008, p. 159). A critique can be made about how it is a

'preservation of place and other cultural expressions' (Nieves 2007, p. 84) that are outside of Indigenous ones, and raises a discussion about the role of colonialism in the present-day realities of post-1994. Although this is not the backbone of my argument, it does serve to highlight the potential usefulness of engaging such sites in conversations about therapeutic work [and social justice]. I then quote Meskell and Scheermeyer (2008, p. 153) saying:

> "Human rights activism, truth commissions, and juridical proceedings are powerful mechanisms for dealing with historical trauma. More materially, South African cultural productions, including objects, memorials, museums, heritage sites, and public spaces of commemoration provide another therapeutic arena".

While reflecting on Moreno's psychodrama, Garcia and Buchanan (2009, p. 405) also remind us about how spaces and places are highly evocative in therapeutic work. In the case of the Groote Kerk, it became a therapeutic stage—a site for social justice. The relational element of the church as a space positioned the attendees in it as relational. The relational quality of [it…] facilitate[d] "multistoried conversations" (Dunne 2009, p. 174) expressed through art as different ways of being, conversing—breathing. The conversation cultivated what Dunne (2009, p. 175) calls a purposeful engagement with one's life history where significant figures—in this case Krotoa's story—continue to resonate long after their physical presence.

Excerpt ends.

The workshop demonstrated how trauma occupies space, including the body (intergenerationally) (Moonga, 2022, p. 42), and that as we move, we carry traces of this trauma with us. As Puwar (2004) suggests, spaces are not neutral, just as the body is not neutral. Social spaces, especially, are constructed and have their own history.

In what ways are creative art therapists challenged by the contexts they occupy? I ask this because reflexivity also demands an awareness of one's body and the politics that enter the therapeutic room with us. Our clients sense it. We sense it. Moreover, Moonga (2022, p. 37) notes that the lived realities of South Africans are disconnected from the ideals of the Constitution. We continue to inherit the unfinished business of the past, and so to address it, we cannot ignore it.

Training

As far as training is concerned, beyond the inequality that is rife within the communities we work with, in the context of this conference, one might ask*: In what ways do South African contexts exclude the trainee and why? Why is it that most therapists do not necessarily reflect the population groups in which the work is intended? What kinds of reflective practices are needed to support the development of all trainees? What challenges surrounding care and wellbeing begin to emerge? How do we transform the face of arts therapies without 'tokenising' the Black body in these spaces* (Ngema et al., 2022, p. 240)? Standing here I wonder about the extent to which my presence is that of tokenism. I say this not to stir unwarranted discomfort in the room but rather to invite all of us to think about the roles we play in training and therapeutic spaces because our context presents the trainee and the therapist with complex encounters.

Students typically enter training programmes bringing parts of their art and community along with them. As artists, they are influenced by and respond to the world around them (Hauptfleisch, 1997, p. 2). Although their reflections cannot illuminate entire societies, their insights about their experiences of artistic practice contribute to how they experience their training environments. We see how our tertiary learning institutions offer supportive learning by integrating reflective practice as part of the construction of the [therapist] (Gordon-Roberts, 2022, p. 86). I think it is useful to uphold such standards because trainees get the space to deliberate and encounter their own epistemologies, which in turn may help them prepare for responding in and with communities (Guhrs, 2022; Balfour, 2010, p. 55).

Draper-Clarke (2022) notes that training creative arts practitioners within the South African context comes with five challenges: the prevalence of trauma, internalised oppression, and dominance, holding complexity and paradox, personal sustainability, and the fear of speaking and writing reflexively. To address these challenges, she poses a move toward a critical contemplative pedagogy that encourages the transformation of destructive emotions for skilful action (Draper-Clarke, 2022, p. 150). I believe a transformation of destructive emotions for skilful action places trainees at the forefront of new knowledge production by problematising how things have always been done (Qhobela, 2023, pp. 26-27) and by creating a "pedagogy of discomfort" (Boler, 1999).

When it comes to research and social justice, Camea Davis (2021, p. 119) says:

> "Research capable of protest and advancing justice must go beyond the study of minoritised persons lived experiences toward validating and sustaining their epistemologies, literacies, and languages in ways that embody their liberation. Otherwise, the social justice research agenda becomes another form of oppression for minoritised participants and researchers".

Practising our profession, therefore, is a great responsibility, one that I want to align with the broader conversations happening within the Global South. In our African contexts, I hope you would agree with me that a decolonial lens is a lens of ethical practice. I think we live in a world where it is difficult not to consider a multi-disciplinary approach to research, as our various mediums already do that by default. There is dance, art, and music in drama therapy, and storytelling in art and music therapy, among others. As Talwar (2020) suggests of art therapies, intersectionality becomes imperative to address issues of historical oppression and marginalisation of people due to sexual orientation, gender, and people living with disabilities. In the same breath, she advocates for diversity in our practice.

Curricula

To stay with the theme of decolonisation as a form of social justice, as far as curricula are concerned, I wonder whether programmes are intentional in encouraging students to be mindful of who they cite in their work. As important as psychodynamic and psychoanalytic texts are, we also cannot neglect seminal thinkers within the wider humanities and social sciences who might inform us of alternative ways of interpreting the world. They have already helped us understand how sociological, anthropological, historical, and indeed, economic injustices unfold and impact communities. This consideration may be reflected in the kinds of research outputs we hope to generate. I believe that if we are to challenge Eurocentric approaches to psychotherapies, then we need to be willing to continue, as many of us are trying to do, to learn from other African researchers. Ngema et al. (2022, p. 239) says:

> "In the scholarship of decoloniality, this is the legitimacy of expanding what we imagine of the intellectual—a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality and frontiers of difference".

Within the academy, Moosavi (2023) asks the question whether we are decolonising or merely performing decolonisation. He asks this question because there is a tendency within curriculum development to keep the conversation on the fringes either as a sign of resistance or ambivalence. I think we need to be mindful of what we have internalised of the Western canon in our practice. I think that, in our teaching of creative arts therapies, we could benefit from making specific psychology and art readings available. Here, I think of scholars such as Joseph White, Credo Mutwa, Mamie Phipps Clark, Frantz Fanon, and contemporaries. Given where we are in our history, perhaps it would be unwise to discard the usefulness of what the West offered, of course. However, our task now is to continue to build on the scholarship of the Global South by writing about the work we do to encourage the development of African-centric therapy.

Another point made by Moosavi (2023, p. 143) asserts that:

> "While a mere diversification does not necessitate a decolonial shift, introducing students to scholars, theories, topics, solutions, case studies, or concepts that have been relegated to the periphery due to coloniality is a common approach to decolonising the curriculum".

Inviting students to problematise with lecturers may further decolonise the ways we engage with training and practice material. In other words, inviting a critique of the very materials said to be on the fringes. While standing in as lecturer for honours in a Drama Therapy course a few years ago, I remember inviting my students at the time to identify cultural practices, objects, or performance art forms from the African continent as a way of encouraging an appreciation for heritage as/for therapy. It was a short lesson, which could have been developed further. To borrow again from Moosavi's (2023) sociological research on decolonising curricula, my short experiment could have been developed as a collaboration between students and lecturer; for example, one could have tasked the students to find thinkers within their cultural arsenal and present to the class their relevance to creative art therapy approaches. This way, one might minimise the potential to be biased towards

certain scholarship chosen by the lecturer, as well as the potential to exclude the learners' sense of identity in curricula. At the same time, it might build on an archive of African-centric approaches to our practices. This approach, as I would argue, is warranted by the kind of pedagogy we already employ as creative art therapists, such as modelling a client-led approach in our classrooms.

Conclusion

Of course, social justice may not necessarily be achieved on a grand scale by doing this alone, so a more systemic approach may be necessary (Moosavi, 2023, p. 148). Perhaps the approach should be aimed at managerial levels where structures often demonstrate the colonial grip. We may also consider quantitative studies rooted in social justice frameworks as they may offer perspectives about the growing impact of the various projects we conduct. Responding to coloniality in our work is an emotional project that often requires us to engage in emotional labour for the work to move forward.

To summarise, one might say that social justice in South Africa is a continuation of the fight against apartheid and its legacies of violence. If we are to think of the future of arts therapies in South Africa and on the continent, we have to acknowledge the colonial past that comes with each context. I have yet to interrogate contexts outside of South Africa. However, looking at South Africa, one already has access to its colonial past and the present legacies of apartheid. This legacy is arguably the prime culprit for social injustices as we experience them in the present. The inequality that faces this country permeates and manifests itself differently in various spaces. In Gauteng, it is one thing, and in the Western Cape it is another. So, we have much work to do. However, this is why we are here.

For as long as we are faced with inequality in South Africa (and the rest of the continent), I am encouraging all of us to continue to grapple with training, research, and social justice from the perspective of critical reflexivity. The kind of reflexivity that embraces the discomfort of acknowledging our privileges and shortcomings, as well as the places and spaces around us that hold so much history. *What privileges do we walk in with when we meet with clients? What limitations do we have? As neutral as we wish our bodies were—and they are not—what politics are potentially ignited because of our race, gender, social*

status, ability and so on, such that we can continue to rework and redefine our curricula?

I invite us to appreciate the work that will be shared and continue to grapple with the meaning of social justice in our African contexts. Let us continue to be mindful of culturally specific frameworks and embrace the process of being reflexive.

Thank you.

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Deep diving towards a vision for social justice: A visual dream matrix

A Workshop by:

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Abstract

This article explores the utilisation of social dreaming as a methodology to engage conference participants at the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice* in understanding the interplay between individual and group psyche. Through group analytic techniques, participants shared nighttime dreams and free associations related to the conference theme of social justice, creating a collaborative space for reflection and new knowledge generation. The structured process, reminiscent of community gatherings, facilitated creative expression and collective resonance, fostering a democratic approach to learning and teaching. Themes such as trauma, repression, and societal injustices emerged, providing insight into both personal and collective experiences. The article highlights the transformative potential of social dreaming in eliciting deep reflection and societal awareness.

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Reflections on the Social Dreaming workshop by Hayley Berman

Social dreaming was introduced as a methodology of engaging all conference participants at the University of Johannesburg who attended in person. This group analytic method provided a way of understanding the relationship between the individual and group psyche, illuminating the social milieu and unconscious of this particular group. An experiential space was provided for participants to engage in a group formation known as a matrix to share nighttime dreams and free associations responding to the social, political, and personal resonance with the theme of the conference (social justice). These dreams were available for use as objects with which to freely associate and engage in the realm of play. In the process of sharing and reflecting, new knowledge was created, and a shared sense of societal and communal imagery came together to form something mutually resonant.

The structure held the ethos of democratising learning and teaching. We recreated a time when communities gathered to talk about their dreams, create together, play together and dream together. The transitions between conscious and unconscious language allowed for the emergence of new feelings and thinking to arise. It is also an experience of group-based visual research. This process facilitated participants' creative and collaborative abilities and potential.

We gathered in an organic variation of what Gordon Lawrence (founder of social dreaming) called a 'snowflake formation', where participants placed their chairs in such a way that there was no eye contact (Figure 1). This approximated the analysand on a couch, free to free associate without the distraction of the gaze of the other. An initial dream was brought by a group member with the invitation for others to associate the dream with other dreams, poems, songs, images, or metaphors that came to mind. The matrix lasted approximately 45 minutes. The hosts offered moments of reflection and wove some of the themes as a containing function.

We moved from the 'snowflake formation' to a large group discussion. Time was created after this image matrix process to bring the group back into a more conscious state of relating, preparing the group for the return to the outside world. We offered a more structured cognitive approach to thinking and making meaning. This process elicited the social unconscious of the

collective group experience, which was generated from dreams, associations, image making, and reflexive responses.

Figure 1: Social dreaming matrix that took place at the UJ art therapy conference with conference participants, 2023

The themes that emerged included being lost, feeling helpless, and trauma of the past and the present. Remembering and forgetting, the comfort of repression, and not wanting to remember the social injustices in our country. A sense of not wanting to revisit the discomfort of difficult stuff. We became aware of the search for the injustices outside and the need and invitation to look within at our own power and powerlessness. A visceral embodiment of these feelings emerged in the matrix when there was 'load shedding' and the lights went out. This experience powerfully located us all in the present fears and traumas, including water shortages, corruption, and crime.

This process allowed traumatic experiences to find a relational home in the group. The creation of a holding intersubjective space facilitated reparation and attunement, which is necessary to mitigate enduring trauma and social injustice. This approach disrupts established norms of academic discourse, encouraging individuals and groups to unmute and find a voice in creative resistance.

Research as storytelling: Sharing wisdom with the profession

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Abstract

This article delves into the transformative potential of case study research within art therapy. Ethical considerations inherent in research and practice are highlighted. The authors underscore the importance of representing clients authentically while considering social justice implications. The paper offers practical tools to navigate biases and ensure respectful representation. The authors advocate for arts-based research as a means to enrich scholarly knowledge and storytelling in the field. By framing research as a form of storytelling rooted in practice wisdom, the paper encourages practitioners to explore diverse narratives and contribute to the global expansion of art therapy.

