

Introduction: Invitations and Purposeful Encounters

Guest Editors

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with Carmiella Salzberg Zorzi

The virtual-physical journal you are about to read has been woven by seven arts-based researchers from around the world in Switzerland, Canada, Peru, Spain, Turkey, and the United States. These seven women first came together collaboratively in June of 2022 to facilitate a historic physical-virtual Alumni Festival at The European Graduate School (EGS). The connections built amongst the group of alumni became so immensely supportive and energizing that they decided to move forward together as a group of co-researching, co-writing, and co-inspiring collaborators who are passionate in their parallel pursuits of expressive arts, and critical theory. *Artizein: Arts and Teaching Journal* offered a platform for the next iteration of their work together—articles based on the original sub-panel presentation groups at the 2022 alumni event. The invitation germinated intimate (see Torres & Goodall), affective (see Giovanini) and purposeful (see Cueva & Zorzi) encounters. Eberhart and Atkins (2014) explain the “invitational presence” encountered in the collaborations:

In human-to-human relationships, [we] often experience a quality of *invitational presence*. Each person attracts and in turn is attracted by the other or others in a kind of call and response... Each one calls and each responds to the call of the other in a back and forth or simultaneous interactive dance of experience. Thus, in this sense, presence is not only a quality of being. Presence is also an interactive encounter with whatever is present in awareness, including the self, the other and the atmosphere that is created in the in-between. (p. 75)

Presence with one another was a central theme on their writing journey alongside vulnerability, the difference of cultures, languages, and time. The training and research received in Expressive Arts and Critical Theory at EGS was the ground for their writing processes, however unwieldy these could feel when seven people of different cultures were collaborating from around the world. A coherence came through in the final collection that we as guest editors (and contributors) could never have contrived or consciously fashioned through a curatorial intention.

In this collection, all the articles invite and welcome readers to witness intimate exchanges through the experimental conversations between artists, expressive arts professionals, counselors, business-practice innovators, and educators. Descriptions of the art-making processes that accompanied the authors’ transformations, over the course of writing together, are included for those interested in arts-based research experiences and structures. Included in this introduction of the articles are aesthetic responses (Figures 1-6).



Figure 1: Aesthetic Response to “Doing and Thinking” Carmiella Salzberg Zorzi (2023).

The first article (Figure 1), *Doing and Thinking on the Edge with Intermodal Expressive Arts* by **Katrina Plato, Sinem Lanaci, and Valerie Oved Giovanini** explores the process of decentering oneself through artistic practices such as co-journaling and photography while in collaborative dialogue. Bracha L. Ettinger’s (2006) work on *matrixial borderspaces* provides a theoretical backbone to their exploration of self and others. Their inquiry became, “How can art allow us to hybridize ourselves without losing our individual core?” (see p. 17 in this issue).

The epistolary exchange between artists/Expressive Arts therapists **Alba Torres Robinat and Alexandra Goodall** in *Collective Memory and Creative Subjectivity: A Living Conversation* (Figures 2 & 3) unfolds as an honest and intimate exploration into creative subjectivity, intergenerational trauma, the role of bodily experience in therapeutic and artistic practice, and the unique responsibilities artist/facilitators have in artmaking for public and private spaces.



Figure 2: Aesthetic Response to Alexandra’s letters in “Collective Memory” by Carmiella Salzberg Zorzi (2023).



Figure 3: Aesthetic Response to Alba’s letters in “Collective Memory” by Carmiella Salzberg Zorzi (2023).

Valeria Rocío Gonzales González Cueva and Carmiella Salzberg Zorzi's experimental conversation in *Borders and Bridges in Virtual Work: Between Real and Imaginary*, addresses the therapeutic potentials and limitations for Expressive Arts practitioners who engage in virtual spaces (Figures 4 & 5). They navigate 'fluid time' and 'everyday time,' traverse imaginal layers of reality, and prioritize "a genuine confrontation with the complexities [they] seek to understand" (see p. 78 in this issue). A digital media piece brings their real and imaginary conversation to a close.



Figures 4 & 5. *Embodied Conversations*, artwork by Carmiella Salzberg and Valeria González Cueva (2023)

Following these collaborative pieces, **Valerie Oved Giovanini** takes the language of Expressive Arts into *Teaching Philosophy as a Pedagogic Practice-ing: Are You the Type of Person that Says, "Everything Happens for a Reason"?*, to understand and illustrate how pedagogical practices can include the arts in higher education for the development of a critically minded community.



Figure 6: Aesthetic response to "Harvesting a Blessing" by Carmiella Salzberg Zorzi (2023)

The media piece, *Harvesting the Blessing* (Figure 6) edited by **Alba Torres Robinat** is a playful aesthetic response with five of our seven members: **Alba Torres Robinat**, **Katrina Plato**, **Alexandra Katherine Goodall**, **Valerie Oved Giovanini**, and **Sinem Lanaci**. It reflects the purposeful, affective and transformational relationships that were created through the collaborative writing journeys found in this issue.

To bring in additional expressive voices into the issue, the authors in the collection were invited to write a review about a book that inspired their profession as artists, teachers, and consultants.

Seasoned art-therapist **Katrina Plato** invited her creative writing teacher and author **Lucien Zell** to write a collaborative review based on their shared admiration for the book by Margo Fuchs Knills' and Sally S. Atkins' (2021), *Poetry in Expressive Arts: Supporting Resilience through Poetic Writing*. Zell eloquently dives into the theme of resilience while Plato explores the nurturing therapeutic writing practices within the book's poetry prompts.

Feminist philosopher **Valerie Oved Giovanini** understands her review of Barbara A. Bickel's and R. Michael Fisher's (2023) book, *Art-Care Practices for Restoring the Communal: Education, Co-inquiry, and Healing* through the Jewish lens of *Tikkun Olam*, which is the social action of cosmic or communal healing. Spontaneous Creation-Making (SCM) is a form of art-making that cares to restore communal healing and is shown to stand in proximity to Bracha L. Ettinger's (2006) ideas, such as the *matrixial* and *wit(h)nessing*, as carried from Ettinger's work and found in her book, *The Matrixial Borderspaces*.

As a researcher, client, and therapist of expressive arts, **Carmiella Salzberg Zorzi** reviews *Spacious Theories of Object Relativity and Objective Reality* by Carlo Rovelli. Zorzi recommends the book for its poetic telling of the history of physics and the simplicity of its thought examples. She demonstrates how this book's clear explanations of complex ideas, in regard to the relativity of time, can be useful to expressive arts professionals as a guide into and back out of the imagination.

At the heart of all the articles, book reviews, and the media pieces, lies an invitation to return to the body. The reader will find this theme expressed as: borderlinks (see Plato, Lanaci, Giovanini), *cuerpalma* (see Torres), *sentipensar* (see Cueva), affective encounters (see Giovanini), spiritually weaving the heart and mind in poetry (see Plato, Zell), and grounding oneself in the physical world (see Zorzi). We are grateful for this journey through which we traversed metaphysical-physical-virtual presence-ing to collaboratively explore our learning through arts-based research.

References

Eberhart, H., & Atkins, S. (2014). *Presence and process in expressive arts work: At the edge of wonder*. Jessica Kingsley.
Ettinger, B. (2006). *The matrixial borderspace*. University of Minnesota Press.

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