Full On—Festival Art Therapy

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Full on—Festival art therapy

Pamela Whitaker

ABSTRACT

Festival art therapy is a proposition for identity-in-the-making within events. The intensity and immersion of personal narratives within festival themes can extend identity into free association. The festival is composed of multiples – simultaneous opportunities to enter and be impacted by words, sounds, visual culture and spectacle. It is an experience of becoming within a network of production. This is a consideration of art therapy as a public art form that utilises festival culture as a form of experiencing. The encounter with a festival extends a participant's personal geography, in terms of discovering something different and beyond the already known. An arts festival is one way to produce affects that improvise with fixed identity formations. A festival can be considered a social prescription or cultural remedy that results in 'cognitive, social and affective benefits'. A festival can be considered a social prescription or cultural remedy with restorative impact. Art therapy can offer contributions within festival programmes that situate the making of ourselves within a cultural experience.

Vollständige Kunsttherapie auf dem Festival

ABSTRAKT

Festivalkunsttherapie ist ein Vorschlag zur Identitätsstiftung innerhalb von Veranstaltungen. Die Intensität und das Eintauchen persönlicher Erzählungen in Festivalthemen kann die Identität bis zur freien Assoziation erweitern. Das Festival besteht aus mehreren – gleichzeitigen Gelegenheiten, einzutreten und von Worten, Klängen, visueller Kultur und Spektakel beeinflusst zu werden. Es ist eine Erfahrung, in einem Produktionsnetzwerk zu werden. Dies ist eine Betrachtung der Kunsttherapie als öffentliche Kunstform, die Festivalkultur als Erlebnisform nutzt. Die Begegnung mit einem Festival erweitert die persönliche Geografie eines Teilnehmers, um etwas anderes und über das bereits Bekannte hinaus zu entdecken. Ein Kunstfestival ist eine Möglichkeit, Affekte zu erzeugen, die mit festen Identitätsformationen improvisieren. Ein Festival kann als soziales Rezept oder kulturelles Heilmittel betrachtet werden, das zu "kognitiven, sozialen und affektiven Vorteilen" führt (Fancourt et al., 2020). Kunsttherapie kann Beiträge im Rahmen von Festivalprogrammen anbieten, die die Entstehung unserer selbst in einer kulturellen Erfahrung verorten.

Gran festival de Arteterpia

RESUMEN

El festival de arte como terapia es una propuesta de identidad en la creación dentro de los eventos. La intensidad y la inmersión de las narrativas personales dentro de los temas del festival pueden extender la identidad a la libre asociación. El festival se compone de múltiples y simultáneas, oportunidades para entrar y ser influenciado por las palabras, los sonidos, la cultura visual y el espectáculo. Es una experiencia de reflejarse dentro de una red de producción. Se considera a esta terapia como arte público que utiliza la cultura del festival como forma de experimentar. El encuentro con el festival amplía la visión personal de un participante, en términos de descubrir algo diferente, más allá de lo ya conocido. Un festival de arte es una forma de producir afectos que improvisan con formaciones identitarias fijas. Un festival puede considerarse una prescripción social o remedio cultural que resulta en 'beneficios cognitivos, sociales y afectivos' (Fancourt et al., 2020). La arteterapia puede ofrecer aportes dentro de programas festivos que nos ayuda en la realización dentro de una experiencia cultural.

