CC BY NC ND

EDITORIAL

In its second edition, Transfer brings the perspective of art therapy in the community to trauma and intercultural collision. The polarities meet. The destruction around us requires the powers of creativity in order to face and deal with reality, imagine and build the future.

Art therapy processes allow an active relationship between imagination and visual communication. Actively creating, being in the image (in the sense of an embodied or diagrammatic image) and towards the image (in the sense of transference and counter-transference), reveals ideas, insights, connections of different editions of persons who express themselves through creativity, externalize themselves through art materials to the outside world. At the same time, the idea as "an internal image with the help of which a higher power raises us to its level" (Hamvas, 1995), touches both depths and heights that are rarely available in the dynamics of everyday life. The idea is that we can imagine the future even in the darkest night of the soul and that we can direct this image to the specified goal.

Indeed, art therapy strategies for dealing with stress strengthen, ensure (self- and mutual) understanding, and finding meaning. However, even more valuable, art therapy has to offer the exploration of the subconscious and the authentic inner world of persons, which enables them to cope with the world around them and take an active role in it. By getting involved in life and showing agency, we change the instinctive reactions of the trauma that leaves us immobilized or hyperactivated, but in any case, isolated from the environment, be it benevolent or the opposite. How, then, can we reconnect the fragmented reality into a coherent one, and how does a person with a fragmented self fit into society?

An anecdote narrates how Margaret Mead, asked about the first sign of the beginning of civilization, recognized it in a broken, then healed femur, which draws the conclusion of prolonged care of one person for another. Care for traumatized from the surrounding community is one of the most significant predictors of early healing, with the critical factor being the time of support given - as close to the traumatic event as possible. More specifically, the renowned cultural anthropologist defines the first sign of civilization in constructing large cities, the complex division of labour and the method of archiving knowledge (Madden, 1968). The first records and the communication of knowledge accessible to all indicate the power of the word in society.

However, in the beginning was not a word, established Antonio Damasio (2021), a neurologist who proves the origin of emotions from sensations that make up the pictorial primordial mass of the personality in its emergence. Chemical-electrical processes of the organism lead to mental states at each new moment of the flow of life. Neural pathways with the information of experience, which we receive through interoception, proprioception and exteroception, create a pattern and, with the organism's positive or negative assessment of its state (pleasure or discomfort) and other subcortical sensory data, form a mental event - an image, which with the addition of affect becomes part of our consciousness (2021). Even there, within us, at the micro-organic level, the image forms the basis of consciousness. Developmentally, certainly, at the level of human development, in the preverbal phase, but also historically, at the level of civilization development, collectively and globally, the image always faithfully conveys an intrinsically recognizable, essentially unique experience of sensations and their primordial pattern. At the same time, the image carries a message that contains a fusion of all sensations. How many of us will be taken by the gesture of a stranger and the tone of his violin struggling through the white noise of rain, recognizing the distant soft feeling of comfort of a song that his mother taught him (who was taught that same song by her mother, etc.) while the brush drew a brown trail of paint creating a stain that was repeated by the car, splattering in speed a muddy line of brown onto the wall, for a moment syncopating the melody and twitching the body of a violinist. Thus, words serve to describe a feeling, but we do not need words to feel (Damasio, 2021). We obviously use words to communicate, but people also communicate without words through the subconscious communication of nervous systems (Porges, 2011), often creating additional images that give colour and character to our thoughts, words, and actions.

In the last ten years, neurology has shown the way towards somatic practices using almost the same terminology. These "images" in Somatic Experience (SE) include sensation, image (visual information), behaviour, affect, and meaning (SIBAM), and Emily C. Nolan describes them in her work, offering a perspective on the treatment of trauma in the community through the making of dolls. Somatically recognizing the wounded points in the body and the traumatic identities, people mirror them onto the doll. What is frozen or numb is kinesthetically activated; what is hyperactivated finds stability, and strategies for regulation are found in situations that otherwise remain unnoticed, unconscious, and thus impossible to mend.

Embodying the condition of play in therapeutic work, Dina Fried demonstrates effective Developmental Transformation (DvT) strategies for working with the therapist's body in all its presence and creative readiness. The body becomes a tool, and every reaction, sensation, thought, image, sound, or movement is part of the rich process described in the research on the following pages.

Barbara Ivković Cikač talks about new perspectives on dissociation in a review article that studies the art therapy approach in solving the complete abandonment of bodily sensations due to trauma. Sometimes, even describing this event is uncomfortable and stressful for people who have experienced dissociation. Stigma and fear of madness or ostracism from society can be threatening, and not being present in the shared reality is not widely accepted.

However, looking at the writings from the beginnings of civilizations, we can find common experiences described uncommonly, using analogies, lyric descriptions, and metaphors, often in the form of myths and stories, allegorically fiddling with the lesson we will eventually be able to conclude. The symbols created by the deposition of these images are transmitted generationally. A picture, pregnant with meanings, is glimpsed at and separated from the subconscious mass of personality that shaped the product through the processes of art therapy.

