

# *Environmental Arts Therapy UK*



## *Community and connection - Winter 2023*



***Winter edition compiled and edited by Gary Nash – February 2023 with contributions from: Gary Nash (London/Hertfordshire/Bristol); Vanessa Jones (Kent); Fiona Penfold (New Forest); Rachel Clare Campling (Edinburgh); Cecilie Browne (Sheffield)***

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### ***Words from Winter***

#### ***Turning of the year; turning of the page***

The winter season is a time stepping back and moving into descent. As the earth turns, so the darkness and cold reduce the energy and provide a time for stillness and rest. It is a time of letting go of the old and turning the page in preparation for the new.

The themes of health, self-care, and reviving our intentions and wellbeing through our relationship with nature have emerged along with the theme of sustaining one's creativity, imagination, and capacity to care in a world under stress.

### *Contributions from practitioners*

The images, words, and caring attention to self, other, and nature as described by our contributors, provides seeds of intention for us all to take into the world through our creative and environmental arts practices:

#### *Honouring our elders – Gary Nash (London)*

Ian, my dear friend, elder, teacher, colleague

Touching Earth

Felling loss

Digging deep

Honouring the past

Expressing my anger

Releasing my pain

Allowing feeling to follow

Protecting the child

Using the masculine

to shield the vulnerable within me

Finding my words

Raising my voice

Defining my creativity

Bringing the feminine into my power



*Midwinter Fire, December 2022*

Sharing from my  
heart

Being a power  
for good in the world

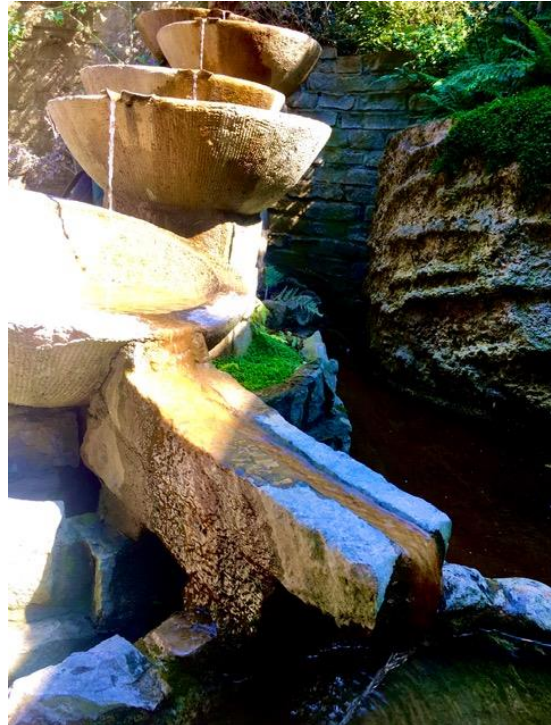
You witnessed  
my process

Your gentle  
presence

Shaped my growth



*My shrine to the elder, November 2022*



*White water spring, Chalice Well, Nov 2022*

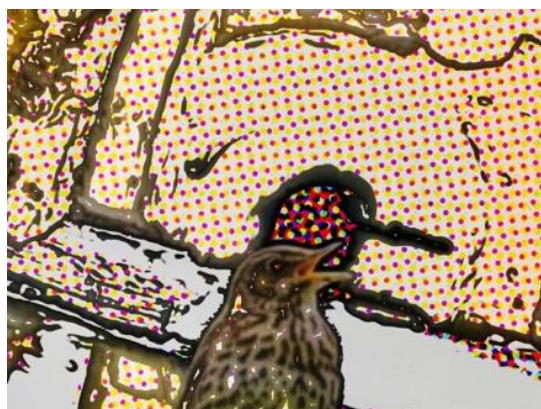


**Walking with elders – a visual essay and film screening – Vanessa Jones (Kent/London)**



These  
feet  
make a  
path of  
kisses  
along  
this  
river's  
edge  
Back  
towards  
our  
ancestral  
home

These images and words are part of my personal art-based supervisory and reflective environmental arts therapy practice. It is a trail of images, sieved from the footage from four short films: - 'Into the Earth', 'Medicine Walk', 'Fireside Creatures' and 'Whispers' (Jones 2022). The original films animate the premise, and process of the Wild Elders Group, as seen through my eyes. They offer an immersion into the multi-layered experience of a group I co-facilitated for over eight years before helping to reshape it into a rich, organic, non-hierarchical and truly co-creative wild community of elder women and wild woodland beings.



