

PUBLIC EVENTS

Public Lecture

EXPRESSIVE ARTS: A PURPOSEFUL ENDEAVOUR TO MEET A CHALLENGE AESTHETICALLY

Clients are often challenged and restricted by situations in which they feel helpless. During an expressive arts therapy or consulting session, the client may be confronted by another challenge, an artistic one. This challenge can be met on aesthetic considerations. How can we understand this process, so that we can help clients to take a step toward well-being?

In this public lecture/demonstration with **Paolo J. Knill**, we will explore this question by applying a model that we might call "purposeful substitution".

February 3rd, Friday, 7-9PM

ISIS Studio, 66 Gerrard St. East, 3rd Floor
Free admission

Paolo J. Knill is one of the founders of the expressive arts therapy programme in Lesley University and is now the Provost of the European Graduate School.

Spring Symposium

The Sea of Stories **European Spring Symposium** **The Advanced Expressive Arts Therapy** **Messila- Lahti- Finland** **April 18th-23rd, 2006**

In this spring symposium we share and create stories in various ways. By writing, playing, dancing, singing and even with photographs we find ways to form and present our unique, odd, brand new, funny, sad, true or whatever story there is to tell. Through the arts we celebrate together the richness of the Sea of Stories.

The Symposium is hosted by Institute Inartes
Kirsi Lybeck, Director, CAGS
E-mail: symposium@inartes.fi
Tel: +358 (0) 40 770 4299

Workshops

'Knowing through the Arts'

A six-part workshop series throughout 2006

Expressive Arts Introductory- February 19th

Music workshop- March 18th and 19th

Dance/Movement studio- April 8th

Expressive Arts Introductory- April 29th

Theatre Studio- May 27th

Poetry/Writing Workshop- June 17th and 18th

Painting Studio- June 24th

1-day workshops are \$65.00, and 2-day workshops are \$80.00.

For more information please log on www.isis-canada.org or call (416) 539-9728 or send an email to admin@isis-canada.org

Poetry

Gili Haimovich, Board of Director/ISIS-Israel Graduate

Like an apology

Though my hands are beaten
Their ability to feel hasn't been damaged,
But has darkened the ability to be accurate,

As when drawing on paper.

Open Mike Poetry

Come join the ISIS community

for an afternoon of poetry with **Elizabeth McKim**, poet laureate of the European Graduate School and author of a book of poems, *The RedThread*. Followed by an Open Mike session.

March 26th, Sunday at 3:30PM

ISIS Studio, 66 Gerrard St. East, 3rd floor
Free admission

Call for TA's

ISIS-Canada Graduates are invited to submit a letter of interest by April 14th, 2006 for the 06-07 academic year. Please include why you're interested in volunteering as a Teaching Assistant and what you've been up to in the field since graduating. Send a Fax or e-mail to the ISIS office.

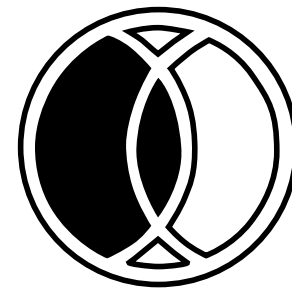
Apply to ISIS

We will start accepting applications to be considered for interviews for the Fall 2006 class after February 1st, 2006. This is an ongoing admissions process and will remain open until all 18 places in the first year class have been filled. Completed applications will be processed on a first-come-first-served basis. Potential students are encouraged to apply early in 2006 to guarantee an interview.

Call the office for more information and to receive an application and brochure.
You may also download one from our website:
www.isis-canada.org

ISIS Orientation

Our 2006 Orientation Evenings will be held for prospective students on **Sunday, February 12th, and April 9th, from 4 to 6PM and Thursday, June 22nd, from 6-8 PM at the ISIS Studio, 66 Gerrard St., East, 3rd Floor.** Admission is free. Come meet the faculty and find out more about ISIS.



2006

CONTENTS:

What is our response to madness?

ISIS-Canada's 15th Year

Community News

Public Events

"Knowing Through the Arts" Workshops

Orientation Evenings

ISIS-REPORT

Newsletter for ISIS-Canada, No.20

A non-profit Educational Institution for Expressive Arts Therapy

What is our response to madness?

