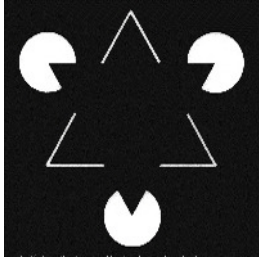


The Fifth Exeter Arts and Therapies Conference



'The Spaces Between'

2005

The Fifth EATc conference continued to build on our vision of bringing together a diversity of speakers and participants from across the arts in health. Our aim is to encourage good practice, to expand theoretical horizons and to provide a networking hub for arts and health activity in the Southwest.

The Sponsors.

We were delighted this year to have been able to attract an equal diversity of sponsors for the event.

The Champernowne Trust for Psychotherapy and the Arts have generously supported the whole conference series so far, and continued to do so. Arts Council England also gave generous support, and Devon Partnership NHS Trust provided support in the form of subsidising places for Trust employees, carer and service users. (This funding was spread between seven participants: one carer, three service users and three mental health workers. We were pleased with this balance.). The British Association of Art Therapists helped with publicity and mailing costs, and Insider Art loaned large amounts of time to the project. This 'panel' of sponsors together reflect Arts psychotherapy, Art practice, Health service delivery, Professional Association and a local practice and training resource.

The Participants.

Participants, (63 in total), came from an extraordinary spectrum of contexts. People travelled from as far afield as Edinburgh to attend the event. The participants list was in itself a useful resource, according to the feedback. Many of the participants themselves straddled different fields. For instance of the eighteen people who primarily identified themselves as working in mental health, 10 also identified themselves as working with art. Similar overlaps presented themselves between art education and mental health, (4), and art making, art education and Art therapy, (9). As well as these main groupings, we were pleased to welcome delegates working in Music Therapy, Psychology, Arts Council England and doctors. The event was oversubscribed by about 15%.

The Presenters and Presentations.

The participants had been attracted by presenters who are all leaders in their fields:

Christopher Gardner Thorpe as Consultant Neurologist at Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital.

Caryl Sibbett at the fore front of Art Psychotherapy training and research at Queens University Belfast.

Sally Weston, developing Art Therapy in neurological rehabilitation.

Amrit and Rabindra Singh from art practice in this country and internationally.

More details about all the presenters are available at the bottom of this page.



From left to right:

Malcolm Learmonth, Sally Weston, Caryl Sibbett, Amrit and Rabindra Singh, Christopher Gardner Thorpe, Karen Huckvale.

The presentations were uniformly excellent. The Feedback showed that each of them was someone's favourite element of the day. Maintaining the focus on the theme and the chairing were also highly appreciated by the participants. The presentations both inspired many participants to develop their own work and practice, and provided much material that not only challenged assumptions, but was at times profoundly moving. The capacity of art making to reach and transform some of the most difficult areas of human experience, and to address some of the most complex areas of ambiguity and uncertainty shone through each presentation, despite the very different angles it was being approached from.

EATc 5 also offered two separate exhibitions of art work: the first by local



'Outsider artist' and service user ***Ronald Henriques***, and the second of archive Art Therapy work from the Creative Therapies Service, Exeter. The presence of the art itself was also highly valued by delegates.

The Feedback.

The response to the request for feedback was excellent: 83%. We have also never had as many follow up letters and e mails about the day expressing appreciation and making suggestions. The feedback has been carefully analysed, and a full summary made. Participants were asked to rate the event on its relevance and helpfulness to them, whether it was stimulating, what was most/ least useful, what could be improved, and any other comments or suggestions. Some typical (and they really are!), responses:

Relevance.

'Initially I was uncertain if my own art practice approach would be relevant to theme.... I have a good understanding now that it is'

'Very relevant to my work as an artist'

'I appreciated a meeting that underlined diversity and connection'

'Very to my own practice with mental health care and recovery in particular'

'Definitely, for example in relation to mental illness'

Helpfulness.

'Yes. Helped to formulate ideas about how my own art can be applied'

'Yes: contacts and people to exchange ideas with'.