These images are scattered here, as a prelude to the forthcoming visual essay soon to be published in the spring special issue of the *Journal of Applied Arts and Health*, 14 (1). I invite you to view the images as gateways into physical, imaginal, natural and digital landscapes, to walk alongside us as elders, following the footsteps of active participation, praise, and rebellion in a collapsing world.



**Step by  
step  
Bird by  
hare  
Along this  
ancient  
path  
unfurling  
where  
magic  
unfolds**

The images are gateways into the flow of the group's work through physical, imaginal, natural, and digital landscapes.

They offer an immersion into the multi-layered experience of The Wild Elders group that I have been co-facilitating for the past eight years. The original films animate the premise, and process of the group through my eyes.

Compiling this silent visual thread, I invite the reader to journey with the imagery. Feeling the way through rippled textures and grainy forms, within the perpetual flow of transformation.

The full-length films are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK5GWvJmpE0P6IPFECHpU3A/playlists>. It runs for 5 mins. Should you wish to connect or share comments, please contact [vanessajonesther-apy@gmail.com](mailto:vanessajonesther-apy@gmail.com) so these might be added to our creative cauldron in the woods.

### ***An Earth Candle at Imbolc – Fiona Penfold – Alchemy in the Forest***



*Today we are celebrating Imbolc, the  
beginning of spring, the fire in the belly  
Imbolc is the fire festival marking the midway point between  
the midwinter solstice (Yule)  
and the  
spring equinox (Ostara).  
The word imbolc means “in the belly of the mother” because  
the seeds of spring are beginning to stir  
in the belly of mother earth.*



**Imbolc – Earth Candle** – we have melted down the remnants of the winter season candles, the ends of last year, and made an earth candle which has been burning through the day and night at this point in the season.



I work as an environmental art therapist/art therapist with my alpacas (Gary, Ian and Derrick) and therapy dog Bee...with children and will begin working with couples in this way in the summer.

I also do sound healing sessions with my wondrous planetary and elemental gongs and alchemy crystal bowls!

My therapy business is in the new forest, and you can find me on Instagram @alchemyinthenewforest



**Gin Farrow-Jones** (Plymouth-Devon & Cornwall)

I have been actively generating interest in Plymouth in EAT through several projects that have been running concurrently. Perhaps there are means for our networks to connect and help grow the interest/numbers for next year's conference?

A project called Messages From The HeArt. (By Hope in the Heart CIC) has just ended in Plymouth. Now the project is on tour, replicating free art workshops and the exhibition in London. Perhaps you would like to visit it?

Here's the website link <http://www.hopeintheheart.org/lived-experience-messages-from-the-heart.html>

**Reflections and news from Edinburgh ‘Circle of Trees’ Environmental Arts Therapy Group** We gather regularly throughout the year in a beautiful and secluded woodland wild-life reserve on the shores of Duddingston Loch under Arthur’s Seat, yet close to the city of Edinburgh...



We met during the autumn and winter of 2022 with a rich mix of long-standing members and new folk, ending in mid-December with our toes warming around the fire...



... and resuming in January to enact the powerful story of the Three Billy-Goats Gruff in the woodland with movement, sound, and imagination. Together we then built a bridge from the woods into the bright meadow, and each was invited to cross it into the new lighter time towards Imbolc, the snowdrops and the Spring.

**Circle of Trees is almost fully booked this series, but there are still a few spaces in the group on Sundays 5 February and 12 March! (1pm - 4pm). If you or anyone you know would like to join us on these dates, please contact Dramatherapist Rachel-Clare Campling: [RachelC@phonecoop.coop](mailto:RachelC@phonecoop.coop) or 07766 256911. £30 / session (concessions available).**

**Future events** - I’m dreaming up Circle of Trees gatherings entitled *Summer Gloaming* once monthly from May onwards, from early evening into twilight in the woodland... we will follow the sun as it stays glowing later and later and embrace the magic of the gloaming!