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Research panel of the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023

Chair summary – Nataly Woollett

Panellist bios

Jordan S. Potash (PhD, ATR-BC, LCPAT) is an associate professor in Art Therapy at George Washington University (United States). Potash has published numerous articles in a range of interdisciplinary journals. He is the current editor-in-chief of *Art Therapy*.

Lynn Kapitan (PhD, ATR-BC, HLM) is professor emerit in Art Therapy at Mount Mary University (United States). Kapitan is the author of *Introduction to Art Therapy Research* (Routledge) and former editor-in-chief of *Art Therapy*.

Presentation

In Potash and Kapitan's presentation, *Research as Storytelling: Sharing Wisdom with the Profession*, they provided the audience with expertise from their perspectives as editors, clinicians, supervisors, and educators. The presenters focused on case study research as a form of storytelling and underscored that all research and practice require ethics (ArtTherapy.org, n.d.). They offered practical support and an invitation to all to contribute to the broadening of the profession globally through research, application, expanded theories, and culturally responsive practices based on local customs and needs.

We were reminded that when writing about clients, we are presenting and representing the clients. We should bear social justice in mind: *Are we presenting the client in a way that is honest, true, and authentic to them?* Kapitan's family member test is a helpful way to consider bias and transparency in writing about clients/participants. When reading a case study, imagine the person being described as a family member (mother, child, or spouse). Would they like the way they are being spoken about? Are they being represented as a case or as a person? Is the language respectful? This test is helpful in research that honours the humanity of clients/participants.

Kapitan's Critical Thinking Rubric further supports practical ways to ensure researcher bias is critically engaged in another social justice perspective. For example, notions that 'art is for healing' or 'art creates a safe space' cannot be claimed to be true unless these are explored decisively. Questioning oneself for clarity, not self-doubt, being curious about one's views and where they come from, recognising counterarguments, and positioning a perspective from one's particular context can broaden and deepen our collective understanding of what art therapy offers and can do. This deepening is achieved through critical analysis and reflective thinking and is the basis of scholarly output.

The presenters underscored the professional advantage of arts-based research (art made by researchers, not art-informed research made by participants) as a form of data and also as a unique tool that performs an effect on the data and moves a researcher to a nuanced position rather than simply describing a phenomenon. The method works on the researcher in how they relate to the data, which is part of the outcome, generating creative and scholarly knowledge.

Potash emphasised that publication and research are merely a form of storytelling. Research offers a structure to the story where critical thinking can be honoured, and stories can be told with a scholarly mindset, but it can also be a story that is told in our own voices. One way to frame that storytelling is through 'practice wisdom', the wisdom or knowledge that develops through our practice and is often referred to as intuition (our internalised experience that turns into background knowledge). Practice wisdom gives each of us permission to investigate our own experience, determine what it is that we have started to develop in how we are working, and see how that relates to what exists in the profession. We all already have a starting point for storytelling and can ask: *What is the conceptual scaffolding on which to hang the story?*

Kapitan shared an exercise to determine the concepts we are working from that can frame stories in compelling and scholarly ways. There are so many stories that have not been told and knowledge that has not been shared, particularly from low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs). The missing stories beg the question: *What is our responsibility to our work, our clients, and the field when conducting and disseminating research from our practice as art therapists in South Africa?*

Three journals have partnered on increasing the anti-oppressive frameworks of art therapy in the field, and each has a recent special issue that contributes towards that:

American AT Association's journal
Art Therapy – Cultural Humility (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/uart20/40/2)

British Association of Art Therapy's journal
International Journal of Art Therapy – Intersectionality (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rart20/28/1-2)

Canadian Art Therapy Association's journal
Canadian Journal of Art Therapy – Reindigenisation and Colonialism (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ucat21/36/1)

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Art therapy and social activism in community-based projects

Panel convened and chaired by

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Abstract

This article describes the current interventions and experiences of grassroots members of community-based organisations across South Africa that were presented during the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023. The theme of the panel was art therapy and social action in community-based projects. The panel was positioned as a conversation contextualised by the moderator within the South African landscape. Following the introductions to the work of Butterfly Art Project, Lefika La Phodiso, Intlantsi Creative Development Project, Creative Mentorship Hub, and Angela Rackstraw, the panellists discussed three main questions: *How can therapeutic art training programmes incorporate social justice principles to better prepare community workers such as community art counsellors and community art facilitators to address systemic inequalities and remind inclusivity in their practice; what is the role of supervision and mentoring in your specific organisation and how it helped you to sustain the work between the advocacy, the mental health and facilitation; and what examples do we have of community programmes that effectively address any social action or social justice issues and would you measure success in advocating for or achieving a social justice aim?*

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SAJAT Special Issue: Conference Proceedings

University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023, explored transformative applications of art therapy and its potential in promoting social change.

Panel title: Art therapy and social activism in community-based projects 14 July 2023, 10:00-12:00 AM SAST

Panel presentation and webinar in collaboration with:

- University of Johannesburg, Art Therapy programme, FADA
- Lefika La Phodiso
- Butterfly Art Project
- Intlantsi Creative Development Project

Corresponding authors and panel moderator

Rozanne Myburgh – University of Johannesburg arts therapist, part-time lecturer, Lefika La Phodiso managing director

Authors

Nomphelo Dumke – Intlantsi Creative Development Project higher level community arts facilitator and/or founder member, first cohort of Train-the-Trainer programme

Sinovuyo Ngcolomba – Intlantsi Creative Development Project higher level community arts facilitator and/or founder member, first cohort of Train-the-Trainer programme

Charles Jansen – Butterfly Art Project art centre coordinator, community art facilitator trainer, mentor, and team leader

Angela Rackstraw – Red Cross Children's Hospital and the COMMUNITY ARTs THERAPY (CATh) programme

Kamal Naran – University of Johannesburg assistant lecturer, arts therapist, senior community art counsellor, and supervisor at Lefika La Phodiso

Humbulani Mamphiswana Nsenga – Lefika La Phodiso senior community art counsellor, trainer, and supervisor

Ziyanda Magadla – Lefika La Phodiso senior community art counsellor

Author bios

Moderator – Rozanne Myburgh is a registered art therapist (drama therapy) and managing director of Lefika La Phodiso. She convenes the reflective practice group and theory in practice for the BA Hons Art Therapy programme. Myburgh is a clinical supervisor for Drama for Life at Wits and a part-time lecturer in the University of Johannesburg Art Therapy programme.

Nomphelo Princess Dumke has been an Intlantsi Creative Development Project founder member since 2012 and a creative development facilitator in the Lovers Twist township near Peddie in the Eastern Cape. She is a 48-year-old mother of two. She matriculated in 1998 and began studying financial management. However, she was forced to drop out due to financial problems. She said, "I stayed at home doing nothing, but luckily, I started training in this arts programme. We eventually named it the Intlantsi Creative Development Project and registered it in 2015. I grew to love my job with children because when I was young, I had never seen myself standing in front of a class. I was too shy." She has now done related training through the project, including community engagement, arts practices, computer literacy, and administration skills. Dumke works in primary and high schools and is in the Intlantsi Creative Development Project's first Train-the-Trainer programme. Two of Dumke's trainees are now working independently in their own schools.

Sinovuyo Ngcolomba has been an Intlantsi Creative Development Project founder member since 2012 and is a creative development facilitator in Mgababa village near Mpekweni. Ngcolomba first joined the project because she was bored with "sitting at home with nothing to do". She became excited when she realised she would be playing with children because she loves that. She has since become a vibrant facilitator who is passionate about the important role she plays in her community. She said, "We never had these opportunities in our childhood, so I do this because I don't want these children to suffer the way we did. Many of them don't have parental support but we can offer some of that now in their lives." Ngcolomba was in the first cohort of the Train-the-Trainer programme and has successfully trained a new recruit to independently deliver sessions in another village.

Charles Jansen has been with the Butterfly Art Project for almost eight years now. He was trained as a community art facilitator in 2013. During his first year at the Butterfly Art Project, he has had the opportunity to assist various very experienced art teachers. Through this, he has gained much expertise when it comes to implementation and working with children. He feels lucky to be working in his community and having the opportunity to help to make it a better place. Jansen is a community arts facilitator (CAF) trainer, team leader at the art centre Vrygrond, a mentor for CAFs, and loves to work with children and youth.

Angela Rackstraw is a trained and registered art psychotherapist with almost 20 years' experience of working with both children and adults in this field. In 1995, she completed her two-year Postgraduate Diploma in Art Therapy (now a master's course) at the University of Hertfordshire. Then she went on to study for another two years, gaining her Master of Art Therapy degree and also studying medical anthropology. Before training as an arts therapist, she was a nursing sister, with considerable paediatric experience. She often teaches arts therapy master's students in Ireland and supervises foreign students from both Europe and Ireland in Cape Town, where she arranges various placement opportunities. Rackstraw has also lectured at Lesley College in Cambridge in the United States as part of their Expressive Therapies doctoral programme.

Kamal Naran is an artist and HPCSA-registered arts therapist in South Africa. In 2023, he completed his Master of Art Therapy at the University of Johannesburg. He stands as a member of the inaugural cohort of South African art therapists. Naran serves as an assistant lecturer in the Department of Art Therapy and Visual Arts at the University of Johannesburg, contributing to both practice and academia. As one of the first art therapists to intern at a university centre for psychological services, Naran showcases a commitment to integrating art therapy into diverse therapeutic settings. His educational journey includes an honours degree in Fine Arts from the University of Pretoria and a distinction in Art Therapy from the University of Johannesburg. He has extensive experience in the non-profit sector, particularly at Lefika La Phodiso: Community Art Counselling & Training Institute. His art therapy and counselling experience extends across group work and all age groups. Naran has shared his insights at various conferences, blending artistic talent with a dedication to therapeutic practices and academic excellence.

Humbulani Mamphiswana Nsenga is the co-founder and instructor of the not-for-profit organisation Creative Mentorship Hub based in the inner city of Johannesburg. The organisation is a safe space for young artists aged 13 to 23, offering art classes, mentorship programmes, and mental health support. The organisation is also a space for showcasing the artists' artworks. Nsenga obtained a Diploma in Fine Art at the University of Johannesburg in 2006 and trained as a community art counsellor in 2013. She worked at Lefika La Phodiso as the Safe Spaces Programmes Coordinator from 2014 to 2019. She is a practising artist, certified life coach (COMENSA), a SETA-accredited facilitator, and a Community Art Counselling Course trainer. Nsenga is a co-author and featured artist in *Opening Bodies – Open Studio for Children*, a book in the Lefika La Phodiso *Body of Knowledge* book series. She facilitates a wide range of groups for adults, adolescents, and children.

Ziyanda Magadla is a social auxiliary worker and community art counsellor. She has a background in counselling skills, including working with trauma, bereavement, and grief. She has worked with many different population groups. She is passionate about working with people and sees herself as a helper at heart.

Introduction

This article is a summary and record of a panel presented at the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023. The panel was introduced by Rozanne Myburgh with a brief overview of social justice and challenges faced by individuals and organisations working in community settings.

Social justice refers to the concept of fairness and equality in society, where every individual has equal access to rights, opportunities, and resources, regardless of their background, identity, or social status. Social justice includes the belief that all individuals deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, and impartiality. Social action is these principles in practice. The panel discussed the practice and the work that community organisations have been doing for years to increase access to mental health services and access to mental health training in a country with a dire deficit. South Africa has a rich history of therapeutic arts-based organisations.

Organisations such as Intlantsi Creative Development Project, Butterfly Art Project, Lefika La Phodiso, and others who are not represented in this panel have, for years, been holding space in the form of grassroots work – from the rural communities in the Eastern Cape to the inner-city of Johannesburg, Gauteng, and the small community of Vrygrond in the Western Cape. These organisations have been responsible for extraordinary projects that use therapeutic arts methodologies to support communities and affect change through activism, active participation, and collaboration with the communities in which they function. The process of creating an academic art therapy programme has been a journey of around 25 years. We were delighted when the University of Johannesburg's programme was accredited in 2020. These organisations were key for bringing these programmes into existence, but also for holding the space while this process was unfolding. The organisations continue to serve in communities all over South Africa – creating programmes and training programmes for people working in communities.

However, the work, social justice in community-based settings, involves more than just creating programmes for community members. The work addresses and rectifies the systemic and structural barriers that contribute to inequality and oppression. The work aims to promote a society that is inclusive, just, and equitable by challenging discrimination, prejudice, and disparities based on factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and other identities.

The pursuit of social justice often involves advocating for policies and practices that promote equal access to education, healthcare, housing, employment, and other essential resources. It also involves recognising and rectifying historical injustices and working towards creating a society where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive.

