Pictured in the Present Tense: The Here-and-Now of Art Therapy

A Heuristic Inquiry

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Abstract

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The following qualitative research paper explores the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated in the student of art therapy and its potential implications for therapeutic transformation. The here-and-now is defined as the moment-to-moment awareness and attunement to presently occurring phenomena within the art therapy frame. In art therapy, the therapist and client are allied with the art and the process of its creation. Somewhere in the dynamic of this triangular relationship lies the here-and-now of art therapy. Using the model of heuristic inquiry (Moustakas, 1990), this paper reveals the investigative journey of the researcher as he explores the cultivation of the here-and-now through various experiential practices, literature, art making, and the phenomenological experience of his colleagues. For the researcher, the here-and-now emerges through a confluence of practices that include notions of mindfulness, embodiment, spontaneity, and an intimacy with the creative process.

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Setting the Scene 3

Vignette 4

Statement of Purpose 5

Research Questions 5

Relevance to Art Therapy and Creative Art Therapies 6

Definition 7

Assumptions 7

Limitations 7

Literature Review 8

The 'Here and Now' in Psychotherapy 9

The 'Here and Now' in Creative Arts Therapies 14

Mindfulness 19

Existentialism and Art Therapy 25

The Creative Process 26

The Creative Process and Heuristic Research 27

Methodology 28

The Here-and-Now and the Heuristic Journey 31

The Heuristic Model and Art Therapy Research 32

Concepts and Processes of Heuristic Research 33

Critique of Moustakas's Heuristic Model 36

The Six Heuristic Phases 38
Phase 1: Initial Engagement 39
Phase II: Immersion 40
Phase III: Incubation 41
Phase IV: Illumination 42
Phase V: Explication 43
Phase VI: Creative Synthesis 44
Data Collection, Generation and Analysis 45
The Co-Researchers 46
Composite Profile 48
Creative Responses 50
Artworks 52
Personal Data Generation 61
Creative Synthesis 66
Narrative 68
Photographic Work 70
Artwork 76
Validity 82
Future Research 83
Conclusion 84
References 88

You came upon me carving some kind of little figure out of wood
and you said, “Why don’t you make something for me?”
I asked you what you wanted, and you said, “A box.”
“What for?”
“To put things in.”
“What kind of things?”
“Whatever you have,” you said.
Well, here’s your box. Nearly everything I have is in it, and it is not full.
Pain and excitement are in it, and feeling good or bad and evil thoughts and good thoughts - the pleasure of design and some despair and the indescribable joy of creation.
And on top of these are all the gratitude and love I have for you.
And still the box is not full.

- John Steinbeck, dedication from *East of Eden*

Pictured in the Present Tense: The Here-and-Now of Art Therapy

A Heuristic Inquiry

Introduction

I'm not particularly good at meditating. Or drawing. I realise using the word *good* is problematic but that's just how I feel, and feelings are the currency of art and therapy after all. Perhaps it's a question of discipline, but regardless both practices are a struggle for me and yet both feel equally urgent; they call, as it were. I appreciate the note of irony in opening my thesis this way, a thesis about the here-and-now in and of art therapy. But as this is a heuristic investigation I'd like to be candid about my point of departure. On those occasions that I do sit on a cushion, with all the finesse of a bent twig, I usually end up chuckling to myself about just how busy things are upstairs, in my mind. Plus I have tinnitus so I'm kept company by a consistent, high-pitched tone in my left ear. When I draw, I feel awkward and embarrassed by my lack of inherent skill. I don't come to the studio arts easily, something I have shared with many of my clients. I am photographer and my training in the visual arts has mainly employed the use of machines. This has left me with certain insecurities about my experience within the fine arts. I know my art materials but I don't know them as extensions of myself. And I know meditation, but only from the noisy side of the cushion. I begin my commentary on these two practices because I believe they are posts between which I will find my goal, the here-and-now of art therapy.

I remember clearly the first time I was introduced to the notion of the here-and-now in therapy. It was from my earliest days in art therapy training. The lights dimmed and the video rolled (Rosen et al., 2006). There on the screen appeared a balding man

with a neatly groomed beard. He wore an understated jacket and tie and was the very picture of how someone might imagine a psychotherapist. He had kind, attentive eyes, but was otherwise discreet in his expression. The scenario, which was dramatized for the purposes of the video, showed an in-patient group therapy session conducted by this curious fellow. As each character checked-in, it became apparent that there were some interpersonal conflicts among the members that were not being addressed. Like a master chef cooking up several courses simultaneously, the therapist attended to the feelings being expressed by each member. With seeming grace and ease, he reflected, paraphrased, echoed, and facilitated the safe externalization of each member's experience. And as each expression was called forth into the room he ferried their momentum and negotiated changes that could take place that very day, that very minute in fact, that would help to ease the tensions among members. Self-reflection was shared, insight was achieved, and the interpersonal mechanics of the group were actualized to bring about therapeutic transformation.

I was impressed, very impressed. At this point in my training I had not yet begun my practicum work and therefore was still very much on the outside of what facilitating therapy felt like. Urgent questions arose: Who was this wizard of therapeutic alchemy? What did he just do and how did it work? And perhaps more importantly, what did it have to do with art therapy? The influence of Irvin Yalom would continue to be felt in the years of my studies; he is one of the stars of this thesis after all. But what was set in motion that morning was a personal quest to understand, nay internalize, the here-and-now. Despite the relatively pragmatic manner in which the here-and-now had been introduced and demonstrated, as a phenomenon or a tool it felt elusive and mysterious.

For the rest of my training, no other theory, approach, or intervention would capture my attention so completely. I would scrawl notes in the margins of my page anytime it was mentioned in literature or lecture. I was hooked. Looking back I can also see that this was the initial seed of my heuristic inquiry, though it would be some time before the research method would become part of my vocabulary.

The here-and-now, when written about, often appears with some punctuated emphasis. It can appear in quotations: "here and now"; or with hyphens: here-and-now; or even italicized with hyphens: *here-and-now.* The impression given is that the here-and-now (I choose hyphens) is at once enigmatic and conceptual. It is widely discussed but not, perhaps, so easily understood. In my own experience, I have found the notion of the here-and-now to be a kind of meta-concept; it touches the essence of all humanistic pursuits: philosophy, spirituality, the arts, and healing. Semantically, it can be broken down into its elements to answer the basic questions about its conceptual nature. *Here*, answers the question: Where does this phenomenon exist? *Now,* answers the question: When does this phenomenon take place? *And*, demonstrates the interdependence of two, and even symbolically references the therapeutic relationship in the context of this research. Still, despite its relative simplicity, the here-and-now eludes simple explanation.

The Time is Ripe; the Scene is Set, and all the Players are in Place

The here-and-now as a concept touches many facets and practices of my own personal inquiry, touched upon later, that precede and coincide with my training as an art therapist. I have long thought about the here-and-now, wondered about it, marvelled at it from several angles, and even "graze[d]…on its outskirts" (Cohen, 2006, para. 2). But I have also longed for a genuine experience within it, a lived experience. The question has

become: How do I cultivate it? And, how do I not simply be aware of it, but know it personally, intimately? Given that this question has become most pressing in the context of becoming an art therapist, it makes perfect sense to me to explore, personally, the nature of this notion as an art therapy researcher. What follows, then, is a heuristic investigation into the cultivation of the here-and-now in art therapy, my cultivation. To arrive at what is ultimately a beginning point, I draw upon the guidance and resources that have made the most sense to me. At times this sense has been logical sense but more often it has been felt. These resources include literature, the expertise of colleagues, and my own heuristic journey. It is my goal that this research be a creative act and that the product will reveal the creativity of the process. The potential benefit of this journey is a personal transformation not only in understanding, but also in how I will practice art therapy.

First a Vignette to Set the Tone

He ambles into the small room and takes a seat at the desk. His nearly blank expression is familiar, and betrays a thoughtfulness I know him to possess. He has arrived with the desire to draw but without knowing the content the drawing will possess. The white paper sits silently in front of him. We talk for a few minutes. I fumble a few questions and suggestions his way and he weighs them with his eyes. This is a common exchange. At first I can barely stand the uncertainty but I come to trust his quietude. I know that when he sets pencil to paper, he is present. He makes a gentle arc with his spine, half shielding the page with his dormant arm. His drawing hand holds the pencil firmly. As his lines take flight, a succession of near and neat decisions come into being. His forearm muscles flex, contract, and relax. Occasionally, his exhalations carry a small

discernable exertion, like a little grunt. He is creating, and with each new moment what did not previously exist begins to take life on the page.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated in the student art therapist. As illustrated thus far, my research question has grown from my own lived experience of the phenomenon, a primary characteristic of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990; Rose and Lowenthal, 2006). The process of heuristic research is an ideal vehicle to explore the phenomenon of the here-and-now because the researcher is compelled to remain within the question until the answer is revealed (Moustakas, 1990). The here-and-now resides in the heuristic journey. At each stage the researcher attends to his experience, listening, responding, and attuning to his present-felt phenomena. My aim is to deepen my understanding of the here-and-now of art therapy, to internalize its theory and application, while revealing relevant modes of its cultivation along the way.

Primary Research Question

"All heuristic research begins with the internal search to discover, with an encompassing puzzlement, a passionate desire to know, a devotion and commitment to pursue a question that is strongly connected to one's own identity and selfhood" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 40). I believe that the notion of the here-and-now in therapy struck such a chord with me because of pre-existing and related questions, passions, and practices: the struggle to be present in my day and in my work, the existential reality of uncertainty or groundlessness, and the will to be spontaneous. These concerns have been my fellow travellers for many years but it was not until this research that they became so

pressing that I was truly able to articulate what it is I want to know. What practices, teachings, and experiences will it take to cultivate a sense of here-and-now? How do I get there; get here-and-now? In carving away the anxiety around not knowing these things I was able to focus my question on my present experience. Thus my question was finally born: What is the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated in the student art therapist?

Secondary Research Questions

Related to this primary question are secondary ones that are designed to help flesh out the experiences of the here-and-now in art therapy, both my own and those of my co-researchers: questions that help me answer the question. They are as follows: How is the here-and-now employed therapeutically in art therapy? How do students of art therapy define the here-and-now? And finally, what impedes the here-and-now in art therapy?

Relevance to Art Therapy and the Creative Arts Therapies

The creative arts therapist is allied with the creative expression of the client. In art therapy, the third relationship in the room is with the art product, and, more essentially, the process of its creation. One of the fundamental concepts I was introduced to in my training was Winnicott's notion of the holding environment (Malchiodi, 2003). From an art therapy perspective, the skilled art therapist develops a capacity for bi-attunement; he "holds" for the environment while simultaneously "holding" for the client's creative expression (Malchiodi). Somewhere in the moment-to-moment dynamic of this triangular relationship lies the here-and-now of art therapy. The major contribution of this research will be to identify the skilful means by which this student art therapist arrives in the here-and-now of art therapy, accessing its potential for therapeutic change. This research

offers both a contribution to the growing body of literature on the notion of the here-and-now in the creative arts therapies and to art therapy trainees in search of methodology to actualize theory.

Definition

The here-and-now of art therapy: The moment-to-moment awareness and attunement to presently occurring phenomena within the art therapy frame.

Assumptions

There are a few assumptions I would like to identify before moving forward. I feel they will help to situate this inquiry within art therapy research and set the stage for the journey: First, the human process is a creative process (Gray, 2010). Second, making art objects is an essential human activity. Third, empathy is the cornerstone of the therapeutic relationship, which is the vehicle of therapeutic change (Yalom, 2002). And related to this, mindfulness is an essential component in the cultivation of empathy.

Limitations

The most obvious limitation of heuristic research is the entirely subjective nature of its inquiry. The researcher is also the chief source of data and ergo the principal source of meaning making. As such, the risk for consensus collusion is potentially high as the researcher may, whether consciously or not, be attentive to only that data that supports his investigation (Rose & Lowenthal, 2006). While it is one of the principal goals of the heuristic method to be an accurate representation of others' experience as well as that of the investigator, its capacity to generalize is limited. Heuristic research approximates generalization through its resonance with the lived experience of others and the

successful elucidation of meaning through the creative synthesis. (Rose & Lowenthal, 2006; Sela-Smith, 2002).

Literature Review

> *The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.*
>
> - Carl Jung

In all research, the literature review serves the purpose of summarizing what has already been explored and published in a given field. It educates the researcher and situates his inquiry within certain parameters of investigation. Whether illuminating holes in available literature or compounding on established writing, the literature review assures both reader and investigator that the research in their hands is a relevant contribution. Because of the special, inverted nature of the heuristic inquiry, the researcher is less concerned with answering a question for the world than with answering a question from within. In fact, he is asking to be transformed by the process of answering the question. In this light, literature can be viewed as an agent of provocation, pushing and pulling at the researcher's self-awareness and jarring him into new insights.

This literature review is a part of a larger bricolage of creative data generation. I am not pursuing a single line of inquiry in the traditional sense but rather I am tracking and tracing the resonance of the here-and-now through the writing of several different authors. I have followed leads based intuition, recommendation, or random luck. Words, ideas, ideals, and whole concepts leap from the pages of my research crafting and shaping my experience. Phenomenologically speaking, I am in search of the lived and imagined experience of the here-and-now through the words of these writers. I have not attempted to provide whole theoretical summaries of different approaches. Instead, I have let my

impressions guide the elucidation of each writer included here, sourcing their contribution to my research question rather than their overall contribution to academic writing. These thinkers have helped shape this inquiry and helped push me towards answering my research question. They have each, by virtue of their inclusion in this text become part of the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated in *this* art therapist.

