

ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

Welcome Speech

Head of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies (STaCS)

Professor Jim Campbell

I am very pleased to take this opportunity to open the conference today. This is a wonderful opportunity for art psychotherapy academics, practitioners and students from around the world to meet together at Goldsmiths to share ideas and stories about research, policy and practice.

As Head of the Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies at Goldsmiths I very much value the importance of the role that my art psychotherapy colleagues play in delivering highly respected programmes and quality research. As a social work academic I have always been intrigued and interested in the way that art psychotherapists work with clients and patients. This interest began at the very beginning of my social work career when I was a social work assistant in a rural psychiatric hospital in Northern Ireland in the early 1980s. I have strong memories of an art therapist who was practising in the hospital in those days. Not only did she provide interventions for patients, she also offered lunchtime experiential workshops for staff. I was impressed by her patience and, what would be called mindfulness these days. Those early experiences have stayed with me and I have often thought about how the knowledge, values and skills of art psychotherapists might be transferable to other disciplines like social work. At

the very least we should try to learn from each other because, essentially, we criss-cross each other's paths in all sorts of settings and different client groups.

And I assume that these are the types of opportunities to learn from each other that the conference will seek to encourage. I have read the programme and, like you, am excited by the variety and quality of keynote addresses, individual papers, experiential groups and exhibits. Even more impressive is the international nature of the conference, drawing participants from all around the world. I very much wish to thank my academic and professional support colleagues in how well they gathered together such a distinguished group of art psychotherapists. Finally I want to wish everyone a productive and exciting conference over the next three days and I am sure the relationships that are initiated and built upon will be long lasting and productive.