

2018 Conference News: Unique Opportunities to Learn, Connect and Create Art

Heidi Tournoux-Hanshaw, MA, LPC-AT-S, ATR-BC, ATCS, Conference Chair
May 3, 2018

The American Art Therapy Association's 49th Annual Conference to be held October 31 to November 4, 2018 in Miami provides a unique opportunity for art therapists, future art therapists, and others in related mental health fields to come together at a pivotal time in the history of our profession. This year's theme, *Honoring Yesterday, Celebrating Today, and Building for Tomorrow* could not be more appropriate. We have much to honor, celebrate, and discuss about the future of art therapy, [and we hope you will be part of it!](#)

Expanding Your Knowledge

Our conference is considered to be the “premier art therapy conference” where attendees from across the U.S. and around the world come to learn about the latest innovations in art therapy practice and cutting-edge research in the field. Nearly 300 presenters, many of whom are experts in the profession will energize the program, and infuse our 225 sessions with the latest theories and techniques. **Attendees should plan to leave the conference feeling more knowledgeable, energized and inspired!**

We will continue to offer the expanded program schedule that begins with our opening plenary session on Thursday, November 1, at 8:00 a.m., featuring a keynote presentation by Dr. Joy DeGruy, an internationally and nationally renowned researcher, educator, presenter and the acclaimed author of *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome – America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing*. Learning continues throughout Friday, and Saturday with most of the educational sessions concluding by 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Another unique feature of our conference is the very popular “**experiential learning**” sessions: workshops offered on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and advanced practice courses, offered on Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and on Sunday from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. Along with didactic instruction, these sessions include a “hands-on” experiential learning approach with art directives and supplies. Workshops and advanced practice courses are the only sessions for which attendees must pre-register and pay additional fees. They **typically fill up by the conclusion of early bird registration, so if you want to participate in these, be sure to [register early](#)**. All other educational sessions are “general seating,” and participants simply go to the session room at the designated time.



The AATA is returning to the traditional Poster Session Format this year. Plan to attend sessions on Friday from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. where presenters will share information in a “graphic” style, using a traditional poster. They will present and be available for Q&A. For the first time, we are also offering **Undergraduate Posters** which are also shared using a “graphic” style. The Undergrad Posters will be presented on Friday from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. For more information on educational session formats and continuing education [visit the conference website](#) or [download the detailed conference brochure](#).



Networking and Developing Relationships

Our program is infused with unique opportunities to network with leading art therapists from around the world. Miami is considered to be a “global city” and serves as the perfect setting for attendees to meet others from different cultures, perspectives, communities, and experiences. Here are a few of the networking opportunities:

An International Shared Interest Group will be held on Wednesday, October 31 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. This meeting is for those living and working in other countries, international students in the U.S., or anyone interested in international art therapy. The meeting takes the place of the International Exchange or Focus Group held at previous conferences. Come network with art therapists from various regions of the world where you can discover what is happening and inform others of your interests and skills. [Click here](#) for more information.

The Local Arrangements Committee is also planning to host several informal **meet and greet opportunities** for individuals who identify with any of these groups: LGBTQIA, Multicultural, and Men. These events will be scheduled on Wednesday in the

late afternoon, just before the Newcomer’s Session and are designed for conference attendees to make connections with peers. If there are additional interest groups that want to have a “meet and greet” opportunity, please email conferenceinfo@arttherapy.org. Watch for more information about these gatherings on the [conference website](#) and future *Art Therapy Today* articles.

The **Newcomer’s Session** on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. is a time for first-time attendees to meet other first-time attendees, receive an informative overview of the conference and learn tips from experienced conference leaders. A meet up is scheduled for **Retired and Retiring attendees** on Friday, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the Open Art Studio. Participants will complete a unique art activity, share their experiences, meet other retirees, and have some bonding time.

On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday during the **lunch break**, from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., a cash and carry lunch will be provided by the Hyatt, to include a-la-carte items and healthy menu options. Attendees can purchase lunch and enjoy networking time with other attendees at the tables provided in the Exhibit Hall.

Be sure to review the entire program for other networking opportunities including the [Social Justice Caucus](#), [Special Session for Students](#), [Art Therapists of Color](#), [Asian Art Therapists Focus Group](#) and several groups and sessions for art therapy educators. The [online schedule is a good place to search the program for “key words.”](#)

Artmaking and Self-Expression

The **Open Art Studio** will provide an inventive space for attendees to create and experiment with the complimentary art supplies generously provided by Blick Art Materials. Escape from the hustle and bustle of the conference routine and come to the studio to create. Use the complimentary art supplies to help envision, create, unwind, and simply have fun. Watch the studio as it transforms into a gallery where your art fills the walls! The studio opens on Thursday morning and will be open on Friday and Saturday until 5:00 p.m.



There are several workshops that will be held in the Studio, including the [Multicultural Committee’s “Embracing Diversity: Piece by Piece” Quilt Project](#) from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and [Spin Me a Yarn](#), on Friday, from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. **Both of these sessions are free, but registration is required, and seats are limited. You can register for both of these sessions via the [online registration site.](#)**



We are also introducing a brand new self-expression activity this year, called “**I AM.**” Attendees will be able to write an expression using the provided materials and post it on the walls in the exhibit hall to create a large collage.



We hope that the highlights from these three areas: learning, networking and artmaking have provided a good overview of some of the components of our conference that make it truly unique, and we hope you will [register today for the conference!](#)

AATA Members receive a discount on conference registration, so if your membership is not current or would like to become a member visit: <https://arttherapy.org/membership-starts-here/> or call (888) 290-0878 or (703) 548-5860.

Visit the conference website for more information! www.arttherapyconference.com



4875 Eisenhower Ave., Suite 240, Alexandria, VA 22304, [Contact Us](#)