Arte Terapia in Festival

RIASSUNTO

L'arte terapia in Festival è una proposta per la crescita personale e lo sviluppo dell'identità all'interno di eventi. L'intensità e l'immersione delle narrazioni personali all'interno dei temi del festival possono espandere l'identità attivando un processo di libere associazioni. Il festival è composto da molteplici opportunità simultanee di entrare in contatto ed essere influenzati da parole, suoni, cultura visiva e spettacolo. È un'esperienza di divenire all'interno di una rete di produzione. Questa è una modalità dell'arteterapia come forma d'arte pubblica che utilizza la cultura del festival come forma di esperienza. L'incontro con un festival amplia la geografia personale di un partecipante, in termini di scoperta di qualcosa di diverso e al di là del già noto. Un festival delle arti è un modo per produrre affetti che improvvisano con formazioni identitarie fisse. Un festival può essere considerato una prescrizione sociale o un rimedio culturale che si traduce in 'benefici cognitivi, sociali e affettivi' (Fancourt et al., 2020). L'arteterapia può offrire contributi all'interno di programmi di festival che situano il farsi di noi stessi all'interno di un'esperienza culturale.

À fond – la Thérapie Festival Art

ABSTRAIT

La thérapie Festival Art consiste à proposer une identité-en-devenir au sein-même des événements. L'intensité et l'immersion des récits individuels dans les thèmes du festival peuvent prolonger l'identité vers l'association libre. Le festival présente des opportunités multiples-simultanées pour pénétrer les mots et être touchés par eux, ainsi que par les sons, la culture visuelle et le spectacle. Cela constitue une expérience d'être en devenir au sein d'un réseau de production. Il s'agit de prendre en considération l'art-thérapie comme forme d'art public utilisant la culture festivalière comme un type d'expérience. La rencontre avec un festival prolonge la géographie personnelle du participant en tant qu'il découvre quelque chose de différent, au-delà du déjà connu. Un festival d'arts est une façon de générer des affects qui bousculent les identités acquises. On peut considérer un festival comme une prescription sociale ou un remède culturel dont les résultats se situent au niveau des « bénéfices cognitifs, sociaux et affectifs » (Fancourt et al., 2020). L'art-thérapie peut contribuer aux programmes des festivals qui localisent le soi en devenir comme une expérience culturelle.

Απόλυτο - Φεστιβάλ Θεραπείας μέσω τέχνης

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το Φεστιβάλ Θεραπείας μέσω τέχνης είναι μια πρόταση για το γίνεσθαι της ταυτότητας εντός του συμβάντος. Η εντατότητα και η εμπύθιση των προσωπικών αφηγήσεων στα θέματα του φεστιβάλ μπορεί να επεκτείνει την ταυτότητα σε ελεύθερο συνειρμό. Το φεστιβάλ απαρτίζεται από πολλαπλότητες - ταυτόχρονες ευκαιρίες να εισάγει και να επηρεαστεί από λέξεις, ήχους, οπτική κουλτούρα και θέαμα. Είναι μια εμπειρία γίνεσθαι σε ένα δίκτυο παραγωγής. Πρόκειται για μια θεώρηση της θεραπείας μέσω τέχνης ως μια δημόσια μορφή τέχνης που χρησιμοποιεί την κουλτούρα του φεστιβάλ ως μια μορφή εμπειρίας. Η συνάντηση με ένα φεστιβάλ επεκτείνει την προσωπική γεωγραφία του συμμετέχοντα, όσον αφορά την ανακάλυψη κάτι διαφορετικού και πέραν από το ήδη γνωστό. Ένα φεστιβάλ τεχνών είναι ένας τρόπος παραγωγής θυμικών αποκρίσεων που αυτοσχεδιάζουν με τα υλικά των πάγιων σχηματισμών της ταυτότητας μας. Ένα φεστιβάλ μπορεί να θεωρηθεί μια κοινωνική συνταγή ή ένα πολιτιστικό γιατρικό που οδηγεί σε «γνωστικά, κοινωνικά και συναισθηματικά οφέλη» (Fancourt et al., 2020). Η θεραπεία μέσω τέχνης μπορεί να συνεισφέρει σε προγράμματα φεστιβάλ που τοποθετούν τη δημιουργία των εαυτών μας μέσα σε μια πολιτιστική εμπειρία.