However, this mandate is also often a place of contention and difficulty, where community workers specialising in the therapeutic use of the arts are torn between the roles of activist and counsellor, facilitator and protestor. With increasingly high levels of burnout because of the workload and intensity of the content that these organisations face daily, it often feels almost impossible to advocate for change on a systemic level and support community members in their day-to-day lives. Nevertheless, we recognise that we have a unique opportunity to use our various arts modalities to affect change.

South Africa, like many countries, is starting to recognise the importance of social justice and the role of art therapy, specifically community art therapy, in promoting well-being and addressing social issues. Training programmes in art therapy and community art counselling in South Africa often emphasise cultural sensitivity and understanding, given the country's diverse population and history of apartheid. But addressing social issues must also go beyond understanding and must create real opportunities for access to mental health training and access to mental health services.

Mental health context in South Africa

The white paper by the University of Witwatersrand/Medical Research Council's Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit (DPHRU) found that one in four (25.7%) South Africans are most likely depressed. Respondents reported moderate to severe symptoms of depression. The prevalence of mental illness was different across all nine provinces, with higher rates in the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Gauteng, and Mpumalanga.

Associate professor at the School of Governance at the University of the Witwatersrand William Gumede (2021), says in an article that, "The shame and stigma which many South Africans, particularly black communities, place on people who live with mental illnesses, are preventing sufferers from seeking help". Gumede (2021) goes on to say that "before the COVID-19 pandemic, only 15% of South Africans with mental health concerns received treatment". This low rate of treatment is due largely to not seeking help because of the public stigma attached to mental illnesses and because in many cases mental health support is just not available in public medical facilities.

South Africa allocates only 5% of its overall health budget to mental health. This ranks the country at the lowest tier among international benchmarks for public spending on mental health. This results in less than one person in ten receiving mental health care. Individuals with limited financial means in South Africa face even greater challenges in accessing mental health care due to deficiencies in capacity, accessibility, and resources within the public health sector (Gumede, 2021).

In 2019, a survey conducted by the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town highlighted significant shortages in mental health specialists, with only three provinces having child psychiatrists. The survey findings underscored the routine unavailability of medications for chronic

mental illnesses, including conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety.

Myburgh shared that while listening to Hayley Berman speaking about *childism* she was struck by how the data supports this very notion. The South African Child Gauge 2021/2022 report (Tomlinson, Kleintjes & Lake, 2022) found shocking statistics on the experience of children and the effect on their mental health. Director of the Children's Institute, Shanaaz Mathews (Children's Institute, 2022) believes that:

> "The characteristics of a neighbourhood – whether it is peaceful and clean or violent and dirty – has a bigger impact on the mental health of the people who live in it than their own individual predispositions".

The most recent statistics emphasise that a substantial portion of children in South Africa experience poverty, specifically two-thirds (63%). These children often reside in environments where the challenges that exacerbate material insecurity include insufficient services, discrimination, and violence (Tomlinson, Kleintjes & Lake, 2022).

At the same time, nearly four in ten children (39%) live below the food poverty line. This condition exacerbates the existing pressures and conflicts within their households due to heightened food insecurity. Mathews (Children's Institute, 2022) added:

> "These children and adolescents are at particular risk of poorer mental health, which can perpetuate an intergenerational cycle of poverty, violence and ill health".

Furthermore, almost half of the children in South Africa (42%), have encountered violence, encompassing instances of physical violence (35%) and sexual abuse (35%).

Mathews (Children's Institute, 2022) noted that research also found that in the immediate aftermath of a violent event, children may experience waves of fear, anxiety, panic, and shock; and without appropriate support, these feelings may give rise to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance use, and other mental health challenges. Mathews (Children's Institute, 2022) added:

> "Given the scale and intergenerational nature of violence against children, our response to trauma needs to extend beyond dedicated psychological and psychiatric services".

The lack of mental health support is glaring, and it is in these spaces that community organisations that therapeutically utilise the arts can play a vital role through preventative programmes focusing on building resilience through trauma-informed training, supporting parents and communities, and creating referral systems to ensure that people get the help they need. It is also through these training programmes and relationships that we can build bridges of support between formal and non-formal training. And even though we have a seeming hierarchy of trainings, we have a need for both these streams of training programmes.

Myburgh shared that she believes that the collective dream is that art therapy interventions in South Africa can address a wide range of social concerns, such as healing from trauma, promoting mental health and well-being, fostering personal growth and self-esteem, addressing social inequalities, and facilitating community engagement and empowerment. In addition, we can create spaces where we can enable a culture of reflective practice and empathy among community workers.

Introduction of panellists, their organisations, and personal journey into the work

In this section a brief overview of each panellist's contribution will be summarised and shared as it unfolded in the conference proceedings.

Nomphelo Dumke and Sinovuyo Ngcolomba introduced the Intlantsi Creative Development Project in rural villages in the Eastern Cape in 2017. Intlantsi Creative Development Project exemplifies community-driven development. The centre was collectively built by the villagers using local resources like mud, sticks, and bottles (Figure 1). The centre symbolises the genuine community effort to address the lack of space and the existing systemic issues, showcasing a grassroots approach to community development.

Figure 1. Community members from Lovers Twist village who hand-built their own arts centre, 2017 (photograph by Intlantsi Creative Development Project, used with permission)

Charles Jansen, a community art facilitator at the Butterfly Art Project, described the organisation's comprehensive approach that offers safe art classes for children and trains adults in various communities, incorporating mentoring, self-care, and therapeutic principles (Figure 2). Jansen shared his own journey, highlighting the transformative impact of art on his life and his commitment to uplifting the community.

Figure 2. Charles Jansen with group members from Butterfly Art Project (photograph by Butterfly Art Project, used with permission)

Humbu Nsenga, co-founder of the Creative Mentorship Hub and a facilitator at Lefika La Phodiso, focused on supporting underprivileged youth aged 13 to 23. The hub provides visual skills, life coaching workshops, and mental health support. Nsenga emphasised the organisation's commitment to empowering adolescents from diverse backgrounds, showcasing their artwork through an annual fundraising exhibition.

Angela Rackstraw reflected on her work, which spanned 17 years in the Nyanga and Gugulethu areas. Despite starting with minimal resources, she established a community art therapy space, addressing issues like food insecurity and lack of consistent shelter. Rackstraw's approach emphasises empathy, dignity, and respect, aiming to instil these values in children and provide a safe space for them to share and express themselves.

Ziyanda Magadla, a drama club facilitator at Lefika La Phodiso, shared her own journey from volunteering to studying community art counselling. She highlighted the transformative impact of the course on her personal life and professional work. Magadla emphasised the importance of creating a safe space for teenagers to express themselves through drama, fostering empathy and understanding (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Lefika teens engaging in a dance and drama workshop, 2023 (photograph by Rozanne Myburgh, used with permission)

Kamal Naran narrated his journey into art therapy at Lefika La Phodiso, where he discovered the therapeutic potential of artmaking. Reflecting on a decade of involvement, Naran discussed the evolution of Lefika La Phodiso as a space fostering creativity, empathy, and community. The Rainbow Rising project exemplifies the enduring impact of the community art counselling course initiated ten years ago.

Incorporating social justice in therapeutic art training programmes

The first theme explored strategies for integrating social justice principles into therapeutic art training to enhance the preparation of community workers, including art counsellors and facilitators, in addressing systemic inequalities and promoting inclusivity in their practice.

The importance of training community workers to be versatile and adaptive to the diverse needs of their clients is emphasised. The training should equip them with the skills to identify priorities and address a range of challenges beyond the immediate focus on art and therapy. Nsenga says:

> "We might want to do one thing; they may come for counselling or for an art lesson, but once you go through the process with them, you actually find that there is such a big need that comes with that person or that child. It could be that they come to the session hungry and then we have to provide things that give access, be it a food parcel and also just providing lunch. Which is what we do at Lefika La Phodiso and Creative Mentorship Hub as well. You might find that they're struggling at school, so there's a whole education system behind it as well. So, I would say, training community art counsellors that are able to support all the many needs that one person comes in a room with, is important".

A recurring theme was the need for a holistic approach to community work. Community art counsellors and facilitators were urged to consider multiple dimensions of a person's life, addressing mental health and also factors like hunger, education, and familial issues.

Several speakers, including Jansen, Naran, Nsenga, and Magadla, shared personal stories of transformation through their engagement with community art projects and specifically through discovering the training programmes. Jansen described his troubled teenage years, involvement in crime, and subsequent healing through art. These personal narratives cannot be separated from the broader themes of community development and social justice. The panel emphasised the healing aspect of engaging in therapeutic art training for the training facilitators (Figure 4). The training equipped them with skills for community work and primarily contributed to their own self-discovery and personal growth.

There was a mention of the broader goal being not just mental health but also preserving the dignity of individuals. The work of community workers extends beyond therapy to address fundamental aspects of well-being and human dignity. Rackstraw says:

> "And I thought if we can instil empathy in some way; if the children can experience empathy and start treating each other with respect and empathy. If we can help children feel respected and regain their dignity, accepting that we can't make things better as a lot of children went back to situations at the end of the day which were far from ideal. […] It was about giving children space to speak, to think. To share if they wanted to. Yeah, and obviously doing as much as we possibly could. To change situations, to make referrals. Whether they were medical or to social workers".

Figure 4. A Lefika La Phodiso trainee in a session with a group, 2023 (photograph by Nicole van Niekerk, used with permission)

The implication is that therapeutic art training programmes should incorporate social justice principles by addressing systemic inequalities and fostering inclusivity in community practices.

Supervision and mentoring for sustaining advocacy, mental health, and facilitation

The second theme was centred around examining the pivotal role of supervision and mentoring within specific organisations and how these practices contribute to sustaining the work across advocacy, mental health initiatives, and facilitation in therapeutic art programmes.

Supervision was recognised as a crucial element in the work of community workers, particularly those engaged in therapeutic art programmes. Supervision is viewed as essential for maintaining the well-being of facilitators, allowing them to debrief and seek support. Dumke and Ngcolomba say that "Supervision is very important for us as facilitators because in the day, you just meet different children, and then they share their stories". The team from Intlantsi Creative Development Project shared that they have supervision on a weekly or monthly basis. Moreover, Dumke and Ngcolomba shared that:

> "We do have group supervision and then one-on-one supervision. You as a facilitator have your own life and then you can take the stories of the children and you can make art. You have to speak to your supervisor so that you can start afresh".

Magadla shared that supervision is a space where she feels supported:

> "I felt being heard. I felt, in fact, given ideas, and also for myself to offload everything that I'd needed to offload; and maybe given some tools on how to cope. And that meant so much. I managed to build a bubble around myself and be able to have the empathy and work with children and love them and give them and know that what I'm giving to them is good enough. Because I always questioned, am I doing enough? Until I went to supervision".

The panel shared that community work, especially when dealing with challenging stories and situations, can have a profound impact on the mental and emotional well-being of facilitators. Supervision becomes a space to reflect on and process these personal effects. There was an emphasis on the importance of personal therapy for individuals engaged in community work.

The need to separate personal issues from professional responsibilities was highlighted, and personal therapy was presented as a means to achieve this separation. Rackstraw emphasises:

> "I mean, supervision is absolutely essential. Supervision and therapy. I know that with the students that I work with, I push personal therapy all the time. Because it is just so important, as has been said earlier today, you know, to separate stuff, our own stuff from what we bring with us. We do feel the effect of the work. And we carry it, and we need to find ways to debrief ourselves".

The panel shared personal experiences of burnout and vulnerability. Furthermore, the panel discussed how, despite receiving supervision, the emotional toll of the work led to a significant health issue for one individual. This effect on health underscores the challenges and risks faced by community workers. Organisations recognise the importance of self-care activities for facilitators. Artist hubs at the Butterfly Art Project are mentioned as spaces for facilitators to engage in art themselves, providing an opportunity for self-expression and a break from the constant demands of the work. Jansen said:

> "We offer what we call artist hubs and that's purely for self-care. For the facilitator, where you can come, you are exposed to a medium, and you do some art. Because really, to be honest, in the work that we do, we seldom have time to sit and paint or draw ourselves because we are constantly busy, busy, busy, busy working. So, it's really important to take some time out and then just create for yourself".

Lastly, the idea of a community of care was emphasised, suggesting that support networks and partnerships, such as those with universities, contribute to the success of social justice work. Collaborative approaches and partnerships are seen as integral to the well-being of community workers.

Effectiveness of community programmes in addressing social justice

The last theme assessed successful community programmes that effectively tackle social action or social justice issues and explored the metrics used to measure success in advocating for and achieving social justice aims.

Panellists acknowledged the difficulty in measuring success, especially in the context of therapeutic art programmes. The impacts are often gradual

and not immediately visible, making it challenging to quantify success in terms of specific metrics. Nsenga shared her experience in the form of an example:

> "You do see gradual change (in the children and teenagers they work with), be it in building confidence and then being able to speak in public. The ability to express themselves. Getting more confidence in other areas of their lives, gaining clarity, and thinking critically for themselves. I think it can be very difficult to measure because it hasn't always happened in the room. It happens very gradually".

