It’s hard to believe the 2015 is here. We have accomplished a great deal in 2014. We look forward to a more productive year in 2015. Your participation and membership in HKAAT are important to the success of all the events and development of the association. So I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new members and thank you all old members’ long-term support.

In our eleventh AGM, we have elected a new body of officers in the committee. HKAAT welcomes Kit-Ping, Wong to join us (Krisdean Law, Ida Ng, Hoilam Tang, Tristan Chan, May Chan and myself). HKAAT believes that through our joint efforts, we can build a well-recognised Art Therapy professional identity & establish links with allied professionals to activate our vision, so that more in the community can benefit from art therapy.

In June 2014, HKAAT has its first art exhibition of members, Artvolution. It was my first art exhibition with HKAAT and it was wonderful to see firsthand all of the excitement and passion that you all have for the art exhibition and for HKAAT. Thank you again to all the exhibitors, volunteers, attendees, speakers, guests, & committee members who made the exhibition a huge success. Creative feedback from audience in the interactive zone has made a memorable exhibition experience for us.

In the second half of 2014, we were very lucky to meet with a renowned art therapist, Dr Chris Wood in the Meet the Art Therapists event. It was such a fruitful and enjoyable evening to learn about Dr Wood’s work and perspective on the role of art therapy in mental health profession and in the United Kingdom. Registered Art Psychotherapist, Ms Wang, Hua-Wen also shared her work in hospice palliative care in Taiwan. Her work demonstrates the healing power of art & deeply touched our members. Through these meetings, we were able to have a snapshot of art therapy practice in the UK and Taiwan. We will continue to invite local and overseas art therapists to our Meet the Art Therapists event to broaden our view on art therapy profession.

Finally I am grateful for all the volunteers who work tirelessly on committee and coordinate delivery of events and services to our members and the public. Your work and dedication continue to drive the association forward. I hope you enjoy this newsletter with all the events we have hosted. We look forward to seeing you again in our coming events.

Looking forward to a great year.

Sarah Tong
轉瞬間又踏入了 2015 年，2014 年裡我們完成多項的活動，展望 2015 將會更加豐盛。你們的加入成為本會會員對香港藝術療師協會是非常重要，你們的參與使我們舉辦的活動得以成功，並幫助本會的發展。在此我衷心感謝舊會員們的長期支持及歡迎新的會員。

在第十一屆的會員大會裡，會員們選舉了新屆的委員會成員，我在此代表香港藝術治療師協會歡迎黃潔冰女士加入我們的委員會(委員: Ida Ng, 羅嘉慧, 鄧海琳, 陳雅姿, 陳小薇及本人)。我們將會盡我們最大的努力去為藝術治療建立專業的身份，及與其他心理服務專業聯系，使更多的人能受惠於藝術治療及達成本會的願景。

於 2014 年 6 月，本會舉行了第一次的會員創作品展覽 Artvolution，這是我參與香港藝術治療師協會的第一次展覽，我親身體會了你們對是次展覽及本會的熱烈支持和擁護，令我感到十分感動。藉此機會，我再次感謝所有參展會員、義工、嘉賓、參觀者及籌委會會員的努力付出，使展覽得到空前的成功，而參觀者在互動區留下的充滿創意的回饋，是我們美好回憶的印記。

在 2014 年的下半年裡，我們更非常幸運的邀請了著名的藝術治療師 Dr Chris Wood 來到藝術聊天，她分享了她在英國的藝術治療工作，我們共渡了一個愉快又豐富的晚上。另外，台灣藝術治療師王華雯也來到藝術聊天，分享她在安寧病房的工作，令我們看到藝術創作的巨大治療力量，她的專業與愛心深深感動了參加者。這些工作坊使我對香港以外地方的藝術治療專業增加了多一點認識，我們將會繼續邀請本地及外國的藝術治療師來與我們分享經驗，以豐富我們對當今藝術治療專業的知識。