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KEYWORDS Art therapy; festival event; Deleuze; cultural practice; creative health

SCHLÜSSELWÖRTER Kunsttherapie; Festivalveranstaltung; Deleuze; Kulturelle Praxis; Kreative Gesundheit

PALABRAS CLAVE Arteterapia; Evento de Festival; Deleuze; Práctica Cultural; Salud Creativa

PAROLE CHIAVE Arteterapia; Festival Event; Deleuze; Pratica Culturale; Salute Creativa

MOTS-CLÉS Art-thérapie; festival; Deleuze; pratique culturelle; santé créative

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ Θεραπεία μέσω Τέχνης; Εκδήλωση Φεστιβάλ; Deleuze; Πολιτιστική Πρακτική; Δημιουργική Υγεία

Let the festival begin: Art therapy as *eventscape*

Art therapy is suited to festivity in its recognition of art making taking place in the middle of something. I consider art therapy operating within a continuum of spaciousness that offers the potential to move in more than one direction (Lorraine, 2005). Art festivals can challenge repression, inhibition and social exclusion, and within the context of a festival programme, art therapy can offer engagement for wellness. Festivals encourage social improvisation, becoming, and the negotiation of new perspectives. The festival scene is unconventional and characterises relations between participants. Routines of predictability may be challenged and de-constructed, and there is an enthusiasm for enthrallment and encouraging participants into variation. This idea of divergence generates an awareness of polyphony as a co-existent multiplicity of voices, rather than an agenda of hierarchy (Bakhtin, 1984). In this proposition I am an art therapist-curator that assembles creative activity for potential and engagement. A festival extends art therapy's reach beyond a clinical frame, and unites the profession with the benefits of cultural health – reduced anxiety, social inclusion, hopeful narratives and empowerment (All Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017a).

I propose a new approach to art therapy practice – festival art therapy – that situates art therapy within a scene of simultaneous events that evoke unscripted social encounters. It features a walking event I facilitated as a contribution to a mental health festival, the First Fortnight Festival, in Dublin, Ireland. The walk's itinerary was inspired by Deleuze's situating of an event as a network of production that can 'reshape the material fabric of connectivity' (Beck & Gleyzon, 2017, p. 339). I composed a walking route that facilitated conversations about featured venues and locations that had community appeal. The walkers were introduced to exhibitions, history, nature and street art situated within urban streetscapes and within arts and health venues. The participants formed new relationships amongst themselves and to the places they visited that took them off course and into unexpected dimensions of experiencing. The ethos of the walk was informed by dialogical aesthetics, and the meaning co-produced by participants as they walked and spoke about their experiences in relation to places visited and their engagement with themes related to mental health (Kester, 2004).

The wayfaring in this proposition was both an event and studio – the art of conversation and portable art creation occurring within impromptu situations along a walking route. The event mapped a cartography of making that challenged stigma and shared narratives through cumulative dialogue (Kester, 2004). 'Within each emplacement (where something or someone is situated) there is an encounter with objects that make a scene, a communication and an impact with artistic potential' (Whitaker, 2021,

p. 47). Festivals support diversity, regeneration and togetherness, and can produce the conditions for psychological invigoration (McQueen-Thomson et al., 2004). The wellness factor of festivals resonates with ceremonial initiations for ourselves and each other, and a mutuality of response within cultural experience.

I consider a festival to be an event composed of many occasions and situations; it has multiple pathways meeting expressive circumstances, serendipity, and the unusual. Art therapy is typically an enclosed indoor pursuit within a built environment that acts as a studio for creativity and therapeutic reflection. However, the recent influence and prevalence of environmental art therapy has taken the profession outdoors to enact studios within the thoroughfares of civic spaces. The therapeutic encounter is then extended into the materiality of place and relations between people. The de-territorialisation of art therapy's activity across *eventscares* (as experiential locations) transforms its delivery into outdoor happenings. As a festival is discursive and conducive to meandering, it offers an intensive encountering with otherness (Beck & Gleyzon, 2017). It is also a provocation to move through complexity and to reconfigure space into experiential zones.