There is an understanding that social justice work is a long-term process, and success is often seen in personal, individual stories. The emphasis is on gradual change, particularly in the confidence and expressive abilities of children and teenagers, which may not be immediately apparent.

Specific examples of success are highlighted, such as successfully placing children in formal schools through collaboration with the Department of Social Development (DSD). The Butterfly Art Project has placed 71 children in schools since the programme started three years ago.

The panellists emphasised the importance of personal stories and individual cases as indicators of success. These stories, such as a child finding a voice to report abuse, serve as powerful examples of the programme's impact. Myburgh shared the philosophy of helping one child at a time as their measure of success in the face of overwhelming challenges that can sometimes lead to burnout.

The focus was not only on direct outcomes but also on the ripple effects of the programmes, as shared by Rackstraw. Positive relationships within the group are expected to translate into better relationships in other contexts, such as the classroom and at home. Rackstraw says:

> "I think what I really found quite moving and which made a huge difference to how we all viewed the work, whether or not it was of value, was when children that had left the programme would come back to visit several years later. Furthermore, it was evident that they had internalised something positive and that that had made an impact on them and informed choices that they made later on as older adolescents and as adults. So that is so important, you know, for them to internalise something".

Post-conference reflection on panel discussion

Kamal Naran

The inclusion of art therapy and social activism in the conference discourse underscores the significant role of arts therapies as a catalyst for social change within communities. Moreover, the discussion articulates a commitment to advocating for the universal accessibility and equitable provision of mental health resources. The imperative to direct attention towards grassroots-level mental health initiatives is emphasised, with numerous community-based organisations serving as pivotal agents of social activism, particularly within the mental health domain. These groups often work with people who are especially vulnerable and who often have trouble accessing mental health services and training because of limited resources.

Supervision plays an important role in supporting community-based programmes and facilitators, as engaging in community work can be emotionally taxing, given the responsibility of encountering and holding a plethora of challenging narratives and experiences. Supervision is closely intertwined with the notion of accessibility, as community-based facilitators frequently lack formal training in the conventional sense, typically acquired through tertiary education. Those who do possess formal training often transition away from community-based roles. Nevertheless, individuals with access to tertiary education hold the potential to contribute significantly to community work, particularly in roles such as supervision and support. Regrettably, the importance of this role is often underestimated or overlooked in community-based settings. Recognising and assigning due weight to this supervisory function in community-based spaces is pivotal. This acknowledgement facilitates a harmonious integration of social activism, wherein knowledge is shared and exchanged between individuals trained in community facilitation and those educated through tertiary institutions.

As a result of this panel discussion, I hope that people acknowledge the crucial role assumed by community-based organisations in addressing accessibility gaps within the mental health sector. Additionally, the discussion underscores the essential contribution of arts therapies in community-based settings, emphasising their indispensable role in promoting mental health and well-being within these environments.

An important lesson I took away from the conference is that what really matters in our work is the quality of what we do, not just how much of it we do. We learned that it is crucial to focus on giving each person we help our best effort rather than trying to help as many people as possible. This best effort means ensuring our interactions with each individual are meaningful and helpful. This realisation showed me that if we want to keep doing good work in our community, we have to keep getting better at what we do. That means always trying to learn more and improve our skills. Learning is a cycle – the more we learn, the better we can help people, and the more we help people, the more we learn. In order to ensure we keep growing and improving, it is important to have access to resources and opportunities to learn from others who have experience. That way, we can keep getting better at helping the people in our community.

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Art therapy in the Global South: Now and next

Panel: Convened and co-moderated by

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Bio of panellists

Nelly Adhiambo is a teacher and counsellor who has been in practice for 20 years. Her work includes working with children and young adults in school and mentoring programmes. She is a curriculum expert who has participated in forming educational and empowerment curriculums for both boys and girls at county and national levels. She is also the founder and director of Token of Mercy, a community-based organisation in slums in Nyalenda (Kenya), where she uses therapeutic art interventions to create awareness about sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence. Adhiambo is a poet and music lover and uses these avenues to spread information about teenage pregnancy, early marriages, and the need for economic empowerment among adolescent mothers and women. Her hobbies are writing poems, listening to gospel music, travelling, and crafting.

Hayley Berman is an art psychotherapist, social activist, practising artist, and a founding director of Lefika La Phodiso. She is one of the core team of theory lecturers for the University of Johannesburg Art Therapy programme and also contributes to community and professional practice. Berman is currently the clinical lead at Woodford (United Kingdom).

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Catherine Hyland Moon is professor emerit at the Department of Art Therapy and Counselling, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is the author of *Studio Art Therapy: Cultivating the Artist Identity in the Art Therapist* and contributing editor of *Materials and Media in Art Therapy: Critical Understandings of Diverse Artistic Vocabularies*. She has worked in varied settings, from a psychiatric hospital to home-based care. Her current art therapy practice is focused on co-leading cross-cultural therapeutic arts training programmes in East Africa through the Global Alliance for Africa and co-facilitating free community art studios in the United States aimed at cultivating community across social differences.

Lyambai Kestone has an MSc in mental health and psychiatry and BSc in mental health and psychiatric nursing from the University of Zambia. Kestone is passionate about art therapy. As the head of the Department of Mental Health and Psychiatry at the University's School of Nursing Sciences, he oversees academic development, research, and staff management. Kestone also directs Therapeutic Art Zambia, a non-profit promoting art therapy. With extensive clinical experience, he excels in patient care. Recognised for his commitment to professional growth, he engages in conferences, presentations, and consultancy work. Kestone's dedication to advancing mental health through art therapy is evident in his multifaceted roles.

Isaac S. Lema is a clinical psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in Tanzania. He teaches, co-facilitates seminars, provides supportive supervision to students on various academic issues (including research and clinical supervision), and is a research co-investigator in the department. He has skills in therapeutic art and is an expert on Art Therapy Open Studio, an intervention particularly effective in enhancing psychosocial support for individuals with distress, mental health problems, and mental disorders. He has facilitated various art therapy sessions for individuals and groups in areas including emotional regulation, anger management, trauma, and professional self-care. He is a chairperson of the Mental Health Association of Tanzania (MEHATA) and a National Trainer on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

Paola Luzzatto is a philosophy and comparative religions scholar with a doctorate, trained in art psychotherapy at Goldsmith College, University of London. She further specialised in psychoanalytic psychotherapy at the Tavistock Institute. Luzzatto worked for eight years with psychiatric patients

in London and later established the art therapy service at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, earning the 2004 Clinical Award from the American Art Therapy Association. In Tanzania, she served as an honorary lecturer, developing innovative art therapy protocols for trauma and addiction. Luzzatto is an accomplished author and has written books on art therapy, a biography, and three children's books.

Emma Mills is a State-registered art psychotherapist, supervisor, and teacher with extensive experience in child and adolescent mental health in the United Kingdom National Health Service, Women's Aid (refuges and outreach centres), community projects, local authority teams, and schools. She is also a private practitioner. She worked for ten years as an art teacher and counsellor at St Joseph's College (Botswana) and lectures at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Mills is the co-author of a paper in the *International Journal of Art Therapy* on using group art therapy to address domestic violence and its effects on children regarding the shame and silencing surrounding children's experiences of witnessing domestic violence.

Prof Mavis Osei is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Innovations in Science and Technology at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), where she also trained as an artist (Bachelor of Arts) and an art educator (Doctor of Arts). She had her art therapy training via a Fulbright scholarship at Long Island University (United States). Her experience in the creation and successful running of two art therapy programmes for about 30 mental health clients for over nine months was the basis for her additional training through a Diploma in Mental Health Studies. She has also worked with children for over ten years and facilitates a vacation art workshop for children. She is the author of West Africa's first art therapy master's programme, which started in September 2019 and has successfully graduated two students.

Joanna Pearce trained as an art therapist and has a master's degree in advanced art psychotherapy from Goldsmiths (United Kingdom). She worked for the National Health Service in Scotland for over 20 years in adult learning disabilities (forensic and mental health). As part of Zambia Therapeutic Art, she has developed and delivered training to health and social care professionals and trainees since 2014. Pearce trained in trauma treatment through art therapy (TT-AT). In 2022, she supported the piloting of the trauma protocol in Zambia.

Pamela Reyes has an MD PhD and heads the Health and Art Therapy master's programme at Universidad Finis Terrae, Chile, with 16 years teaching art therapy and 12 years leading the first graduate Art Therapy programme at the University of Chile. As director of the 2009 Latin American art therapy conference, she is a key member of the Latin American art therapy network. Reyes contributes to the research group on Artistic Education for Social Justice at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and collaborates in their Master of Art Therapy programme. Her work explores art, community, and mental health, which is evident in her private practice and roles in community recovery projects following natural disasters. She is a peer reviewer for *Art Therapy Online* (ATOL) and the *Art Therapy* journal. She investigates intersections between art education and community art therapy.

Abstract

This article describes the development of art therapy education and practice in Botswana, Chile, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia, as discussed in a panel presentation at the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023. Panellists discussed the challenges and successes of varied educational paradigms, from paraprofessional training programmes to higher education courses and degree programmes. Among the panellists were citizens of the countries under discussion, as well as art therapy educators from the Global North who worked as visiting professionals in these countries. The panellists touched on practices that have emerged from these trainings, ethical considerations for the development of Indigenous education and practice models, and questions of social justice related to the development of culturally relevant, context-specific art therapy. Included in the article are key questions identified by panellists prior to the conference, a summary of the conference presentation, and visual and written reflections from the panellists after the conference.

Introduction

Though cultural practices across Africa have always incorporated the arts for social transformation and interpersonal healing, art therapy as a profession defined by the Global North (i.e., including standards of entry, formalised education, code of ethics, and sanctioning organisation) is relatively new

throughout the world and still emergent in many Global South countries. This article reports on the status of art therapy education, training, and practice in the countries of Botswana, Chile, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia, as described by a group of ten panellists at the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023.

Prior to the conference presentation upon which this article is based, some of the presenters/authors gathered online to identify key questions we hoped to explore. Though the time limitations of the panel presentation prevented each question from being fully addressed, the overarching topics suggested by the questions provided the structure of this article. In this way, we hope to convey that the questions raised are at least as important to the ongoing development of the discipline of art therapy in the Global South as the responses to those questions.

In addition to providing a summary of the panel's dialogue related to each topic, presenters' post-conference reflections and creative responses (poetry, creative writing, and visual art) are included as forms of arts-based research and reflexive practice. These responses to the panel offer new ways of coming to know not only the *current state of art therapy in the Global South* but also what might come *next*. Informed by historical understandings of Indigenous healing arts practices and by current iterations of those practices that have been shown to be effective in the local context, we can find our way forward. By weaving together numerous voices and perspectives, we aim to reflect the multifaceted nature of the developing field and to model and promote a democracy of practice, one with social justice at its core.

We acknowledge that the 'Global South' is a complex and contested term. 'Global North' and 'Global South' mostly denote richer and poorer countries, not geographical locations. Also, countries in both the north and south manifest extreme economic disparity and the ongoing effects of colonisation, such as transgenerational trauma. Thus, our reference to the Global South is an acknowledgement of ongoing colonising systems that benefit some groups of people at the expense of other groups.

This ongoing colonising effect is apparent in how art therapy theory and practice models continue to originate largely from the Global North, rather than from an equitable and meaningful Global North-Global South partnership. In such a partnership, multiple forms of scholarship and practice would be

equally elevated and equally impactful in shaping art therapy globally. In writing this article, we initially identified art therapy literature we might cite to support and amplify the topics addressed. However, in keeping with the intent of our presentation, we resisted complicity with the systemic use of academic publications to elevate Global North voices and perspectives while Global South voices and perspectives are excluded, marginalised, or disregarded. Instead, we focused on the rich material that came from the collaborative, cross-cultural process in which we had engaged. Our 'references' are reflexive and representative of multiple cultural contexts, as expressed through our stories, musings, images, and poetry.

Diverse models of art therapy education in the Global South

The education and training models in the seven countries discussed here vary in relation to who the education is for, the educational models in use, and whether the training is associated with a community-based organisation (CBO) or an educational or healthcare institution. In relation to the master's degree programmes in South Africa, Ghana, and Chile, the students are those who meet the qualifications set by each university and who can afford the tuition. In relation to CBOs, learners might range from artists who already use the arts for therapeutic and socially transformative aims to people with higher education degrees in the helping professions. In some training models, the students are those with advanced degrees whose art therapy training is considered a complementary addition to existing professional skills, and in at least one country, Zambia, this additional education has become a required component of bachelor's and master's degrees in mental health.

As the maturation process of art therapy education continues in these countries, key questions remain. Are current education and training programmes supporting or interfering with the cultural knowledge through which people use the arts for personal and collective wellbeing? What are the benefits and disadvantages of these different educational models? Is there a need to establish a core curriculum for training programmes across the spectrum of educational models and contexts?