'Yes: to meet so many in related disciplines'

'Helped my personal and professional development'

'Yes: inspiring. Something I can put into practice with clients'.

'I will be chewing this over for years to come'

Stimulation.

'Yes these speakers have inspired me to think of other starting points for the development of my own art work'

'Very. The cross fertilisation... Was very powerful and creates a network to hold the ideas in place'

'Yes. There is a way to give back to the community...'

'Lots of overlaps... A conference with a difference!'

'Extremely. Each speaker had total command of their area of expertise and put it over in a clear, concise and humorous way'.

'Given me lots of new ideas for self development and training'

Liked/ Found most useful

'All the presentations, and the Introduction which helped to formulate a summary'.

'The amount of breaks, the fantastic lunch, the atmosphere

'The range of angles and perspectives'

'Synergistic approaches'

'Great to have this in the South West'

'Everything was presented at such a high level'

'Loved the format, perfect break timing, really effectively run, no sitting around: liked the chairs conclusions and observations: the participant list was interesting too'

Disliked, least useful.

'I would only have wished for two days, overnight is good for social and play'

'Time went too quickly'

'The presentation that didn't touch directly on my work: but it they were still enlightening and relevant to other attendees'

What could be better?

'A two day conference'

'NOT a two day conference: too expensive for those of us out of reach of home'

'Practical art making

,

'More time'

'There must be something...'

Other comments, suggestions.

'You've hit the nail on the head'

'Talks all day could be too much... But the balance worked well. Well done!'

' Brilliant, best one yet: it will be really difficult to beat!'

'Well organised and chaired. I hope I'll come again'

'You have created a very safe and companionable space for sharing and learning'

'Great day, held my attention throughout/ stimulating and useful to take forward in my work life'

'The exhibitions are very fine. I liked the changes you've made, nice balance between size, informality and seriousness of focus'

Conclusion.

The organisers feel that EATc 5 fulfilled its brief to address 'The Spaces Between' the mind and the brain, illness and health, the commonalties and differences between 'art as art' and 'art as therapy', between theory and

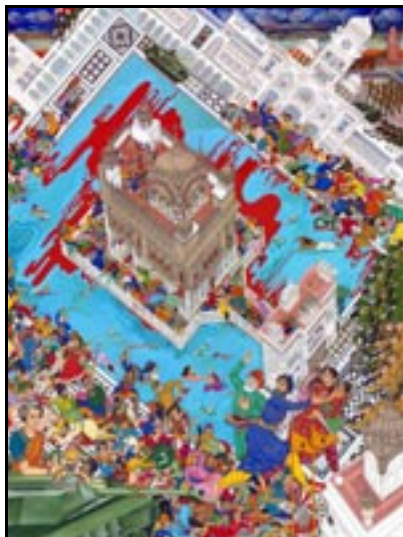
practice, and between practitioner and service user as joint participants in the human condition. We were delighted that so many delegates at the conference clearly left feeling energised and inspired to develop their own art making, their own mental health work, and their own spirit of enquiry into what is so special about art making, and why it impacts on health, particularly mental health, the way that it can if skilfully facilitated. Many participants delighted in the opportunity to network across disciplines, and some strong alliances were clearly formed. An eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of the EATc events to forge these sort of connections was borne out by the fact that the group initiating an 'Arts on Prescription' project in North Devon held their own informal meeting at the end of the conference, the idea having sprung from a presentation at EATc 4.

We hope that the EATc events can continue to be a catalyst for the development of the arts in health, of innovative, informed and high quality art making, and of the arts psychotherapies in the Southwest.

We would like to thank our sponsors, our speakers and our participants for the energy and support they contributed to making this event possible, and to express a hope that we will work together in future as EATc continues to develop.

We will be working on developing ideas for next year's event, and as these reach fruition they will appear on the EATc web site.