感謝會員們參與了 2014 年 3 月的社區義務活動，與一群長者共同作畫 circle painting，在快將來臨的 2 月，我們將會與智障成年人共同作畫。因為多種原因而停辦了的藝術治療基礎課程，希望能在 2015 年再次舉行。以上的各項活動詳情，請留意本會網頁或電郵中的宣佈。

最後，我衷心感謝會員義工們的無私付出時間和精力，參與委員會的工作及籌辦各項活動，服務所有會員及公眾，使本會能不斷地向前發展。希望在 2015 的活動中與大家再見面。

祝 大家新年進步！

唐明敏
When we look for books on art therapy, we inevitably need to search for the foreign references. Gracefully, in 2014, Mr KK Lai, a Canadian Trained & Registered Art Therapist, Pastor and Honorary Lecturer who is practicing and teaching in HK, has added an additional resource in the field of art therapy for Hong Kong and the Chinese Community.

*The Marginal Center* (澄心藝術治療) is probably one of the first Chinese books published in Hong Kong that is totally dedicated on art therapy, mindfulness, and theological counseling. In the first part of the *The Marginal Center* (澄心藝術治療), Mr Lai gives us a comprehensive idea on what art therapy is about and how “art” becomes a verb and a key player in therapy.

In the second part, Mr Lai invited us and his students to actively interact, reflect, and respond to our very own images in order to gain meanings and insights from them. Unlike those self-claimed art therapy workbooks that misled the public and portrayed art therapist as a fortuneteller who only analyze and interpret the “hidden” message of the client’s art images. Mr Lai used the mother-and-child relationship as a metaphor to describe the relationship between artist-client and their artworks. A mother doesn’t necessary understand everything about their children unless she is attentive, having a dialogue, and interacting with them. Mr Lai invited his students to share how to have a dialogue with their own creation with full illustration so it helps the readers to have a nice overview on how to interact with our art in order to achieve the therapeutic outcome.

In the last part of the book, Mr Lai explored how the creative process in art making helped him experience more on the love of God and God’s Creation. Through the book, Mr Lai used simple words, pictures, and his faith to help the readers to understand how art therapy can work in any individual life. For those who are interested in art therapy, this book can give you a better introduction on how art therapy works.

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**Book Review:**

*The Marginal Center* (澄心藝術治療)

**Author:** 黎家傑 (K K Lai), RCAT  
**ISBN:** 9789881610164  
**Reviewed by HoiLam Tang, ATR**
Differences and the common pulse

I have had the unique opportunity to support and witness the artistic expressions of people from throughout the world for over forty years. It is generally assumed that creative expression through the arts with groups I have engaged in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Oceania will involve distinct regional and cultural differences. My experience witnessing continuities across cultures offers a counterpoint. As a researcher-practitioner who has been living a global spectrum of artistic experience, I have observed two different and complementary threads---infinite individual differences of people and artistic phenomena, together with universal or transcultural dimensions.

In various settings where I have encouraged spontaneous expression with arts therapists and artists as well as children and people in therapeutic settings, there have been significant differences in artistic expressions but they are related to individual styles and interests and not cultural, regional, or national factors. Of course language, customs, personal backgrounds, beliefs, and other shared or disparate cultural features distinguish people within the group settings where I work but I find consistently that these factors are transcended when we begin to engage the arts. The one-sided emphasis on differences that we see today in discussions about culture, motivated I believe by efforts to include, understand, and value people has resulted in abandonment of attention to transcultural phenomena, particularly evident in the arts, and arguably one of their greatest assets in furthering well-being and human understanding.

