

# drawn

FROM THE CIRCLE

Issue 40 | Winter 2018

## Walking to support NAMI

Janelle Hallaert

On September 22nd, 2018 from 8am-11am GW Art Therapy students and faculty volunteered at the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) Northern Virginia Annual Walk. We had four activity tables set up for walkers to come by and create a book mark, add their self-expression to a mural, create a card for a loved one, and decorate a t-shirt.

Though it started to sprinkle toward the end of the walk, my heart was warmed to see my peers and professors volunteering for this informative and important event. With their entertaining confidence, Mary Ellen, Ingrid, and Heidi led our group through the course. Being mindful of this precious moment, I looked around to notice the companionship growing as laughter erupted from us all while we walked together. This is family to me.

Before I was accepted into the program, I had a pressing question I asked to the faculty and students during the interview process. My question was, "How do you give back to your community?" Not only does GW Art Therapy talk the talk, but they walk the walk. It wasn't even a month into the new school year and seeing these wonderful people show up to support their community at this event solidified that I made the right choice in graduate art therapy programs. Talk about integrity. Well done GW Art Therapy. Let's keep it up! ■

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## My Favorite Day in Osijek

Alyssa Jones

**July 07, 2018** • I had a fantastic morning today volunteering at the dog shelter with a few of my fellow classmates and Denis, one of our hosts. We took a tour of this absolutely amazing dog shelter that houses over 200 dogs and puppies. Dogs are dropped off here daily, and the shelter does everything in their power to help these poor animals by giving them vet care, food, water, and shelter. They do not have many volunteers so they were so happy that some of us wanted to volunteer our time to walk some of the dogs.. It was a great time being outside, enjoying a beautiful day, and having great conversations with Denis and my friends. I have really enjoyed spending time with both Denis and Jasmina, who have the best energy and the most kind souls.

After the dog shelter we headed to a textiles workshop with some ladies from the community. ! I felt like I was back at my grandmother's house crocheting with all of my cousins. I also got to dress up in traditional Croatian robes, a style worn about 100 years ago. These robes are all hand made and absolutely stunning. We were taught traditional Croatian folk dances and got to dance with Jasmina and the ladies. It was such a cool experience to dress up like that and participate in their traditions.

Later that day, we got ready for the big Croatian World Cup match against Russia. Denis bought us all Croatian jerseys to wear. When the first half was over, some of us headed down to the Fortress, in the old town, to watch the remainder of the game. People crowded all over wearing red and white, filling the bars and cafes, and spilling out into the streets. The crowd went nuts when Croatia scored their 2nd goal of the game, sure that they were going to win. Then when Russia scored to tie the game up, the crowd was silent. The rest of the game was quite the nail biter, as it entered overtime and eventually a shootout. I couldn't watch, but man did I hear the moment Croatia scored their final point to win the game. It. Was. Loud. Flags flew, crowds roared, some people cried, and hundreds flooded the streets parading their cars and setting off fireworks while playing their national song. This was hands down one of the coolest experiences I have had in a really long time. To be standing in a place that was blown to shreds, where you can still see many of the scars from the war, and to now see the country come together to cheer for their soccer team was just amazing. I am so lucky to have experienced that with this country and culture I have grown to love so much.

HRVATSKA!! ■

# Bringing History to Life

Beth Oliver



In the early 90's I remember seeing the news stories of the conflicts taking place in what was once referred to as Yugoslavia. I was confused at the time of what spurred the unrest in this region. Our visit to Vukovar, Croatia helped put together the missing pieces of the story and at the same time shed light on one of humanity's tragic moments.

On our tour guide at the Memorial Center of Homeland War Vukovar, we learned of the conflict in Vukovar from Major Ivankovic. He explained that after the fall of the Berlin Wall and a rise in nationalism, countries under the Republic of Yugoslavia declared their independence, including Croatia. Ninety-nine percent of Croatians voted in favor of independence, the part of the population that was Serbian wanted to be part of a Greater Serbia. When the Croatians expressed their desire to be their own state something began to change, as described by Major Ivankovic, "You could just feel it in the air."

