

## Editorial

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Michal Lev, Vivien Speiser, Rebecca Zarate

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It is with profound respect and admiration that we dedicate this Winter 2024 edition of *Creative Arts in Education and Therapy (CAET)* to the memory of Dr. Ilene Serlin, an esteemed member of our editorial board and a pioneer in dance/movement therapy, trauma psychology, and humanistic approaches. Ilene's spirit and deep compassion have left an eternal mark on the global community of creative arts therapists.

Dr. Serlin's extraordinary career was characterized by her unwavering belief in the power of the body and the arts to heal trauma, foster resilience, and reconnect us to our shared humanity. Whether working with Syrian refugees, addressing collective trauma in intergenerational contexts, or mentoring students across the globe, her legacy is one of love, courage, and transformative vision. Her teachings remind us that even in the face of adversity, the arts can ground us, empower us, and allow us to transcend.

This issue opens with Vivien Speiser's heartfelt tribute to Ilene Serlin, celebrating her lifelong dedication to integrating creativity into therapeutic practices. This tribute sets the tone for a collection of eleven articles that reflect the themes closest to Ilene's heart: connection, resilience, and the boundless possibilities of the human spirit through art.

We delve into the foundations of creativity and professional growth with *Music and Gesture—New Perspectives in Conducting and Education* by Riccardo Lombardo, which explores the integration of Laban's movement theories into music education, highlighting the foundational role of movement in artistic expression. This is complemented by *The Exploration of Music Therapy Professional Competency in Chinese Higher Education* by Sisi Lin and Lo-Ting Chen, which examines the competency-based education model and its implications for music therapy professionals in China, emphasizing the necessity of structured growth within creative practices.

From these foundations, we transition into healing through artistic expression. Two articles underscore the transformative power of art: *Graffiti of Healing: Therapeutic Elements of Hip-Hop Dance among Indian Youth* by Tanushree Mishra and Oindrila Mukherjee highlights the resilience fostered through dance in India, while *Poetry in Peer Groups to Reduce Suicide in a Latin American Context* by Felipe Agudelo-Hernández, Mariana Rojas Echeverry, and Matías Mejía Chaves demonstrates how poetry can support adolescents' mental health, showcasing the significant impact of creative outlets on psychological well-being.

Next, we shift our focus to community and social engagement. In *Cultivating Well-being, Community Cohesion, and Sense of Purpose through African Contemplative Practices*, Lucy Draper-Clarke and Caryn Green explore African rituals as models for community healing, connecting cultural practices to communal resilience. This theme is further illustrated by *A Participatory Approach to Uniting the Multiple Agendas of*

*Social Arts* by Eltje Bos and Ephrat Huss, which proposes a framework for evaluating social arts projects, emphasizing research-driven methods in the creative field.

Adding a pedagogical dimension, *The Enactive Nature of the Relationship between Criticism and Aesthetics* by Ivan Magrin-Chagnolleau introduces an innovative undergraduate aesthetics course rooted in practice-as-research, bridging critical inquiry with artistic practice. Complementing this is Lee R. Chasen's review of Bailey, Sally, and Dickinson, Paige's book *The Drama Therapy Decision Tree: Connecting Drama Therapy Interventions to Treatment*, which offers a practical guide for drama therapists. The article *Redefining Creativity and Well-being* by Lee Friederich and colleagues explores the transformative potential of an interdisciplinary course that combines arts and positive psychology to promote student well-being in Japan. Through innovative methodologies and a focus on themes such as safe spaces, self-acceptance, and redefining creativity, the study underscores the critical role of creative education in addressing mental health challenges, particularly in cultural contexts with significant stigma surrounding mental illness. Together, these works encapsulate Ilene's belief in systematic and creative approaches to healing, aligning deeply with her vision of art as a tool for self-discovery, resilience, and empowerment.

As we close this Winter 2024 edition, we conclude with "*Art Meets Books: A Co-produced Arts Pilot Project in Public Libraries*" by Val Huet. This inspiring article celebrates the potential of inclusive art initiatives to bridge social divides and foster belonging, echoing the heart of Ilene Serlin's work and vision. By situating art within public spaces, this project exemplifies Ilene's belief in grassroots creativity as a tool for resilience and collective healing.

Ilene often spoke about the arts as a universal language—a way to connect with others, transcend barriers, and heal wounds that words alone cannot address. The contributions in this issue serve as a testament to her legacy, offering insights into how creativity continues to inspire connection and transformation across disciplines, cultures, and communities.

This edition serves as a reminder that the arts can mend what is fractured in individuals, families, and societies. It highlights how collaboration and creative expression can foster connections across cultures and geographical boundaries, reinforcing the global relevance of the themes explored within these pages.