

## Editorial

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We had a call for papers for our summer 2025 edition and received an overwhelmingly positive, rich response from the community. It is a sign of your confidence and engagement in the work we are doing here at *CAET* as well as an indication of the most important of times to be an active and engaged arts practitioner, teacher, or scholar. Representing four continents, our group of authors for this summer's edition truly represent the transcultural and global connection of the mission and vision of the journal. Collectively, they address the core and intrinsic nature of the multisensory, holistic use of art and that of its *protective factors*. Socioculturally, they reflect a running theme of how the openness and malleability of the creative act allows for *pivoting* in times of mass social change, whether it is ongoing reflections and learnings from COVID-19 work on continued and emerging adverse environments of war and conflict, creativity research holds up resiliency, threads connections, and pushes social and political innovation. All articles are connected to this and show the true depth and transformative power of these protective factors, innovation, and resiliency. Readers will see these in themes of mourning, as vehicles for artistry with *sensory* experiences, the power of improvisation for shaping empathy, threading together redemptive practices, methods for spaces and places for healing in extreme adverse war circumstances, children's artistic competence through axiological lens, art therapy methods as a way for adopted children to connect to their "chapter one," and digital and hybrid modes of dance/movement training in higher education. We are also offering a new section on reflections and discussions of conference proceedings to provide an opportunity for ongoing dialogue on critical social topics and to highlight important international collaborations happening in those spaces. At this moment in world events, for the vital element of being able to imagine and re-imagine, to engage in open iterative processes that arts bring to our lives, the time is now. This edition has something for everyone—practice-based techniques for the classroom, empirical research, and philosophical approaches—and tightly woven across all articles are the themes of resilience, intergenerational knowledge, cross-cultural embodied and sensory practices, resourcefulness, innovation, and hope.

We begin with "The Therapeutic Dimensions of BaTonga Mourning Songs: A Study of "Oona mwanaangu waakucaala kunamaumbwe"," written by Nsamu Moonga, who draws from arts-based research, grief literature, and Indigenous knowledge systems. Setting the song as a narrative and artistic knowledge site and analyzing the song's lyrical content, its performative elements, and cultural significance, the project illuminates the potential therapeutic elements inherent in Indigenous musical mourning practices. Moonga presents the relevance of these findings to possibilities for innovating contemporary therapeutic approaches. "Canvas of Sounds: Non-synesthetic

Visual Representations of Music in Scholarly Literature,” by Christabel Parung and colleagues from the Institut Teknologi, Indonesia, takes us into a systematic review and examination of the relationship between visual arts and music, with a focus on the non-synthetic visual representations of music. They explain the importance of filling this gap in knowledge because while synesthesia (i.e., when a sensory experience involuntarily stimulates another sensation) has been extensively studied, our understanding of how music can be visually represented without direct sensory overlap has not. The authors present themes of nature of visual representations, methodological approaches, cultural and individual factors that influence visual representation of music, and a broad timeline of review to capture trends and gaps. If you are interested in diving into musical compositions and the musical elements within those and their symbolic and abstract visual accompaniments, then this is a study for you! Liumyla Brovchak and colleagues offer the article “Axiological Approach to the Development of Artistic Competence of Children under Martial Law,” which addresses key areas of arts education, child development, upbringing, and war contexts. The authors present a critical perspective on prospects for furthering the improvement of the education system with regards to the development of artistic competence of children who are living in martial law conditions in Ukraine. They offer practical priorities needed for the formation of artistic competence. Building on empirical evidence for effectiveness in this area, they highlight the power of observation and creativity. Their findings present *ying* as the basic principle of the formation of artistic competence in children and discuss its use in new opportunities in the context of war. Behavioral patterns, artistic activities, aesthetic taste, sense of rhythm, ability to hear others, fine motor skill development, and mobility are discussed in the context of *ying* and new opportunities to be harnessed in the most adverse of educational conditions. They quote, “the main goal of developing artistic competence of children is to create their own picture of the world in each particular child and cultivate critical thinking as a protective factor.” Maya Rogers-Bursen, a first-time author with *CAET*, offers “An Art Therapy Intervention on Identity Development through the Lens of the Adoptee through: A Qualitative Arts-based Approach” titled, “Chapter One.” It addresses key areas of adoption, post-adoption in art therapy treatment contexts, and the journey that includes a reclaiming of chapter one, often lost pieces in individuals who are adopted. In this project, Rogers-Bursen grounds her argument with the guiding philosophy that holding creative space to explore a time when choice is made for an adoptee and that there were no words to describe the feelings or experience of that life-changing transition. She offers a method for practitioners to use, one that is built on the picture book approach. As she quotes, “the art gives our beginning a home, something to look at and understand how these first moments really shape who we become.” Using the Hinz expressive therapy continuum, and interviews conducted with adoptees using the technique, readers who are practitioners working with this population will gain new clinical understanding, a knowledge base, and a guide in integrating this study into one’s own practice.