On May 2nd, 1991, twelve policeman were ambushed and the Serbs began to barricade the roads. Seventy percent of the military were Serbian, so Croatian civilians volunteered to fight and were referred to as the Defenders. "You had to fight for your life," Major Ivankovic said. Many atrocities happened during this 90 day siege in Vukovar with thousands killed and missing.

We visited the General Hospital in Vukovar, which houses a museum in the basement demonstrating how they facilitated operations during the siege. The museum is called Spomen Dom Ovcara. The tour guide, a war veteran, explained that he does not look at this time with hatred or carry around a prejudice toward a group of people. We are all individuals, "We all have hearts and souls" he says.

I later reflected on the quote, "The greatest happiness in this world is to love and be loved." Hana Soijan Galic. Hatred and anger are heavy burdens to carry. It becomes baggage that burdens us from finding the universal connection with one another. Through the expression of love we experience a lightness in our heart and a reverberation within our soul giving way to deepen our lives and broaden our story. What a powerful gift to give ourselves and to others than to honor each other with love. ■





# Reflection on Croatia Study Abroad

Excerpt from a Poem Series

Carli Cortopassi

Part 3: The learnings

In a way it is easy to speak.  
To run one's mouth as one runs a marathon, slow and steady.  
Each mile drifting by like a thought drifts into spoken word.

It is harder to speak deeply.  
Like climbing a mountain  
or escaping through a tunnel.

The start is slow, unnerving.  
What is to come on the other side?  
What is waiting at the top?

As the journey continues it becomes steady, rhythmic.  
And as the journey nears it ends it may become rushed.  
Words flowing so fast another cannot interrupt.

For it is even harder to say nothing at all, to simply listen.

Listen as the car stutters forth and the veteran behind the wheel speaks, unwavering.  
As he parks and you arrive in a chapter of his story.  
As he recounts a different time, in a different town, with the same name.

A town where bombs fell from the sky like rain.  
Where the hospital became a home  
Where fields of flowers became mass graves.

A town that endured tragedy yet did not succumb to it.  
A hospital that breathes resilience into its inhabitants.  
A field that will never forget.

I listened and bit my tongue as words of pity tried to escape.  
I listened and held back the thoughts of sadness wanting to be heard.  
I listened & learned of pride, perseverance, & positivity unlike the likes of those I thought I knew. ■

# AATA Conference Reflections

## Min Kwak



I feel so lucky to have the invaluable opportunity of experiencing this conference as a recipient of the GWATSA scholarship. During the conference, I was able to gain in-depth knowledge of neurobiological theories and their applications in trauma treatment relating to my area of interest.

Also, interacting with people in social working, counseling, and the medical setting helped me to build my social network and broaden my perspective on multidimensional treatment approaches. Witnessing and learning the latest research trends and gaining so much knowledge was fascinating. This conference experience was a cornerstone of my career as an art therapist! ■



## Ashley Rivera

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend the 2018 AATA Conference in Miami. I was strongly impacted by a panel that introduced how historical and intergenerational trauma affect people of color in underserved communities. The panel discussed their own historical trauma from their perspectives as Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Black women. I found this discussion to be courageous and inspiring. In my own Filipino culture, past traumatic events would be mentioned but never discussed more deeply. This session encourages me to be more mindful of historical trauma experienced by people of color in my work as an art therapist. ■