In some of the first writings on cultural aspects of the arts in therapy (1979, 1981, 1984), I identified continuities in the use of creative expression for healing purposes within indigenous communities throughout the world and connections to current practice. I emphasized (1984) how psychotherapy is itself a distinct culture (in relation to the aspect of culture involving shared beliefs) containing many cultures and paradigms within it, all of which have to be considered in engaging people who may be entering the process from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and worldviews. My experience with people throughout the world suggests that human differences are endless. Cultural sensitivity is thus essential to every move we make and differences are recognized and respected as a fundamental quality of being human and part of any community committed to a shared purpose. The differences exist across cultural backgrounds and within them, in the cultures within cultures, and within the complexity of individual persons and the wide-ranging styles of therapists and leaders, all of which are consistent with the infinite variations of expression within the arts. I often feel closer to colleagues in Hong Kong than others here in United States based on attunement to differences together with recognition of “similarities and cross-fertilization between cultures” (Kalmanowitz, et al., 2012, p. 26).

When speaking about these questions in the early 1970s to my mentor Rudolf Arnheim, who became the world’s pre-eminent authority on the psychology of art after being forced to leave his native Germany in the 1930s, he put his finger on his wrist and said, “We have a common pulse.” This has also been the bedrock reality of my experience working with other people and it conflicts with efforts, albeit
well-meaning to place people into categories of culture designated according to a particular ideological perspective, not inconsistent with the deeply ingrained tendency to label exhibited by various psychological theories. Culture is something we create; it is ever changing and transforming itself like art through both criticism and new visions.

Within art therapy today “cultural competency” standards make no mention of transcultural features of the art therapy experience (AATA, 2015). The field of mandalas, archetypal imagery, symbols, artistic knowing, and visual communication that is increasing becoming a “citizen of the world,” overlooks how the empirical art making process and the formative qualities of media tend to cross-over the often arbitrary boundaries of culture that do not even begin to engage the multiple dimensions of the idea of culture as shared values, an ongoing process of creation, and dare I suggest, universal artistic practice. The healing aspects of the arts in my group studios are connected to participating in these common currents of creative expression while having the freedom and support to engage them in the most personal ways, without judgment or expectations, and also feeling the satisfaction that comes from contributing to something that carries us all.

Empirical transcultural features

As demonstrated in my effort to further understanding of the uniqueness of each person’s expression in my forthcoming Imagination in Action (Shambhala Publications, August 2015), no single element in nature is exactly the same. As I have discovered, even when repeating what appears to be an identical gesture in drawing, painting, moving with the body, or vocalizing a sound, the same is never the same. Differences appear in all levels of nature and human experience, both within and across groups as mentioned above. Yet the arts do empirically communicate across cultures in both expression and perception through the senses, elemental gestures, and media that do not require the linguistic and cultural orientations and knowledge needed to communicate through verbal discourse that as always maintains its hegemony on ideas, even within the arts.

For example, persons making a large circular gesture with both arms in a similar tempo will not significantly vary in different parts of the world. The same applies to a child drawing a circle and then dividing it with radial lines meeting in the center. The empirical features of media and physical gestures further universality. The qualities of a brush, paint, and surface are similarly going to have significant influences on the kinds of expression made with them.

In my studio groups where I encourage simple movements and gestures in painting, dance, vocalization, rhythm, and performance, it is clear that approaches emphasizing these fundamentals of expression are more likely to transcend cultural concepts and genre since they are based in common human and material features—like breath and concentration on the present moment in contemplative practice.

Nevertheless, even with these elemental approaches encouraging repetition and responding spontaneously and in unplanned ways to preceding gestures, commonalities of expression are complemented by the inevitable individual differences and styles that emerge as described above in keeping with the dynamics of change and variation in nature.
In countries where I have worked with many thousands of people over the years I have found that groups will show the same tendencies as individuals in expressing both universal and endlessly different qualities. Groups within or across regions of the world will sometimes vary in how they express fundamental human gestures. Like individuals, they have characters and personalities that differ in relation to the interaction of the particular elements within them. When I see one of my group studios immediately working in more spontaneous or cohesive ways, I ask was there a particular thing that I might have said or done to generate this response. Something different about my tone? Was it more relaxed or inviting? Or was it simply chance, something unique to a particular composition of people. Or perhaps a mix of both?

