

ECARTE PROPOSAL

The Space Between

The Work of Art is the Work of Embodiment

This proposal relates to the theme 'the space between'. Participants will be situated inside an installation art work which includes objects, film, projected images and a 15 minute performance. A facilitated opportunity to reflect on the experience will also be part of this session. The installation includes images, projections and film that are part a body of developing artwork titled 'The work of art is the work of embodiment'. This work is a collaboration of a team of four art therapy educators (Dr Sheridan Linnell, Suzanne Perry, Josephine Pretorius) from the University of Western Sydney. The work explores the interface of our experiences in our roles and identities as artists, art therapists and educators. A complex emotional landscape is created which is inspired by the use of art based methods in learning about becoming an art therapist.

Aspects of this work have been presented at several different sites. As art therapy educators we have observed the effectiveness of art based methods in teaching and learning with students. We decided to apply our teaching methods to ourselves to see what occurred. We were excited by the effects of the work and this proposed installation/performance will include exploration on the ideas, visual & experiential evidence of the work and our developing thinking in these areas.

Notions of art, aesthetics and embodiment have been central to this work and have preoccupied our minds. Aesthetics is about sensory perception. Embodiment is about an integration of 'substance and spirit' – 'body and mind'. When brought into consideration with art it suggests thinking about the body, senses and perception in making and experiencing art. These topics lead to philosophical depths and questions that we are beginning to explore primarily through the experience of creating art work on these themes related to art therapy and education.

Several authors in the art therapy field have discussed and considered relevant ideas on art, aesthetics and embodiment. Namely, Joy Schaverien (1987, 1992) who put forward a discussion about the nature of 'embodied' images in art therapy, David Maclagan (2001) who has conceived of a notion of 'psychological aesthetics' and Hyland Moon (2002) who has contributed a notion of 'relational aesthetics'. Additional relevant authors include Paolo Knill, Ellen Levine and Stephen Levine (2005) on therapeutic aesthetics and expressive arts therapy. From the realms of art and embodiment Paul Crowther (1993) has contributed significant philosophical arguments about art and the embodied subject. Jill Bennett's (2005) work is relevant in relationship to trauma, empathy and contemporary art.

References:

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Hyland-Moon, C. (2002). *Studio Art Therapy: Cultivating the artist identity in the art therapist*. London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Knill, P., Levine, E., Levine, S. (2005). *Principles & Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy: Towards a therapeutic aesthetics*. London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Maclagan, D. (2001). *Psychological aesthetics: Painting, feeling and making sense*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Schaverien, J. (1987). The scapegoat and the talisman: Transference in art therapy. In T. Dalley, C. Case, J. Schaverien, F. Weir, D. Halliday, P. Nowell-Hall & D. Waller. *Images of art therapy* (pp. 74-108). London: Routledge.

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Jill Westwood is a registered Art Psychotherapist (UK & Australia), Artist, Educator and Researcher. She is currently a visiting tutor at Goldsmiths College, University of London and an Adjunct Fellow, School of Social Sciences & the Research Centre for Social Justice & Social Change at the University of Western Sydney, Australia where she is conducting research and completing her PhD in Art Therapy. As Head of Program of the Master of Art Therapy & Graduate Diploma in Expressive Therapies at the University of Western Sydney 1995-2007 she has been extensively involved the development of the profession and the training of Art Therapists in Australia. She has work experience as an Art Therapist in Adult Psychiatry. She is originally from a fine arts background and is a practising multimedia artist. She is involved in research collaboration with Dr Andrea Gilroy, Goldsmiths College, University of London. Her special interests include; the interface of Art Therapy & Contemporary Art, Art Therapy in Organizations, Art Therapy Education and she also has an independent practice.