Speaker Biographies:



www.singhtwins.co.uk

Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh

London born twin sisters Amrit and Rabindra are contemporary British artists of International standing whose award winning paintings have been acknowledged as constituting a unique genre in British Art and for initiating a

new movement in the revival of the Indian miniature tradition within modern art practice. Describing their work as Past - Modern (as opposed to Post Modern), their work engages with important areas of critical debate - challenging existing stereotypes and redefining generally accepted, narrow perceptions of heritage and identity in art and society. Combining elements from Western and Eastern aesthetics they assert the value of traditional and non European art forms to the continuing development of Contemporary Art practice - exploring cultural, social and political issues of global significance within a highly decorative, often witty and symbolic style which has universal appeal and transcends cultural barriers.

With paintings in private and public collections world wide the Singh Twins continue to be invited to speak on their work at institutions such as the Tate Gallery, London; The Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada; The National Museum of Modern Art in Delhi and Mumbai; the University of California, Santa Barbara and the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco. At the same time a significant interest from academics, individual art students and University research graduates has resulted in their work being incorporated into the Open University syllabus and other sectors of Britain's formal education system. As well as being profiled in numerous main stream publications including the Penguin History of Scotland, The Oxford History of Art publication on Portraiture and Marg Publication's New Insights into Sikh Art, their work is featured in two fine art books (Twin Perspectives and Worlds A-Part) and has been selected for the next 'Pocket Art Series' by the established Fine Art publishers, Roli.

Having attracted International media attention, Radio and Television appearances include interviews for BBC's Womens' Hour, Mid Week and Belief; CBC's Here and Now and the Granada TV documentary Singh Out Sisters. An independently commissioned Arts Council film about their work, ('Alone Together') received 'The Best Film on Art' prize at the 2001 Asolo International Film Festival. In the same year they were short-listed for the Asian Women of Achievement Awards (in the category of Arts & Culture) and in 2002 were appointed official Artists in Residence to the Manchester Commonwealth Games. The work they produced in response to the Games gained wide publicity and was featured as a question on Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?

In 2002 their Arts Council England, British Council and Air Indian sponsored solo India tour was launched at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi - making them the only British artists (besides Henry Moore) to have been offered a solo show at this, one of India's foremost venues for Contemporary Art. In 2003 their work toured USA and Canada. They currently have three of their major works on loan to the Smithsonian Institute Washington and future plans include exhibitions in New Zealand and Australia.

Artists' statement

Our art and collaborative partnership developed largely in response to the serious criticisms we faced during our first degree for pursuing common interests and goals in developing personal styles which were not only deemed to be unacceptable because of their similarity, but because they were 'inappropriately' rooted in Eastern cultural aesthetics and our experience as British Asians.

Against this hostility our determined exploration of the Indian miniature style and established practice of working and exhibiting together (as well as dressing identically), is a political statement against the hypocrisy of an establishment which advocated self expression as the 'be all and end all' of Modern Art, yet denied the validity of anything which did not comply with the expectations dictated by a selective, Eurocentric perspective. Whilst asserting the right to define our own cultural and artistic 'individuality' in a way that is meaningful and true to who we are as British Asians, artists and twins our work, more importantly, redresses the need to re evaluate established cultural definitions, values and role models within the wider context of an evolving global society dominated by western consumer markets and popular culture. This is because ultimately, our artistic strategy is defined by a sense of responsibility to look beyond personal issues of identity towards exposing wider cultural prejudices and highlighting other concerns of more global significance. The desire to make a real difference through our work has fuelled our determination in establishing an international profile that demands acceptance on our own terms - creating a recognised platform for serious debate which has meaningful impact in challenging pervading social, political and cultural attitudes.

Sally Weston

Art therapy after brain injury

I work in a 'sub acute' Rehabilitation unit for adults with severe brain injury. This is a place where people wake up in hospital to face unimaginable losses- physical abilities, speech, the ability to think plan to recognise people, remember their past, know where they are. For many, in time, this situation improves. But, severe brain injury cannot be totally recovered from. People find themselves in a different place to where they were before, in themselves and in their lives.

In this setting, the usual distinctive between Professional roles often blur. It is impossible to separate out the brain from the body, or ignore the patient's previous life and aspirations. Physiotherapists have to take into account their patients' anxiety; Arts Therapists might need to find out about how someone might be physically positioned so they can hold a brush. Everyone has to be aware of perceptual, cognitive communication and language issues.