The Here-and-Now in Psychotherapy

The here-and-now: use it, use it, use it.
-Irvin Yalom

Since Otto Rank first brought the here-and-now smack down into the middle of the therapeutic relationship (Wadlington, 2001), the notion has remained a cornerstone of relational psychotherapy. *Staying with, focusing on, returning to* the here-and-now, is conceptual language that continues to permeate the annals of several clinical and theoretical approaches and lines of discussion in contemporary psychotherapy (Yalom, 2005; Stern, 2004; Siegel, 2009). It is neither the goal of this literature review, nor this thesis, to provide a comprehensive history of the here-and-now in psychotherapeutic literature, such is the stuff of a theoretical discussion. Instead, I would like to concentrate on those authors who bring this discussion into sharp focus in the present moment.

To consider the here-and-now in any modality of therapeutic work is to consider the writing of Irvin Yalom. It would seem that no other author has brought this phenomenon so prolifically into the therapeutic frame. The author cites several theoretical approaches that make up the history of a here-and-now focus, including: humanistic, attachment, psychodynamic, and existential (Yalom, 2005). Yalom is well known for his practice and contribution to an existentialist orientation in psychotherapy (Yalom, 1980; Yalom, 2002), but, like the practice of the here-and-now in therapy, the

author maintains that this is not self-contained theoretical approach (Yalom, 2002) but can be an adjunct to any theoretical foundation. In distinguishing the psychotherapeutic group from other group work Yalom (2005) identifies the here-and-now experience as a major vehicle of therapeutic change. The interpersonal relationship, Yalom (2002) explains, is central to any and every patient's presenting problem and the crux of therapeutic change in group work rests in the correction of interpersonal distortions.

A here-and-now focus in group psychotherapy requires the therapist to be aware of and actualize the interdependence of two tiers: the experiencing tier, which is ahistorical, and the illumination of process. Here the group is self-reflective of its own inter-dynamics and this reflection becomes the material of change. In the illumination of process, "[The group] must study its own transactions; it must transcend pure experience and apply itself to the integration of that experience" (Yalom, 2005, p. 142). In addition to the interdependent tiers, Yalom (2005) provides a framework of tasks performed by the therapist to maintain the here-and-now focus. In my reading, Yalom is one of the few authors to provide such a practical, comprehensive, and staged approach to bringing the here-and-now into any therapeutic work. I only lament that he is not an art therapist and could bring the wealth of his experience to bear on the phenomenon of creative expression in therapy.

In individual therapy, Yalom (2002) emphasizes that the here-and-now focus is no less crucial to therapeutic change. The interpersonal relationship of therapist/patient becomes a model for the development of empathy in the patient. "Accurate empathy is most important in the domain of the immediate present – that is, the here-and-now of the therapy hour" (Yalom, 2002, p. 11). Yalom explains that the here-and-now is the

therapist's ally in fostering empathy and that it carries momentum into the rest of the patient's life. Skilfully wielded, countertransferential material experienced by the therapist becomes the raw material of empathic relation; how the therapist feels about the actions and behaviour of the patient is played-out in the here-and-now of the therapeutic relationship.

Where Yalom is gifted at explaining and actualizing the dynamics of the here-and-now in psychotherapy, Daneiel N. Stern (2004) can be credited with revealing the implicit, micro-mechanisms that underscore its experience. The author proposes an exciting, if not radical, refocusing of psychotherapeutic concern on the present, intersubjective, and experienced moment in therapy. Verbalizing, recounting, and storytelling, according to Stern, do not lead to change. Change only comes about through lived experience, and this lived experience happens in the present moment. Stern explains: "The idea of *presentness* is key. The present moment that I am after is the moment of subjective experience as it is occurring – not as it is later reshaped by words. A first step towards understanding experience is to explore the present moment" (Stern, 2004, p. xiii). Stern's theory, as I understand it, begins something like this: The present moment is the "process unit" of experience. One present moment leads to the next and constructs micro narratives. But the present moment is not and cannot be consciously grasped and articulated. It is grasped by "implicit knowing."

Implicit knowing is a non-conscious process, as opposed to unconscious, which is composed of repressed material (Stern, 2004). Implicit knowing is neither tacit knowledge nor intuition but a process of awareness that hovers at the door of consciousness. It may never be verbalized but exists in awareness all the same, what

Bollas (1987) called "the unthought known." (as cited in Stern, 2004, p. 116) Implicit knowing is the realm of non-verbal, non-symbolic language that informs a range of mental processes including how we co-exist socially (Stern). As the author states: "It is likely that the majority of all we know about how to be with others resides in implicit knowing…[it] is not restricted to nonverbal communication, body language and sensation, as it was previously thought. But rather applies to affect, expectation, shifts in activation and motivation, and styles of thought" (Stern, 2004, p. 114). Implicit knowing also informs the explicit (conscious/verbalized) level of knowing (Stern). What gets talked about begins with what does not.

Clinically, Stern's (2004) interest in the present moment in psychotherapy grew out of the author's use of video to capture mother-infant interaction. He was impressed by how much significant content there existed in the briefest moments of exchange. These moments could be analyzed and re-experienced through the tools of the technology: freeze frame, slow motion, and repetition of segments; tools he would later apply to clinical work He could see that implicit knowing had a major influence on the intersubjectivity of shared experience, experience that can be more or less shared by two minds, what he refers to as the "intersubjective field" (Stern). Thus, the direct, lived, and shared experience - the present moment - of the therapeutic relationship became the author's focus rather than the more traditional stance that emphasized past and repressed material. Stern calls intersubjectivity a "major motivational system essential for human survival – akin to attachment or sex" (2004, p. xv). The presentness, then, of the therapist is essential to actualizing the potential of lived experience in therapy. If implicit knowing can be brought into shared awareness not only on the explicit (verbalized) level of

knowing, but on the implicit level of shared knowing as well then change can begin even before it is articulated. Taken from this view, implicit knowing also influences creative expression and could potentially have an impact on the (amorphous) structure of heuristic research.

Bradford Keeney's (2009) book, *The Creative Therapist: The Art of Awakening a Session* promotes transcendence of all theory and approach in psychotherapy and calls for all therapists of every orientation to become creative therapists (not to be confused with creative arts therapists.) "The creative therapist is ready to create, compose, construct, form, parent, give rise to, grow, bring forth, bring about, and bring into being an authentic, made-in-the-moment, one-of-a-kind session" (p. 2). Keeney's here-and-now lies in his improvised, implicated, and courageous approach to conducting therapy. Whatever the client presents in the moment, at the point of encounter, is regarded as the creative resilience of the client and the material of transformation. "The interaction between therapist and client is the locale of transformation in therapy…If we congruently address [clients'] strengths and resiliency, they will activate expressions that match" (pp. 72 - 77). Keeney celebrates the absurd, champions improvisation, welcomes accident, and readily encourages therapists to steer therapy into unknown waters. The author moves like a therapeutic swashbuckler from act to act, wielding the unknown as the only viable intervention. He writes:

> Let us free ourselves and return to the stage of unpredictable performance. There, we may be inspired to think or do anything as the situation calls forth from moment to moment…I am speaking of theory-less action, performance not consciously directed, though unconsciously influenced, by knowing. I am talking

> about the unsaid, what cannot be said, and what should not be said. To our textural chagrin, the unspeakable unknown is the most important stage for performed therapy. (p. 34)

How this translates into clinical practice is another matter and the stuff of critique, which is not the business of this thesis. Instead, I find energy in the larger-than-life call-to-arms heralded by Keeney. The point, I believe, is not to emulate his work, but for therapists to awaken to their own unique, creative resources in helping to bring therapy alive. In Keeney's "made-in-the-moment" approach I am reminded of Yalom's (2002) notion of creating a unique therapy for each client and conducting each session as if it were the last. I cannot help but be impressed by Keeney's tenacity and motivated by his words. As he writes: "Creative therapists are most creative when they draw upon their own natural resources, skills, gifts, talents, and eccentricities…The life of a creative therapist is inseparable from the quest to becoming a creative human being…[and] revitalizing our presence in everyday life" (Keeney, 2009, p. 249).

The Here-and-Now in Creative Arts Therapies

> *Is this the moon? Or a sweet cake? Or maybe it is just a bottomless bucket?*
>
> - Awakawa Koichi, Zenga artist

The major themes related to the here-and-now to emerge from the previous literature section include the essentiality of empathy, the intersubjectivity of the therapeutic encounter as fulcrum of transformation, the present moment as transformational unit, and the will to creative improvisation as vehicle of transformational momentum. As I move into the literature of the creative arts therapies, these themes are echoed and expanded upon to include notions of embodiment,

spontaneity, encounter, and, specific to my own therapeutic practice, the here-and-now of art making. Each practice has inspired my research question in some way and informed this inquiry process. My personal experience with each will be discussed in detail later.

Waller (1993) echoes Yalom's approach, extending it to group art therapy. The author qualifies her approach as group interactive art therapy, with emphasis on the interactive component of the social system at work. While less thorough than Yalom in her discussion on the apparatus of the here-and-now, Waller (1993) nonetheless provides essential insight into its relationship with the art object. She explains: "The artwork…aids understanding of the here-and-now of the group. The group can reflect on all the images made by each individual from the perspective of how the image relates to the individual and also to the group as a whole" (p. 38). One of the primary roles of the therapist working with the here-and-now of group art therapy is to identify commonalities in themes expressed in artwork thus promoting identification and discussion (Waller). The art object also serves a vehicle of transference, bringing past feelings and unconscious material into the here-and-now of the relationship (Waller).

Gestalt art therapy offers a compelling model of here-and-now experiencing for both client and therapist. This humanist-existentialist approach is couched in the tenets of Gestalt psychology that emphasize responsibility, the creation of new and meaningful configurations from "unfinished business", and an intersubjective, creative and authentic experience grounded in the present moment of therapy (Rhyne, 2001). For the Gestalt art therapist, all phenomena are occurring in the present moment, including all that is remembered and all that is anticipated. As Corey (1982 as cited in Rhyne, 2001, p. 135) explains, "The central task of the therapist is to help clients fully experience their being in

the here-and-now, by becoming aware of how they prevent themselves from feeling and experiencing in the present."

In this non-interpretive approach, therapeutic transformation occurs through the present creative act. "Experiencing the authentic expression of inner experiences with artistic materials during therapeutic interaction enhances that which exists "between" therapist and patient…beyond mere self-expression. It is a phase in a process taking place between two human beings" (Amendt-Lyon, p. 226, 2001). This creative encounter is described by Rhyne (2001):

> We contact each other through the presence of the drawing, seeing the interplay of lines, shapes, and forms within the wholeness of it as a Gestalt. Moreover, enactment of the forms, through sounds, gestures, and movements, bring into play kinesthetic and other sensory, immediate perceptions. Without pushing for interpretations, we explore the dimensions of the drawing and elaborate its impact, through active, present experiencing (Rhyne, p. 136).

In Gestalt art therapy, the therapist is creatively attuned to the present sensory mode of the client. To facilitate, the therapist is responsible to and for his own creative awareness, presence, and innovation. "Creativity in psychotherapy is more than being creative as a therapist or being in contact with a patient who shows creative qualities. It is the daring, creative interaction within the therapeutic relationship" (Amendt-Lyon, 2001, p. 226). Brown (1969, as cited in Amendt-Lyon, 2001) stresses awareness training as a means of improving "creative functioning at each stage of the conventional four-stage structure of the creative act: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification or

elaboration" (p. 236). The parallels between the stages of the creative act as described by brown and the stages of heuristic inquiry, explored later, are noteworthy.

Situated in Dance Movement Therapy (DMT), Authentic Movement is a spontaneous, creative expression wherein the client (Mover) waits to be moved, what Goldhahn (2009) calls "the choreography of the moment" (p. 55). There you are standing before the Witness(es). You are motionless, aware, and waiting. And then, movement. You follow the expression from inside out through your body, allowing yourself to be shaped by feeling. When it has ended, your witness may share images that arose within him and you may do likewise. Rather than being driven toward some perceived sense of the essential, something unattainable, both the client (Mover) and the Witness in Authentic Movement are invited to experience the immediate. "Although it could be construed that Authentic Movement chases after an original source of movement, in my view it is rather concerned with the here and now" (Goldhahn, 2009, p. 59). While this does not negate the importance of the unconscious and historical material that may arise during movement it emphasizes the temporal dimension in which it occurs. Like all creative art therapies, Authentic Movement liberates the Mover from reliance on uniquely verbal modes of expression. The Mover's access to his own creative expression provides opportunity for those dormant and wounded parts of the self to experience healing and wholeness (Taylor, 2007). Through creative movement, the body of the Mover can become a trusted place of communication (Goldhahn).

Authentic Movement brings several notions to the fore, which are pertinent to the here-and-now in creative arts therapies. One is the notion of waiting, that is, allowing the spontaneous expression inherent in the Mover to arrive at its own pace, in its own time.

Another is the notion of embodiment. The body is, naturally, the medium of expression in Authentic Movement (and DMT). The immediacy of embodied experience lends a powerful dimension to the flow of creative expression. A third notion is spontaneous expression, a cornerstone of all creative arts therapies. Spontaneity as embodied expression gives form to the unconscious and brings us into connection with our true and authentic self (Taylor, 2007) and cultivates flexibility in daily life.