I cannot say that groups in one country are significantly different than those in other regions when it comes to empirical features of artistic expression although again there are always differences---some will tap into the creative process immediately but may resist later before re-engaging, others build more gradually, and so forth. I observe how in some countries participants might be more outspoken whereas in other parts of the world I have to do more to encourage responses and egalitarian participation. But with painting, drawing, moving, making rhythms, writing poetry, or doing performance art, the differences tend to be personal and stylistic and not cultural. For example, I have found when I engage people worldwide in making free body movements before painting, their gestures are generally akin to the spirit of tai chi ch’un, moving with the world---if as a leader I encourage balance and relaxation, slowing things down, and extending the body with large circular gestures. These qualities of expression result from the process of moving slowly and mindfully.
In addition to the movement basis of expression there are many other empirical features that I have observed in my work with people from throughout the world. They include:

- the absolutely consistent resistance to expressing oneself spontaneously and outside the realm of mental controls;
- the need to relax and allow expression to emerge;
- the distinctly transcultural phenomena of perfectionism, personal histories with repressive judgment, and circumscribed standards of value;
- the satisfaction of being attentively witnessed, seen, and affirmed when taking risks in artistic expression;
- standards of quality based upon authenticity of expression and individual uniqueness;
- the importance of personal competence and self-esteem in expressing ourselves;
- the ritual qualities of the art experience in the company of others or alone and the sense of sacredness when we give unconditional attention and support;
- how both artistic expression and healing transform difficulties into affirmation of life --- or as Bruce Moon says, “It can feel good to express feeling bad” (personal communication, 7 January 2015);
- the way art heals by activating and circulating creative energy into slipstreams of the life force (chi) in our bodies, groups, and communities in an integrating process that contains all of the above and more.

In summary, this author's studio practice in the arts therapies in many regions of the world suggests that the artistic interests and expressions of participants involve high degrees of both individual rather than cultural differences, together with universal qualities characterizing art-making in varied media. Of course it is necessary to understand the regional customs of all places of practice and do everything possible to respect a particular person’s cultural context. But let’s make sure our cultural standards do more to underscore common humanity and the empirical qualities of artistic expression that affirm it.

References

Shaun McNiff is author of Trust the Process; Art as Medicine; Art Heals; Art-Based Research; Integrating the Arts in Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice; Art as Research; and other books. An exhibiting painter, his books are translated into many languages and he has lectured and taught throughout the world. McNiff is the recipient of numerous honors and awards for his work including the Honorary Life Member Award of the American Art Therapy Association and he was appointed as the first University Professor at Lesley University in 2002.
The fall of 2014 passed like a wind yet the messages from our MAT speakers stayed still in our hearts and motivated us to continue to foster the growth of art therapy in Hong Kong.

HKAAT was very grateful to have two overseas speakers, Dr Chris Wood from the United Kingdom and Ms Hua-Wen Wang from Taiwan, to share their works with our members.

In the healthcare system, funding is an universal issue. From Dr Wood’s sharing, British art therapists have worked for decades to develop stability & employment within the limited funding system. With all these obstacles, the healing power of art therapy still goes beyond the wall of the hospitals’ wards. With many pioneers’ effort and the drive of the art therapy community, the British art therapists have extended their work from hospital wards toward ruined riot street. From schoolrooms to community shelters, British art therapists have brought comfort to the broken and the misery by inviting them to transform the blank canvas into unlimited creativities.

While we know that the world is round so does its history, the sharing gave hope to our ongoing development of art therapy in Hong Kong. It is to be hoped that the field of art therapy will continue to flourish despite all obstacles and limitations, likes our beloved friends on the other side of the globe. It is our vision that Hong Kong art therapists can contribute more to the public healthcare system and the community. In the coming years, we wish that people from all social classes and background will be able to experience and understand the joy and healing power of art therapy.
Death is a never changing ending of any human being. The existential once said that to live is to suffer. And to die is to the end of its suffering. Yet, as a human being, we would still experience fear, sadness, and anguish when we’re encountering with dying. We might put up a fight to struggle with this ending process. In a hospice setting, therapy cannot be used as a remedy to stop its pre-written ending. From Ms Wang’s sharing, the role of therapist is to be a fellow traveler who is willing to walk with the clients in their very last stage of life. The goal of therapy is no longer making changes or progress, but is to witness the dying process and acknowledge the client’s existence & struggle as a human being.