Festivals facilitate nomadic subjectivity, through the production of opportunities that construct improvisation. 'We can consider nomadic space, not as a space with intrinsic properties that then determine relations ... but as a space with extrinsic properties; the space is produced from the movements that then give that space its peculiar qualities' (Colebrook, 2005, p. 182). A festival is something that stimulates our movements through ideas, artistry, and events – the performing of a rite of passage through scenes that invigorate our responsiveness and connectivity. The immersion into a walking studio, as festival event, took participants somewhere different within themselves and their city. It was relational in terms of communication amongst participants and in the context of relating differently to found environments that meant something. The transitional nature of a walk associates to a participatory model of aesthetic experience 'in which environmental features reach out to affect and respond to the receiver' (Berleant, 2005, p. 9). The word *transurbance* is associated with discovering the unconscious of a city – its yet to be experienced meaning and articulation by those who journey into its hidden retreats and passageways (Careri, 2002).

The Deleuzian event happens through impromptu productions of happenings that are always in the middle (Stagoll, 2005a). 'Becoming "moves through" an event, with the event representing just a momentary productive intensity' (Stagoll, 2005a, p. 88). An event takes it all in – the complexities, the discord, and the chaos and structures a composition. It is 'a relation of expression' (Deleuze, 2004, p. 194) that plays with divergences without resorting to hierarchy. It is the capacity to be present in the midst of everything. The influence of festivity on art therapy is multiple and simultaneous –

it takes art therapy outside clinical boundaries and it aligns art therapy with celebration and a trajectory of pageantry. These are all noteworthy attributes inviting art therapy out of seclusion and into a larger scale spectacle. Festivals take art therapy somewhere different, where making and experiencing is within a focussed and time-specific community of practice (Wenger, 1998). A festival is a form of social pedagogy, where we are brought into contact with unfamiliar ideas and social behaviour. It is enterprising and negotiates meaning through relational togetherness and the juxtaposition of contrasting perspectives. Our own trajectory of passage through a festival meets the trajectory of others, and we are influencing (and being influenced) by these meetings of both mind and presence. The artistry here is in motion and it produces affects through engagement intensities. 'The encounter with art takes us forward by using the spaces and spacings it opens up to construct a new vocabulary for presenting that which cannot presently be said' (Dewsbury & Thrift, 2006, p. 106). Festivity is a durational plane of immanence with differing currents of attention that articulate the art of movement between events. Deleuze conceived the plane of immanence as a continuum of spaces where all possibilities and events can co-exist (Stagoll, 2005b). Art therapy in this context, is not the making of an object, but the making of a range of experiences – the potential to move beyond limitations and to make more of one's life.

Festivals can conjure the world anew and our becoming within its experimentation. A festival is a curated landscape that impacts upon us, as an assembling of creative spaces 'where you are in touch with the raw energy of the world [and] of yourself as part of that world unfolding' (Dewsbury & Thrift, 2006, p. 100). Festival space produces concurrent events, and also the production of our own transcendence beyond the familiar routes of the life we have made for ourselves. These are desiring lines of flight (our escape) into spaces in which we consider new routes of variation (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). A festival is a series of movements existing on the plane of immanence – a folding and unfolding into what our surroundings and encounters are offering. 'Art at its most social exposes the desiring production that organises space, using desire in its most productive sense to bring to life the affective dimensions of art' (Parr, 2005, p. 147). A festival offers intensity within situations of unfamiliarity that invigorate thoughts, sensations and transmutations (Deleuze, 2004).