In drama therapy, the therapeutic field of engagement is known as the playspace. The playspace "is an interpersonal field in an imaginative realm, consciously set off from the real world by the participants, in which any image, interaction and physicalisation has meaning within the drama" (Johnson, 1992, p. 112-113). Developmental Transformations (DvT) is a therapeutic practice situated within drama therapy and is defined as a "continuous transformation of embodied encounters in the playspace" (Johnson, 2005, p. 6). In DvT, the play has no script. It begins in the body, with sound and movement, and continuously flows, moves, and transforms according to the present dynamics of the group or dyad. *Transformation to the here-and-now* is an intervention/interpretation employed within the play and refers to "what's really going on among the participants" (Johnson, 1992, p. 126). In my own observations I have found this technique also calls into the play both the latent and manifest content the client has brought with him that day. Whether inter-member or transferential in nature, the material brought out through this intervention can be *played* with, bringing about the potential for further transformation. The idea is that the more that can be tolerated in the playspace the more the individual can tolerate and transform through a cultivated capacity for spontaneity.

Johnson's (1999) essay on the developmental process in artistic expression provides a valuable model for attuning to the here-and-now in the creative arts therapies. The author emphasizes that artistic development must be viewed as "an unfolding process" (p. 173) rather than as stages. The recursive cycle, employed in a treatment process, attunes to the creative expressions of the client while giving form to the moment-to-moment awareness in the therapist. The steps of the recursive cycle*, Noticing, Feeling, Animating,* and *Expressing*, are not bound to drama therapy but can be employed with any medium of expression. As Johnson (1999) writes: "In this approach, the therapist's own capacities for attending, feeling, animating, and expressing may become powerful healing factors for the client" (p. 179). Whether the therapist takes the role of guide or interpersonal participant, Johnson's model can be adapted to bring awareness to both client and therapist in facilitating therapeutic change.

Mindfulness

> *Mindfulness can be cultivated by paying attention in a specific way, that is, in the present moment, and as non-reactively, non- judgmentally and openheartedly as possible.*
>
> -Jon Kabat-Zinn

Whether an urgent response to the perceived speed at which our tech-driven lives travel, a felt disconnection with our natural world, or a proposed guide to personal freedom, the West has downward doggedly embraced the religious and philosophical practices of the East in an effort to resolve the malaise of modern life. As evidenced by the variety of sources below, mindfulness has become a contemporary therapeutic preoccupation whose application and effect seems to be permeating several fields of creative and psychotherapeutic research. Indeed, an entire thesis could be easily devoted to the exploration of mindful practice and art therapy, and some have already taken up

this charge (Moskovici, 2006). Specific to this research paper, the connection between a mindful practice/approach to therapy and the here-and-now phenomenon in session is self-evident. Whether considered a technique, spiritual stance, intervention, theoretical approach, or philosophical-therapeutic hybrid, mindfulness is poised to transform any and all therapeutic practices and practitioners. Rather than a broad survey I present a selection of mindfulness-based literature that has found me during this research process. Some are included for their contribution to a field of research, others for practical reasons, and still others for their eloquence.

Mindfulness can be loosely defined as: "A meditation practice that involves bringing the practitioner's awareness fully into the present moment without judging or evaluating that experience" (Kabat-Zinn, 1990 as cited in McCollum & Gerhart, 2010). More formally, Bishop et al. (2004) take on the task of operationally defining mindfulness within contemporary psychology, citing its popularity as the need for such defining. The authors' model of mindfulness is comprises two components: "self-regulation of attention… maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment [and] orientation of experience…an orientation that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance" (Bishop, et al., 2004, p. 232).

There is nothing new about the psychotherapeutic preoccupation with mindful practice. In 1957 an exciting and unprecedented "workshop" took place in Cuernavaca, Mexico wherein a meeting of minds, both Western and Eastern, convened to explore the potential intersection of Zen Buddhism and psychoanalysis (Fromm, 1960). As if hailing

the emergence of mindfulness based therapy, Fromm's essay in responding to the summit, stated:

> The analyst understands the patient only inasmuch as he experiences in himself all that the patient experiences…In this productive relatedness between analyst and patient, in the act of being fully engaged with the patient, in being fully open and responsive to him, in being soaked with him, as it were, in this center-to-center relatedness, lies one of the essential conditions for psychoanalytic understanding and cure…The full awakening to reality means…speaking in psychological terms, to have attained a fully "productive orientation." That means not to relate oneself to the world receptively, exploitatively, …but creatively, actively…(p. 112 -116)

Fifty years later these contemplations persevere pointing to the momentum of influence of eastern thought and practice on western therapeutic theory and practice. In his treatise on Zen and existential psychotherapy, Bazzano (2010) goes to battle with Heidegger's notion of authenticity, promoting in its stead ideals of "openness, vulnerability, and integrity" (p. 51). With these, the author finds common ground in the Zen ideal of a 'true person of no status,' a person who achieves and maintains an openness to life despite its impermanence. While heady and pedantic, Bazzano's discussion, nonetheless, provides provocative links between a person-centred approach to therapy and the philosophical underpinnings in Zen practice. In contemplating the therapeutic relationship he poses the question: "Could it be that it is out of awareness of the wound, of one's own frailty, that genuine communication is made possible" (Bazzano, 2010, p. 56)?

When questioning the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated, pedagogy and training of student therapists are vital components. McCollum and Gerhart (2010) report on the success of a mindfulness-based program designed to foster therapeutic presence in marital and family therapy trainees. The authors suggest that the primary facilitator of therapeutic change is the therapeutic relationship. Furthermore, more than any skill, the essential component of the therapeutic relationship is therapeutic presence. Using an opportunistic sampling comprised of 13 graduate students, the qualitative study suggests a positive relationship between mindfulness training and practice and the felt sense of presence by the students in their practicum work. The students reported positive results in terms of being able to attend to their own inner-experience (countertransference), sense of presence with client, attunement, and interaction. While limited in its generalizability, the study provides a working blueprint for therapeutic programs to include mindfulness training as part of their curriculum.

In a random search for literature on mindfulness in psychotherapy I came across Wilson's (2008) book *Mindfulness for Two.* The text is as much a therapeutic guide as it is a treatise on the human condition. While firmly planted in the model of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Wilson) the text's accessibility and clarity make it potentially valuable to therapists of any orientation. Personally, I was won over by the transparency and spirit of the author's approach. In the opening pages of his text he confesses, "I didn't come to mindfulness out of any strength at all. I came to mindfulness out of a weakness…my complete inability to listen to [my client] carefully" (p. xii). Wilson touches on themes relevant to all students of therapy and their clients: the fact of human suffering, ambiguity, and acceptance. He highlights several mechanisms that clients

employ to keep them out of the here-and-now, including worrying/ruminating, storytelling, and apologizing (Wilson). "Mindfulness is a way to disrupt these patterns of distractions and bring [both client and therapist] rapidly into the here and now" (Wilson, p. 79).

Wilson focuses his attention on the art of listening, speaking, and semantics and asks the reader to train his ear and "listen hard." He advocates simple and gentle interventions such as pauses to bring attention to the here-and-now of the session. Tone, cadence, body language, pacing, patterns, and quality of voice are all at once data for therapy and tools for the therapist. Connecting mindfully with the present moment slows down the client (and the therapist) and creates space for something besides suffering to occur. "What emerges…is a wider appreciation of the experience of life surrounding the event…The pain doesn't typically go away, it just ceases to dominate the client's ability to act" (Wilson, p. 62). The ultimate goal of this approach is to foster psychological flexibility in the face of ambiguity (Wilson). "Most of the things in life we truly care about are ambiguous, and if we can't learn to tolerate ambiguity then we are doomed to act in the service of its elimination" (Wilson, p. 11). To me this notion is reminiscent of DvT's aim to instil spontaneity in the client as a means of tolerating the instability of being (Johnson, 2005).

And what about mindfulness in the creative arts therapies? Monti et al. (2006) report on a quantitative study using a developed psychosocial group intervention they've called mindfulness-based art therapy (MBAT). The intervention combines the established mindfulness-based stress-reduction (MBSR) model developed by Kabat-Zinn (1990) with short-term supportive group art therapy for women living with a variety of cancer

diagnoses. Using a sample of 111 women (n = 111) participating in the MBAT groups against a control group on waiting lists, the study employed, pre and post intervention, the use of two established instruments including: the Symptoms Checklist Revised (SCL-90-R) and the Global Severity Index (GSI). The findings supported the authors' two hypotheses: that the members of the group reported decreased levels of distress and improved quality of life.

Rappaport (2009) combines art therapy with Gendlin's model of Focusing method to create an embodied synthesis she calls Focusing-Oriented Art Therapy. When researching with Rogers, Gendlin (1981) observed that successful therapeutic change was contingent on the client's ability to listen and connect with their inner experience (as cited in Rappaport, 2009). This capacity, beyond intervention, theoretical approach, or verbalised content, is the mechanism of transformation. What is termed the "felt sense" is an authentically embodied awareness of feeling that is unencumbered by articulation (Rappaport). When a client is guided to his felt sense, he is invited to connect with it symbolically which leads to a shift in feeling state ("felt shift") and to new opportunity for change. In this hybrid method, the bodily felt sense is engaged through art making. "The hand, arm, shoulder, and torso move while drawing, painting, and sculpting. The breath changes in response to different amounts of physical pressure on the art instrument…the felt sense…is implicit in creative activity" (Rappaport, p. 87). Recalling Yalom (2004), Focusing-Oriented Art Therapy is grounded in the therapist's capacity for accurate empathy mirroring that may take verbal and/or creative form.

Franklin (2010) triangulates attachment theory, mindfulness, and empathic art with the latest scientific studies on mirror neurons. Art-based intersubjectivity can serve

to address and repair relational fractures (Franklin). Viewed through attachment theory, intersubjectivity is "the sharing of subjective states with another person through emotional attunement" (p. 160). The author advocates for a participatory approach to art making in art therapy wherein, in the tradition of Edith Kramer, the "third hand" of the art therapist provides auxiliary ego and relational support through the creation of empathic art. Kramer (2000) coined the term "third hand" to refer to "a hand that helps the creative process along without being intrusive…[and] must be capable of conducting pictorial dialogues that complement or replace verbal exchange" (p. 48). Malchiodi (2010) calls the "third hand" "art therapy's version of mindfulness, insight and empathy" (para. 1). The notion of empathy, the "intersubjective, imaginal practice of entering the world of another" (Franklin, p. 161) is now gaining scientific validity through the examination of the activity of the mirror neuron system. The author proposes that art therapists are in a unique position to cultivate empathetic alliances through mindful attunement and the visual image. As Franklin explains, "With careful attunement, art therapists can develop unique, aesthetic forms of empathic resonance that will help clients feel deeply seen and develop empathy for themselves and compassion for others" (p. 160). Franklin makes use of empathic art making with his clients, and in doing so "potentially disorganized emotions can be responded to with art and skilful verbal and visual listening" (p. 166). Franklin's research is also an exciting argument in the age-old debate over whether or not art therapists should make art with their clients.

Existentialism and Art Therapy

Bruce Moon (1990) honours the complexity of individual suffering through his exploration of existentialism and art therapy. The text is not so much a philosophical

discussion as a tao, or way of, art therapy. Existentialism acknowledges the reality of human suffering as central to human experience and life journey, and that in this awareness there resides liberty. The creative act is also celebrated in existential thought. Thus Moon paints, literally at times, a very real and transparent portrait of the art therapist as existential voyageur engaged in the process of meaning-making. "For an existential art therapist, the question is how to be attentive to the emptiness of the patient…What is important is engaging not in intellectual discussion of universals but the here-and-now meaning of one unique individual's life at the present time" (Moon, p. 30). Moon's text illuminates the immediate relevance of an existential approach to art therapy while providing a rich example of heuristic research and writing.

The Creative Process

As I moved through the different phases of this heuristic inquiry (and back and forth several times) it became plainly clear that the creative process not only proceeds analogous to the heuristic phases but that developing an intimate knowledge of both was essential to answering my research question. For this reason I must make mention of two essential texts that have served as guides on my creative journey. One is Shaun McNiff's (1998) *Trust the Process: An Artist's guide to Letting Go.* The guide encourages a creative process that illuminates the major notions that have emerged from this literature review: The essentiality of creative practice, the cultivation of spontaneity, embodiment, the mindfulness of the moment, and the ongoing process of transformation.

> The discipline of creation is a mix of surrender and initiative. We let go of inhibitions, which breed rigidity, and we cultivate responsiveness to what is taking shape in the immediate situation. The creative person, like the energy of

creation, is always moving. There is an understanding that the process must keep changing (p. 2).

The other essential guide is Hinz's (2009) *Expressive Therapies Continuum* (ETC). Of specific value in this approach is the knowledge that each medium carries its own unique therapeutic characteristics that may respond to the present needs of the client (or therapist, or investigator). The continuum travels the gamut of media and their application; fluid to resistive, kinaesthetic to sensory, affective to perceptive, cognitive to symbolic. Contained within its framework, the ETC reveals the intimacy of art materials, that are at once tools but also partners in art therapy.

The Creative Process and Heuristic Research

There is both great value and potential insecurity in reading the heuristic investigations of others. On the one hand, the accounts can be as exhilarating and captivating as a great novel. The honesty and courage with which the authors make their experience transparent sets a motivational bar for this writer to answer the call. On the other hand, encountering the candidness of those who have voyaged before me strikes a chord of concern that I have not delved deep enough or if I have, have not conveyed the depth of my journey with enough passion and conviction. Since the heuristic journey is a solitary one, I feel a connection to the investigators through the honesty of their words. In reading their texts I realize I am fulfilling the ultimate goal of the research, which is one of relation.