## Environmental Arts Therapy courses in London



### **Introduction Environmental Arts Therapy Certificated course with Gary Nash & Vanessa Jones**

**This course over four months will introduced you to theory, safe practice, individual, pair-work and group work outdoors in woodland in Highgate, London.**

This course is for arts therapists, psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, counsellors, educators and others who wish work with nature in the consulting room and to move their practice out-of-doors. The series of one day workshops will introduce the ideas and practice of working therapeutically in nature. It will consist of experiential exercises, self-reflection, working in pairs, group work, and reflective time to deepen knowledge and skills in this area of nature-based therapeutic practice using the arts.

Course dates: Saturday 29th April; 20th May; 17th June; 8th July 2023.

Saturdays 10-4pm: 4 sessions over 4 months

***Venue: Highgate Woods, Muswell Hill Road, London. N10 3JN***

***Time: 9.30am – 4.00pm (GMT)***

Initial deposit £65

Total course fee: £460 with payment by instalments.

Early bird fee £440 booking before 30th March 2023

**Course deposit: £65 via Eventbrite**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/introduction-to-environmental-arts-therapy-tickets-424586398347>

### **Environmental Arts Therapy Seasonal Workshop with Gary Nash & Vanessa Jones**

Dates: Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023

***Venue: Highgate Woods, Muswell Hill Road, London. N10 3JN***

***Time: 9.30am – 4.00pm (GMT)***

**Course fee: £95 via Eventbrite**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/summer-into-autumn-1683299>

**These one-day workshops will introduce the ideas and practice of working therapeutically in therapeutic woodland in Highgate, London.**

This workshop is for art therapists, psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, educators, counsellors, and others who wish work with nature in their practice. The one-day workshop will introduce the ideas and practice of working therapeutically in nature using the cycle of Nature to attune to the turning year

Working entirely within the woodland, with the use of tipi tent we plan to introduce participants to the themes and metaphors associated with the month of October & November, which within the Celtic tradition is the end of the year.

No previous training in the arts, art therapies or ecotherapy is necessary but a willingness to be curious about your own interconnection with the land and all her relations is encouraged.

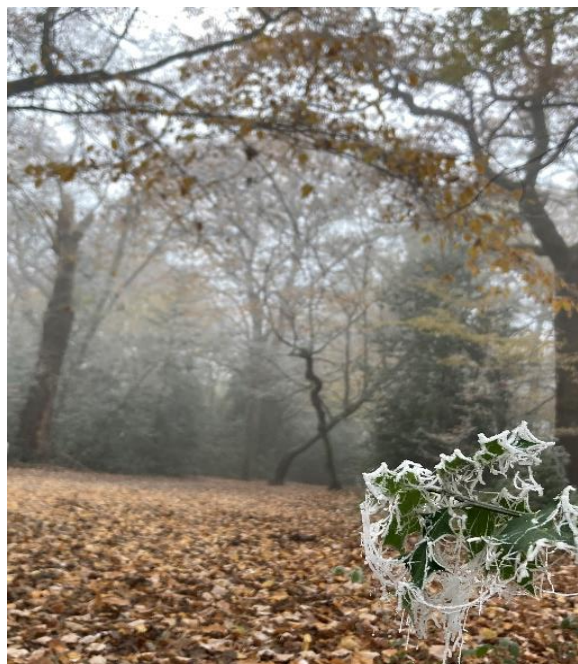
**Course facilitators:**

**Vanessa Jones**, Dip. AT MAAT, EAT Cert, Trained MBCT Mindfulness Teacher. She is a Baat registered private practitioner, working outdoors in nature as an art therapist within her private practice and the NHS since 2010. She is also co-founder of the Elders Group with colleague Deborah Kelly and is published in *"Wild frontiers of the heart"*, Siddons Heginworth, I., & Nash, G., Routledge, 2020. Her work within the NHS is published in *"Ecotherapy: theory, research & practice"*, Eds Jordan. M & Hinds, J, Palgrave, 2016

**Gary Nash**, Dip. AT MAAT, EAT Cert; has over twenty years of art therapy experience working in adult mental health, voluntary sector, learning disabilities services & mainstream education. He is a Baat registered Supervisor and Registered private practitioner. He runs an environmental arts therapy group in London and is co-editor of *Environmental Arts Therapy: Wild frontiers of the heart*, Routledge, 2020.

