

AATA Featured Member

August 24, 2016

Michael Franklin, PhD, ATR-BC, is the recipient of the 2016 Distinguished Educator Award, an honor conferred on a Professional member of the Association in recognition of significant contributions to the education of professionals in the field of art therapy, specifically in the area of outstanding teaching and the development of innovative educational practices.



Dr. Franklin, ATR-BC, is Professor and Chair of the Graduate Art Therapy Program at Naropa University and is the primary designer and coordinator for the Naropa Community Art Studio in Boulder, Colorado. Prior to Naropa, he practiced as a clinician and directed the Art Therapy programs at the College of St. Teresa and Bowling Green State University. Michael is an international lecturer and has published numerous articles on various subjects including aesthetics, self-esteem, AIDs iconography, interpretive strategies, community based art therapy, and contemplative approaches including yoga, meditation and empathic methods. Michael's current research as an artist and writer focuses on integrating the relationships between art therapy, social engagement, yoga philosophy, and meditation. He has a forthcoming book soon to be published in early 2017 by the State University of New York (SUNY) Press entitled “Art as Contemplative Practice: Expressive Pathways to the Self”.

Regarded by his students as a thoughtful and supportive instructor, he challenges them to achieve levels of excellence and insight beyond what they may initially think themselves capable of. When asked about Dr. Franklin's teaching style and contributions to the field, one student reveals, “For me, he has been a true mentor. He holds the bar just a little bit higher than I think I can reach.”

Deborah Bowman, PhD, Dean of Naropa University's Graduate School of Counseling and Psychology reiterates his particular skill in this area by stating, “Demonstrating a commitment to

keeping the curriculum current, he ensures our students receive a balance of theoretical and experiential learning through service in the greater community. He sets a high standard for our students while meeting them with a compassionate humanity and respect for their unique expression as budding art therapists and counselors.”

Dr. Franklin’s writings have contributed strongly to the growth and understanding of Transpersonal/Contemplative art therapy and numerous co-publications and presentations on the subject are credited to his name. In one recommendation letter the writer explains, “Even as a writer, he maintains his art therapy educator hat, writing articles and book chapters specifically with his students in mind. He writes what is needed to bridge the gap of currently published material on the subjects we need in classes.” Furthermore, Dr. Franklin’s “expertise in art based research methods, community-based approaches to art, art therapy, and the expressive therapies” have also earned him recognition and invitations to teach from countries around the globe.

Dr. Franklin's outstanding contributions as an art therapy educator, practitioner, researcher and author are commendable. We congratulate him for this distinguished and highly deserved achievement!



"From the Place to Pray Series" by Michael Franklin.