Janet Rigg's (2004) thesis, *An Artist Meets a Therapist: Conflict and Convergence in the Identity of the Emerging Art Therapist*, is a creative document. Her heuristic investigation is an arts-based one and the text is replete with the author's

process. Journal excerpts, distilled reflections, and artwork intermingle with Rigg's contemplation and search for resolution of her multiple selves – artist, art therapist, client, and student. Her use of the heuristic research model to resolve, explore, or restore issues of identity and insecurity is common amongst art therapy researchers (Morin, 2008; Arsenault, 2009; Shortliffe, 2004; Har-Gil, 2008). Rigg's thesis is relevant to my own investigation because of her emphasis on and exploration of the creative process of the artist as a parallel not only to heuristic inquiry but the therapeutic process as well. Through spontaneous art creation she is able to reconcile her self as artist and her self as art therapist (Rigg). This is relevant to my own investigation; I believe that an encounter with one's self, with my self, through art is an essential component to cultivating the lived experience of the here-and-now in art therapy. Rigg also asks important questions about how art therapists are trained and the perceived lack of emphasis on art as the way of healing. Looking to my own primary research question, there is an element of pedagogy that is questioned. *What is the process by which the here and now is cultivated in the student of art therapy?* In the question, there is an inherent examination of the nature of that cultivation, namely training.

Methodology

> *...I would like to beg you dear Sir, as well as I can, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.*
>
> -Rainer Maria Rilke

Heuristic research is a personal, introspective, creative, and paradoxical journey. It demands a voyage inward while attending to the external world for inspiration. It demands of its researcher a willingness to encounter his own instability, insecurity, and open-endedness. It is a quest that can be pursued by anyone if the need for concrete fact can be suspended. Its structure is flexible, though delineated. Its timeline is contingent on revelation. Its tools are varied. Nevertheless, the heuristic journey is born of the basic human propensity and capacity to unravel the mysteries of phenomenon and being. It is an established qualitative research method designed to generate evidence but allows for, and even celebrates, creative and philosophical reflections. When it is done well, it is authentic and resonates as such.

Heuristic research is an "organized and systematic form for investigating human experience in which attention is focused inward on feeling responses of the researcher to the outward situation rather than exclusively to relations between the pieces of that outside situation" (Sela-Smith, 2002, p. 59). It is a branch of phenomenological research wherein the researcher's own lived experience is the vehicle of discovery (Moustakas, 1990; Rose & Lowenthal, 2006). The word heuristic is derived from the Greek *heuriskin*, to discover or find, and is related to *eureka,* suggesting sudden discovery or insight (Moustakas, 1990; Kapitan, 2010). Heuristic inquiry, as an established and credible model of research, is mainly credited to Clarke E. Moustakas (1990). The structure, language, and research process are almost entirely derived from his literature and as such are the foundation of how heuristic research is performed, discussed, and critiqued. In Moustakas's (1990) own words, heuristic research "refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods

and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (p. 10). At the heart of heuristic research is a journey. Moustakas identifies six phases of heuristic inquiry in his model: *initial engagement*, *immersion*, *incubation*, *illumination*, *explication*, and *creative synthesis*. The researcher's own capacity to engage in self-awareness and self-dialogue drives the process until such a point that new meaning about the research subject is unearthed and personal transformation is lived (Kapitan, 2010; Sela-Smith, 2002). The entire process is transparent in the research document and becomes the principal source of data.

In the first part of this next section I will elaborate on the heuristic method of inquiry, identify its key concepts, and review Moustakas's model of research as critiqued by different authors. I will also justify the heuristic method as a sound research model for this inquiry and situate it within art therapy research. In the second part of this section I will discuss the six phases of the heuristic journey and provide accounts from my own journey as illustrations. I will also discuss the generation and collection of data pertinent to this study and the heuristic method of establishing validity.

Heuristic research always begins with a question (Moustakas, 1990). This question may burn, entice, excite, or merely irritate but invariably it becomes nearly impossible to ignore and its resolve becomes imperative. The word *passionate* seems to appear time and again when describing the researcher's affliction (Moustakas). This is the seed of the inquiry. Again, it is the lived-experience of the researcher that produces the question. It is personal, intimate, but the ultimate goal is one of relation, that is, the research must be relatable to the experience of others (Moustakas, 1990; Rose & Lowenthal, 2006). According to Moustakas, the researcher, armed with his question,

embarks on a journey of discovery using his powers of self-awareness to guide him. He moves through six phases of the research process to emerge with the answer to his question in hand. The introduction to this document revealed the seed of this research's inquiry. The here-and-now within the context of my training as an art therapist became a major preoccupation for me. I became attuned to any reference, mention, or suggestion of its activity. This preoccupation, along with the necessity of fulfilling research requirements, produced my question.

The Here-and-Now and the Heuristic Journey

Why choose heuristic as a research method to understand the process of the here-and-now's cultivation in art therapy? Certainly a theoretical analysis would provide me with some context of how the here-and-now is written about and imagined, and as my literature review illustrates this information is readily available, current, and is a timely concern of modern therapeutic practices. But my question is not so much *what* is the here-and-now of art therapy, or even what are the steps to applying it in therapy, though these are both integral components of this discussion. My question is how is the phenomenon lived? Only a heuristic inquiry can potentially transform, personalize, and deepen my understanding of the phenomenon. If I want to learn how to become a farmer it would be wise to learn how to grow crops. My research, thus, is an active engagement with processes.

There is also something of a kinship happening on a meta-level between my subject of inquiry and the method I've chosen to explore it. The focus of one, it appears, inherently serves to illuminate the other. The process of heuristic research is an ideal vehicle to explore the phenomenon of the here-and-now because the researcher is

compelled to remain within the question until the answer is revealed (Moustakas, 1990). There is the presumption of presence in both. As Moustakas (1990) writes: "Immersion in the question…requires that the researcher be alert to signs or expressions of the phenomenon, willing to enter a moment of the experience timelessly and live the moment fully" (p. 44). In order to answer the question "What is the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated in the student art therapist?", I must immerse into the process of its very cultivation; I must be this student in the process.

The literature on heuristic investigation is as vital to this study as that on the here-and-now, mindfulness, presence, embodiment, and art making. By focussing on immersion with the phenomenon and subsequent re-emergence with new and relational understanding, the literature directs the journey toward the cultivation of meaning. This was a revelation to me as I immersed into the heuristic literature and it somewhat accounts for the length and extensive discussion of this methodology section. What I want to make clear is that the method became the answer to my question. It contains all the elements that produced its answer. The heuristic journey, as I have experienced it, demands self-awareness, spontaneity, creative reflection, embodiment, the free-flow of feelings, presence, compassion, and the capacity to elucidate these experiences in a meaningful and relatable manner. The heuristic journey is, in other words, a here-and-now journey.

The Heuristic Model and Art Therapy Research

Heuristic investigation is an ideal, ethical, model of inquiry for practice-based psychotherapy investigation (Moustakas, 1990; Rose & Lowenthal, 2006). It is also remarkably congruent with art therapy research. While broaching the heuristic notion of

validity, McNiff (2008) explains this congruency: "Since artistic expression is essentially heuristic, introspective, and deeply personal, there needs to be a complementary focus in art-based research on how the work can be of use to others and how it connects to practices in the discipline" (p. 34). Kapitan (2010) continues, "Art therapists…who create artworks for self-inquiry – to process an intense experience, explore a life concern, or follow an idea in order to see where it leads – are using the basic processes of heuristic inquiry" (p. 145). There requires little modification then, if any, to extend the heuristic model to the creative arts therapies as researchers experienced in the creative process will find familiar ground in the heuristic phases.

Concepts and Processes of Heuristic Research

The language used to describe heuristic research warrants some discussion. Given that I refer to such concepts as *tacit knowing* throughout this paper, it's important to unpack the major concepts referred to by Moustakas (1990) and to provide some understanding for their employment. In heuristic terms these can be considered operational definitions. The seven core concepts and processes of heuristic research are: identification with the focus of inquiry, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing, and the internal frame of reference (Moustakas).

Identification with the focus of inquiry is the capacity to live the question (Moustakas, 1990). Through the processes of self-dialogue, immersion, and indwelling the researcher is able to get inside the question, to experience it personally. The question is not viewed from the outside as something to be pondered, but from within as something that is personal and sensed (Moustakas). The researcher is one with the question.

Self-dialogue: As the name suggests, self-dialogue is the process wherein the researcher begins an exploration of his own experience of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990). The researcher, through his own self-awareness and self-discovery can dialogue directly with the question, because the question has been internalized, has become part of his self. Self-dialogue proceeds transparently as the researcher allows more and more of his experience to be revealed (Moustakas). In self-dialogue, the researcher and the question dance, and from this dance flow new meanings, meanings that will shape the core of themes to come.

Tacit knowing is perhaps the most pivotal instrument of heuristic research and yet the most difficult to fully define though each author adds to its illustration and create a more expansive picture. Moustakas (1990) identifies it as "the deep structure that contains the unique perceptions, feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and judgments housed in the internal frame of reference of a person that governs behavior and determines how we interpret experience" (p. 32). Tacit awareness is subliminal (Kapitan, 2010) and knowing precedes intuition (Moustakas, 1990). Sela-Smith (2002) reiterates that tacit knowledge is "that internal place where experience, feeling, and meaning join together to form both a picture of the world and a way to navigate that world" (p. 60). Tacit knowledge is ever growing, ever developing, and ever engaged in the process of reorganizing around new experience and information. Tacit knowing is inherent to the researcher, to his self, it is a universal understanding of things, but cannot be articulated in words, and stands in counterpoint to explicit knowing. Explicit knowledge is dependant on tacit knowing in formulating understanding but tacit knowing can stand independently of the explicit. In

this way, all knowledge grows from tacit knowing (Polanyi, 1983 as cited in Moustakas, 1990).

It is paradoxical to try to put tacit knowing into words. It is the *ness* of things; the felt essence that eventually informs the explicit. Moustakas (1990) describes tacit knowing as a "capacity that allows one to sense the unity or wholeness of something from an understanding of the individual qualities or parts" (p. 21). There is a something of the gestalt in his description and the human tendency to perceive wholes from parts (Rhyne, 2001). He continues: "Knowledge of the trunk, branches, buds, flowers, leaves, colors, textures, sounds, shape, size – and other parts or qualities – ultimately may enable a sense of the treeness of a tree, and its wholeness as well" (Moutakas, 1990, p. 21).

Intuition is proposed as a bridge between the tacit dimension of knowledge and the explicit or describable. Intuition is our personal truth detector. It enables us to discern meaningful patterns without the necessity of reasoning. Intuition allows for the gestalt in perceptions, where wholes form from pieces or essences (Moustakas, 1990). It is "the internal capacity to make inferences and arrive at a knowledge of underlying structures or dynamics" (Moustakas, p. 23). As intuition guides tacit knowledge to the surface so does it bridge our journey inward, guiding us toward an authentic encounter with our tacit dimension (Morin, 2008).

Indwelling "is a heuristic process by which the research participants turn inward with unwavering attention and focus on some facet of experience to attain a deeper, more extended comprehension" (Kapitan, 2010, p. 146). Moustakas (1990) often uses the term *passionate* to describe the unwavering commitment of the researcher to remain within the

question until its meanings are revealed, with an openness to the flow of feelings, beliefs, and perceptions.

Focusing is the capacity to clarify what has been lived. "[It] is based on a consistent and pervasive attention to detaching the core meanings of a particular personal experience, which is the base of the research" (Morin, 2008).

The internal frame of reference is the base of our world of experience and our access to the worlds of others. It is the medium by which all knowledge is negotiated (Moustakas, 1990). "To know and understand the nature, meanings, and essences of any human experience, one depends on the internal frame of reference of the person who has had, is having, or will have the experience" (Moustakas, p. 26).

Critique of Moustakas's Heuristic Model

Sela-Smith's (2002) critique of Moustakas's heuristic model focuses on what she perceives to be a failing on his part to completely surrender to the heuristic process that he himself codified. She charges the originator of the method with ambivalence and resistances citing a major discrepancy in his writing with regard to how he establishes the model of inquiry and how the research is actually carried out. Particular to Moustakas's account (1990) is what she calls a shifting from the "self's experience of the experience to focusing on the idea of the experience" (p. 53), that is, a failing to remain turned inward to the free flow of feeling and tacit knowing, retreating instead to an objective stance on the phenomenon. In her review of twenty-eight heuristic inquiries she found only three to have successfully ascribed to the full measure of the method. Essential in her estimation of the success of the studies was what she describes as a "free-fall" into the inquiry. Sela-Smith's major criticism is directed at later chapters of Moustakas's text:

> The application portion of his method in the later chapters has been codified into an external process that requires making lists, constructing methods, and following data-collection procedures in a prescribed fashion. Other participants become the major source of data. Validity of the self-experience is established by similar experiences of others; yet validity in subjective discovery-research is not possible by comparing to others' experience. (p. 74)

At the other end of the spectrum, Rose and Lowenthal (2006) streamline and reorder Moutakas's (1990) model based on their experience with their own heuristic inquiries as it applies to psychotherapy. In sharp contrast to Sela-Smith (2002), the authors ascribe an even greater value to the relational dimension heuristic research, placing the experience of others with the phenomenon at the head of the research process. The authors emphasize three major and distinct contributions of heuristic research: First, "heuristics can be seen to be a feasible research method for researching psychotherapy, particularly as its central tenet is for the researcher to have experience of the phenomenon of the study" (p. 138). Heuristics within the context of psychotherapeutic research dignifies the experience of the other, be they the client, student, or co-researcher because of its capacity to capture vividly the experience of practice (Rose & Lowenthal). Second, heuristics is the ideal model for dismantling the sometimes-obtuse nature of research and puts it within the grasp of the practicing or training therapist, "for research is positioned as something practitioners can be actively involved in, in their day to day practice" (p. 138). Third, heuristics responds to the contemporary shift toward embracing new paradigms of research for understanding the human experience. Practice-based evidence and practice-based education can inform new theories and interventions based on the

lived experience of the researcher and his ability to relate his experience to that of the other.