Next, we move from clinical methods of life-journey connection to embodied community practices of connection in musical and dance/movement environments. “Investigating the Impact of Musical Soundscapes on Well-being: A Qualitative

Arts-Based Study,” by Dominik Havsteen-Franklin, offers a participatory action arts-based project where musical experiences and environment provided a curated set of musical soundscapes. Participants were asked to engage with these meditative soundscapes periodically over a 1-week period and to record their responses to those soundscapes through several media. The author followed up with focus groups that recorded, analyzed, and cross-referenced the transcripts with the participants’ responses. Outcomes of personal, psychological, physiological, and sociocultural benefits are highlighted. Exciting emerging themes are also discussed, including intersensory synchrony, embodied musical affects, stress relief, self-transcendence, communal connection, and integrated well-being. As the author states, “the study underscores the capacity of musical experiences, which transcend cultural boundaries, to enhance well-being across these dimensions.” We could not agree more, and we are looking forward to further engagements and developments from this study in the broader community. “Dance/Movement Therapy in Virtual Spaces: Building Practices for Connection,” by Valerie Blanc, is a reflective and practical article that provides interested readers with the author’s theoretical and philosophical challenges in pivoting the kinesthetic-focused practice and teaching in higher-education dance/movement therapy training in the COVID-19 pandemic into the online and digital space. Blanc offers learnings and developments of a practice of technology, with which she shares how they open up the opportunities for the digital space of dance/movement therapy and embodied and sensory practice, teaching, and learning in higher education. Staying on the subject of work that occurred during the pandemic, we *pivot* to film and animation with “Reflections on a Collaborative Animation Project Run by Mental Fight Club, London,” by Vivien Ellis and coauthors Daniel O’Byrne, Mark Elliot, Glenn Keiles, and Stehen Clift. The authors present and discuss the animation project “Our Journey,” which explores the challenges of living in and through a mass social lockdown. The project was funded by the Wellcome Trust and a part of a larger mental health charity called the Mental Fight Club. They share their findings from surveys and follow-up telephone interviews of participants who worked on the project, which highlights the benefits on mental well-being, creative expression, and social connection experienced from this project. *Pivoting* slightly from film and animation technique into the field of theater, drama, and improvisation, we are pleased to include “Toward Redemptive Theater: A Structure for Silence: Part 1,” by Petro Janse van Vuuren, Tshego Khutsoane, and Les Nkosi. They ground the article with a focus on a strategic narrative structure with improvisational elements and call their narrative design “STORI-strategy.” The strategy guides readers on how this structured approach can enable specific use of play and improvisation within the framework. In particular, it illuminates on how the use of silence and tension can be harnessed and valued as a meaningful technique and part of play on relational power dynamics related to xenophobia. Coming from a critical social lens to address social and cultural issues of xenophobia, the authors share how, in a world of conflict and polarities, this research seeks to design an applied drama and theater form that can create a third space where redemptive conversation could begin.

Next, the article on the “Evaluation of the Effectiveness of an Art Therapy Program for Deafblind People,” by Victoria Martínez-Vérez, highlights a puppetry-based art

therapy experimental study with deafblind people by addressing the isolating impacts this population faces and the importance of harnessing the opportunities of the tactile and nonverbal features and mechanisms of art therapy interventions. Results from the study showed significant improvements in body and space perception, communication skills, and creativity in the experimental group. The author shares how puppet making not only promoted self-expression and creativity but also improved social skills and group cohesion. The overall study highlights the need for and importance of the inclusion of empirical art therapy research and practice in such areas as high specialty clinics and programming. Staying with themes of creativity, collaborative engagement, and environmental spaces, we *pivot* one last time from clinical interventions to arts in education by expounding on a broader topic in our final article, “Development of Children’s Creativity Through Collaborative Learning with Parents: A Case Study of Indonesia.” The author, Nur Fajrie, discusses an approach that involves a philosophy of collaboration, including a multipronged approach among students, between students and teachers, and between students and parents, for quality learning outcomes in creativity and creative ability in an early childhood education setting. The study investigated the effectiveness of collaborative learning with parents in enhancing the creativity of kindergarten children using collage art-based technique on natural materials. Findings revealed significant improvements in children’s creativity scores, and the author comments, “offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to foster holistic development in children.”

We are also extremely proud to be offering a new section on conference proceedings reflections, dialogues, and conversations with the inaugural paper, “Mitigating Collective War Trauma Through Expressive Arts Therapy,” by Olena Vosnesenska, Nathalie Robelot-Timtchenko, Vivien Marcow Speiser, and Phillip Speiser. They offer a story on intentional collaborations of convening via conferences across varying sectors in arts, arts education, art therapy, and expressive arts therapies. These international, interdisciplinary, scientific, and practical conferences were held within the framework and sponsorship of the All-Ukrainian Art Therapy Association, together with First Aid of the Soul (FAS) and the International Association for Creativity and Arts in Education and Therapy (IACAET). The article contains a reflective analysis of using art therapy toward mitigating the consequences of collective traumatization (a systematic phenomenon of targeted oppressions on an individual and a social group with intergenerational consequences) of the Ukrainian people due to the war.

We close this edition with another first, “A Conversation between East and West: Introducing Expressive Arts Therapy in China,” with Vivien Marcow Speiser and Didi Zhang. They share their experiences and story of working together in the first Inspirees training program in expressive arts therapies in China. The reader travels with them as their conversation unfolds into vibrant twists of expression, reflections, and re-imaginings of what is possible—turning our eyes to the visual representations of work from the program. They truly engage in insightful, intellectual, and creative dialogue on what it means to be deeply engaged in one’s own and one’s shared artistic processes. Their conversation lifts out the timeliness and relevance of the program and

deeply connects to the, as Zhang expresses, the “soul stirring transformative” impact of this work in its personal, professional, cultural, and artistic growth-focused perspective.

We hope you come away from this edition with renewed creative agency, a revised outlook on adverse social and cultural conditions in development and collective contexts, and a revitalized perspective on the empirical and social impact of creative arts in education and therapy. A final reiteration on the right time to *engage* and *pivot* with the creative act—the time is always now.