Lisa Herman, ISIS-Canada acting Co-Director

Recently, I sat on a panel at the 'Rendezvous with Madness' Film Festival at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, and I wondered what I was doing there. The filmmakers who made up the rest of the panel spoke eloquently about their experience of making meaning from chaos, trying to shape their understanding of the world so that it could be transmitted to others and how they used the arts to contain overwhelming emotion. They discussed entering the process of not knowing and waiting for emergent surprises that changed their way of looking at the world. They played with multimedia, violated the rules and gave the work new forms. I wasn't sure why they needed a psychotherapist to be sitting with them. Were they not already doing all that we as expressive arts therapists are practicing? As I listened, I continued my questioning. Don't these artists fulfil the goals of our project? Why do we need therapy as a separate profession? Should we not be encouraging the public to engage in intermodal art-making as a healing act inside existing interdisciplinary artistic venues, and forget the academic psychological contexts? Who needs the perhaps, outdated model of expert guidance by a trained professional to help solve problems? And anyway, are not government and managed health-care organizational restrictions making the creative act of therapy untenable? Is it not better to call ourselves artists, maybe mentors of artists, and let the psychology world continue on its increasingly positivist path?

I did ask the panel a question. I asked how did they get response to their work. Especially in film, was the spattered applause at the end of a showing fulfilling? Did their friends give them what they needed? Were they satisfied, after all the work, with what came back? There were some sighs and a little cynical laughter from the filmmakers, indicating to me that perhaps they were not that satisfied. This made me think there is a *raison d'être* for the expressive arts therapist.

What is it that we are specifically trained to do? We are trained in responsibility – to respond in an ethical, sensitive way, i.e. we are trained in aesthetic response. We are trained to hold the space for the other and to attend to what is going on for them. We are trained to delight in their achievements and empathize with their sorrow. We learn at ISIS-Canada how we grow attached to our clients and to stay aware of our attachment and our love for them and work to be facilitators for their growth. We learn to respond from the heart; to respond aesthetically to what they do and who they are and teach them to do the same for themselves. We are of service to these others and we remember that they are uniquely themselves and teach them that this is so and this is good. We stay aware of our separateness and take ownership of our own experience, offering this experience as a gift. We form relationships with these others and provide our compassionate engagement in their creative acts. We stay knowing that they have come to us for help and that they are vulnerable and we are the helpers.

Continued on next page

ISIS COMMUNITY NEWS

ISIS-Canada's 15th Year

David Yeh, Faculty/ISIS graduate

November 17, 2005 marked ISIS-Canada's 15th Anniversary COMPLETE EMBRACE Benefit Concert at the Betty Oliphant Theatre, housed inside Canada's National Ballet School in downtown Toronto. The Masters of Ceremonies were Steve and Ellen Levine, co-founders of ISIS-Canada. The event showcased the extraordinary talents of internationally-acclaimed pianist Alma Petchersky and Toronto Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster and violinist Jacques Israelievitch. The evening's highlight, without a doubt, featured a beautiful closing duet of Arvo Pärt's Spiegel im Spiegel. The reception that followed honoured not only ISIS-Canada's fifteen years in the GTA community, but Alma Petchersky's birthday. Mr. Maximilian King-Fisher, our official Cake-Taster (and son of an ISIS student), proffers his concluding remarks: "I liked the strawberry cake the most. Pure ambrosia! Though if it weren't for the whipped cream, the strawberries would have overpowered the sugar." The event was a wonderful and heartfelt experience for all who attended, young and old. Thank you to all our volunteers and donors for their support. A very special thank you from ISIS-Canada is extended to Alma Petchersky and Jacques Israelievitch for generously donating their time and talent to this evening of celebration.

Board of Directors

ISIS-Canada welcomes our new board members:

Gili Haimovich, graduated from the school of Expressive Arts Therapy and Psychodrama in ISIS Israel and also a graduate of the Arts School Camera Obscura – Movie and Television stream. Gili is an expressive arts therapist, an author and a poet. She is currently volunteering at the Muki Baum Association in North York for children and adults with emotional and developmental disabilities.

Dale Thompson is a recent graduate of ISIS Canada and a practicing visual artist who has exhibited his work in Toronto and New York. He is also a co-founding member of AWOL Gallery, an artist-run-space showcasing emerging and mid career artists/curators in the GTA.

ISIS-CANADA IS SEEKING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

For more info please contact the ISIS office or email **Scott MacLean (President)** at scott.maclean@teknion.com

The Board of ISIS-Canada endeavours to keep the arts alive as an integral part of our lives and the life of our communities. By serving on our Board you can help shape ISIS-Canada's future.

What is our response to madness?

Expressive arts therapists acknowledge our own madness. We know we are all on the same continuum of sanity/insanity, each with our own psychopathology. And still we maintain our ongoing commitment to stay active participants in the world, to make art and to live artfully, even though we sometimes despair. We encourage our clients to be active participants in their personal worlds and in their larger communities. We have an agenda and it is to both maintain and increase the beauty on this planet. We don't hide the agenda. We celebrate it. And we make art too. We do it to survive and to be more than survivors.