For the purposes of my own heuristic inquiry I have taken heed from both these views of the model. On the one hand I am impressed by Sela-Smith's (2002) insistence on the thoroughness of the free-fall. I can recognize my own resistance to surrender completely to the process since it feels at times impractical and others fear inducing. Both Sela-Smith and Moustakas (1990) contend that the researcher must remain within the question until the entire story is revealed and retold, to which Rose and Lowenthal (2006) respond, "How realistic is this?…It is suggested here that all relational research methods can do is present a "snapshot", an in-the-moment experience of a phenomenon" (p. 140). Indeed, Rose & Lowenthal's allowance for the temporal constraints of research is pragmatic. Their reference to relational research being "in-the-moment" also reinforces the premise of this current study and the appropriateness of this model. I propose that there are degrees of heuristic inquiry experience. One isn't necessarily a master of indwelling his first time out. Nor does every researcher have years to wait around for *the* answer. *An* answer may suffice for this moment and may potentially, and even likely, lead to more research.

The Six Heuristic Phases

Moustakas (1990) describes in detail the six phases of the heuristic journey. Each phase is not demarcated by timed intervals, rather, the investigator moves fluidly from one to another, almost finding himself at the next phase. The transitions are not without critical attention, however. Each phase demands a different method and quality of attention to the original research question. All the while the investigator remains attuned

to his flow of feeling from within, to his tacit knowing. In my own experience I can attest to the non-linearity of the research process. It's like swimming underwater in a lake; you think you're headed in a straight line, but when you pop your head up you find you have veered off course and may even be swimming in circles.

Phase 1: Initial Engagement

In phase one, the researcher strikes up a conversation with himself. The work of *Initial Engagement* is to reveal the question. This dialogue often begins with a problem. Something has provoked the researcher, something meaningful to his own experience and to humanity's at large. The *Initial Engagement* is passionate and intense; an affair of creative activity has begun. Like a grain of sand under the oyster, the researcher begins to toil away on shaping the pearl that will become his guiding principle, the research question. This process begins with self-encounter and is characterized by activities that are autobiographical. He sets in motion a process by which the free flow of feeling and knowledge begin their ascent to awareness. Without intention, the researcher descends the fathoms of tacit awareness, the light that will illuminate his journey (Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002; Rose & Lowenethal, 2006; Kapitan, 2010).

Long before this research would be formalized, I began a dialogue with my research question, with myself. Excerpted here from various entries, the scrawls and urgent notes written in my journal give a sense of my initial and subsequent engagement; my fledgling attempts to grasp the here-and-now:

> *How to work in the here-and-now? This is the dance right here – the moment of spontaneous interaction & attunement. This is observation w/o judgement... The in-between spaces and death and annihilation and*

insignificance. And that everything I've thought, known, loved, made meaningful will perish with me and become dust. All that thinking gone to waste. All that worry unrealised, or worse - partially realised. But why not make the mark and set something to permanence? The trace. The creative moment: artfulness/mindfulness… Clear the crap. Weed the weeds. Get out of the way. How can I respond to this moment creatively; bring something new into being? The art is the breath.

Phase II: Immersion

In *Immersion* the question is lived. The most marked characteristic of the second phase is the organization of life's daily occurrences around the research question. By turning his focused awareness inward, the researcher is enveloped by the question and the two become intimate dance partners. Externally, the world appears to become a montage of vital data. In walking, waking, sleeping, and eating, the research question seems to be living on the lips of the world; excerpts in the media, bits of conversation, advice from your mother, songs on the radio, the question takes on the quality of a lost lover with reminders at every turn. The tacit awareness of the researcher is like a magnet for like-mindfulness (Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002; Rose & Lowenethal, 2006; Kapitan, 2010).

Incidences of the immersion phase as transcribed from my journal include: *I don't know that I am in the immersion phase. It's hard to know with so much going on at the same time but I'm offered clues. I go to the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal but the show I wanted to see has ended. In its stead I find a group show titled: Acts of Presence. I quickly write down the questions the show is posing: "How can we make*

resonate over time an ephemeral art, an art that involves an act of presence here and now? As artists, what are the specific gestures that forge our creative processs" (De Pauw, 2011)? Later in the week, tearing out magazine pages for clients' collage work, an advertisement asks: Are We Now Yet? I watch a jazz documentary that explains the evolution of improvisation: "They could do something that others could only dream of – create art on the spot" (Botstein, 2001). I dream of an art therapy wizard tucked away in the woods who performs magic and puppet shows. He laughs about my research. Practices, habits, and normally mundane experiences take on new and relevant meaning. The here-and-now is…everywhere.

During this phase I also finalize and send out my interview questions. Nine co-researchers will eventually respond, some immediately, others months later. But each reflection is an invaluable contribution; a piece to a puzzle that has no guiding picture on the box top. Everything is process and I begin to internalize this as I move into my own creative practice. I make art whenever possible and continue to journal almost daily. Sometimes the pitch of output is so fevered I cannot discern my own words.

Phase III: Incubation

Phase III sees the researcher disengaging from the intensity of focus characterized in the *Immersion* phase. The seed has been planted, has been nourished by the researcher's sustained gaze and is now left to grow forth from the soil of tacit awareness. Here the researcher can liberate his attention to life's other matters. But the work continues. The question has everything it needs to grow into its illuminated, creative form. The researcher has merely to house its development and carry it to term, secure in the knowledge that his self-dialogue, awareness, and attention has be thorough and

authentic. (Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith (2002); Rose & Lowenethal (2006); Kapitan (2010).

Disengaging was not a difficult task for me. I had more than enough to preoccupy my attention with school, practicum, work, and relationships. It was a welcome respite to not be researching, or searching at all. Though it was impossible to turn it off completely when for so much time my activities had centred around the generation of data. I enjoyed visualizing the incubation. The image of a seed germinating obviously came to mind but I also saw it as a kind of sculpture, my tacit knowing working away at this raw material; refining its edges and revealing its essence. It occurred to me that this was how therapy worked too: When something new becomes introjected it sets in motion the process of transformation. The tacit dimension churns away at the problem and a new behaviour, perspective, or way of being becomes available.

Phase IV: Illumination

Ah-ha! Rising up through layers of unconscious, the tacit knowledge of the researcher breaks through to the light of conscious day. In the phase of *illumination,* the researcher is in an open, relaxed, and receptive state. He has toiled over the production of the seed, tilled the ground, and now in phase IV he passively awaits the fruits of his labour. *Illumination* often catches the researcher unawares. Having relaxed his focus in the phase of *incubation* he arrives in this new phase naturally, and without intention. By not actively thinking about the subject while the wisdom of tacit knowledge does its work, new themes, perspectives, and dimensions open up on the subject. *Illumination* can expand upon that which was initially intuited, may coalesce disparate themes into a gestalt, or it may modify previously distorted views of the subject. Whatever the case, the

researcher begins his process of being transformed by revelation, creation, and truth (Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002; Rose & Lowenethal, 2006; Kapitan, 2010).

Illumination arrived for me just as promised. I was giving a client a massage (I presently work as a massage therapist), tending to her knots and tensions, when I was struck by a small but personally significant discovery. One of the goals of my research was to identify and synthesize for myself the major themes and/or practices that would help me become an art therapist proficient in the here-and-now. While thoroughly involved in giving the aforementioned massage, these themes began to arrive as if out of thin air. I felt quite divided in my attention since the client's needs took precedence. Nevertheless I wished for a pen and paper to write down what had so clearly arrived at the most inopportune moment. Three themes revealed themselves, resting on the horizon line of my awareness: Embodiment, spontaneity, and mindfulness; a kind of transcreative approach to the here-and-now. These were the keys to the answering my research question.

Phase V: Explication

The critical work of analysis takes place in the phase of *explication.* Having harvested the thematic yields from the breakthrough(s) in *illumination*, the researcher becomes the scientist. Data is poured over again and again. All data, including transcripts of interviews, journals, creative work, and literature are returned to and methodically analysed. The real work of making the findings of the research relatable happens here, as the research must be communicable to others if the work is to be valid. Themes are mined, meanings articulated, and data patterns are discerned. During incubation, the processes of the deep conscious reorganize and the powers of tacit knowing bring to bear

upon the feelings, attunement, and beliefs that the researcher has invested within the question. Thus cultivated, the knowledge transformed emerges to the conscious mind of the researcher during *illumination.* And now in *explication* the researcher must make sense of it all (Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002; Rose & Lowenethal, 2006; Kapitan, 2010).

It could be argued that this entire document is a process of explication. At every stage of this research I have attempted to tease out the emergent themes, relevant passages, and echoic images that have made sense to me on this journey. I have endeavoured to translate the lived experience of this journey into plain text so that it might have some purpose beyond my own development. By way of a more concrete example, the following section presents the data generated from the responses, both in written and creative form, from my colleagues and fellow students of art therapy. By focussing on and repeatedly analysing their contributions I have emerged with a composite portrait of collective experience.

Phase VI: Creative Synthesis

In the final phase of the heuristic journey, meaning is made clear. The form, which this new meaning takes, may vary but as the title of the phase suggests the form is a creative one. Poetry, dance, painting, theatre, and creative writing are some of the ways the creative synthesis is realized. Themes that once confounded and astounded the researcher in their breath of sudden discovery are now familiar guides and companions. The question has come from lived experience, the data has been generated through incubation, illumination has revealed new themes and understanding, all of which have been explicated through intense analysis, and now the researcher is prepared to share his

findings with others. Like illumination, the creative synthesis emerges naturally. It is an extension of the researcher but has resonance with the other (Moustakas, 1990; Sela-Smith, 2002; Rose & Lowenethal, 2006; Kapitan, 2010).

Data Collection, Generation and Analysis

Heuristic research lends itself to nearly every kind of data collection provided it is ethical and refers back to the research question being pursued (Moustakas, 1990, p. 46). In what he calls creative qualitative modes of inquiry, Patton (2002) extends the range of qualitative data to virtually any kind of document that is relevant to the research including artworks, journals, and narratives. West (2001) likens the data collected by a heuristic researcher to that of Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) bricolage, that is "...a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomena under analysis" (p. 130). Bricolage artist Jose Cedillos continues this notion: "Bricolage means to combine odds and ends, fragments, in making something…The power to employ the bricolage creatively rested in perception, being able to spot materials nested in the environment and available" (Cedillos, 1998, as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 401).

For this research I have drawn upon many different sources of data to create my own bricolage. The literature review provided theoretical, practical, and evidence-based guidance. The methodology literature took me further along the examination of and immersion into the heuristic process. Journaling has comprised a regular, often daily practice and a means of recording reflections and ideas as they arrived in verbal form. The generation of artwork has also been an integral component to data generation. The creative responses to my inquiry have given me an arts-based context for exploring the

here-and-now. Generating art responds to the unspoken potential of tacit knowing, the essence of heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990; McNiff, 2008). Art is an ideal vehicle for exploring the rise and dissipation of tacit knowledge. McNiff (2008) explains this relationship in his own practice:

> I am intimately connected to what I make, and this relationship can further understanding, but it is still separate from me. The examination is both heuristic and empirical and thoroughly artistic… There is no better way to understand a particular aspect of creative practice than to research it in this direct way. (p. 31)

In addition to art making, a variety of activities, elaborated and reflected upon later, have fuelled a practice-based research component. These activities are echoed in the practices and concerns of my colleagues who have generously contributed their own heuristic experience of the here-and-now to this research.

The Co-Researchers

As has been previously established, a significant goal of heuristic research, and part of the basis of its validity, is that it finds resonance with others' lived experience (Moustakas, 1990). When broaching my research question "What is the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated in the student of art therapy?" I enlisted the help of my fellow art therapy students. Each colleague has lived experience with the phenomenon I am investigating and thus is a qualified "expert" to assist me in my research. Each student has gone through the same training program as I did, encountering roughly the same pedagogy, professors, and exposure to theory and practice. I should qualify that despite the here-and-now being one of many notions presented in our program, mindfulness does

not comprise a formal aspect of the art therapy training. Traditionally, and at present, Concordia's Art Therapy program is based in a psychodynamic approach with a training focus on the tenets of this theory and an emphasis on the students' countertransferential experience.

As this is my first foray into heuristic research, or any serious research for that matter, I chose to limit the scope of my data generation by asking each co-researcher a series of six questions. Patton (1980, as cited in Moustakas, 1994) outlines three strategies for conducing qualitative interviews. In this case I employed the *standardized open-ended interview*. The interview questions were submitted via email and returned in written form thus avoiding the need for transcription and streamlining the validation process. These are the questions I asked of each co-researcher:

Q1. How do you define the here-and-now in art therapy?

Q2. Based on your answer to question #1, in your training as an art therapist, how do you feel the here-and-now has been cultivated in you?