Post-conference reflection from Mavis Osei

I was excited about how the South African community has embraced the therapeutic use of art through the Lefika La Phodiso programme. With some training, people who are passionate about helping others can indeed make a huge impact. It made me think about how to establish community-based training as an alternative to the formal art therapy programme I lead at my university. In my Ghanaian context, there is a great need for community-based therapeutic art.

However, I also felt somewhat unsettled. Though I was excited to learn from the well-established and renowned art therapists on the panel, I was concerned that art therapy education, as established in the Global North and passed along by White art therapists, might be seen as the ultimate way to train art therapists in Africa. I have struggled with these 'voices' at the forefront in Ghana, both because I obtained my master's degree in art therapy in the United States and because the master's level art therapy training programme in Ghana was originally modelled after the Educational Standards of the American Art Therapy Association. As a result, conflicts arise when using art therapy themes and art practices that are not a good fit for Ghanaian culture. For example, the use of the assessment theme, 'Person Picking an Apple from a Tree', is incongruous with a context where apple trees are not typically grown. Similarly, the use of conventional fine art practices like drawing and painting are widely viewed as childlike in Ghana, whereas textile work, beading, or clay work is embraced because it is embedded in our culture and the outcome of the session is something functional and useful. Though attitudes about art are changing as people become sensitised to diverse art practices, it remains important to integrate culturally relevant craft practices into art therapy.

Post-conference reflection from Paola Luzzatto

Art therapy education in the Global South may consist of 'a module' (within a modular training), or 'a bachelor's', or 'a postgraduate diploma', or it might be given a name in the local language. It could be the same in all African countries… or it could be different in each country.

You may use several bricks of different size and colour… and in the end, you have a beautiful little house (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Village house in Sicily, Italy. Photograph by art therapist Alessandra Agnese

Influence of Global North on the development of art therapy in the Global South

Most of the educational programmes discussed were either led by Global South citizens who had been educated in the Global North or co-led by visiting arts therapists from the Global North. Given the ongoing impact of colonialism, it is important to ask how we might minimise the dominating influence of the Global North and align art therapy education and practice with the art forms, cultural values, social contexts, and caring practices of each country. It must be acknowledged that throughout history and into the present, highly effective African healing arts practices have been marginalised, distorted, appropriated, and sometimes destroyed because of colonisation, apartheid, and academic imperialism.

While there is value in the global sharing of knowledge and skills, how do we determine when it is time for visiting professionals to no longer be involved? How do we disrupt the long-established and highly problematic pattern of treating the Global North as the producer and distributor of knowledge and the Global South as the recipient of such knowledge? What if the role of Global North professionals was to make amends for the long-term ravaging effects of colonisation by acknowledging complicity in academic

imperialism, humbly admitting to a position of not knowing (or not knowing nearly enough), making reparations through resourcing, and insisting on the representation of Global South voices, knowledge, and experiences in the development of art therapy pedagogy and practice globally?

Post-conference reflection from Catherine Hyland Moon

I was both heartened and dismayed by my Kenyan colleague Nelly Adhiambo's comments about our collaborative therapeutic arts training programme, which is structured as an exchange of skills and knowledge among East African and Global North therapeutic arts practitioners. The stated core concept is that everyone is a teacher, and everyone is a student. I was heartened by Adhiambo's expression of appreciation for her ability to adapt what she has learned about art therapy to her local context, where she knows best what her community needs. And yet, I was dismayed when this was framed as "they let us adapt…" because it seemed to suggest a hierarchical, paternalistic relationship to knowledge dissemination. It was a reminder to me of the ongoing effects of colonialism and the complexity of extricating ourselves from it.

My textile art piece (Figure 2) is something I started during the most recent therapeutic arts training programme in Kenya. I completed it later, after the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference. As I arranged and rearranged the fabric remnants and secured them with thread, I remembered sewing side-by-side with my East African colleagues. Each of us was working from the same pile of fabric remnants, quietly seeking to make something of them, perhaps something beautiful or meaningful. Inevitably, we were as tangled as the knotting threads and the unravelling fabric edges. As we worked, the impact of our own and each other's cultures, histories, aesthetics, and sense of place in the world moved through our hands to create something visible and tangible.

Figure 2. Textile art piece by Cathrine Hyland Moon

Post-conference reflection from Isaac Lema

When I was thinking about the conference and what has been done in the art therapy field in Africa, it reminded me of a previous journey I took to my village with my family.

My home village is beneath Mount Kilimanjaro. The village is located at the top of a hill and between two rivers that unite at the end of the village. We travelled together in a car to go back to the village. We crossed the river and slowly climbed up the hill to reach our homes. We were joyful to go back home. However, the journey became difficult because it had rained. Slippery roads made it difficult to arrive at the hilltop. United, we pushed the car, and eventually we reached the top of the hill. We were grateful that we had made it, and the driver was happy to have had people to help during such a challenging journey.

We all aim to go back home. We are ready to push the car and face the mad, slippery road. We are all happy to reach home despite our various feelings and perspectives about the journey. This is where we belong. Though we have

reached home, we keep reminding ourselves that the end of this journey is the beginning of another one the next day.

Practices emerging from varied educational models

The practices emerging from these diverse forms of education range from applying core principles of art therapy in diverse settings (witnessing, self-reflection, grounding, and containment, among others), to employing specific art therapy protocols in clinical settings (for example, a series of ten art therapy prompts to address substance use issues in Tanzania), to engaging in community-based practices (for example, using poetry in Kenya to enable vulnerable youth to convey their experiences and how they have developed from those experiences). Training in art therapy has also led to community partnerships, such as using art therapy methods in Ghana to train police officers in assisting traumatised populations, employing art therapy in Botswana to encourage children to keep taking their HIV medications, and incorporating art therapy in Zambia into the training of HIV-AIDS peer counsellors.

The panellists focused mostly on successful post-education outcomes. Yet, there remain barriers to practice due to the lack of recognition of art therapy as a legitimate profession. For this reason, some panellists would like to see art therapy become a specialised field in their countries through the establishment of certificate or diploma programmes in higher education. Others, seemingly wary of the potential rigidity and inaccessibility of institutional structures, advocated for flexibility. Flexibility might manifest in the way space and time are employed to deliver education, or by retaining diverse educational options, or through openness to educating different kinds of professionals and community workers, such as activists, art facilitators, and clinicians.

Post-conference reflection from Joanna Pearce

An expensive master's degree course is not going to be accessible to many people. How can the practice be sustainably available to most of the population? If the training/practice becomes elitist, it is the opposite of social justice.

ART IS NOT ROMANTIC

IT IS HARD WIRED IN US

POWERFUL, AND LIKE FIRE CAN BOTH NOURISH AND DESTROY.

I WATCH OTHERS MAKE AND FEEL AND I LEARN

I AM SCOTTISH NOT ZAMBIAN, BUT STILL A GLOBAL CITIZEN

Post-conference reflection from Kestone Lyambai

As a Zambian art therapist, I stand in the middle of Zambia, where sunsets paint the sky with flaming hues, with a vision of change and rejuvenation. My passion was sparked by the panel discussion. It demonstrated how art therapy can be used to treat people from many backgrounds and cultures, igniting interest and excitement among a broad audience. This conversation inspired me to take an active role in reframing the conversation about art therapy education in our community.

Making art therapy education available to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic background, was one of the panel's most important takeaways. Regarding social justice, this had a strong resonance. As an art therapist from Zambia, I am dedicated to investigating accessible and neighbourhood-based training options. Most of the population in Zambia should be able to receive art therapy, which should continue to be an inclusive and empowering discipline. We are creating a future where justice and art coexist peacefully in the core of our country through our artistic expressions and teamwork.

My drawing (Figure 3) depicts how art has the unique ability to depict one's past, present, and future, weaving a narrative that transcends time and captures the essence of personal experience.

Figure 3. Artwork by Kestone Lyambai

Ensuring professional/paraprofessional ethical standards

Whether art therapy practice develops through paraprofessional training or through higher education programmes, it is incumbent upon educators to establish and reinforce standards for responsible, ethical practice, thereby protecting those who are recipients of art therapy services. Ethics emerging from conventional Western psychology focus on the individual, yet many countries in the Global South have collectivist cultures where a psychosocial approach is more appropriate. At the Universidad Finis Terrae in Chile, for example, there is an understanding that fundamental concepts such as creativity, imagination, metaphor, nonverbal communication, and triangular relationships do not only apply to the individual, but also contribute to the social fabric. Thus, the university takes a community-oriented approach to ethics that is guided by principles of social justice and human rights.

Post-conference reflection from Pamela Reyes Herrara

My textile image (Figure 4) reflects on the notion of mental health in the context of extreme poverty and social crisis. Someone asked our round table how we could think about mental health when reality crushes us? This question moved me. I don't have an answer, but maybe something human is to build from scraps, memories, and hope.

Figure 4. Textile art piece by Pamela Reyes Harrara

Educating art therapists for social justice

What does it mean to train art therapists for social justice? Critical to the socially just development of context-specific art therapy education and training is foregrounding the voices and perspectives of practitioners from the Global South while decentring the dominating voices of Western, predominantly white, 'experts' so that contextually sensitive and culturally relevant practices might develop in each country.

One of the challenges is to ensure the focus of our practice transitions from individual distress or internal conflicts to interpersonal relationships, and from there to broader social, cultural, and political processes. This includes considering personal and family histories as well as the histories of social groups, communities, and nations. It requires conceptualising mental health not through an individualistic lens, but as something that is created within the context of community. For example, in Chile, post-colonial issues, such as the challenges of Indigenous people in relation to transgenerational trauma or the consequences of the Cold War and numerous coups d'état in Latin America, cannot be ignored. Students of art therapy must learn how to attend to both individual and social psychology, both personal mental health and community wellbeing.

Another example is a group-based art therapy model of training and therapeutic provision at Lefika La Phodiso in South Africa. This programme was developed in response to a specific time in the country's post-apartheid history to redress past social injustices. Lefika La Phodiso established a new category of professional identity, *community art counsellor*, and made the training widely accessible, including for people already doing arts-based community work who could not afford university educations (see Lefika La Phodiso – Community Art Counselling and Training, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffqq3r4eEXk.)

Some cultural understandings of art also present challenges to art therapy becoming a culturally accepted practice. While the roots of the art therapy field are anchored in a view of art as individual expression, this perspective is not universal. In creating culturally relevant approaches to practice, we need to be attentive to how the arts are already being used in a particular context, and what kinds of art practices are effectively fostering health and wellbeing in communities. Instead of painting and drawing, we might need to consider craft practices or the integration of visual art with dance, theatre, and spoken

word. Indigenous arts and care practices provide a strong foundation on which art therapy can be built because, as one audience member noted, our theory and practice must reflect the people and how they want their lives to be defined and formed.

Post-conference reflection from Emma Mills

As I created an art piece to reflect on the conference experience (Figure 5), I was deeply moved by the number of attendees at the conference and by the art therapy healing techniques that are being shared in the Global South. It became apparent to me that there is an urgent need for Global South voices to be heard regarding what is needed for healing, and for the Global North to effectively gain a better understanding of various cultures and ethnicities. It is crucial for us, as global participants, to recognise what can truly be beneficial and consider the long-term support needed for those who are implementing new skills and drawing from Indigenous healing practices.

Samu's [audience member] response resonated with me, particularly their contemplation of the terminology associated with mental health and the spaces for expressions that may not yet exist or differ across cultures. In every aspect, we should remain receptive to the wisdom rooted in Indigenous traditions. This may require a form of political activism from all of us.

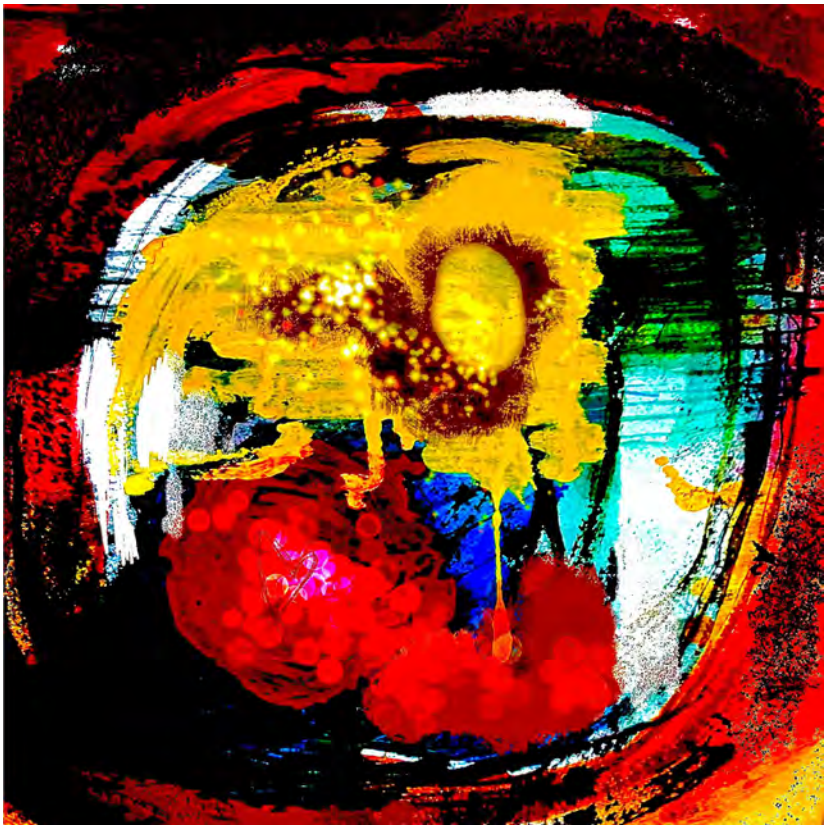

Figure 5. Art piece by Emma Mills

Post-conference response from Hayley Berman

My art piece (Figure 6) reflects how our panel highlighted the complexity and continual need to lean into difficult conversations. We invited an exploration of generational and intergenerational discourses of access to education, privilege, and power and the intersections of mental health and creativity in countries that are part of the Global South.