All courses are provided in partnership with Environmental Arts Therapy UK. Environmental Arts Therapy UK have validated these courses and approved the course content and structure.

**Welcoming new members to Highgate Woods Monthly Circle of Trees: Sunday Prayers**



As winter begins to thaw and the trees begin to awaken from their slumber, we welcome new members to our monthly Practitioners Circle of Trees, environmental arts therapy group.

Booking in advance required for a minimum of 2 months.

Available dates:

Sunday 12th Feb, 19th March, 16th April 2023.

If you would like to join a group of experienced practitioners for our monthly EAT prayers on Sunday mornings contact: [vanessajones-therapy@gmail.com](mailto:vanessajones-therapy@gmail.com)  
(Sliding scale fees available)



## **A Weekend in the Woods: An Introduction to Environmental Arts Therapy Weekend Retreat at Oaks Wood in the Derbyshire Peak District**



**5pm Friday 19th - 3pm Sunday 21st May 2023**

Led by Cecilie Browne and Hannah Montiero

This is a unique opportunity to experience a training weekend delivered in the context of an off-grid camping retreat in private woodland in the Derbyshire Peak District.

In these challenging times many professionals are looking for alternatives to working face-to-face in enclosed environments and the outdoors offers many benefits which the training will explore. This weekend is suitable for practitioners at all levels of experience, serving both as personal and professional development as well as positive self-care in the midst of the hustle and bustle of contemporary life. It will also give a good introduction to the field for those considering taking their therapy work outside. This event is suitable for arts therapists and others in the caring professions (please contact us on the email below if you are unsure about suitability). Maximum group size 12.

There will be a mix of activities over the weekend with an emphasis on experiential workshops which encourage a deeper personal connection with the natural world and it's inhabitants. You can expect:

- A warm welcome with hot drinks and delicious vegetarian meals included.
- Ritual opening and closing to hold the sacred space of the retreat.
- An introduction to the ideas and practices behind Environmental Arts Therapy and eco-therapy.
- Practical and creative workshops which will include a combination of mindfulness in nature, journeying, artmaking using natural materials in the environment, reflection and sharing.
- Discussion of issues around working therapeutically in the natural world.
- Fireside sharing – bring songs, instruments, stories, poems.

Please note: This is an off-grid experience. We have a compost toilet but no running water and very limited phone signal. We encourage participants to see this as an opportunity to experience a simpler way of living, close to nature.

For more information, please contact Cecilie on [ceciliebrowne@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ceciliebrowne@yahoo.co.uk)



### **WEALD PARK WELLNESS GROUP – Brentwood Essex**

The Weald Park Wellness Group was officially formed in January 2019 by Art Psychotherapist, Irene Malvezi, together with other three like-minded friends: Linda Toms, Karon Stubbs and Anna Syanda. It is a focus group for all adults, which aims to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual benefits of being in nature.

The group runs therapeutic/healing/art outdoor workshops at the Weald Country Park several times a year for two or three hours each time. The aim is to reconnect and cherish nature and to explore how it can support our personal development and general sense of wellbeing. During each workshop we walk through open and shaded woodland. We work with specific designed exercises to enhance our senses and we create reflective artwork with natural materials.





Weald Park Wellness is a not-for-profit group. Our aim is to bring together the local community to share the benefits of being in nature.