Saying goodbye, leaving the last words of love, gratitude, and regrets are important for clients in their terminal stage. The power of art goes beyond the limitation of words, time, and space. Art allows the dying to leave permanent marks of their lives in tangible forms. The permanent artworks extended the life of its creators. Those who are left behind can use the artworks to memorize and to cherish their loved ones.

HKAAT is touched to know that how our beloved neighbor from Taiwan put much effort to implement this meaningful work in their hospice system. Their meaningful work is a motivation for us to continue to educate the public and promote the use of art therapy to enhance the mental & physical health of our community.

Hong Kong’s art therapists are slowly implementing services in the hospice system. There were trainings given by professional art therapists to several hospices settings. There are art & expressive art therapists in the community who provide life and death education and workshops to the public. While the field of art therapy is still very young in Hong Kong, its potential to grow is unlimited.
In the spring of 2015, HKAAT will continue the Meet the Art Therapists program. We will have our veteran professional member May Chan, our knowledgeable member, Kit-Ping Wong, and possible an overseas speaker to share their works, research, and study on art therapy.

Before the launch of our MAT 2015, HKAAT will continue its traditional of giving back to the community during this winter season. On Feb 1st, HKAAT will have a Circle Painting Community service for adults with disability at Heep Hong Society.

All members are welcomed to join us. Please feel free to sign up for this meaningful event and engage in this fun circle painting with us

DATE: February 1st 2015 (Sunday)
Time: 2:00pm to 4:30pm
Venue: Heep Hong Society, JC Parents Resource Center
No. 1, G/F, Oi Sin House, Oi Tung Estate, Shau Kei Wan

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**Dinner With the Consultants**

DATE: 24th of January 2015

President: Sarah TONG, V-President: May CHAN, Secretary: Tristan CHAN, and Exco Members: Krisdean LAW, Ida NG, and HoiLam TANG attended the dinner with our 2 consultants: Dr Rainbow HO & Mr William CHOW on Jan 24th 2015.

Dr HO & Mr CHOW enlightened HKAAT on how to further develop the professional standard and protect the professional title of art therapy in Hong Kong. The body of creative arts and expressive arts therapists has grown gradually in Hong Kong in the past few years. In the meanwhile, there are more non-art-therapy-trained people claimed to be practicing art therapy in unsafe manners. While HKAAT respects the freedom of using art in any mean and form of therapy, we worry that the term of art therapy has been misused. The general public has been misled and deceived by that misinformation. As a result, the public general’s right to choose & receive the professional service of art therapy has been taken.

Our consultants believed that it is about time for HKAAT to collaborate with other creative and expressive arts therapy associations to develop local credential and standardize the job descriptions, title and salary schemes with the government health care system. This establishment of credential and standardization can further protect our professions & allow our users/clients to have a clear idea of what services that they are receiving.

Art therapy has been in Hong Kong for about two decades and HKAAT has been established for 11 years. HKAAT is prepared to take a step forward into the credential establishment movement. We hope that each small step that we take can help our professional members and future generation to gain more job security and opportunities. It might be too soon to claim any achievement on this matter but HKAAT is surely in the mission to uphold the standard of art therapy. We truly appreciate that our consultants have guided us into this clear direction of future development. We hope that through collaboration & engagement with different associations, researchers, universities, and NGOs, we will be one step further than our pioneers and cultivate a healthy and safe development of art therapy in Hong Kong.

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**Upcoming Event**

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**Share our happy moment in next issue**