Q3. How does an awareness of the here-and-now serve you, if at all, in your work as an art therapist?

Q4. What is your personal experience of the here-and-now outside of the art therapy frame?

Q5. What tools, techniques, and/or practices (if any) do you employ to maintain a sense of the here-and-now?

Q6. What, if any, is the relationship between the art and the here-and-now in art therapy?

In all, nine co-researchers provided responses to my questions. I synthesized the data according to methods outlined by Moustakas (1990) with two exceptions. I immersed, and re-immersed into the data until common themes emerged, and I was able to construct a composite profile of the co-researchers responses. However, I should note that Moustakas emphasizes a "timeless immersion," that is, an open-ended time frame until the themes are elucidated. The analysis I did was not elucidated according to any prescribed formula, rather, the data was collected in a pragmatic fashion befitting the scope of this inquiry, and reflected in the analysis process. I also did not create individual profiles of the co-researchers responses but went straight to the composite profile. Again, I feel this strategy is fitting given the limited scope of the data.

Composite Profile

Q1: How do you define the here-and-now in art therapy?

A: The here-and-now in art therapy is a moment-to-moment awareness, mindfulness, and openness. It is the art, the record, created in the moment. It is the ground, the anchor. It is the flow of free-floating awareness of countertransference while being present for the client and the art. It is Yalom speaking of empathy. It is the authenticity and self-reflection of the therapist. It is holistic; mind, body, and spirit. It is the relationship between therapist, client, and artwork. It is the before creation, the during creation, and the after creation; the moment-to-moment-to-moments that are elements of something bigger. It is staying with the process.

Q2: Based on your answer to question #1, in your training as an art therapist, how do you feel the here-and-now has been cultivated in you?

A: The here-and-now has cultivated from learning: from counselling skills, from group and family class, from Yalom, from the materials themselves, but not necessarily explicitly. The here-and-now has been cultivated from relationships, past and present, from interactions inside and outside the class, and from supervision and peer support. The here-and-now has been cultivated on the job, on the fly, in the session, one moment at a time. The here-and-now has been cultivated on my own, slowly, gradually, spontaneously.

Q3. How does an awareness of the here-and-now serve you, if at all, in your work as an art therapist?

A: When my clients are children, I am spontaneous; I stay with their flow. When my client is in crisis, the present moment grounds me so that I may be the ground. When my client is dying, the here-and-now is what we have, all we have. The moment is the microcosm of the lives in the room; the content expands to become new meaning. I can remain authentic while tolerating uncertainty. I can see myself, my limits, my client, the art, all of us arriving together, entering the process and trusting its course.

Q4: What is your personal experience of the here-and-now outside of the art therapy frame?

A: In the world outside, there is richness all around me. I take it in through my senses. Breathe it in. I am grateful and mindful of those who cannot experience what I can. I observe myself in relation to my relationships. I can leave it outside. I can be present in my body when I try. When I dance, move, kick, or just walk. I stop, I breathe, I sit and this reinforces the mindful in the everyday. But this is all hard work.

Q5: What tools, techniques, and/or practices (if any) do you employ to maintain a sense of the here-and-now?

A: I make art, dance, I am physical, and stay connected with my environment. I am aware of my body and the space around me. I eat, drink, and try to be merry. I downward dog and upward brushstroke. I visualize and ritualize. I meditate. I search for nature and take comfort in her company. I indulge my relationships. I feel gratitude. I clear the space. I am spontaneous. And all the while I breathe.

Q6: What, if any, is the relationship between the art and the here-and-now in art therapy?

A: Art making is holistic; mind, body, and spirit. Art is alive in the moment and connects me with its creator. It responds to the spontaneous and gives it containment. It is immersive while offering externalization right in the here-and-now. It engages the physical and the sensory, which brings bodily presentness. It allows for distance and reflection the moment after, the next here-and-now. It gives birth to new meanings. When a mark is made, the present is engaged, the unconscious is made conscious. Art is the creative moment, the voice of the present. Art records in real-time. Art is the breath.

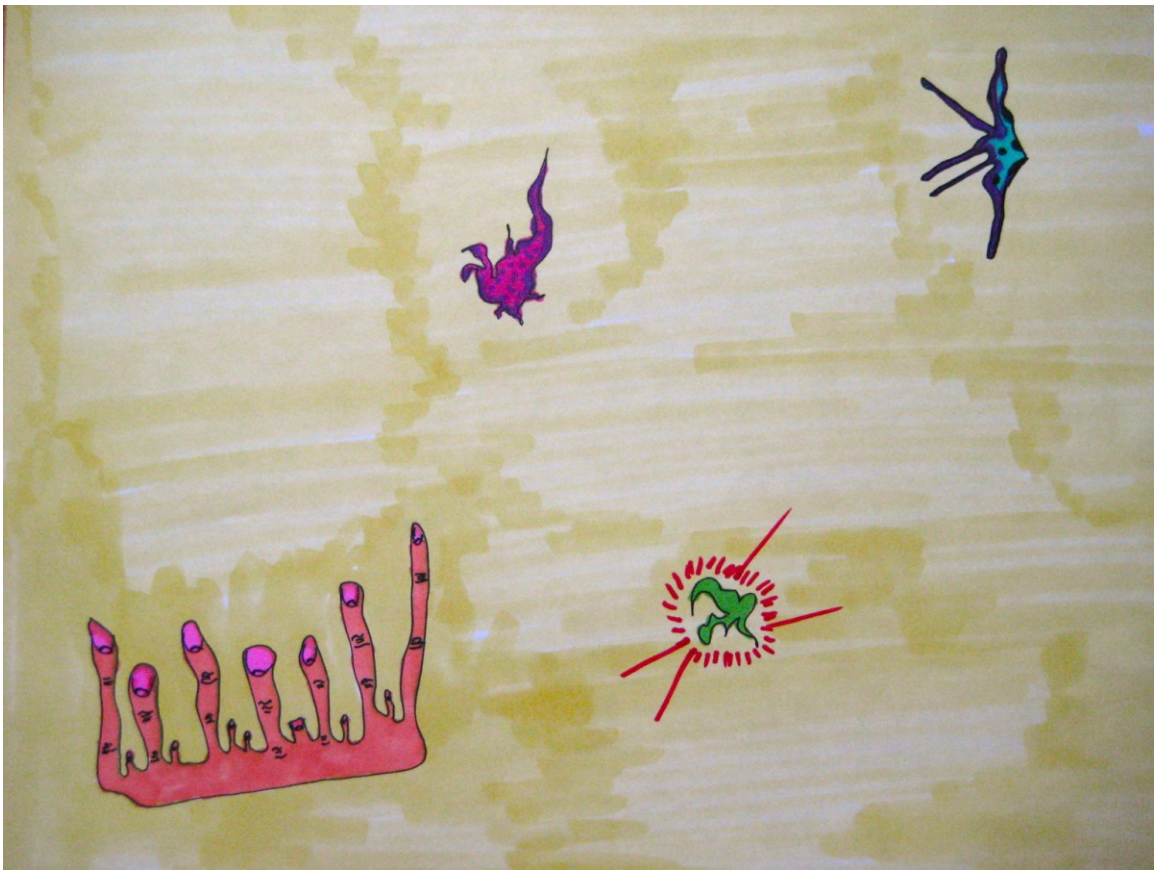
I also asked each co-researcher to make a creative response following the interview questions. Given that I am researching the here-and-now of art therapy I felt the inclusion of artwork would be a valuable, if not essential, part of the data contribution from my co-researchers. I immediately noticed the range of media my co-researchers used to represent their experience. Referring back to the Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC) (Hinz, 2009), there is evidence of several kinds of creative media. The ETC organizes media according to its inherent qualities, example: fluid media may afford the healing function of the release of energy or tension (Hinz). Remarkably, my co-

researchers have provided artwork that run the gamut of the ETC: cognitive, perceptual, symbolic, kinesthetic, dry, fluid, gestural, mandala-esque, spontaneous, calculated, fine-lined, and use several media such as paint, pencil, marker, clay, ink, photography, and even digital - this variety of practices and processes speaks to the myriad ways of describing and feeling about the here-and-now and art therapy.

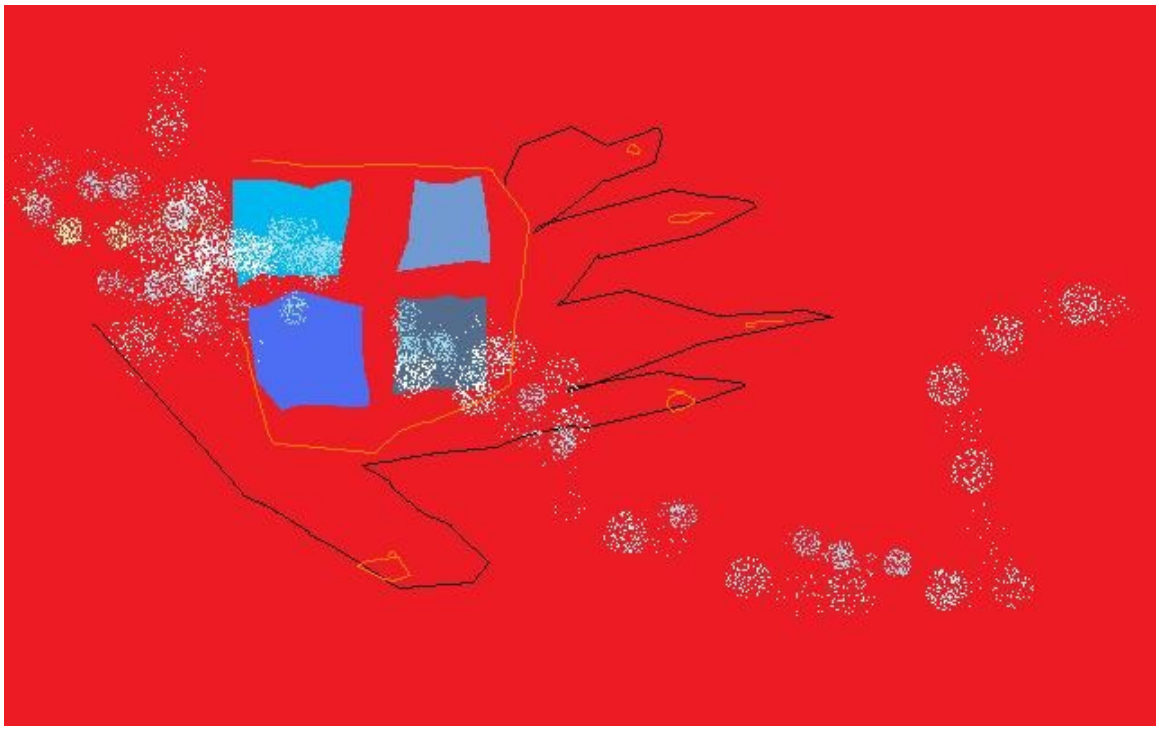
Creative Responses

As with their written contributions, I perceive there to be several visual themes that emerge from my co-researchers collective artwork. The hand appears and re-appears, so often the symbol of holding but also of creation. The amorphous fluid forms call to mind the spontaneity of gesture and also the potential for transformation. There is the body: solid, present, breathing. There is also the notion of waiting, suspension, and the empty chair charged with supporting the frame. There is the warmth of presence felt and presence shared. Again, mindfulness, embodiment, and spontaneity re-emerge.