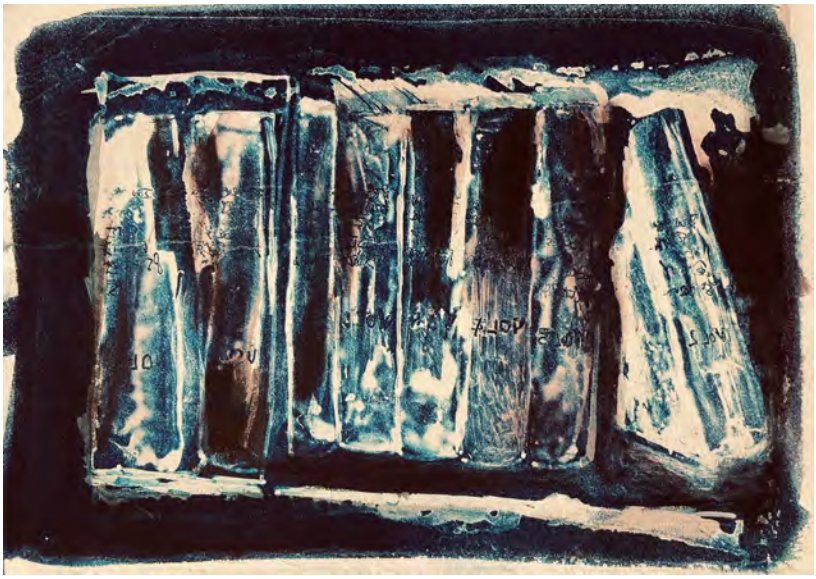

Figure 6. Art piece by Hayley Berman

Promoting and sustaining art therapy and art-as-therapy training requires deep curiosity and democracy of thought and practice. This translates into cultivating and harvesting Indigenous knowledge, drawing on models of practice that encourage integrity of identity, and fundamentally representing and reflecting the people who will receive and implement the work long term.

Conclusion

The Global South provides fertile ground for the expansion of the field of art therapy beyond its roots in the Global North. Differences in world views – in ways of conceptualising art, therapy, and wellbeing – have the potential to upend conventional art therapy theory and practice and to bring about enriching, generative changes within the field. The potential to learn from one another will come about through a generous, cross-cultural exchange of skills and knowledge, along with the willingness of Global North art therapists to take a step back from their expert roles and create space, platforms, and support for Global South peers to step forward as equal colleagues on the world stage. Such efforts will help ensure that art therapy in the Global South takes root and thrives.

Post-conference reflection from Nelly Adhiambo

SHE SOARS

Little voices whisper in the background.

A lot to be heard up the arena.

The stage set to start the play.

Get up and raise your voice.

Is it excitement or surprise?

Something familiar yet so new?

Can dance heal or art treat?

Raise your voice, we need to hear.

Beautiful souls knitted with threads.

Entangled in love, ready to help.

Do I need a paper to spread love?

Speak up, someone hears your voice.

Give a chance, the whisper to hear.

Set the arena, build the stage.

The South is set for all to see.

Art is real and it can heal.

Using the arts to work with refugees and displaced persons in times of crisis and war

A panel presentation convened and moderated by:

Phillip Speiser
Parkside Arts and Health Associates; University of the Witwatersrand
University of Johannesburg
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Vivien Marcow Speiser
Lesley University, University of the Witwatersrand,
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YouTube

Panel abstract

Our global community is experiencing the highest numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees brought about by crises and war. Not since World War II have we seen such huge numbers of persons who have been separated from their families and communities and are without homes. The war in Ukraine alone, caused by Russia's illegal invasion, has contributed to over 14 million refugees and displaced persons, of which, according to UNICEF, 4.6 million are children. This panel explored how the arts can contribute towards restoring common humanity and dignity to those in crisis. Practical examples of how the arts and arts therapies are being used with refugees and displaced persons across the globe were presented. Topics such as safety, space and place, peer support, and collaboration were revisited as these relate to resilience, wellness, and empowerment. Three major questions guided the presenters as they shared their experience in working with people in crisis:

- Why use the arts when working with refugees and displaced persons?

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- How are the arts understood/perceived as they are being integrated in this field of work?
- How do we restore common dignity and humanity to persons living in crisis?

SAJAT Special Issue: Conference Proceedings University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice*, Johannesburg, July 2023.

The conference explored transformative applications of art therapy and its potential in promoting social change. Panel title: Using the arts to work with refugees and displaced persons in times of crisis and war

July 14, 2023, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm SAST

Panel presentation and global webinar in collaboration with:

- UJ – University of Johannesburg, Art Therapy Programme
- FAS – First Aid of the Soul Ukraine
- IACAET – International Association for Creativity and the Arts in Education and Therapy

Presenter bios

Phillip Speiser

Phillip Speiser, PhD, REAT, RDT/BC, is an artist, expressive arts educator/therapist, drama therapist, and psychodramatist who has developed integrated arts therapy, wellness/health and educational programmes for over four decades. He is currently Director of Parkside Arts and Health Associates in Haymarket, Virginia where he does supervision and project development/management around the globe. He is also a research associate at the University of the Witwatersrand and a lecturer at the art therapy programme at the University of Johannesburg. After the tragic events of 9/11 he developed the Healing Arts Project, a trauma recovery/prevention programme in Boston and New York City.

Vivien Marcow Speiser

Vivien Marcow Speiser, PhD LMHC, REAT, BC-DMT, is professor emerita and co-director of the Institute for Arts and Health in the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, Lesley University. Marcow Speiser has directed and taught in programs across the United States and internationally and has used the arts as a way of communicating across borders and across cultures. She believes in the power of the arts to create the conditions for personal and social change and transformation. Her interests and expertise are in the areas of working with trauma and cross-cultural conflict resolution through the arts and she has worked extensively with groups in the Middle East and in South Africa. She is a Fulbright Scholar and had a Salzburg Global Seminars Fellowship in 2020. She received an honorary JAAH Lifetime Achievement in Arts and Health Award in 2019, the 2014 Distinguished Fellows Award from the Global Alliance for Arts and Health, as well as a 2015 Honorary Lifetime Achievement Award from the Israeli Expressive and Creative Arts Therapy Association.

Prof Raymond Saner

Prof Raymond Saner is a titular professor at Basle University (Department of Economics and Management) and has taught at Sciences Po, Paris (Trade & Development of Low Income Development Countries) and at Lüneberg University (Environmental Negotiations). He is a reviewer and partner of research projects and co-founder of CSEND, a Geneva-based NGRDO with ECOSOC accreditation and consultative status. He has been involved with the 2030 Agenda since 2013, was moderator at the Second HLPF meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC, author of a chapter on the science-policy interface for the GSDR Report 2015, member of the drafting committee of Chapter 6 on LDCs, SIDS, and LLDCs and member of the UNECE PPP Bureau 2019-2021. He co-chairs the academic network of the OECD Guidelines on Business and Human Rights, is a member of the UN Task Force on Solidarity and Social Enterprises and is an expert in CSR quality standards. Saner holds a PhD in psychology from UGS University of Ohio, a Master in Education from Lesley University, and a License in Economics and Trade from Basle University. He studied sociology at the University of Freiburg. i.Br in Germany and is the author of 15 books, 35 book chapters, and 45 referred journal articles.

Prof Lichia Saner Yiu

Prof Lichia Saner Yiu is president and co-founder of the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND), a 30-year-old NGO based in Geneva and accredited by ECOSOC in special consultative status. She is an expert in organisational development and institutional learning and is active in policy debates, strategic analysis, and designing public administrative reforms. She teaches at various universities in Japan, Italy, and Switzerland on management and leadership, human resource development (micro and macro) and the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. She is an author of academic publications on the SDGs (city, education, poverty, data and monitoring, and institutional capacity building), co-convener and presenter for the SD Learning Module on Monitoring and Review at the 2015 HLPF, reviewer of the 2015 Global Sustainable Development Report, contributor to regional SDG consultation meetings, and director of CSEND's Summer School on Global Leadership and SDG since 2015. Saner-Yiu was a post-doctoral fellow at Columbia University 1983-1984 and has an EdD in organisational psychology from Indiana University. She has published books and more than 80 articles in academic journals. Her newest book, *Public Goods, Sustainable Development and the Contributions of Business* (2021), is co-authored with Raymond Saner, Roland Bardy, and Arthur Ruben.

Nathalie Robelot-Timtchenko

Nathalie Robelot-Timtchenko, MA, is the founder and executive director of First Aid of the Soul. She holds a Master in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with a specialisation in Intermodal Expressive Arts Therapy from Lesley University. She is a professional member of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA) and the European Federation of Art Therapy (EFAT). While most of her life was spent cross-culturally, the last eight years were in Kyiv, Ukraine. Ukraine is her home. She has over a decade of clinical experience working with groups, individuals, and families within a variety of settings and cultures. Her expertise is in working with individuals facing challenges related to self-worth, acculturation, displacement, complex trauma, crisis, suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety, family conflict, and interpersonal difficulties. Robelot-Timtchenko founded and directs First Aid of the Soul, which offers free mental health and psychosocial support services through multifaceted

approaches and a holistic trauma-informed lens to Ukrainians affected by the war.

Joanna Wroblewska

Joanna Wroblewska, PhD, MA-ET, is a visual artist, expressive arts therapist, and Yoga Nidra teacher currently based in Belgium. She holds a doctoral degree in visual arts and a Master in Expressive Arts Therapy with a minor in Psychology. Joanna works mainly with people who have experienced migration in any form and those who search for a place of belonging, as this is also her own life path. She specialises in profound trauma-informed, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary therapeutic work using art-based tools, somatic practices, guided imagery, and deep relaxation techniques.

Dr Debra Kalmanowitz

Dr Debra Kalmanowitz, PhD, HCPC, BAAT, is a registered art therapist and visual artist with extensive experiences in the context of humanitarian aid, disaster/crisis relief, trauma, resilience, displacement, political violence, refugees, community, social justice, and social change. She held positions at the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture (Londen) and Christian Action (Hong Kong), where she worked with refugees. She is a practising artist and art therapist, head of the Master in Art Therapy programme at Sapir Academic College (Israel), senior lecturer at Ono Academic College, psychosocial facilitator for an international humanitarian non-government organisation (NGO), and works with refugees in South Tel Aviv (Assaf). She is the co-author of *The Portable Studio* and *Art Therapy and Political Violence* and *Art Therapy in Asia: To the bone or wrapped in silk.*

Bobby Lloyd

Bobby Lloyd is a visual artist, art therapist, educator, and refugee charity CEO based in London. She works with displacement, community, crisis support, co-production, and social justice. For more than three decades, she has worked as an art therapist in NHS child and adolescent mental health, inner-city schools and community settings, and on numerous socially engaged art projects and interventions, exhibiting in galleries, site-specific, and public settings in the United Kingdom and internationally. Through the privilege

of extensive collaborations with other artists and art therapists, she has co-led two contemporary arts projects based in East London at the drawing shed and On Site Arts. She has co-led projects, consultation, and training in contexts of conflict and upheaval. She co-wrote *The Portable Studio* and *Art Therapy and Political Violence* with Debra Kalmanowitz, under the Art Therapy Initiative. She has been CEO of Art Refuge since 2016, regularly works with people displaced and in crisis contexts in the United Kingdom and internationally, writes collaboratively about practice and ideas, and the development of The Community Table model.

Brief summaries of panellist presentations

The presenters presented on the topic 'Agency and connections through arts'.

Prof Raymond Saner

Prof Raymond Saner (University of Basel) described the magnitude of the problem of people living outside their countries. About 2.5% of the world's population—184 million people, including 37 million refugees—now live outside their country of nationality. The largest share (43%) of these live in developing countries (World Bank, 2023).