# AATA Conference



## Elizabeth Lee

Brittnee Page, LeShay Keliioholokai and Crystal Norberto: three amazing women who elevated my conference experience through a profound, inspirational, and informative panel session. The speaker's discussed a variety of topics, such as art therapy education in relation to underserved communities, historical triggers experienced in art therapy and the difference between historical and intergenerational trauma. Brittnee spoke of experiences as a black woman from the South; LeShay as a Kanaka Maoli from Hawai'i; Crystal as a Diné woman from the reservation. I was unprepared for the nonverbal connections I made with the speakers, as well as how deeply their stories affected my own perspective on historical trauma. Brittnee, LeShay and Crystal enabled feelings of pride for my own cultural background and provided ideas on how to integrate my perspectives into my art therapy education, as well as advocate for trauma informed care for people of color. The GWATSA scholarship allowed me to gain a lifetime of experience and connections through this conference. I attended many wonderful sessions throughout the week and appreciated every chance to learn from new perspectives. ■

*Panel Session Title: Exploring Historical Trauma in Art Therapy  
Education: healing America's Shadow through Awareness.*



Elizabeth Lee



AATA Response Art, Kaye (Hui-Liang Hsueh)

## Kaye (Hui-Liang Hsueh)

I am grateful and feel honored in having the opportunity to attend the AATA 2018 conference with the support of the GWATSA scholarship. It offered me an amazing journey to step out of the academic setting and build connections with various professionals who are fascinated by art therapy. So many precious moments that kept reminding me of my purpose of engaging in this big family. One of my goals was reaching out to Asian art therapists and getting to know their experiences and perspectives about practicing art therapy as people of color, working in culturally diverse settings. I had the chance to participate in the Asian focus group and paper discussions, and those were marvelous exchanges that I'd had the opportunity to encounter – meeting people, updating information, absorbing experiences, feeling connected and appreciating every moment. 2018 was my first AATA conference encounter, it intrigued my passion for art therapy, and prepared myself to be an independent art therapist. I took a glance over my ideal future, and I am 100% positive in moving forward.



Thank you, GWATSA! ■

# Making Connections: Reflection on the 2018 AATA Conference

Kelly Jacobs

The opportunity to attend the American Art Therapy Association Conference in Miami allowed me to experience the energy of our field, the diversity of people and their interests, and to begin to cultivate my own passions. Receiving the GWATSA Scholarship gave me the financial ability to sign up for some Workshops, including "Working with The Environment: Environmental Art Therapy," led by Dina Schapiro and Jean Davis.

Exploring nature and the environment within the context of art therapy is the focus for my culminating paper. This Workshop expanded my understanding of

what others are already doing and opened the door for making connections with those interested in this topic. During the workshop, we participated in an experiential that included exploring nature objects, examining our individual identities, and coming together to create a collective environment to develop our connection as a group. The various stages of the experiential proved to be a powerful experience, which further strengthened my enthusiasm for the power of uniting nature and art.

I hope to have the opportunity to attend more conferences as I continue to grow and learn throughout my career as an art therapist. Perhaps one day, I will lead my own workshop about nature and art therapy, supporting the growth and development of this field! ■