Artwork by art therapy student Amy

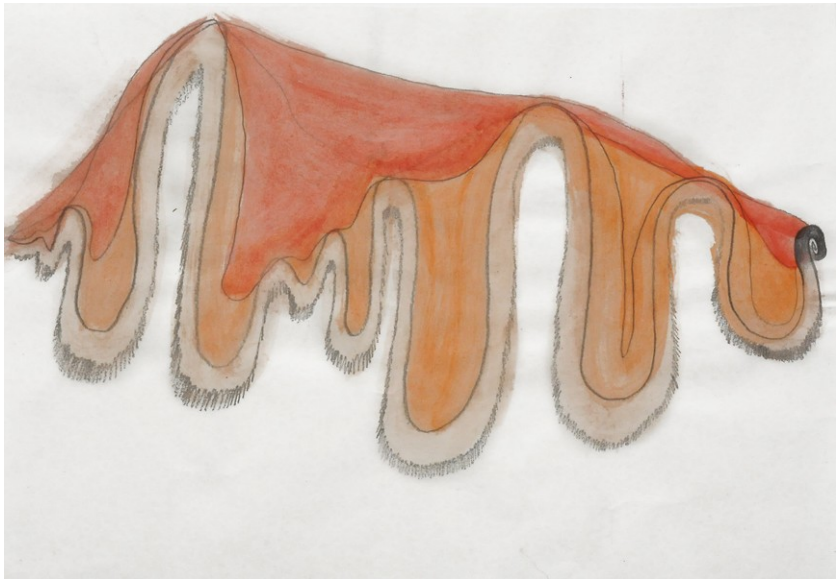


Artwork by art therapy student Jennifer

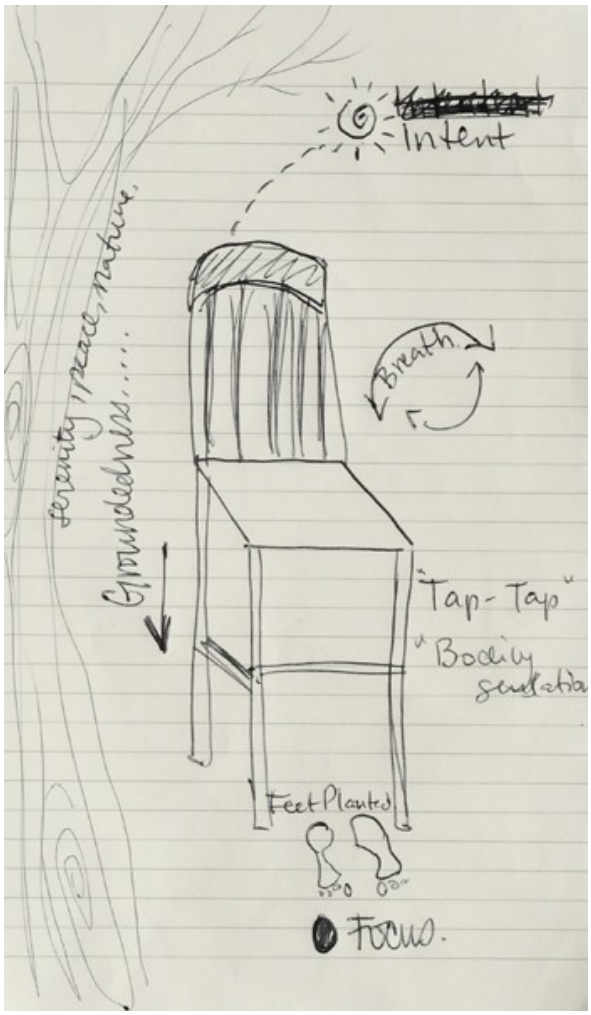


Artwork by art therapy student Sarah

Artwork by art therapy student Grace-Ann

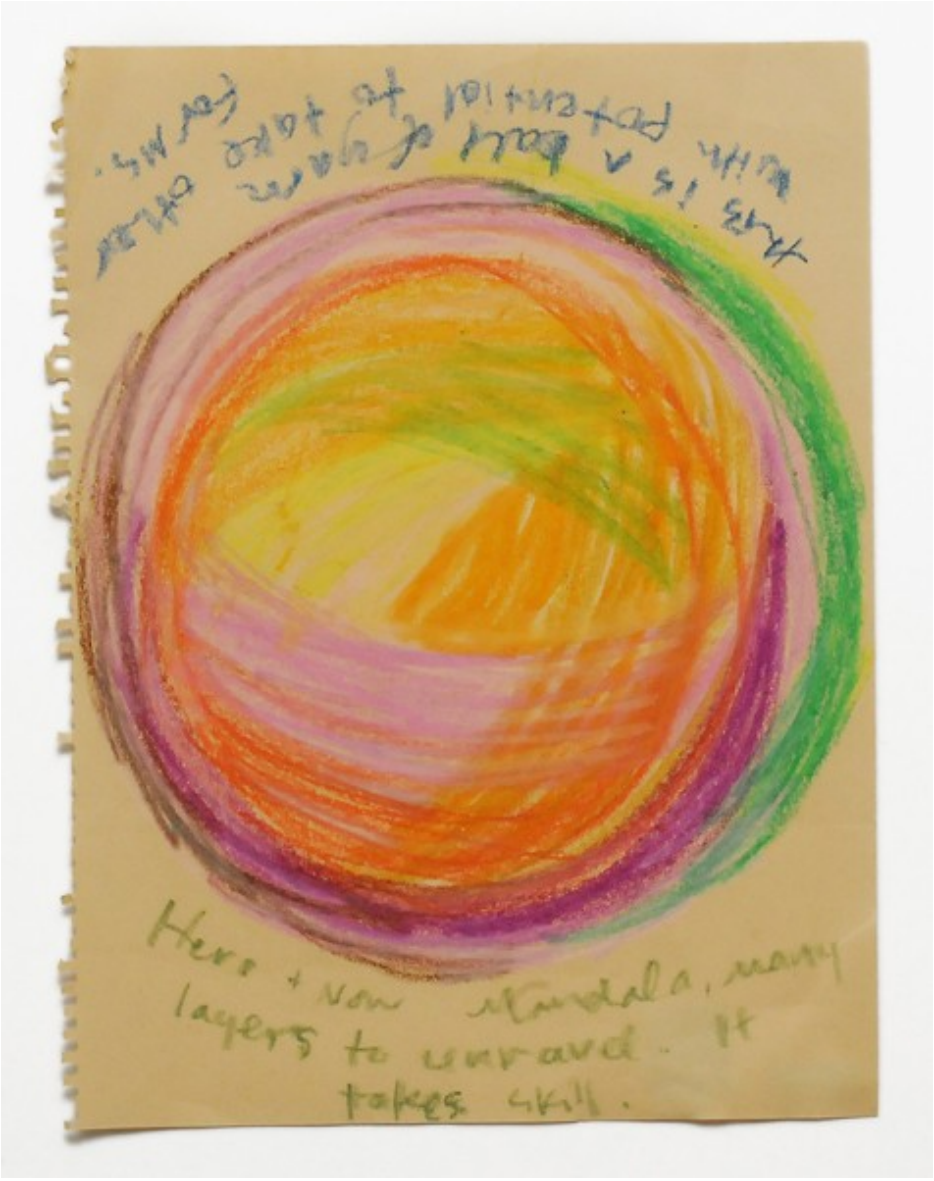


Artwork by art therapy student Cynthia



Artwork by art therapy student Julie

Artwork by art therapy student Ennaea



Artwork by art therapy student Ainslie

Artwork by art therapy student Rashmi

Personal Data Generation

A funny thing happened on the way to the present moment…

-S. Legari

All around me at this moment are the evidence of this heuristic journey. Stacks of books with colourful tongues of protruding post-it notes stand quietly in the corner, their pages having been mined for rich quotations and peer-reviewed relevance. The edge of my battered journal is discoloured and its cover shows the wear of several hundred kilometres of travel. My paint supplies are near-drained and my palette looks like a relief map of some bizarre and unsettled land. The artworks of my colleagues stand in a neat pile, a quiet record of lived experience. This is the bricolage that has formed a major part of this research. The other part is more ephemeral: it is the reflection on the practices that have informed every stage of this inquiry, from *initial engagement* to *creative synthesis*. What is the process by which the here-and-now is cultivated in the student of art therapy? Practice.

What are the practices that have cultivated a sense of the here-and-now in me? Learning and practicing mindfulness is one. There are numerous ways that mindfulness has been described in this document: presence, awareness, non-attachment, attunement. But because mindfulness is experiential, it always seems to defy verbal explanation; it must be experienced to be grasped. In my research, mindful practice has taken on a variety of forms. Some of these have been already described in the composite profile of my colleagues' responses: the encounter with the moment of the everyday; the feeling of gratitude; stopping, and breathing. For me, mindfulness has also taken the traditional form of a sitting practice, of silent observation of the breath and the seemingly relentless

activity of the mind. I find this is especially good practice for cultivating the witnessing function prevalent in art therapy. Specifically, it serves a clearing function wherein by observing my own mind, and the things it is gnawing away at, I can allow for the dissipation of this chatter, or at least an awareness of it, and create space for the expressions and concerns of my clients. But I struggle with sitting, as many do, and I likely always will.

The here-and-now has also been cultivated through different forms of embodied practice. Movement-based or action meditation has long been an aspect of my life, yet I was not completely aware its foundational influence until this research. Martial arts are one such activity. Whether through the repetitive practice of forms, breathing exercises, or actual combat, a primary goal of martial arts is presence in action. I can touch this state from time to time when I train regularly, and train hard. My current practice is a traditional form of kung fu known as Shaolin White Crane (Bernard, 2003). Many of its movements and strikes come from the gestures of the elegant and deft bird. And when I am focused in my practice I can feel the wing within the strength of my arm. But martial arts are also the creative expression of self. To illustrate, I defer to the sage words of Sifu Bruce Lee, a personal hero of mine since adolescence, who explains the relationship of martial arts to mindful practice, and touches upon intersubjective dynamics, existentialism, and even Winnicott's (1960) notion of the "true self," the self born of creativity and spontaneity:

> Knowledge in martial arts actually means self-knowledge. A martial artist has to take responsibility for himself and accept the consequences of his own doing. The understanding…is through personal feeling from movement to movement in the

> mirror of the relationship and not through a process of isolation. To be is to be related. To isolate is death. To me, ultimately, martial arts means honestly expressing yourself. It has always been very easy for me to put on a show…I can make all kinds of phoney things...But to experience oneself honestly, not lying to oneself, and to express myself honestly, now that is very hard to do. (Bruce Li, 1971)

In addition to being a mindful practice in action, martial arts also employs the notions of embodiment, spontaneity, and encounter. When practiced from the frame of the playspace, these notions also find a home in the principles of Developmental Transformations (DvT) (Johnson, 2005). I began regular training in DvT in September of 2010 and went on to complete an independent study in the method in the spring of 2011. I was immediately drawn to the practice of DvT. It made sense to me, at first in a way that I couldn't explain (perhaps tacitly), and was able to articulate once I learned more of its guiding principles. Primarily, the idea is that the practice of spontaneity in the playspace can begin to affect everyday life through the creation of option and difference. In the playspace I am able to play with the parts of myself that are stuck and repetitive, and play with them in a way that involves encountering others in their own embodied, spontaneous expressions. Through these encounters, and with the guidance of the leader, I begin to build new ways of being around old ways of reacting.

This is the mechanism of transformation. Introducing difference, over and over until difference is implanted, internalized, introjected, and then is sent up for accommodation, sent up to become a new part of how I meet the world, with just a touch more spontaneity, a touch more in my body, and a touch more mindfully. There is no

arrival, but there is always option. And that pause, that second thought, is what becomes available. But it takes practice. What I have begun to notice is a slight effortlessness in being reminded that option exists. The more I have played the more option has become a part of the moment. Slowly, progressively, I have witnessed this sense of spontaneity begin to leak out into the real world. Where before I would respond to a situation with stock habit I now find, without too much effort, the presence of options and even playfulness. This has created for me a healthier state of relation both inside my work as an art therapist and in the relationships in the rest of my life.

Continuing with the notion of embodiment, I have found that my practice as a massage therapist has taught me many valuable lessons on the corporeality of life experience, the wisdom of the body, and the essentiality of human touch. I have had the privilege of accompanying clients though a multitude of problems: from simple muscular pain, to work-related stress, to sickness, depression, grief, or the basic need for someone else to help shoulder the burden of living in a body, if only for ninety minutes. In each case I meet my client through the landscape of their knotted tissues and rigid musculature. In silence, I am given access to their pains and offer in return what I can in the form of relief. In best cases the client emerges transformed, if only temporarily. Their eyes are soft, their shoulders drop, and sometimes there are reports of renewed energy and a sense of peace. All this comes to pass through touch of varying qualities that remind me of embodied creative expression: hard, soft, gentle, flowing, sustained, slow, long, repetitive, and so on.

Making art became an essential activity in the creation of this research. There were times, especially during the literature review, that I felt such a strong urge to make a

mark that it was all I could do not to drop everything and break out the paints (eventually I had no choice.) Touching this sense of urgency, of the need for release through art making was such an important feeling for me to encounter. Spurred on by McNiff's (1998) words and my own sense of discovery, I was able to get inside the creative process and trust it in a way I never have before. This happened most effectively for me through painting. Painting has always felt to me like a high art, something that I was not meant to do let alone let others see. Visceral and active, painting was the forbidden fruit of the fine arts that I have always coveted and now finally allowed myself to savour. It could have been any medium, but for me it was paint. The paintings, which are included in the creative synthesis of this document, stand as a record of process; of mindful art making. Each painting was begun and completed in a single session in which I actively followed nothing but feeling, and followed it through until the painting told me to stop. This encounter with my own creative uncertainty has set in motion a practice that, at the time of this writing, is only gaining momentum.

The Rolleicord is a vintage twin-lens medium-format camera. It is a beautiful machine: a black, metal box with a top view ground glass that reflects the inverted world to the photographer. It shoots 12 exposures on 120 film, which you can still find, remarkably, in the digital age. Armed with the delicate apparatus, I embarked on a creative process with the intent to experience, photographically, my pillars of the here-and-now: mindfulness, embodiment, and spontaneity. To accomplish this, I used the model of mindful art making described by John Daido Loori (2004) in *The Zen of Creativity*. The method is reminiscent of Authentic Movement wherein the photographer waits to be moved by the scene. There is no agenda, no photo series being built, just an

in-the-moment experience of reflecting myself in the world, what Robert Frank refers to as "the humanity of the moment" (as cited in Rosenblum, 2008, p. 516). Loori frames the experience with a meditation preceding the photography and a gesture of gratitude following the shot. I ascribed to these principles as I moved through the land and cityscapes. My camera was the perfect companion on these outings as it forced me to engage my whole attention and body in the composition; swaying gently from left to right, up and down, until the horizon rested gently, the focus was just so and then…click.

My experience as a student of art therapy is both the impetus of this research and the central practice to which I am attempting to give personal form through this investigation. Indeed, I could easily write an entire thesis on my training in art therapy and hopefully my colleagues and I have captured and related some of the texture of this experience. Art therapy is a practice but one so diverse and individualised that it cannot be summed up, and in embarking on this heuristic research I am attempting to create my own art therapy practice out of the bricolage this journey has produced. When I combine the literature, the methodology, and my co-researchers' data with my own data, the same three themes re-emerge that came to me during the *illumination phase*: mindfulness, embodiment, and spontaneity. These are not separate notions per say, and one does not begin where another ends. Each is a part of a whole. Rather than forming a blueprint, they are the practices that make sense to me and help to answer my research question.