Saner went on to discuss some of the terms used to differentiate between what is a refugee, a stateless person, a displaced person, and an asylum seeker. A refugee is someone forced to flee a country due to persecution. An internally displaced person is forced to flee but does not cross a border to leave their country. A stateless person is not considered to be a national by any State under the operation of its law. A migrant is defined as a person who moves, usually voluntarily, to live or work, either temporarily or permanently, and this move may or may not involve crossing a border.

Some emergent trends are concerning. An alarming statistic is that more than 20,000 migrant deaths have been reported on the Central Mediterranean route since 2014. In addition, there is a trend in developed countries to put into effect deterrence strategies against refugees. Furthermore, the refugee impact on European Union governments, such as the Netherlands, showed disagreement on asylum policy and significantly impacted the ending of the four-party coalition.

Where there are conventions in place that could or should help, such as the UNHCR Convention, their obligations should be viewed in relation to realpolitik. In reality, the refugee issue is no longer specific to Europe and goes beyond WWII and the focus on European refugees. This refugee issue has also been influenced by the influx of refugees created by the Vietnamese boat people between 1975 and the 1980s when Western host countries' limits of acceptance were reached (Benoit, 2019; Vo, 2005). With Syrian refugees, some leading host countries made a call for new rules and a new interpretation of the UNHCR convention.

Saner concluded his presentation by summing up what can be done in the face of this crisis and offering a solution: the provision of essential services and human care through the use of the arts and community engagement.

Prof Lichia Saner Yiu

Prof Lichia Saner Yiu (President, Centre for Socio-Eco-Normic Development) began with a presentation of the Migration Drivers Chart. In this view, there are nine drivers: demographic, economic, environmental, human development, security, supranational, politico-institutional, socio-cultural, and individual.

The effects of disruption and loss due to migration or displacement and the effect on the lives of refugees and displaced people are defined as follows:

- Loss of belonging and belongings
- Loss of a sense of control and orientation
- Loss of one's societal roles in life
- Need to rebuild in a somewhat alien environment.

The Global Compact on Refugees is presented as a way of working together to help refugees and their host countries and communities around the world. Europe's refugee crisis is a crisis of humanity, not of migration.

The contributions that the arts can make are drawn from the work of Jacob L. Moreno, who was born in today's Romania, educated in Vienna, and died in Beacon, New York. In his lifetime, he experienced two World Wars and worked to help people make sense of their life experiences as survivors, as refugees, and as ordinary men and women.

Moreno (1934) authored the book *Who Shall Survive?* He is considered to be the founding father of psychodrama, sociodrama, and sociometry.

Moreno's three working assumptions are:

1. Spontaneity and creativity are the propelling forces in human progress, beyond and independent of libido and socioeconomic motives.
2. Love and mutual sharing are powerful, indispensable working principles in group life.
3. That a super dynamic community based on these principles can be brought to realisation through new techniques.

Moreno's work with spontaneity-creativity theory shows he believed that the best way for an individual to respond creatively to a situation is through spontaneity, that is, through a readiness to improvise and respond in the moment. Additionally, this theory encouraged the individual to address a problem in a creative way. Reacting spontaneously and based on impulse, they may begin to discover new solutions to problems in their lives and learn new roles they can inhabit within it. Saner Yiu believes that Moreno's work offers a significant theoretical perspective for working with the refugee crisis through the arts.

Further contributions of the arts in this regard have to do with the notion of empowerment as understood through the Karpman Drama Triangle developed by Stephen Karpman (KarpmanDramaTriangle.com, n.d.). This triangle considers the roles of the rescuer, the victim, and the persecutor (First Step Outpatient Services, n.d.).

To move on in a post-migration phase, refugees need to learn to redirect energy and attention away from being a victim, and to take up the role of creator to reengage with reality in a constructive manner. At the same time, caregivers supporting the refugees also need to learn to empower the refugees to develop new skills and expand their role repertoire in an unfamiliar environment and with little social capital.

A concluding remark on the use of the arts for refugees and migrants is that the arts create individual strength and social capital for refugees and migrants, and humanity for the helper and caregivers.

Nathalie Robelot-Timtchenko and Dr Joanna Wroblewska

Nathalie Robelot-Timtchenko and Dr Joanna Wroblewska from First Aid of the Soul (FAS) jointly delivered this presentation on 'First Aid of the Soul:

Compassion, care and belonging in time of war'. FAS is an organisation supporting Ukrainians' mental health. FAS' mission is to deliver accessible trauma-informed mental health and psychosocial support services to Ukrainians affected by the war. FAS uses multifaceted, holistic, and creative approaches. Their vision is to restore dignity, belonging, and wellbeing to the soul of Ukraine through services provided by a collective of dedicated, professionally trained mental health clinicians from North America and across Europe. FAS offers a wide array of support services, including support groups, supervision, mentorship, training, workshops, and self-help materials (FirstAidOfTheSoul.org, n.d.) (Figure 1).

The presenters shared poems and stories from work and via telehealth sessions by FAS volunteers in Ukraine. In addition, highlights were presented from arts-based workshops conducted with children on the ground in Kiev. Mental health challenges in Ukraine were presented that showed that 50% of Ukrainian adult respondents reported anxiety and depressive symptoms, 78% emotional disorders and anger, 84% depression, 84% nervousness, and 87% exhaustion. According to preliminary estimates, more than 15 million Ukrainians have war-related mental health problems and require support for mental exhaustion, bodily injury, and experiences of cruelty (Ukraine Ministry of Economy, 2022).

FAS has established its core team, a group of volunteer mental health professionals trained at leading universities from around the globe and specialised in a variety of trauma-focused therapeutic methods. The approaches used include embodied approaches (mindfulness, trauma-sensitive yoga, and grounding), expressive art therapies (art therapy, music therapy, and drama therapy, among others), dialectical behavioural therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR), and crisis and disaster mental health. The services offered include self-help resources, support groups, supervision and mentorship, workshops, and training. Self-help resources are published in three languages (Ukrainian, English, and Russian), are accessible and downloadable on the website, and are disseminated through social media. Supervision and mentorship groups are offered weekly through ongoing virtual supervision groups, and mentorship is given to Ukrainian psychotherapists working on the frontlines in Ukraine with displaced people. Self-compassion support groups are offered weekly for various networks of mental health providers/frontline workers practising on the ground in Ukraine with displaced people and refugees. Regular trainings

are offered on a monthly basis, with consecutive and simultaneous translation from English to Ukrainian, to provide support and guidance in trauma-informed care, and to provide holistic tools.

Figure 1. These photos were taken in January 2023 in Kyiv, Ukraine. Nathalie Robelot-Timtchenko (FAS Founder/Director) was humbled to facilitate a fun workshop for internally displaced children now living in Kyiv. The Finding Your Inner Superhero Workshop helped the children recognise their strengths and build resilience through creativity. Robelot-Timtchenko led the group in mask-making with plenty of play and imagination. (Photos and videos were taken with written consent and permission from guardians/parents)

As of May 2023, FAS served approximately 500 Ukrainian mental health professionals monthly, ten weekly supervision and support groups for Ukrainian mental health professionals and individuals affected by the war, presented at ten conferences, served over 8,900 individuals, and FAS volunteers delivered 50 workshops and trainings that are ongoing monthly for mental health professionals serving displaced people in Ukraine.

This presentation closed with a poem from a Ukrainian participant receiving services from FAS. She gave permission to share this poem:

Janna's poem

The road is long and hard,
But we travel not alone.
We keep each other grounded
With heart, and voice, and soul.

We're here and you are there,
Our hands reach across the chasm. We open many windows
To give and take compassion.
The road is long and hard,
But we travel not alone.
We keep each other grounded
With heart, and voice, and soul.

Dr Debra Kalmanowitz and Bobby Lloyd

The panel concluded with a presentation from Dr Debra Kalmanowitz (Sapir Academic College) and Bobby Lloyd (Art Refuge). Both are founders of the Portable Studio.

We began by showing our film *Portable Studio* (Kalmanowitz & Lloyd, 2021), which presents the core ideas emerging from our work together in the former Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s, using photos and footage from both our collective and individual work over more recent years. *Portable Studio* is based on the premise that the internal structure we carry with us as art therapists can allow for work to take place physically in a wide range of settings (refugee camps, informal settlements, dining rooms, safe houses, fields, hillsides, and roadsides). This internal structure includes an attitude both to the art and the individual making it. Central is a belief in human beings as possessing internal resources rooted in experience, resilience, and culture rather than being powerless victims for whom the therapist alone holds the solutions.

Following the viewing of the short film, Kalmanowitz detailed one aspect of her work at the Idomeni Refugee Camp with the charity Refugee Trauma

Initiative (Figure 2). The refugee camp is on the Greece-Macedonia border, and work in this area took place for roughly two years, beginning in 2016. She focused on work that began with artmaking with children in a small tent and developed into a community-wide kite project over several weeks with children, parents, and young people from Afghanistan.

Lloyd continued with a short presentation on her ongoing work on the France-United Kingdom border for the United Kingdom charity Art Refuge. She focused on The Community Table – an open-access arts-based psychosocial group model developed in this crisis context (Figure 3), and further adapted for other settings on either side of the English Channel.

Figure 2: Flying Kite, Idomeni Refugee Camp, Northern Greece, 2016; Copyright: Debra Kalmanowitz

Lloyd said, "In our film, we describe how we continue to draw from the knowledge we gained from the people we worked with in the former Yugoslavia almost 30 years ago, and from witnessing their strength and resilience. We ended by reflecting that, over time, we have individually and collectively come to understand that even in the most inhospitable situations, people seek to keep their spirits alive. Hope, imagination, and artmaking in the presence of others help people cope. Ultimately, this points to the capacity of human beings for endurance and survival."

Figure 3. The Community Table, Calais, Northern France, April 2023; Copyright: Art Refuge

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Summary report – Training Art therapists for social justice: A University of Johannesburg art therapy conference

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Summary report

The inaugural University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference was held on 13 and 14 July 2023 at the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture (UJ FADA) Building. The conference marked a pioneering event in the field. This hybrid conference witnessed diverse attendance, both in-person and online (Figure 1), with participants hailing from various professional backgrounds (Figure 2), including international guests. The two-day conference featured a robust programme (Figure 3), encompassing a keynote lecture, presentations by University of Johannesburg Master of Art Therapy students, four international panels, and a social dreaming workshop. The average number of attendees, both online and in-person for 13 July was 110 and for 14 July was 78.

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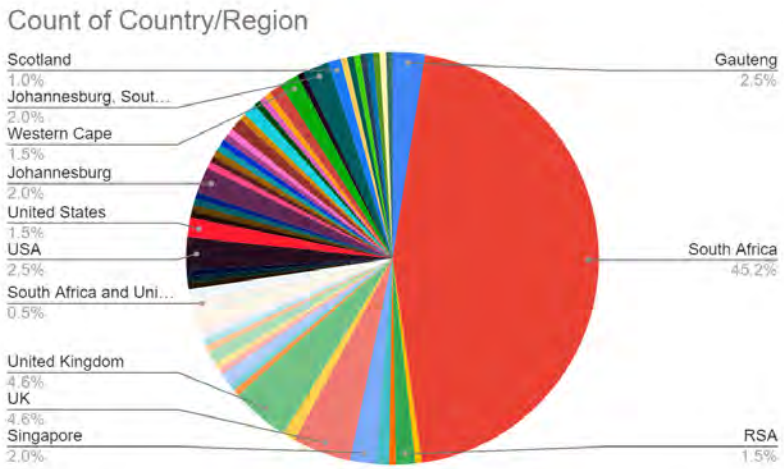

Figure 1. Geographical distribution of conference attendees by country and region

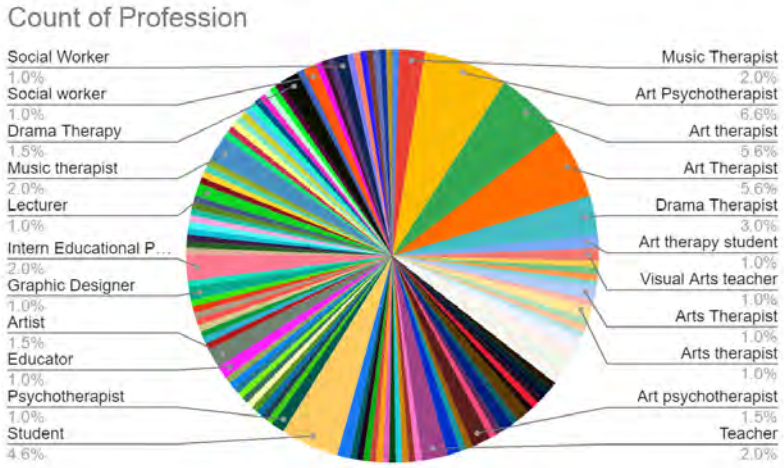

Figure 2. Diverse professional backgrounds of conference attendees

Figure 3. Full conference programme

Day 1 (13 July 2023)

The conference commenced with opening remarks from Prof Kim Berman (Convenor of the AT programme) and Desiree Smal (acting Dean of FADA), followed by an address by Prof Bettine van Vuuren (Registrar of UJ). Dr Hayley Berman and Dr Nataly Woollett (senior lecturers at the UJ honours and master's art therapy programme) provided an insightful overview of the conference objectives.

