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EDITORIAL

Intersecting practices in arts and health research: Creating dialogue and seeking new modes of collaboration

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"The Arts and Health Research: Inspiring Creative Dialogue" special issue published in *Cogent Arts & Humanities* brings together a collection of scholarly, arts-based (or creative practice-based) research papers arising from a two-day interdisciplinary symposium held in Vancouver, Canada in April 2016. Our goal in the symposium was to bring together health researchers, artists and designers working within literary, performative and visual practices in order to identify mutual interests and foster cross-pollination between the arts and health, or more precisely across creative practices and health research. With this special issue, we continue this discussion. Our hope is that the collected contributions will stimulate wider interest in this rapidly growing field, and that the individual projects, methods and practices discussed here might help support other artists and researchers, seeking new modes of collaboration that cross not only scholarly disciplines, but also, perhaps more importantly, critical fields of inquiry, institutions, cultural practices and social differences.

The contributions to this collection identify a range of social, political, ethical and methodological issues arising in arts-based research and creative-practice related to health. As a whole, it resonates strongly with projects adopting a community-based focus and the challenges involved with adopting creative approaches to scholarship that seeks to support social justice and affect positive change. Across the breadth of practices represented herein, we see the arts—art, media and design practices—taken up in an array of projects in several distinct ways: promoting self-expression and therapeutic processes, amplifying the voices of research participants, supporting social citizenship and attachments to place, enriching understandings of the importance of culture as knowledge production, and working to educate health professionals.

The papers included here are situated in varying ways at the intersection between the arts, health research and creative practice. They cover a diverse set of topics and adopt a range of different styles and forms. A critical essay from sociologist Arthur Frank (2017) opens the collection by considering tensions in the relationship between storytelling, experience and health research. Interviews, conducted by Jacqueline Davidson, with Canadian painter Landon Mackenzie (Mackenzie & Davidson, 2017) and sculptor Otto Kamensek (Kamensek & Davidson, 2017) animate the question of how artistic practice gives voice to health and illness experiences, leading both to a kind of healing and the emergence of their artwork as a powerful means of communicating about illness experiences. An essay from medical educator Carol-Ann Courneya (2017) reveals how creativity can significantly enhance health professional education. And, in a visual essay from design researcher Hélène Day Fraser (2017), we learn how a design workshop featuring a process of "open-ended making" and embodied knowing can open up space to imagine new approaches to health research.

Moving on to the research articles, Martin, Korchinski, Fels, and Leggo (2017) and Walmsley, Cox, and Leggo (2017) examine issues of social justice through the lens of poetic inquiry, the former focusing on the theme of hope and its salience to women in prison and the latter investigating the complex social and ethical issues arising in the world of reproductive tourism. Kelson, Phinney, and

Lowry (2017) and Puurveen (2017) shift attention to the lifeworlds of persons affected by dementia and Alzheimer's disease: Kelson et al. (2017) examine the potential of public art to explore attachments to place and enhance social citizenship for people with early-onset dementia. Puurveen (2017) discusses how visual ethnography might be brought to bear on understanding the complex interactions that occur in end-of-life care.

Research articles from Belliveau and Nichols (2017) and from Charles and Lowry (2017) draw upon theatre and performance to examine the links between performing, witnessing and healing: Belliveau and Nichols (2017) look at how forms of trauma arising from veterans' experience of PTSD might be addressed through the theatrical production and the opportunities for both participant and audience involvement. Charles and Lowry (2017) contend that creative practice provides a means of respecting the inherent relationship between knowledge and culture and reconciling Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches to the historical trauma produced by Canada's Indian Residential School System.

What new points of synergy are or might be generated from this collection? As the articles in this special issue illustrate, the interplay between arts-based and creative practice research in the field of health is generating an exciting momentum. But with this momentum comes many challenges, some new and others more familiar. From our perspective, one of the more pressing challenges comes in the form of barriers that continue to impede collaboration between health researchers and artists. In a very basic sense, there is a lack of shared vocabulary among scholars—whether we identify as creative practitioners (artist, designer, media maker), health researchers, cultural theorists or front line workers. This lack of common understanding and, at times lack of mutual respect for disciplinary differences, can undermine equitable collaborations and respectful involvement of communities, especially those vulnerable to misapprehension and misrepresentation—e.g. survivors of trauma, marginalized women, people with dementia and Indigenous groups.

The need for ethical review is one point of potential conflict. On the one hand, many artists and designers are unfamiliar with this institutional norm and the expectations inherent in review, while many review boards are uncertain how to evaluate applications employing arts-based and other innovative methods. On the other hand, as non-artists/designers take up creative, visual approaches that allow them to move beyond forms of representation, documentation or performance conventional to text-based academic research, we need to develop our understandings of technical processes and signifying practices. Learning how to work with colour, sound, lighting, composition, not to mention recognizing historical references and mastering the tools of creative expression (cameras, microphones, stage lights, paint brushes, kilns, pencils and pens) are fundamental to professional art and design practice and advanced education. While command of material skills and cultural awareness offers unique opportunities to create and mobilize new knowledge, we need to recognize the ethical and intellectual challenges involved. The shift from text to visual imagery or time-based media presupposes a changing locus of knowledge creation and dissemination. As the works collected here suggest, the move from library to gallery, studio to hospital room, lecture hall to theatre stage, classroom to public thoroughfare as key sites of knowledge exchange not only changes the academic remit to include different places (localized fields of study), but it also brings to light the need to better comprehend the spatial dynamics inherent in knowledge production (questions about social location and generalizability).

Another example of disciplinary difference and at times discomfort has to do with the circulation of the research output and arbitrary distinctions between "artworks" and scholarship. The lines separating intellectual property, knowledge sharing and cultural production become blurred when scholarship and creative practice merge. Specifically, in relation to this special issue, the language of Creative Commons agreements caused confusion and concern, particularly in relation to permissions to re-mix and re-use content. This new ethics of publishing, while flying in the face of more conventional publishing norms, does raise key questions about the location of, access to and ownership of government funded research specifically and knowledge more generally.

The confluence of interests, communities and institutions that have come together for this preliminary dialogue on the intersection of art and health research represents astounding breadth. We are left with as many questions as responses to the methodological concerns that first gave rise to the symposium and then to this special issue. It is our hope that readers will continue to make connections with ideas and approaches in ways that both critically and creatively expand the scope of scholarly research and professional art/design practice. We are deeply indebted to all of our contributors for their work, openness and patience with the editorial process. We hope and trust that the juxtaposition of individual texts will both resonate within the broader contexts this work emerges from and continue to inspire ground breaking new work.

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