



Learning, Unlearning, Relearning: Intersectional perspectives on academic art therapy education.

Lernen, Verlernen, Umlernen: Intersektionale Perspektiven auf die akademische Kunsttherapieausbildung.

Judith Revers, Claudia Neudecker, Johanna Henschelmann, Irene Grandi

Cultural humility, as introduced by Tervalon and Murray-García (1998), describes the life-long process of self-reflection and critique of one's own cultural biases and prejudices.

Thereby, understanding education not as a fixed timeline leading from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge, but rather as a continuous, circular process of unlearning and relearning. Though, meanwhile, a significant number of publications highlight the importance of an intersectional approach in art therapy (e.g. Eastwood et. al., 2023; Goodman-Casanova & Sánchez-Aranegui, 2025; Talwar, 2010), it remains unclear how this research reflects in art therapy education. This panel presents the results of studies exploring how intersectional considerations are integrated into art therapy curricula and training across Europe.

Judith Revers focuses on a foundational model for art therapy theory and practice: the triangular relationship. In two informative surveys—one conducted in Germany ($n = 63$), and another Europe-wide ($n = 78$)—she investigates how intersectional considerations reflect in key theories and terminology taught in academic art therapy education.

Claudia Neudecker employed a qualitative research design, conducting a document analysis of master's curricula in art therapy in Germany and South Africa. The analysis sought to examine the extent to which principles of cultural humility and an enhanced awareness of intersectionality are integrated into formal art therapy education in these contexts.

In a quantitative study, Johanna Henschelmann collected data from a total of 144 art therapists in German-speaking countries via an online survey, examining the extent to which privilege and discrimination are addressed as relevant factors in art therapy degree courses.



Irene Grandi reflects on practices of cultural appropriation in art and art therapy, highlighting the repetition of learning experiences building the foundation of stagnant beliefs, with cultural humility as a necessary return to what makes us human: the awareness of our own contingency.

References

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Talwar, S. (2010). **An intersectional framework for race, class, gender, and sexuality in art therapy**. *Art Therapy*, 27(1), 11–17.

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Biography

Judith Revers, Prof. Dr. phil., Mag. art., MA, teaches arts and art therapy at Medical School Hamburg (MSH). 2014: PhD in Art and Cultural Studies, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. 2018: MA in Intermedial Arts Therapy, MSH. 2006: Mag. art. in Painting and Graphics, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Judith researches and works in the fields of social art, installation- and performance-art, with a special focus on interdisciplinary questions in the fields of arts, cultural studies, and health. <https://judithrevers.com/>

Claudia Neudecker, (BA, MA), holds a BA in Fine Arts from Stellenbosch University, South Africa (2001), and an MA in Expressive Arts Therapy from MSH Medical School Hamburg (2025). A graphic designer and art therapist, Claudia originates from South Africa and is currently based in Hamburg, Germany. Her master's thesis examined cultural differences in art therapy education and practice in Germany and South Africa, with particular attention to cultural humility and intersectionality. She is a member of the *Deutscher Fachverband für Kunst- und Gestaltungstherapie* (DFKGT).



Johanna Henschelmann, (BA, MA), pronouns: flexible, holds a BA in Social Work (DHGE Duale Hochschule Gera-Eisenach, 2022) and an MA in Expressive Arts Therapy (MSH Medical School Hamburg, 2025). The speaker has previously completed training in social assistance (vocational qualification) and integral therapeutic art education (certificate program). In both their practical and research work, Johanna deals with questions such as: How can creating and exploring art support people in processing feelings, thoughts, and social contexts? Master's thesis: *Intersectionally Sensitive Art Therapy: Approaches for Social Justice in the International Discourse and the Privilege Awareness among Art Therapists in German-Speaking Countries*.

Irene Grandi, BA, MA, is an art therapist who holds a BA in Art History (University of Parma, 2013), a MA in Art & Economy (University of Applied Arts Vienna, 2018) and a MA in Expressive Arts Therapy (MSH Medical School Hamburg, 2025). Born and raised in Emilia Romagna, Italy, Irene is currently based in Berlin, Germany. Her field of interest lies at the intersection of contemporary art, philosophy, sociology, and art therapy, which also shaped the foundation for her master's thesis: *Held out into the Nothingness: Philosophical Reflection on the Role of Expressive Arts Therapy in Dealing with Contingency*.

Recent Publications

Revers, J. (to be published 2025). **Rhythm 0: Vulnerability and Resistance. The performative process as agent of change**. In M. Hills de Zárata, D. Waller, & C.L. Vaculik (Hsg.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Art Therapy Practice*. Routledge. ISBN 9781032612850.

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<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/artsandsocialchange>

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