You can find more information about our groups starting in April at:  
[http://www.irenemalvezi.co.uk/html/Weald\\_Park\\_Wellness\\_Group.html](http://www.irenemalvezi.co.uk/html/Weald_Park_Wellness_Group.html)

**New book** Social Action Art Therapy in a Time of Crisis **by Jamie Bird**  
Routledge, London, 2022



*Social Action Art Therapy in a Time of Crisis* outlines theories and models of social action art therapy, identifies its application in times of crisis, and explores the ways in which art therapy can work effectively for individuals and groups experiencing crisis.

Drawing upon various ecologies, climate psychology, and eco-art therapy, this book addresses various responses to climate change, including notions of belonging, the physicality of experience, and the role of imagination in creating alternative versions of the future. The author presents a social action approach to art therapy as a way of addressing the political and collective components of climate change as well as the individual and emotional components. To help explore what social action art therapy can offer in this time of crisis, the author illustrates examples that show how the ideas have been used in other moments of crisis, including asylum, refuge, and domestic abuse.

This innovative book contributes to the development of contemporary art therapy practice and will be of interest to arts therapists, arts psychotherapists, expressive therapists, ecotherapists, ecopsychologists, arts-based researchers, and many more.

**Dr Jamie Bird** is a senior lecturer and researcher based at the University of Derby, United Kingdom. He is an associate editor of the *International Journal of Art Therapy*.

***Climate Crisis Aware Therapists – Gary Nash, London/Hertfordshire:***

Within the wider environmental arts therapy community there is a growing theme of creativity generating change. Jamie's new book *Social action art therapy in times of crisis* (2022) looks at the part that the arts play in participating in change, challenging inaction, and imagining a different way forward. Jamie's work shows us how creativity mobilises ideas for change and

how communities, like this one, can galvanise care, support, and creativity in response to climate change, showing us that we are the change we need in the world.

As an example of being the change we need, the EATUK community are working together to support the new one-year course that has re-located to Devon, also the return of face-to-face workshops in London has developed with two autumn workshops and new dates for the Introduction to Environmental Arts Therapy course starting in April 2023.

The good news is that the income raised through our workshops are being used to fund the [www.environmentalartstherapyuk.co.uk](http://www.environmentalartstherapyuk.co.uk) website registration for the year ahead, providing a sustainable future for our community. Please take a look at the website and share the link with friends and networks.

### ***Innovation in the Arts in Therapy – CPD Events for 2023***

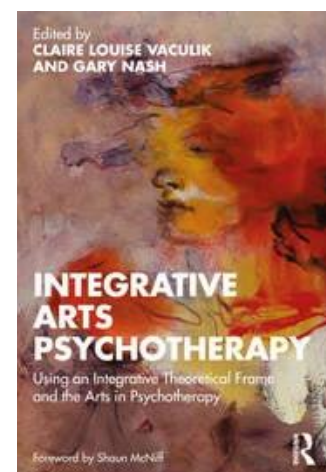
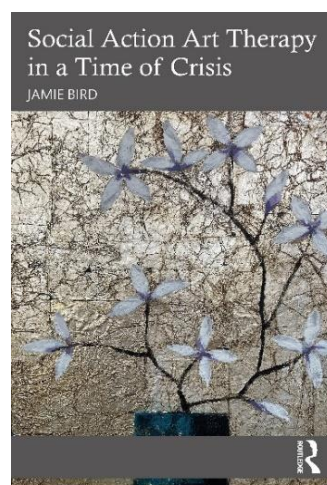
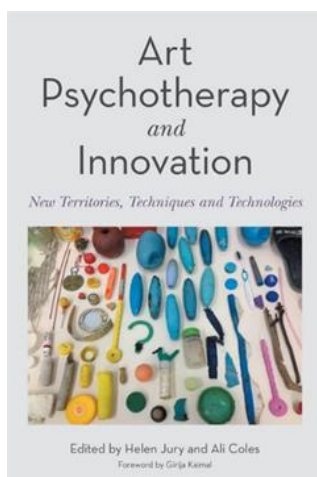
***Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023: 10am – 4pm on campus (Lindop Building, College Lane, Hatfield.***