Festivity is an approach to researching collective ritual. The unpredictability, inventiveness and complexity of festivals can extend human behaviour beyond restrictive roles (Testa, 2019). Culture goes beyond itself via festivity and its association to excess and otherness. An arts festival can also be a form of protest, parade and critique of social standards. It is a performance of transgression in the way that it becomes

a place apart for improvised togetherness (Fournier, 2019). Festivals promote nomadic subjectivity with heterogeneous offerings – a rhizomatic map of events as an extension of subjectivity into different contexts (Colebrook, 2005). As such festivals are a form of new materialism, which emphasises acts of becoming within environments composed of human, natural and object relations (Fox & Alldred, 2015). A festival generates a network of possible relations and event intensities between people, artistic productions, staged encounters, and the materials of the festival environment.

The rhizome names a principle of connectivity. It implies a contact, and movement, between different milieus and registers ... In life this leads to a less one-dimensional and straitjacketed existence. Connections and alliances can be made between different people, different objects and different practices, which in itself allows for more flexibility, more fluidity. (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 17)

Festival art therapy is a method informed by public practice art therapy (Timm-Bottos, 2017), active citizenship and public pedagogy (Biesta, 2012). It also incorporates Mikhail Bakhtin's use of dialogism (polyphony); a simultaneous encountering of people, open-ended connections, and experiences in the making (Robinson, 2011). 'Being is always an "event" or "co-being", simultaneous with other beings' (Robinson, 2011), and as such involves an assemblage of influences. The word festival in this context references the significance of arts festivals to ignite communication and relations of connection. Art festivals are multi-voiced occasions, that transform fixed meaning, routines of identity, and our surroundings. Social boundaries are relaxed and there is an expectation of the unexpected when meeting new people and encountering the unexpected. A festival context assists art therapists to 'work through the processes of creating therapeutic spaces in ... non-traditional environments' (McLachlan, 2017, p. 4). The art of the multitude is showcased in a dedicated space devoted to personal and collective negotiation, a space that is both disruptive and creative, and a place for recovery and mediation (Mesnard, 2016). Making culture is both an analysis and an emotional catharsis, it bestows meaning and it is a place to debate and restore (Mackey, 2010).

In this necessarily growing world it is not enough to explore space ... [r]ather it is necessary to explore the dimensions that make space possible, to experiment whilst pushing knowledge to its nonsensical limits, stretching thought to the tune of this becoming world, creating registers by which we orientate ourselves as a different people and make the world anew. (Dewsbury & Thrift, 2006, p. 97)

Festival art therapy rejuvenates social awareness by way of polyphonic public artistry, offering an opportunity to be with people who are differently

engaging in the world at large. The significance of this is to actualise social justice concerns through networks of dialogue and empathetic attentiveness (Potash, 2019). Relational social justice (Potash, 2019) can be approached through festivals devoted to social issues and the arts. Festivals challenge participants to develop a broad vision and a closeness to people they don't know. Festivity is also immersive, challenging one-dimensionality by circulating awareness amongst participants in attendance and within spaces of captivation. 'A citizenship of strangers' (Biesta, 2012, p. 684) becomes associated within a festival method of pedagogy that supports publicness – a restorative way of bringing people together in order to learn more about each other. Art festivals are 'a form of interruption' (Biesta, 2012, p. 685) that support interactivity within public places. The aim is to challenge authority, and develop multiple scenes of artistic engagement that immerses everyone in themselves and each other.

A festival composes a made-up world, and this is its attraction, it captures peoples' attention and inspires an opening-up to possibility. Getz (2010) describes the significance of festivals as generating 'emotional responses' through an occasion of communal collaboration. The particular features of events manifest symbolisms and emotional stimulations that inspire subjectivities in process (Getz, 2007). The festival does not teach us how to act, but how to make our lived reality an art form within a constructed space of belonging (Duffy & Waitt, 2011). Art festivals offer places to speak, to listen, and to be part of an experience bigger than ourselves – a 'social integration and cohesion, while simultaneously [developing] sites of subversion ...' (Duffy & Waitt, 2011, p. 55).