Creative Synthesis

As was illustrated in the heuristic phases section of this document, the creative synthesis is the clarification of meaning(s) elucidated through creative form. In my case, I have chosen to include three creative components to illustrate the meanings I have

harvested. The first is a narrative response to the data from my co-researchers. Within this narrative I have attempted to capture the breadth of the shared experience of becoming an art therapist and the themes generated from their responses to the here-and-now. I see as much of my own experience in this story as theirs. The second component is a photographic one, the evidence of my "authentic," here-and-now photographic experiences. The third and final component is the paintings. The inclusion of the paintings is at once a record of the creative journey I have travelled and a testament to the essentiality of process; each piece holds the feelings I followed and trusted in the process of their creation, a trace of my "sustained encounters with uncertainty" (McNiff, 1998).

It's Called Paying Attention Because it Costs Something

I'm awake. It is early morning. Unconscious to conscious. I check my body; it's still there but not quite ready. I want to leave enough time to do the things that are essential, before the work of the day begins. But where is the time? "Have a sit," I say to myself. I know this is helpful and the cushion is right over there waiting. No, stretch first I think. Coffee: warm, reassuring. There's my brain. But where is the time? It's here. Slow down, this time belongs to me.

On my way. Images arrive like flash cards. Fractions of narratives leap off my mind's page. How will she be today? Last week…she was so brave. Was I any help at all? The images just kept coming and coming. What will she need today? What can I bring?

The room. Lights on. Retrieve the supplies. There are only a few minutes before she'll arrive. But wait. Consider the materials. Look at them. Thank them. These are my comrades. The crisp, white paper, toothed and fresh. The paints: crimson, umber, ochre, titanium, black. Pastel dust like foreign spices. Wooden pencils rumble in a logjam. It's ready. Everything is ready and quiet and ready. The big hand reaches its destination and I go to the door. Wait, slow down. Breathe. The room is open. I'm open. She comes in.

Sometimes it's the fatigue. The drag of a long, heavy coat that seems to dog me. And I have to fight my way back to this…moment. I have to keep arriving and arriving. It's called paying attention because it costs something. I remember my feet and push them into the ground as if I can will myself to grow roots. I say each word she says back to

myself in my head. Attention, awareness, presence, and empathy. Attention, awareness, presence, and empathy. And here it comes - soaring, searing, and searching up. Whose feelings are these? Anger, despair, joy, restlessness. I try to hang each of them on hooks, watch them, mine them. I move closer to the pencil, committing everything I can to memory. My whole body is engaged, flexed, and yet I'm virtually motionless. Where is the breath? I tell myself, just stay with the art. The art is the breath.

But today is different. I'm on. And the arrival is right here and at hand, natural. I'm not reaching. And every gesture she makes and word she says fills up more and more of the room until every square inch is available to her. And I've got it. I've got the room. I'm right here, and here, and here, and here. And now. And the more now I become the more now she seems. And every stroke on the page brings the next moment to life. And together the three of us dance. One, two, three, one, two, three, one, two, three. Breathe.

On my way home the park stops me. The shadows are long and the light is generous. I watch my feet, one in front of the other. Shuffling along to the song in my head. A familiar path that I'm happy to meet again. This time belongs to me.

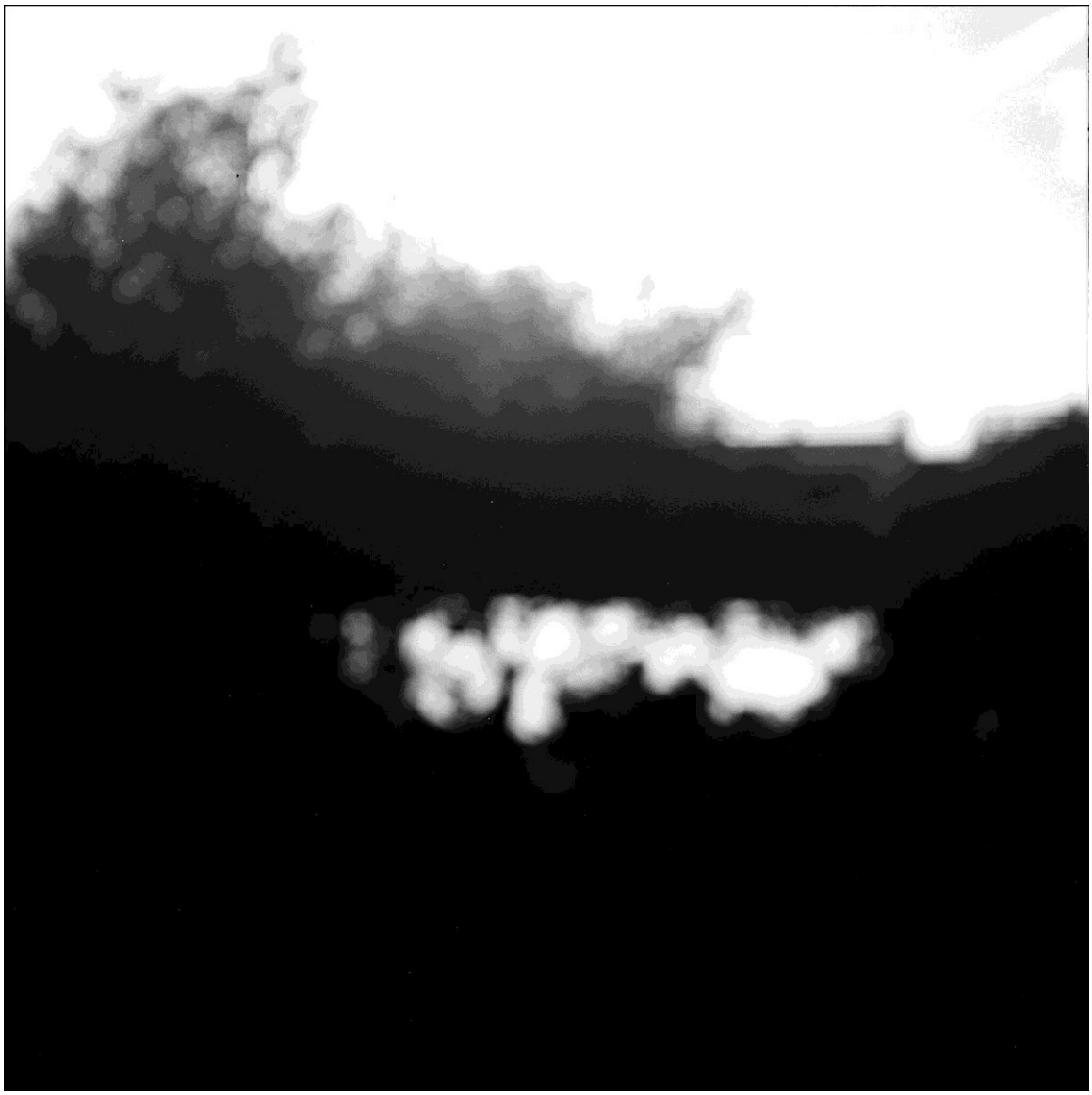
Photograph I

Photograph II

Photograph III

Photograph IV

Photograph V



Photograph VI

Painting I

Painting II

Painting III

Painting IV

Painting V

Painting VI

Validity

The validity of heuristic research is measured by the story that is finally told. Does it accurately, truthfully, and authentically represent the experience of the researcher? Does it resonate with the other? As the sole voyageur on this heuristic journey, the question of validity ultimately rests in my hands. As Moustakas (1990) explains:

> The question of validity is one of meaning: Does the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one's own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience? This judgment is made by the primary researcher. (p. 32)

Methodically, heuristic research offers few guidelines for establishing validity. There is a sense of "you'll know it when you see it." True, one aspect of heuristic validity rests in the data and the capacity of the researcher to return to it successively and thoroughly to verify and glean significance, essence, and meaning. This process also includes returning to the participants to verify the accuracy of their statements and for clarification of shared meaning (Moustakas, 1990). Sela-Smith (2002) claims that validity of the method is established through the complete surrender of the researcher to the question, and when and if the creative synthesis is born of an authentic transformation derived from tacit knowing. And, Rose and Lowenthal (2006) maintain that the findings in the report are made legitimate by the researcher who has made transparent his interest and experience with the phenomenon.

To establish the validity of this research I have adhered to the guidelines established by Moustakas (1990). I believe the depiction I present of the phenomenon to

be an authentic representation of an exhaustive (and at times exhausting) journey of self-awareness. I have faithfully rendered the experience of my co-researchers to the best of my ability and have returned to them with the fruits of my explication for verification of accuracy. I judge this research to be valid. Ultimately, it will depend on the capacity of this document and the creative synthesis to resonate with others for this validity to find truth beyond my estimation.

Future Research

A major goal of my research is that it be replicable, relevant, and relatable. As McNiff (2008) explains: "Since artistic expression is essentially heuristic, introspective, and deeply personal, there needs to be a complementary focus in art-based research on how the work can be of use to others and how it connects to practices in the discipline" (p. 34). One possible outcome of my research will be a framework for other trainees to explore the here-and-now as a vehicle for therapeutic grounding and potential transformation. The feeling of flying without a net might just be tempered by the availability of the present moment as a therapeutic guide. Furthermore, a heuristic framework can be employed in the curriculum of creative arts therapy research training. The stages of heuristic inquiry lend themselves perfectly to this. I have witnessed first-hand the stress and toil of my colleagues as they search exhaustedly for their research focus, a process that might be eased with a heuristically-phased program.

Conclusion

I could feel the day offering itself to me,
and I wanted nothing more
than to be in the moment-but which moment?
Not that one, or that one, or that one,
or any of those that were scuttling by
seemed perfectly right for me.
Plus, I was too knotted up with questions
about the past and his tall, evasive sister, the future.

-Billy Collins, *In the Moment*

At first I thought is was my all-too-common inability to meditate with any kind of regular dedication as the impetus for this journey. I assumed that I had chosen the here-and-now, or rather it had chosen me, because I was meant to learn the value of a sitting practice so that I might bring it to bear in my work as an art therapist. I imagined the here-and-now would become graspable, palpable even. I felt that I understood the here-and-now conceptually enough; it was only a matter of filling in the steps. But there is something inherently backwards about this notion, like meditating really hard so that I might become enlightened before the week is out. What I discovered was that the road to the here-and-now was best travelled from multiple points of departure. A major point of departure was the art itself.

Not long into my heuristic journey I realized the need to encounter myself through art making, and not just producing art as data but also leaning into the unknown of the creative process. It wasn't until I more fully, and deeply, explored an embodied and spontaneous practice with art that I was able to begin getting out of my head in into the present moment of creativity. I needed to learn to dance with art. I had never abandoned myself to the unknown of creative work, to the "sustained encounters with uncertainty" (McNiff, 1998, p. 23). And this, I believe without equal, is the process by

which the here-and-now is cultivated in *this* student of art therapy. I cannot fully accompany my clients to a place I have not properly travelled myself. I know the terrain, I can find it on a map, but I had not allowed myself to get lost. Through many practices, but principally DvT and the artwork created during this journey, I believe I now have a sense of this encounter with groundlessness.

I now believe that it all comes down to a question of practice. What is practiced is what gets cultivated. As Stern (2009) explained, change is a product of experience not discussion. Heuristic research attests, transformation comes through lived experience and clearly there are any number of ways that a young therapist can cultivate mindful attunement, can access the here-and-now. But as Keeney (2009) writes, "There is no easy path to becoming therapeutic" (p. 74). I would argue that there are a few essential conditions that support the greatest opportunity for transformation leading to what Kabat-Zinn (2005) calls *effortless mindfulness*. One condition is that practice must be holistic, that is, it addresses the mind, body, and spirit (or what I have now rephrased as mindful, embodied, and spontaneous practice.) Another condition is that practice must be creative. As a student art therapist, I have witnessed, many times, what I perceived to be the transformative power of art in therapy. I believe that is it essential for creative arts therapists to know this power first hand. As Irwin (1986, as cited in Morin, 2008) writes:

> If I were the therapeutic traveller, I know I would want a guide who had made the trip before, one who would not be afraid of the unknown, for a guide who had been a voyager before would be far better prepared than one who had only studied maps and books. (pp. 16-17)

Maintaining a personal creative practice is essential to our mental health and our personal and professional development. The final condition would be for training to support the experiential cultivation of a mindful, embodied, and spontaneous practice for its students. As students of art therapy we are expected to hit the ground running as novice clinicians and graduate students. I do not suggest either de-emphasizing theory or a blurring of the line between therapy and classroom. What I mean is the placing of an equal emphasis on experiential learning, or "practice-based education," as academic teaching.

I have sensed all along that when I arrived at the end of this research project I would really be at the beginning of something new; that the elucidated meanings would give me a place to begin my own transformed sense of practice. What I have discovered through practice is that the here-and-now in art therapy is a capacity to attune to the art expression as it comes into being, to feel the breath of the brush as it were, the aliveness of the creative act in the moment. This is not a theory, stance, technique, or intervention, but a way of being in the room, in the frame, in the moment, with the client. It is not only helping the client to appreciate the here-and-now of their experience. It is not only breathing techniques or softly spoken reflections of verbal reports. It is the living presence of creativity. The therapist must be a part of the creative momentum that helps set transformation in motion, to be neither the dance instructor nor the partner, but an agent of the dance itself. Not just present but creatively present.

• Thank you for your attention •

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