***A combination of bi-lateral artmaking and the neuroscience of trauma to support practitioners to articulate how creativity and artmaking works within a trauma informed framework.***

*The afternoon session will incorporate an environmental arts therapy approach to working with the wider experience of social and environmental trauma and looking at how the arts can support us to work with resistance, mobilise a creative response, and activate political imagination at a time of ecological crisis with Jamie Bird presenting his work from Social Action Art Therapy (2022).*

*Jamie's book release coincides with two other books on Innovation and Integration in the arts therapies and we have invited the editors to join us and introduce the new publications on the day, it will be a great opportunity to celebrate. The titles are:*





# **The Way of Council and the Wisdom in Challenge**

**March 10th - 12th 2023**

**Cambridge**

**Through the practice of Council, we learn the balance and wisdom of the circle**



**The call of Council was a natural means of communication for our ancestors.**

## What is Council?

The fundamentals of carrying Council in your life and field of work.

- History and cross-cultural roots.
- Importance of creating special time and place. (Opening the circle)
- Different forms of Council.
- The way of story and the art of listening deeply.
- Participation and belonging to a larger body. (Council is Spirit)
- Safe container for dealing with difficult issues.
- Process of building trust by cultivating the values of listening, empathy and honesty in a non-hierarchical mode
- Five intentions of Council

## What & Why Council?

We will embrace stories from within our own lives looking at - how challenges and things going wrong, mistakes, conflicts and opposites can be a portal to a deeper consciousness and a greater understanding. An awaking!

We will begin to look at and experience Council as a way of life and a practice in balancing body/soul/mind & spirit.

## What we will explore

Council is not about fixing things and being right. It is a practice of speaking and listening from the heart; a means of opening to heart-felt compassionate expression and non-judgemental acceptance of how and who and where people are. Council is a practice of witnessing self, other and the environment at one and the same time. Council is a teaching that brings intention, acceptance and authentic speaking to the centre of one's heart, creating the possibility for truly engaged relationships, the understanding of community and an opening to wholeness.



In modern times the core practice of Council sets a container for empathy and honesty. It provides a way of bearing witness and of peace-making that accepts diversity in ourselves and each other, and helps cultivate non-hierarchical power. When in Council we step into a timeless space and spirit moves through us. We experience the deep connection to all life.

[Read more about Council](#)

**Start** – Friday, March 10th at [6.pm](#); ) Finish Sunday 12th by 5pm.

**Cost** - £190, (including £75, non-refundable deposit)

**To enquire or enrol** - please contact Pippa – [pippa@ancienthealingways.co.uk](mailto:pippa@ancienthealingways.co.uk)  
Tel - 44 (0) 7814959613

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**For more information**

[www.ancienthealingways.co.uk](http://www.ancienthealingways.co.uk)



***Climate aware proposal presented to the British Association of Art Therapists AGM on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022.***

*Proposal introduced by BAAT and EATUK member Gary Nash:*

“I think that collectively we have a certain awareness of where we are in relation to climate change. This proposal moves the narrative away from avoidance or mitigation and towards a pro-active engagement with our concerns and asks BAAT to develop a strategy for the association and its members.

The title of the proposal ***That the British Art Therapy Association develops a climate/environmental/ecological crisis strategy that outlines what it will do:*** includes the climate, the environment, and the ecological crisis that we are all in.

And the proposal asks BAAT Council to support BAAT members to be in a better position to work with the massive impact that the climate emergency is having upon us

- to help us understand the emotional and psychological impact
- to work creatively with resistance and loss
- so that we can support those we work with to face the impact that change and crisis is having on their lives and wellbeing.

***Proposal read in full:***

That BAAT develops a climate / environmental / ecological crisis strategy that outlines what it will to:

- a. identify, develop and promote ways that art therapy can support people and communities to think about, and address, the environmental and ecological crisis
- b. provide resources and CPD training to support members to work with people and communities to help understand the implications of the crisis
- c. collaborate with other organisations across the wider arts therapies, psychological therapies, and mental health fields to raise awareness of the crisis and the response the arts therapies can offer
- d. ensure the organisation minimises its own impact on the climate crisis

The proposal was voted for and approved by the BAAT membership in July 2022, Jamie and myself are acting as advisors to help BAAT implement a clear and ethical approach to supporting art therapists work with a climate crisis aware approach.