Therefore, language can be visual. It can be layered and lead to unpredictable depths. The image is the language of the subconscious, and for Jung, it represents the psyche itself (Hillman, 1972). Speaking of the symbol as loaded with ineffable meanings, Jung finds it natural to express it with colour, shape, and material.

Speaking of matter as ambiguous, Hamvas (1995) sees it, on the one hand, as a part of nature or nature itself and, on the other, as a spirituality that lives hidden in the material. Emerging from the incomprehensible inner world, the image becomes a means of communicating inner contents with the outer world, so we connect, recognize each other, oppose one another,..., and build society.

Whatever internal boundaries we cross, we also build an external collective latent reality. The potential of merging and dividing, definition and vagueness, until what is expressed in words becomes a manifest reality. Like the articles in front of you that describe past complex, deep, multifaceted processes. As it were, in the end there was a word.

We are witnessing political and social situations that put us in situations of dealing with new forms of trauma. Terrorist attacks and gun violence in public are becoming frequent. The unexpectedness of the attack creates constant tension, a general state of anticipation of trauma, and a sense of arbitrariness because we have no control over events

nor value because life becomes a mere object of extortion or ultimatums for the powerholders.

In the shadow of these world events, we increasingly deal with therapy in the community because that's where problems are formed, says Nolan. Art therapy in the community can offer work strategies through learning about the mechanisms of art that Ephrat Huss and Dominik Havsteen-Franklin determine in their article. In their contribution to social art therapy, authors show the need to change the approach of art therapists during long-term crises in community work, taking the perspective of social theories.

The long-term crises and wars have caused mass migrations, refuge and asylums in the last ten years since the war in Syria and, more recently, in Ukraine and the Middle East. Migrations lead to an intense cultural collision. Homo forced turisticus becomes suspicious, redundant, maladjusted, and thus undesirable, cannot identify himself with the surrounding, doesn't belong, and is brought to a state of dependence if not helplessness and feeling lost. With the relatively rapid change in the appearance of the population, which we are witnessing in Croatia as well, the way we conceive of security has also changed.

The meeting of cultures in this dynamic environment becomes genuinely worth observing. Jasmina Ferček describes one of the viewpoints in her multimodal art therapy workshops and studies immigrants' experiences trying to fit into a new environment.

A war refuge is not always to the free territories and implies uncertainty and prolonged trauma. In addition, therapists who operate within these supportive frameworks are also under threat and experience trauma as well. Thus, in open studios organized primarily for Ukrainian refugees and then for more than 253,000 residents displaced from their homes in Israel (https://www.inss.org.il/publication/evacuation), both evacuated persons and therapists went through trauma together, supporting and building safety in highly demanding conditions. Michal Ulizur-Zemel and Gali Borman describe the experience of these Safe Studios. In another form of exile, the confinement, are prisoners, a population with whom art therapy work has not been described to such an extent, which is represented by Carlo Coppelli. By integrating art therapy and drama elements between the impermeable borders of the walls, protected in the danger of its inhabitants, the author achieves liberation within, healing and rehabilitating with expressive forms and humanism.

Observing from the perspective of society in times of change, we must change our approaches and familiarize ourselves with new rules, learn to look from multiple perspectives and critically relate to the information we receive. Finally, every client we work with is part of

society, regardless of place of origin and point of view. By leading him towards betterment, both his environment and society are led towards better functioning. However, social justice and human rights issues often arise when working with the community. In this issue's interview, Jordan Potash shares his personal and professional experience in this field. Since the beginning of his career, he has taken a declarative position on social justice. By working with marginalized people, he has taken an activist attitude within and outside the profession, leading to a societal shift through art therapy interventions and actions.

Even in a highly individualistic society such as ours, we will find similar symptoms in a crisis-stricken community, and some of the methods and perspectives of dealing with a trauma-struck community can be found in the texts before you.

Mia Janković Shentser,
Editor-in-chief

References

Damasio, A. (2021). *Feeling and Knowing*. *Making Mind Conscious*. Pantheon Books

Hamvas, B. (1995). *Scientia sacra*, I, II i III. Ceres, Zagreb

Hillman, (1972). *The Myth of Analysis:Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology*. Northwestern University Press

Jung, C.G. (1975). *Man and His Symbol*. Dell

Madden Ch. F. (Ed.). (1968). *Interview with Margaret Mead in Talks with Social Scientists*. Southern Illinois University Press

Milton, J., Polmear, C., Fabricius, J. (2004) *A Short Introduction to Psychoanalysis*. Sage Publications

Porges, S. W. (2011). *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-regulation*. W. W. Norton & Company.

The National Emergency Management Authority and The Research and Information Center (https://www.inss.org.il/publication/evacuation/), accessed on 20.12.2024.