

## Editorial

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For this edition of the journal, we put a call for papers for authors to submit their work on constructive dialogue, diplomacy, safe coexistence, harmonious futures, and arts-based approaches in order to understand and work on how we can ease individual and collective suffering and trauma. We wanted to generate thoughtful and caring dialogues through our practices, research, and teaching in response to the painful realities of war and conflict. We particularly wanted to offer an opportunity for artistic and creative work to come together in this edition to represent how we can produce the brightest of lights when so many of us find ourselves in such complex existence and to offer a reprieve and moment of alleviation. We see *CAET* as an international journal representing not just bridges among Eastern, Western, and global ideologies but also as a way of collaborating and dancing with each other—to just be with each other in this time, through our scholarly and creative dialogues. As you will see from our current articles for this edition, our international community is so vibrantly represented and has responded to this call with such care, creativity, sense of responsibility, and beautiful offerings for healing and resiliency.

We begin with Michal Lev’s “Intimate Representations of Displacement,” a photo essay of her own artistic journey of 9 months of navigating her way through the Hamas invasion of Israel. She writes about how its purpose “pays homage to all who persist in creating light in the darkest of times.” Her essay indeed does take us through her ordeal with the gamut of feelings and emotions encapsulating surprise, stress, the power and pain of experiences, and observation of human and community destruction. Themes of sleeplessness, ethereal, wandering, ravishment, burning and devourment, liminal and in-between spaces of psychological processes, intimate and family relationships in separation and reunion, transformation, change, the simple truth of our intrinsic link and relationship to nature, and nature and nurture.

Next, we continue with transformative nature and move from visual to musical spaces in the article “Change Process Research in Music Therapy: Introducing a Transdisciplinary Framework” by Lorenzo Antichi, Rebecca Zarate, and Marco Gianini. They take us into conceptualizing a transdisciplinary model that shows us how we can move the needle with music therapy research in our understanding of not just what is changed in the therapeutic relationship but also allows for an understanding of how change happens. Exciting and cutting edge, they blend their areas of expertise in psychology, change research, music, and music therapy.

Following their article, we continue with process-driven arts-based interventions with the article “Studio Art Therapy as a Learning Ecology: Crossing Borders between

Art, Education, Health, and Therapy, A Deleuzoguattarian Perspective” by Kathryn Meyer Grushka. Grushka offers a learning ecology that interfaces several major approaches that do not usually speak to one another in our practices. A metaphor of life lessons in conflict, it offers a solution of community care, practices of belonging, and resilience, which are at the heart of her approach. In it she states, “care, community, belonging, and resilience are core to a studio art therapy learning ecology that responds to real-life experiences in the support of personal care and wellbeing.”

We continue through the edition linking our relationships to nature, art, health, and economy in the article “The Art of Planting Rice as a Meditative Practice: Sensemaking and Equanimity about Societal Disruption through Performance Art” by the international team of Made Jodog and Jem Bendell. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they address the impact it had on the economy of Bali, Indonesia, and demonstrates resilience and response by returning to small-hold farming practices. In solidarity, the first author created an arts-based performance practice of planting rice as a meditative act. The authors summarize what that process elicited and what was learned in this qualitative arts-based project. They mention how “the analysis affirms the role of artistic expression in supporting people’s sensemaking about societal disruption, with implications for social learning and mental well-being.”

We continue to explore our community connections and engagement threads in the article “Mural Painting and Inclusive Research in Cameroon: Implementation and Impact at the University of Bamenda Campus” by Paul Animbom et al. This work represents another international team seeking and exploring the impact and esthetic connection power of the mural and processes we engage in with creating and implementing mural paintings. As part of knowledge mobilization and using symbols deeply connected to their mission and their community, the authors help us to be reminded of, and learn on a deeper level about, the importance and meaning of inclusion as a “vision of hopefulness” of inclusive education and research on a university and learning campus.

We continue into this reflexive and reflective journey with the article “Embracing the Kahankar and the Ahankar: A Reflexive Inquiry into Body, Movement, and Consciousness, Interwoven with the Warli Philosophy” by Devika Mehta Kadam. A critical arts-based look at the intersection of personal stories and narratives of the multifaceted and complex components of identity and colonized descriptors of art and arts practices, it offers a dimension of engaging in the practice of witnessing in authentic movement. Here, witnessing is explored and deeply reflected upon as not just a dance/movement technique but an active mechanism for insight—generating reflections—something the author indicates to be an important part of story-telling and a check on what and how we tell those stories about ourselves and of others. In the context of war and conflict, it is a check-and-balance method that controls bias and polarizations, lifting light into our own lives and bringing it to the lives of others in our practices. So, we thread this idea of care and culture into the next article, “Cultural Appropriateness, Arts-based Care, and Well-Being in Sensitive Research” by Ying Wang. This article leads us into facing the presence of violence against women, particularly addressing Asian immigrant experiences of violence in New Zealand, and within and outside of

the family circle, marriage, relationships, and community. We offer this article in this edition as a message of hope and strength and another powerful example of how our arts-based care work can mediate difficult-to-reach severely traumatized populations such as this one and soften the medical and medicalized experiences of trauma from sexual violence and bodily harm.

Pain comes in different ways, and in the next article, “The Lexicon of Pain: Highlighting the Advantages of Applied Theater in Pediatrics through the Lens of Psychodynamic Therapy,” by Persephone Sextou and Stelios Kiosses, the authors take on an interdisciplinary approach to explore alternative means of treatment with pain. This article focuses on pediatric treatment and hospitalized children, their use of the arts, and their experiences of pain and offers a potential for non-medical activities with children bridging clinical therapy and performing arts.

We begin to close this edition with the theme of resilience and co-construction of evolving practices that strengthen our capacity to cope. The article “Navigating Resilience: Developing the MAP Framework for Supporting Children through Familial Adversity in Hong Kong” by Kit Ping Wong offers a framework as support treatment of families with wide ranges of experience. MAP, representing mindful awareness, attachment, and positive self-worth, is presented as a mode of treatment to work with children with adverse childhood experiences and offers a practical approach that we hope our readers will make use of—many of whom, we know are working in these spaces with children impacted by wars and conflict.

We bring this edition to a close with the article “Art Encircles Life: Journeying With, In, and Through the Expressive Arts” by Vivien Speiser and Phillip Speiser. This article presents the work of two expressive arts therapists who traveled and taught around the world between February and April 2024 and their unique opportunities and experiences in that time, encountering the ongoing pandemic issues and the invasion of Israel. They bring a specific and timely use of “encircles of life” for this edition, as it speaks to the symbols, stories, hope, and practices that lift out the universality of arts practice, the importance of community arts practices as a reprieve from pain and suffering, and a path for peace, harmonized communities, constructive dialogue, diplomacy, and safe co-existences.