**EAT UK News**

Good News - the EatUK website is now online at: [www.environmentalartstherapyuk.co.uk](http://www.environmentalartstherapyuk.co.uk)

The website is available to all to share workshops, events, gatherings, and website addresses, so please do let the website person know any updates that can then be added. Simon has kindly set up the website and we are now looking for a volunteer to manage updates. We are also looking for someone to volunteer to compile the next newsletter for Summer 2023.





## International news - New Journal – *Ecopoiesis*

ECO-HUMAN THEORY AND PRACTICE  
ISSN 2713 – 184X

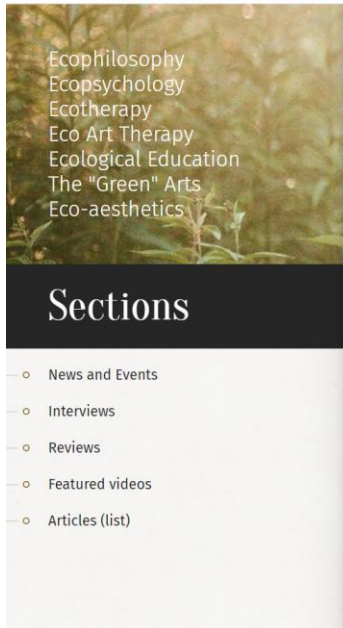


Current issue key articles



### EDITORIAL: THE RELEVANCE OF ECOPOIESIS AND A POIETIC ECOLOGY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS AND ARTS THERAPY

This issue of the *Ecopoiesis* journal focuses on the work of the nature-assisted arts therapies, based on ecopoiesis and a poietic ecology. In the era of the Anthropocene, we believe that the ecological arts therapies can implement a life-affirming creative initiative for sustainable development, one which allows humans to maintain health and well-being and to live in good relationship with their earthly home and the global web of life, appreciating its gifts and realising its beauty as an essential quality for all beings.



Home \ Reviews \ Bird, J. Book review: "ENVIRONMENTAL ARTS THERAPY: THE WILD FRONTIERS OF THE HEART."

### Bird, J. Book review: "ENVIRONMENTAL ARTS THERAPY: THE WILD FRONTIERS OF THE HEART."

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**Book review: "ENVIRONMENTAL ARTS THERAPY: THE WILD FRONTIERS OF THE HEART." Edited by Ian Siddons Heginworth and Gary Nash, London: Routledge, 2019**

**Reviewed by Jamie Bird, June 2021**

#### Abstract

This review outlines the book "Environmental Arts Therapy: The Wild Frontiers of the Heart", as reflecting the development of new health-promoting approaches and types of psychological support based on the alliance of nature and the arts. The book is comprised of twelve chapters, divided into five parts. Part one maps out the shape of environmental arts therapy in literature and within the contemporary history of art therapy as it is practiced in the British Isles. Part two integrates the theories of attachment and childhood emotional development into the practice of environmental art therapy. Part three explores notions of the feminine and masculine as they appear within relationships with the natural world. Part four focuses upon the theme of natural yearly cycles and how they relate to psychological processes of change. The final part brings ageing and palliative care into the picture. At various points in this collection of reports and reflections about environmental art therapy, climate crisis and environmental is explicitly addressed.

**Keywords:** art therapy, environmental arts therapy, ecopsychology, ecotherapy, dramatherapy

Jamie Bird has written a review of the new book Environmental arts therapy: The wild frontiers of the heart which appears in the latest edition of *Ecopoiesis*, please access following this link:

[https://en.ecopoiesis.ru/reviews/article\\_post/bird-j-book-review-environmental-arts-therapy-the-wild-frontiers-of-the-heart](https://en.ecopoiesis.ru/reviews/article_post/bird-j-book-review-environmental-arts-therapy-the-wild-frontiers-of-the-heart)