

## **MA Dance Movement Psychotherapy large group as critical pedagogy in higher education: professional arts therapies training through experiential embodied learning.**

**Caroline Frizell & Agnes Law**

This presentation shares a collaborative research project carried out by a team of investigators from the staff community on the MA in Dance Movement Psychotherapy at Goldsmiths, University of London. The practice-led research inquired into the Dance Movement Psychotherapy Large Group (DMPLG) as central to a professional training programme. Working with the creativity of moving bodies and resisting normative pressures of identity politics, students and staff are enabled to respond to geopolitical challenges, locating this professional training simultaneously within personal, political and professional landscapes. Thus, social and political justice become embedded in the process of a non-directive critical pedagogy.

In the DMPLG, a community of bodies are dancing relationally in dark times, staying with the trouble and moving within the tensions of diversity and difference, power and oppression. The presentation will outline this practice-led enquiry that drew on data generated from two streams. Firstly, prompts and provocations sent to the research team by the principal investigator, Caroline Frizell, in relation to their experience of the bi-termly DMPLG, as well as creative-process liaison meetings during the DMPLG cycle across one academic year. Secondly, two alumni focus groups enquired into how the experience of the DMPLG in training contributes to the professional practice of graduates. This paper will illuminate how teaching and learning can be optimised within the immediate intersectional context of the DMPLG process and in relation to wider departmental, institutional, social, cultural and political groupings. Overall, this research project has demonstrated how the DMPLG offers an effective critical pedagogy, providing a teaching and learning space in which critical thinking and first-hand

experiential experience come together. The research process also provided a rich source of nourishment for the research team, notwithstanding the contemporary pressures of working within the context of higher education institutions (HEI).

## Biography

**Caroline Frizell, PhD, UKCP, ADMPUK, Dip.Sup. SAP** is a practising dance movement psychotherapist (DMP), supervisor, educator, researcher and author, Caroline brings together embodied practice, environmental awareness and critical disability studies within wider creative and socio-political landscapes. Caroline is a Senior Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London, where she has worked since 2007. She has directed the programme from 2010-2019 and has served as admissions tutor, as well as providing both clinical and PhD supervision. Caroline has a keen interest in the DMP Large Group, which is central to the MA DMP studies at Goldsmiths. In 2021 she received an internal grant at Goldsmiths to research Large Group as a critical pedagogy within arts therapies training. Caroline has published extensively, focusing on the creative moving bodies, ecopsychotherapy and critical disability studies. Her most recent publication is entitled *Posthuman Possibilities of Dance Movement Psychotherapy; moving through ecofeminist and new materialist entanglements of differently enabled bodies in research* (Routledge, 2024).

**Agnes Law** is a lecturer in both dance movement psychotherapy and social work at Goldsmiths, University of London. She has been a registered private practitioner and clinical supervisor with Association of Dance Movement Psychotherapy since 2013. She is a faculty member of School of Playback Theatre, UK and a founding member of True Heart Theatre. Her areas of interest are reflective practice, learning through action and intersectionality.

## Recent publications and conference presentations

Frizell, C. (2024). **Posthuman possibilities of dance movement psychotherapy moving through eco-feminist and new materialist entanglements of differently enabled bodies in research.** Routledge.

Frizell, C. & Rova, M. (eds.) (2023). **Creative bodies in therapy, performance and community. Research and practice that brings us home,** London: Routledge.

Frizell, C. (2023). **Coming home to a posthuman body; finding hopefulness in those who care.** In Parker, D., Jackson, C. & Aspey, L (Eds). *Holding the hope: reviving/restoring psychological and spiritual agency in the face of climate change.* Monmouth: PCCS books. <https://www.pccs-books.co.uk/products/holding-the-hope>

Frizell, C (2023). **Bodies, landscapes and the air that we breathe. Our dance democracy; Forum Kritika on dancing democracy in a fractured world.** *Kritika Kultura*, issue 40., pp. 66-73. Access here: <https://ajol.ateneo.edu/kk>

**Moving bodies and environmental justice in dance movement psychotherapy** at The AGM and conference of the Taiwan Dance Therapy Association (TDTA) Taipei, Taiwan. 3rd June 2023