

ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

ATOL Editorial

Philippa Brown and Helen Omand

ISSN: 2044-7221

Date of Publication: 4 April 2023

Citation: Brown, P. & Omand, H. (2023) *ATOL: Editorial*. ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine 13 (1) DOI 10.25602/GOLD.atol.v13i1.1698



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License

<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

After a period of absence ATOL is delighted to be back with this new issue. As some readers will know, we have been taking part in the direct-action boycott of academic publication and research by Goldsmiths University, our hosting website, in support of the University College Union (UCU) and as part of the industrial action in Higher Education. The boycott of research platforms has now officially ended, although strikes are currently ongoing and now echoed outside of academia in increased industrial action across public sector workplaces.

Since our last publication in 2020 the world has sustained turbulent and difficult times. There have been military conflicts globally, a pandemic bringing loss and uncertainty, increased inequality and polarity in divisions of wealth, and multiple catastrophes caused by climate change. As editors of this issue, and as two art therapists based in the UK, we note the current cost of living crisis, the detrimental effects of austerity, cuts to services and Brexit. This shifting and uncertain landscape has resulted in challenges for art therapy practices.

The writing in this issue reflects that of art therapists who seek to adapt to changing global contexts. Carolyn Krueger's article explores the potential role of art therapy within global mental health provision. Presented in two languages she draws from art therapy literature relating to cultural diversity and socio-political justice, as well as from her personal experience as a white German practitioner. The paper considers the impact of Western psychological concepts on therapeutic settings, and power dynamics between different countries and cultures, and suggests the relevance of non-Western and Indigenous knowledge and practices for mental health. These themes are linked to Catherine Keyzer's paper; Catherine has worked with Aboriginal mothers and babies in Aboriginal community schools in regional NSW Australia. She discusses an approach referred to as 'Play Ground' which takes place in four Aboriginal pre-schools. Additionally, she proposes a culturally sensitive, collaborative play space that brings alive encounters and knowledge shared between cultures.

We hope that the three book reviews will focus readers' attention on contemporary imperatives. Global power imbalances, political conflicts and displacements of

people are often the context for the work described in the book *Art Therapy Treatment with Sex Trafficking Survivors: Facilitating Empowerment, Recovery and Hope* (Kometiani, Ed., 2020), which is acutely reviewed by Jessica Collier. In the review by Nicki Wentholt of *Arts Therapies and the Mental Health of Children and Young People: Contemporary Research Theory and Practice* (Hermann, Hills de Zarate & Pitruzzella, Eds., 2021), we learn that the editors have set the contributions in a global context, including the effects of globalisation. Diana Velada's review of *Contemporary Practice in Studio Art Therapy* (Brown & Omand, Eds., 2022) shows how art-focused studio approaches have adapted to changing political contexts in the UK and North America, with a collection of case studies that show the work of practitioners working often on the radical margins of art therapy. Brown and Omand continue the thinking around the role of the studio as a social and political space in their reflective review of the Whitechapel Gallery exhibition of *A Century of the Artist's Studio: 1920 - 2020*.

Finally, we point to the live debates and shifts within the editorial team and draw attention to the welcome response of board member Ange Morgan in criticism of the board's previous decision to publish a review of the book 'Inventing Transgender Children & Young People'.

We hope readers will find this issue thought provoking and that it will stimulate further writing on the impact and adaptations that art therapy practice has experienced and must take in the ensuing global political and cultural shifts.

With this in mind we ask readers to consider the call for articles that debate the Case Study for a special issue on cases studies, and a separate call for visual creative responses in art therapy practice for our forthcoming issue. Please see the ATOL website.