When I work with mental health agencies, I often ask who is caring for the helpers? This care that I mean is more than what is traditionally called 'supervision' where 'cases' are presented for observation and analysis. I want to know who is responding to the therapist's madness? Who is providing the space and time for the abyss that all of us are facing and that our clients are (maybe) experiencing somewhat more acutely?

As expressive arts therapists, we learn that we too need response and that we must have empathic understanding in our own lives in order to help others. Our madness needs recognition. Our vulnerability and our suffering and our rage do not need mirroring, but rather call for a one-of-a-kind encounter with a unique other. Our joy and achievements need to be held by another's living presence and our egos need to be tempered by them too. We need those reality checks and nudges to our grandiosity. We must have artful expressions so our artful selves and the thingly things we create will continue to emerge and be nurtured and prodded and shaped and moved and exploded. We have a responsibility for human connection as much as our clients do.

Joan Didion's new book on coping with her husband's death, 'The Year of Magical Thinking', says Rachel Donadio in The New York Times, was written in order to "impose some order on the unruly agonies in her life". Didion confronts an absence of meaning and tries to stay sane by working with fragments of memory. In her article, Donadio quotes Didion's commencement address at the University of California, Riverside in 1975:

"I'm not telling you to make the world better because I don't think that progress is necessarily part of the package. I'm just telling you to live in it. Not just to endure it, not just to suffer it, not just to pass through it, but live in it. To look at it. To try and get the picture. To live recklessly. To take chances. To make your own work and take pride in it. To seize the moment. And if you ask me why you should do that, I could tell you that the grave's a fine and private place, but none I think do there embrace. Nor do they sing there, or write, or argue or see the tidal bore on the Amazon, or touch their children. And that's what there is to do and get it while you can and good luck at it."

These words are a fine credo for expressive arts therapists. We preach this message of aesthetic response while providing the crucible of the arts for learning to do so. We provide space and time for the fragments of others' lives to be reconstructed in a new way. We do this while offering a responsive relational presence that respects both authors and their works. This is what we are trained for and why we are on panels and in offices and mental health agencies and communities. This is why we are both artists and therapists and proceed with our work in the world with dignity and respect for the arts, our clients and ourselves.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gili Haimovich
Scott MacLean
Dale Thompson

DIRECTORS

Rowesa Gordon
Lisa Herman (acting Co-director)
Steve Levine (on leave)

FACULTY

Rowesa Gordon
Lisa Herman
Ellen Levine (on leave)
Steve Levine (on leave)
Lee Shields
David Yeh

PRACTICUM COORDINATOR

Lee Shields

PRACTICUM SUPERVISOR

Melanie Nesbitt

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR & FINANCIAL AID OFFICER

Pamela Rosales

The International School of Interdisciplinary Studies is a non-profit, charitable, educational institution which offers a three-year training programme in Expressive Arts Therapy.

Charitable Registration
No. 886568252RR0001

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Dreaming, Traveling, Making Art

A Report from Ellen and Steve Levine

Greetings to all our friends in the ISIS community. This year we've been on a leave-of-absence. We're living in Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts, dreaming of new projects and new ideas to bring back to Toronto. In between dreams, we've been or will be traveling to teach in various places: Switzerland (The European Graduate School), Toronto (ISIS-Canada), Cambridge (Lesley University), New York (The Harvest Symposium), San Francisco (California Institute of Integral Studies), Israel (a pre-conference workshop on the arts and social change at the Imagine 2006 conference in Tel Aviv, the phototherapy program at Musrara School of Photography in Jerusalem, ISIS Israel in Tel Aviv), Geneva (L'Atelier), and Stockholm (Swedish Expressive Therapy Institute). Traveling is exhausting but it takes us into a wider world.

Part of our time on the Vineyard has been spent doing arts-based research on the arts and social responsibility. The theme that emerged from the work had to do with the experience of torture and our capacity - or incapacity - to respond to the suffering of those who have been abused in this way. This has been a powerful process for us and we've begun to share it with others. We firmly believe that the expressive arts can be a force not only for personal but also for social and political change. We hope to carry this work further when we return.

See you all next year!

Honours & Awards

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER & FIRESIDE FUNDRAISER

The members of the **Jennifer Haberman/Sjenta Dancer Scholarship Fund** are very pleased to announce the winner of this year's JSDH \$900 scholarship to an ISIS-Canada student, **Carol Barrett**. Carol is the seventh recipient of this award.

The JSDH Scholarship Committee (**Nishe Catherine, Arthur Haberman, Ayrli MacEachern, and Bella French**) with Carol's help, is planning the annual Fireside Fundraiser scheduled for February 18th, 2006. Check our website for more info about this fun and heartwarming event