The First Fortnight festival: *Walking off course*

The First Fortnight Festival (www.firstfortnight.ie) in Ireland is an example of how a mental health arts festival can publicise and practice restorative justice in relation to specific issues. The First Fortnight Festival 'utilises arts and culture to challenge mental health stigma while supporting some of Ireland's most vulnerable people through creative therapies' (First Fortnight, 2020).

The First Fortnight festival operates during the first two weeks of January, and aims to:

- (1) Make the beginning of each year synonymous with mental health awareness, challenging prejudice and ending stigma.
- (2) Create a consistent space in the national cultural calendar where citizens can be inspired through arts and cultural events to talk about mental health issues in a non-scripted manner.

- (3) Utilise unscripted conversation to change people's perceptions about the ordinary experience of a mental health problem and the less ordinary experience of mental ill health (First Fortnight, 2020).

The festival has consistently been aligned to creative arts therapies practice, and at its inception its curators were art therapists. The festival now supports a year-round art therapy service for people experiencing homelessness affected by mental ill health (First Fortnight, 2020). I have contributed three events to the festival: *Lay Your Cards on the Table* (2016); *Words That Move Us* (2017), and *Walking off Course* (2019). I will highlight *Walking off Course* as an example of how art therapy can take to the streets, to facilitate conversations about mental health, and be approached through observations of real-life situations.

Walking off Course was a four-hour walk in Dublin, beginning at the National College of Art and Design and ending at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, typically a walking distance of twenty minutes. This festival walk was undertaken in The Liberties, a historic area of Dublin associated with pilgrimage, political upheaval, and independence. These metaphors infused the walk with a spirit of free association and artistic agency; it was a route through public thoroughfares that prompted themes related to making one's way within civic spaces. The gallery locations, at the beginning and the end of the walk, amplified exhibition themes devoted to place making and protests. This art of walking, a form of psychogeography (the psychology of place) (Coverley, 2010) situates each participant in their own narrative responding to the physicality and sociology of a walking route and a group of strangers. The participants (as walking artists) discovered found objects, scenes to photograph, and environments to write about. The walk was a series of impromptu studios and readymade encounters where the participants reimaged their own sense of identity within their city. The locations of the walk were meaningful, in terms of each person's interpretation of a streetscape, locality or situation therein.

Ehrenreich (2007) suggests festivity takes us out of ourselves and our social roles. She considers the spectacle of the festival to generate affective ties or contact through access. 'Hierarchy, by its nature, establishes boundaries between people – who can go where, who can approach whom, who is welcome, and who is not. Festivity breaks the boundaries down' (Ehrenreich, 2007, p. 252). Richard Sennett (2012) examines the significance of portable rituals and how 'expressive cooperation' (p. 17) can happen in a liminal zone. The festival as liminal space mediates transitions, and 'choreographic gestures' (Sennett, 2012, p. 245), which can be performed again outside the festival schedule as a resonance that impacts participants' social movements going forward. A festival is a studio of creation, and within its engaging environments participants can wander in and out of situations. The

capacity to move and improvise within the dimensions of a festival, is a metaphor that is both intra-subjective and encompasses larger scale inter-subjectivity. There is an association with the *dérive* described by Guy Debord as a 'passage through varied ambiances' (Debord, 1958). The festival is an invitation to let go of expectations in order to be drawn into 'the attractions of the terrain' and the encounters found within locations of discovery (Debord, 1958).

The art therapist can be a festival companion and assist in the discovery of content that impacts people getting out more and doing more things. The joint attention to a festival is a companioning of responses that combine lines of inquiry and the bringing together of possible meanings. Joint attention within art therapy is an *interaffective* experiencing that combines ways of perceiving in a shared environment (Isserow, 2008). The artistry of The First Fortnight Festival, curates a community of practitioners all in the process of becoming within events that alter perspectives. An art therapist can bring people places they haven't been before, and accompany them within shared cultural experiences. The festival evokes non-singular experiences, and an invitation to find oneself amongst many sensory, cognitive, and physical activations. The art therapist is simultaneously impacted by the festival experience, alongside the participants of the event. As an assemblage a festival is a play of both contingency and structure and it can be entered and re-assembled according to the inclinations of each participant.

