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Returning Home and Remembering

Vrnitev Domov In Spominjanje

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This paper explores ‘returning to the origin’ as a process of reconnecting with the suppressed yet inherent authenticity of the human being. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the artistic process supported by arts therapy revealed a dual relationship with oneself and others—observing from a distance while longing for closeness, belonging, and wholeness. *Return* is understood as an inner movement back to oneself, to the fundamental mode of being as home, and to the body as the source of genuine experience. *Embodiment* thus represents a universal return to self, fostering renewed connection with oneself, the community, and the world.

The qualitative research, conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and over the three years following the performance, highlights the importance of interweaving artistic-creative and art-therapeutic processes in work with young people, particularly when addressing topics that require sensitive engagement. The first phase (2020–2021) demonstrated the positive effects of the creative process on participants during Covid-19: reduction of anxiety, strengthened sense of connection, and enhanced opportunities for self-expression. Based on *kinesthetic interviews* and *embodied memory*, the second phase of the research (2023) identified long-term contributions such as the development of deeper self-confidence, boundary setting, shifts in internalization and sensory awareness, new insights, acquisition of tools for artistic and personal growth, self-recognition, and transformation.

A key contribution is recognizing the role of the arts therapist. Professional collaborators, skilled both in art and therapy, played a central role, as did the participants, along with their prior creative experiences and inherent artistic potential. This highlights the triangulated relationship and the importance of both the artistic process and the artwork itself in the work of the therapist.

Keywords:
Creative process, arts therapy, return, embodiment, embodied memory

Biography

Mojca Kasjak is an independent artist, dancer, choreographer and dance teacher, trained at the London Contemporary Dance School, UK. She is the artistic director of dance festival in Slovenia and the founder and director of the private Institute for Contemporary Dance Arts, Creativity. Kasjak has created numerous projects, performances, workshops, and professional seminars. She holds a master's degree in Arts Therapy from the University of Ljubljana, where she is an assistant in dance expression. In 2020, she received a state plaque for her contributions to Slovenian dance culture and pedagogy. She was also a national dance selector.

Andreja Kopač, PhD, is a publicist, professor, editor, mentor, and dramaturge in the field of contemporary dance and theatre. She works as a professor at the Secondary School for Preschool Education, Grammar School and Art Grammar School in Ljubljana (Theatre and Dance Department), as well as at AMEU – Academy of Dance in Ljubljana.

Alenka Vidrih, Associate Professor, is an artist and researcher in the interdisciplinary field of performing arts in education and therapy, and a professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana. She serves as a coordinator for the *European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education* (ECArTE)**.** Since 2011, she has been the head of the master's programme *Arts Therapy* at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana.

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