I would like to talk briefly about how as a team space needs to be made

between treating patients so that we can communicate. I think our neuro specialisms come out of this learning from each other. I will then outline how my practice as an art therapist evolved in this setting (by learning from the patients and colleagues).

The unit has Art, music and a psychology service. Not all brain injury services offer specialist psychological or emotional support. There is however increasing recognition of the need for such help. Many don't do well psychologically or socially. Even when good physical recovery is made, there are high rates of depression, relationship breakdown, and unemployment.

The creative therapies are particularly appropriate for this client group. People who have had a brain injury are dealing with loss, change, and questions of identity. Most would struggle with verbal psychotherapy due to problems with verbal reasoning, speech and understanding, perceptual and invariably with memory. However taking part in the arts involves a much wider range of brain functions and people with brain injury even when disorientated can make meaningful use of them and work with the issues that are affecting them.

I would like to illustrate some of the ways patients have used art therapy. In the enclosed world of the unit, people often make images of the outside world, real and imagined. These 'places' seem to be where often metaphorical meeting point between the self and the world. In creating them, clients begin to find expression of growing awareness of the changes facing them and what George Prigatano, a psychotherapist working with bi people using the arts calls 'the wounded soul'.

I will illustrate how I have found the Art Therapy room to be a 'space between' with potential for clients to begin the slow painful and very complex process of examining the physical and cognitive damage their brain injury has wrought and the implications for themselves and the people around them.



Caryl Sibbett

www.qub.ac.uk/.../Staff/Academic/DrCarylSibbett/

Dr. Christopher Gardner Thorpe

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

- Speaker and Organizer of various Lectures and Conferences for neurological and other medical associations and organizations locally, nationally and internationally and which include, among others,.
- Estimation of Anti-epileptic Drugs by Gas Chromatography International Workshop on the Estimation of Anti-epileptic Drugs, held at Noordwijkhout, Netherlands, 12-15 April 1972
- Neurological Complications of Shingles West Country Physicians' Club meeting at Yeovil, 1 November 1974
- Identical Twins discordant for Multiple Sclerosis, and a case presentation - Muscular Dystrophy Twelfth Meeting of the Clinical Genetics Society at Exeter, 26 September 1975
- The Needs of a Clinician Third International Workshop on the Determination of Antiepileptic Drugs in Body Fluids Organizer of Meeting held in Exeter, 15-17 August 1976
- Epilepsy - Current Concepts Symposium held at University of Exeter, 18-20 August 1976
Organizer, Welcome - What is Epilepsy? Clinical Aspects of Drug Treatment including Status Epilepticus
- The Development of Units for the Care of the Chronic Sick European Association for Internal Medicine meeting held at the Royal College of Physicians on 20 November 1978
- Gardner-Thorpe, C (1992) James Parkinson Memorial Service An Address given at St Leonard's Church, Shoreditch, London on 7 April 1992
- World Congress of Neurology (2001) Invited Speaker, London
Royal Society of Medicine (2002) Invited Speaker on Medical Electricity at the Section of Radiology on 18 January 2002

South Western Regional Health Authority Consultant Neurologist 1974-1993

- Secretary of Exeter Medical Division 1977-1980
- Secretary of Exeter Scanner Sub-Committee 1977-1978
- Chairman of Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital Policy Committee 1980
- Lead Clinician in Neurology -1991 and 1995

Present Medical Appointments

Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust

- Consultant Neurologist, Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Exeter and Plymouth General Hospital, 1993-

Lead Clinician in Neurology 1997-

- Honorary Writer of Obituaries 2001

Wessex Regional Health Authority

- Honorary Consultant Neurologist 1981-

University of Exeter

- Honorary Tutor, Postgraduate Medical School 1983-1990

- Honorary Tutor, Peninsula Medical School

- Introduction to Teaching and Learning Course 2002

- How to Interview Medical Students 23 October 2003