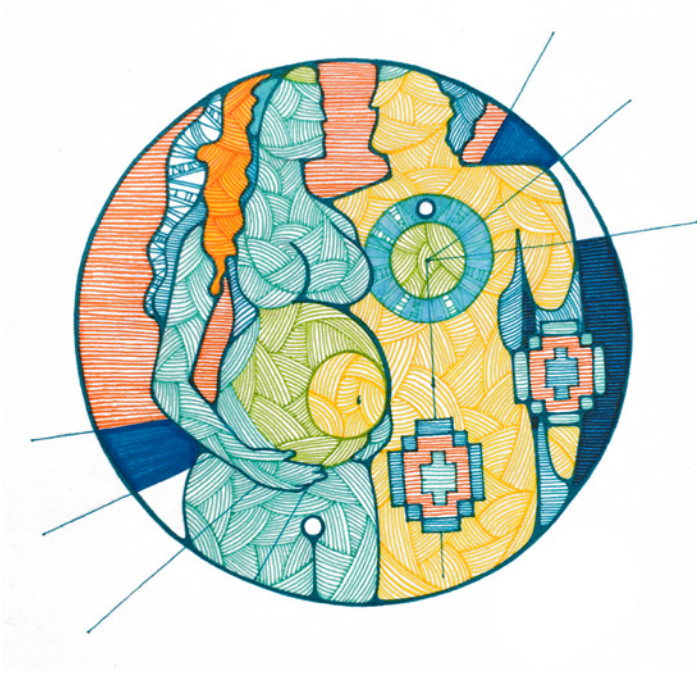
# Art and Diagnosis

Ashley Rivera

For my diagnosis class, I wanted to gain a better understanding about eating disorders. I read *Life Without Ed*, which is based on Jenni Schaefer's story about how she dealt with her eating disorder. When she was in treatment, she was taught to treat her disorder as a relationship. When coming up with a name for her disorder, she named it Ed (acronym for eating disorder) and her goal was to finally break up with him. She felt that her relationship with Ed was controlling and abusive. She felt worthless, criticized, and experienced self-hatred.

My response art is based on she felt trapped and surrounded by negatively, unable to escape from perfectionism based on body image. I cannot imagine how difficult it was for Jenni to be surrounded by different personas that would continuously make her feel insignificant. Ed and his colleagues are made out of plastilina clay, which is moldable. Jenni said, "In therapy, I learned that recovery is not about eliminating the eating disorder but it is about changing my relationship with it." ■





## Prenatal Art

Tracey Zavala

Pregnancy is a major transition in a woman's life. During this 9-month period of time, I chose to use art to deepen my awareness of the changes in my body, build my maternal identity, and lay a foundation for the growing bond with my baby in-utero. Since I was in my first year as an art therapy graduate student during pregnancy, I was inspired to direct my graduate research endeavors towards a heuristic approach documenting my journey into motherhood through personal art.

The bi-weekly art making sessions became a time of meditation and reflection. Materials of choice included watercolors during 1st/2nd trimester, and ink/marker pens during 3rd trimester and after birth ("4th trimester"). The shift towards a more restrictive material was unanticipated but appeared to facilitate further detail, symbolism and storytelling in contrast to the more abstract forms created by the earlier watercolors. The content of the art, in addition to the written journal responses, centered around 3 main themes including somatic awareness, internal mind/spirit/intuition, and external support-enhancing subject matter. I found that the months experienced during pregnancy were a sacred time deserving of deep and personally meaningful support. I am interested in attachment theory and curious about the integration of art therapy during pregnancy and post-birth. My culminating project has become a personal journey of discovery into the meaning of artmaking during pregnancy. ■





# Magnitude of Art

Alia Nasier

During my visit back home to Bali, Indonesia in August of 2018, a series of destructive earthquakes hit the island of Lombok. I contacted an organization whose mission is providing relief efforts for children and the elderly during natural disasters and that I had volunteered with back in 2009 when an earthquake had hit Java. I asked the organization's leader if setting up an art workshop for the survivors in Lombok would be helpful. She said yes, absolutely. I filled my bags full of art supplies and took the soonest flight I could.

Once I got to Lombok, I met up with the organization, and we traveled by jeep to several villages where we provided food and supplies to survivors. In one of the villages we visited, I facilitated an artmaking session with children survivors. Contrasted with my earlier experience volunteering in Java, this time I was aided by my training in art therapy that I had received from GW. This time around I observed first hand just how empowering and therapeutic the expressive resources of artmaking can be for those under the stress and anxiety brought on by natural disasters.

The seeds from this experience in Lombok, in time, would generate into my culminating project that examines the role of art therapy during the early phase of a disaster response program. Volunteering in Lombok was a humbling experience. I learned to embrace the unpredictability of life and witnessed the therapeutic power of art. ■



GW | Art Therapy

## drawn FROM THE CIRCLE

### Statement of Purpose

Our goal is to provide a channel for communication among students, faculty, and alumni as well as to introduce prospective students and the art therapy community to George Washington University's Graduate Art Therapy Program.

DRAWN from the Circle will provide articles, commentary, notices, poetry, humor, and anything pertinent to art therapy. If you wish to respond to anything presented in this issue, please send materials to:

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