The keynote lecture titled 'Training and Research: Art Therapy for Social Justice' was delivered by Dr Lireko Qhobela (postdoctoral fellow at the University of Cape Town at the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies).

Following the keynote lecture, the first panel was moderated by Prof Kim Berman and showcased research posters by the inaugural and second master's in art therapy cohorts. Dr Neo Pule (counselling psychologist) and Dr Hayley Berman (art psychotherapist and group analyst) conducted a workshop

with the theme *Deep Diving Towards a Vision for Social Justice: A Visual Dream Matrix*. This interactive session engaged in-person participants in the dream matrix experience.

The second panel on Research as Storytelling: Sharing Wisdom with the Profession was moderated by Dr Nataly Woollett (lecturer in art therapy at UJ) and featured esteemed international panellists:

- Prof Jordan Potash (associate professor in art therapy at The George Washington University in Alexandria, Virginia, United States, current editor in Chief of *Art Therapy)* and
- Prof Lynn Kapitan (professor emerit in art therapy at Mt. Mary University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, United States, author of *Introduction to Art Therapy Research* (Routledge) and former editor in chief of *Art Therapy*)

The panellist shared their insight into writing research papers and articles for publishing in the art therapy field.

At the end of this day, the University of Johannesburg's *South African Journal of Arts Therapies* was launched, the first of its kind in South Africa. This first issue was dedicated to the first Master of Art Therapy cohort, who contributed articles from their final dissertations.

Day 2 (14 July 2023):

The second day began with the second Master of Art Therapy cohort presenting their research posters, followed by the third panel on Art Therapy and Social Activism in Community-Based Projects moderated by Rozanne Myburgh (drama therapist, senior lecturer of the UJ art therapy honours programme, Executive director at Lefika la Phodiso – Community Art Counselling & Training Institute). This panel delved into the intersection of social activism and art therapy in South African community-based projects.

The panel featured panellists with extensive experience in the field:

- Angela Rackstraw (lecturer in the UJ art therapy programme, Red Cross Children's Hospital and the COMMUNITY ARTs THERAPY (CATh) programme)
- Charles Jansen (coordinator of the Art Centre, trainer Community Art facilitator, and mentor and team leader at the Butterfly Art Project)

- Humbu Nsenga (founding member of the Creative Mentorship Hub and senior community art counsellor at Lefika la Phodiso)
- Ziyanda Magadla (senior community art counsellor at Lefika la Phodiso)
- Kamal Naran (Master of Art Therapy student and senior community art counsellor at Lefika la Phodiso)
- Nomphelo Dumke (higher level community arts facilitator and a founder member at Intlantsi Creative Development Project, first cohort of the Train-the-Trainer programme)
- Sinovuyo Ngcolomba (higher level community arts facilitator and founder member Intlantsi Creative Development Project, first cohort of the Train-the-Trainer programme).

The fourth panel on Art Therapy in the Global South was moderated by Prof Catherine Moon (professor emerit School of the Art Institute of Chicago) and co-moderated by Dr Hayley Berman (art therapy practitioner and a founding member of Lefika La Phodiso). The panel introduced art therapy initiatives and training from various Global South regions, offering valuable insights into diverse practices.

The distinguished panellists included:

- Paola Luzzatto, Isaac Lema, Alex Ndagabewe, Letisia Ruzibuka, Muhimbili, and Godfrey Kimathy (University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Tanzania)
- Joanna Pearce (University of Zambia, Zambia)
- Kestone Lyambai (head of department at the University of Zambia, School of Nursing Sciences, Zambia)
- Emma Mills (Southend Borough Council and Metal, Basildon Women's Aid Refuge, Goldsmiths College, United Kingdom)
- Michelle Hope (UK National Health Service, Place2Be mental health charity, United Kingdom)
- Pamela Reyes Herrera – (Universidad Finis Terrae, Chile)
- Nelly Adhiambo (Token of Mercy CBO, Bar Andingo Primary School, Kenya)
- Mavis Osei (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana).

The fifth and final panel of the conference was an international panel moderated by Prof Vivien Speiser (professor emerit and co-director of the Institute for Arts and Health in the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, Lesley University, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa) and Dr Philip Speiser (director of Parkside Arts and Health Associates Haymarket, Virginia University of Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa).

The panel included:

- Dr Raymond Saner (University of Basel/Diplomacy Dialogue, Switzerland)
- Dr Lichia Saner-Yiu (president, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, Switzerland)
- Nathalie Robelot-Timtchenko (founder and executive director, First Aid of the Soul, Cambridge, United States)
- Dr Joanna Wroblewska (therapeutic coordinator, First Aid of the Soul, Belgium)
- Dr Debra Kalmanowitz (head of the art therapy programme, Sapir Academic College, Israel)
- Bobby Lloyd (visual artist, art therapist, educator, and CEO at the refugee charity Art Refuge, United Kingdom).

This international panel explored how the arts can contribute towards restoring common humanity and dignity to those in crisis.

The conference culminated with a reflective session guided by Dr Hayley Berman and Dr Nataly Woollett.

Post-conference feedback

Following the conference, an evaluation form was emailed to attendees to provide feedback on the conference.

Post-conference feedback indicated mostly positive experiences and found that the presentations were beneficial to increasing their knowledge and their professional development (Figure 4 and Figure 5). The fourth panel that explored art therapy and social activism in community-based projects proved to be the most insightful for most attendees, followed closely by the keynote lecture by Dr Lireko Qhobela titled 'Training and Research: Art therapy for Social Justice' and the second panel on Research as Storytelling: Sharing Wisdom with the Profession (Figure 6). Furthermore, the hybrid

nature of the conference was met with positivity (Figure 7). The attendees found the presenters to be knowledgeable, relevant, and engaging (Figure 8).

Some of the feedback received from the attendees included:

- Quality and expertise of the presenters were exceptional, well organised and executed, a brilliant opportunity to present one's own work.
- Insightful, helpful, and meaningful.
- What a positive start to this well-awaited social action conference. The keynote speaker Dr Lireko Qhobela was excellent, and all the participants and speakers added value to the field of art therapy in South Africa.
- I appreciated the experiences shared by the speakers. Networking was made available. The students' work was celebrated with presentations and a journal launch. Very impressive.
- Vast breadth of knowledge from presenters.
- Glad to have the inclusion of arts therapists and integrate the modalities.
- Extremely meaningful and rich conference.

Comments regarding areas of improvement primarily centred around technical and online issues:

- Sometimes, the sound was a challenge.
- Definitely a tech team next time.
- The online part could have had a person dedicated to working to make sure any trouble was addressed.
- If you attended in person, you could not engage with or interact with those online.
- More breakout sessions and opportunities to meet others in the field please.
- More movement and practical workshops like the social dream matrix (SDM) please.

Figure 4. Feedback from conference attendees about their overall experience of the conference

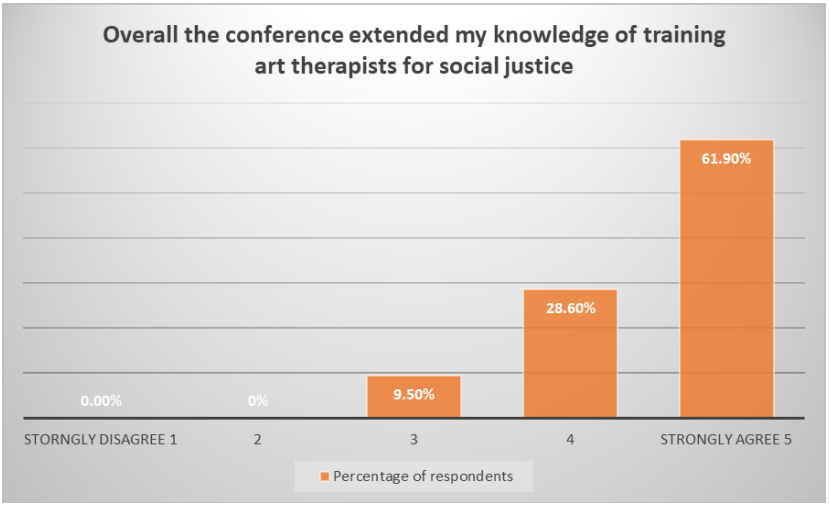

Figure 5. Attendees' feedback on whether the conference expanded their understanding of training art therapists for social justice

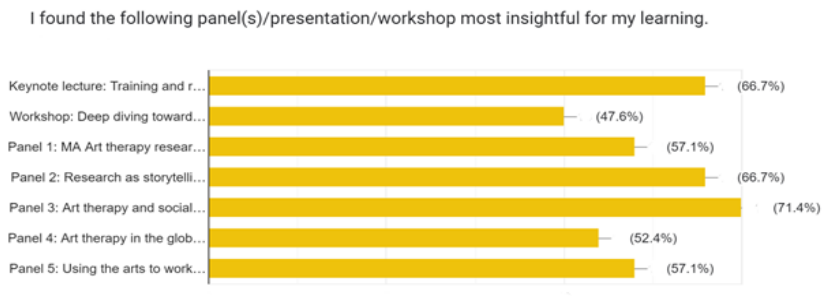

Figure 6. Presentations the attendees found to be the most insightful for learning

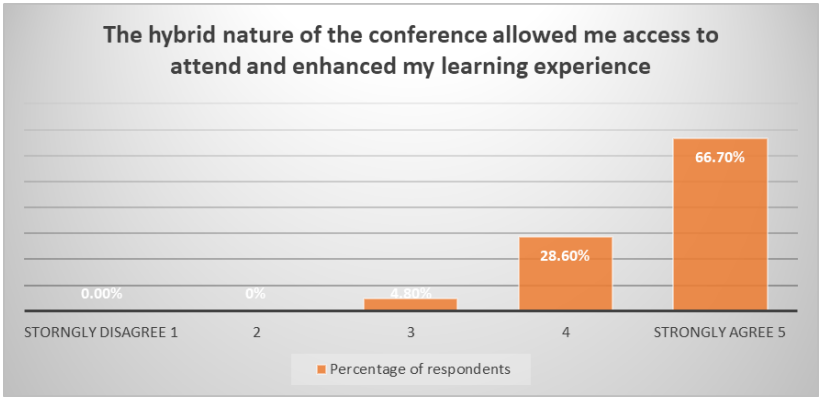

Figure 7. Perceived benefits of the conference's hybrid format on attendees' learning experience and access to the event

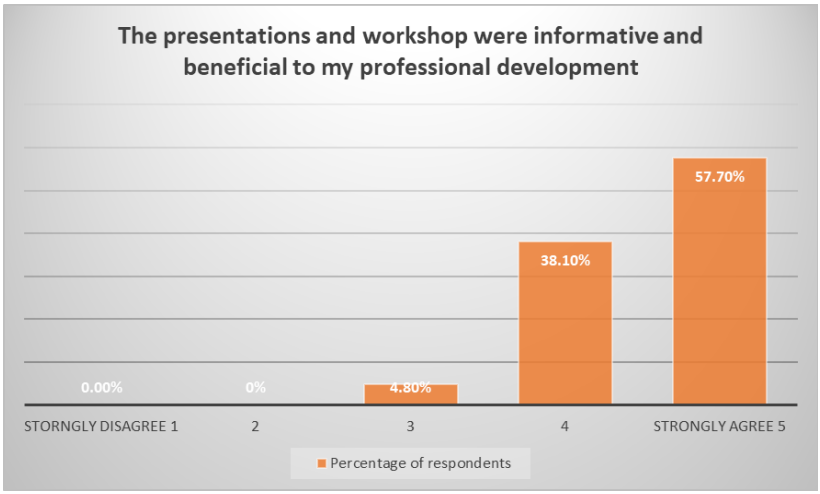

Figure 8. Effectiveness of conference presentations and workshops in enhancing attendees' professional development

Conclusion

Overall, the University of Johannesburg's Art Therapy in the Global South Conference with the theme *Training Art Therapists for Social Justice* successfully advanced discourse and knowledge in the field, setting a promising precedent for future engagements in the intersection of art therapy and social justice. Through a hybrid format that combined in-person and online participation, the conference successfully facilitated knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and engagement on a global scale. The conference featured a diverse range of presentations and highlighted the multifaceted nature of art therapy and its potential to address complex social issues. One of the conference's notable achievements was the launch of the University of Johannesburg's *South African Journal of Arts Therapies*. The journal represents a significant step forward in advancing arts therapies scholarship in South Africa. This groundbreaking event, the first of its kind, brought professionals, scholars, and students in the field of arts therapies together and particularly highlighted art therapy in the Global South.