Figure 1. The First Fortnight Festival: Walking off Course.

Walking off Course offered a route of travel with diversions along the way (Figure 1). Impromptu studios for art making took place in an art college gallery, near a wall of graffiti, a community garden, a psychiatric hospital, and a contemporary art museum. Each stopping point was a portal into a participant's own way of experiencing, which aligned with diverse viewpoints and activities from the walk's collaborators. There was no predetermined meaning in each found studio, but rather each venue produced affects that composed an assembling of influences both familiar and in process. *Walking off Course* was not a singular event, but a constellation of happenings over an extended length of time. The walking event encouraged the meeting of different perspectives, ways of seeing and moving in tandem. The walking artists saw the city through each other's eyes and formed a collection of viewpoints that transgressed preconceived ideas. Being on the move meant people were not on their guard and they were better able to meet each other side-by-side as collaborators.

Participants were engaged in an art therapist facilitated event, that offered a chance to walk and be with people in their city as a form of collective initiation. It fit the goals of the First Fortnight Festival to create opportunities for speaking about mental health in an unscripted manner, within the commons of civic life. Art therapy can exist in festivals as a form of outsider art, that takes people where they need to go and at their own pace. The benefits of extending the reach of art therapy beyond the boundaries of a confined clinical space is the impact of social prescriptions emphasising the significance of cultural health. A social prescription is a referral to a cultural activity to enhance health and wellness. It is a form of creative health that includes associations to place, environment and community and a health producing society (All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017b). Festivals have a part to play offering experiences beyond rumination, as each participant is taken beyond themselves through content that brings forth a sense of invigoration and innovation. A festival is a chance to get away and be in a different place, a retreat from our habitual responses of how we see ourselves and inhabit social spaces. Festivity can influence subjective well-being and quality of life through enhanced social interactions that are conducive to a sense of belonging (Yolal et al., 2016).

Events without end

Events produce intensities that vary for each participant, and they continue to be experienced in the aftermath of their timeframe (Grosz, 2003). Festivals are a release, 'from something, somewhere, someone – accompanied by the wish to be transformed' (O'Neill, p. 499). They can be socially therapeutic, with the art therapist occupying a curatorial position from which to propose routes of passage. The art therapist, as curator, coordinates the environments

within which identity reflection and production can occur. ‘The curatorial as constellation . . . proposes a more juxtaposed or simultaneous field of signification, form, content, and critique’ (O’Neill, 2019, p. 502). Festivals can facilitate knowledge creation, where the art is being manifest within living forms. *Walking off Course* was about discovering readymade materials and situations that were there all the time in the thoroughfares of daily life. Indeed, it is these occurrences and relatable materials that bestow a sense of relevancy and keep the memory of the festival alive as an activation of personal and social artistry.

Festival art therapy features *eventscares* as territories of interaction. Deleuze’s conceptualisation of an event, reminds us to make experiences count, ‘by embracing the rich chaos of life and the uniqueness and potential of each moment’ (Stagoll, 2005a, p. 88). Art therapy can support the making of life as an event, where subjectivity becomes improvised in trajectories of happenings that celebrate transitions rather than developmental stages. This art of movement is an emphasis on designing the production of *now*. The festival as therapeutic methodology is an immersion into the plane of immanence as a continuum of experiencing. The festival in our lives is an antidote to complacency, it beckons us into events that we make distinctive, exceptional and transforming. The festival assemblage, pays tribute to all that has come our way, and all that we have walked away from. As a collective enunciation, the festival is a desire to be influenced by experimentation and improvisation. The point of attending is to show up, not for the outcome, but for the adventure.

Disclosure statement

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Notes on contributor

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