

Working multimodally to experience, make, and come to know through creative relationships

Amanda E. Woodford

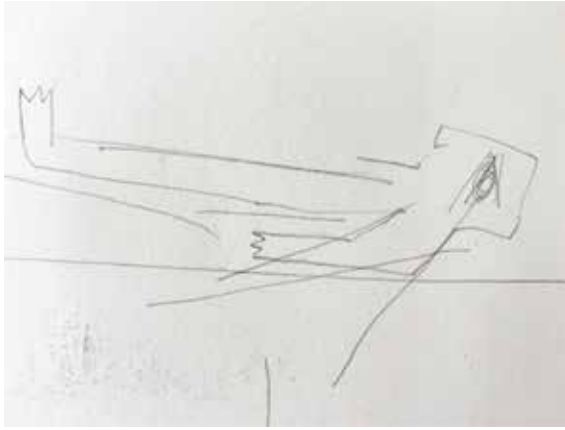
I formed this multimodal text in response to my colleague Dr Ariel Moy's explainer on working multimodally, published here in *JoCAT* (Moy, 2023). In a draft of Ariel's work, she wrote, "working multimodally to experience, make, and come to know through creative relationships". To respond, I returned to an experience of inquiring during my Professional Doctorate in Therapeutic Arts Practice studies. I selected a 'creative relationship' from my data-gathering inquiry work with participant Anouk. I took the following images from my arts-making journal and the data postcard I sent to Anouk as an intersubjective response. I added words beneath the photos to describe how I worked multimodally to experience and make, which resulted in me learning more about Anouk's experience of living with her on-going pain, through the creative relationship.

The postcard Anouk sent me, which described an experience of her pain that month and to which I was responding to, can be seen on page 504, volume 3 of the research, *An artistic holding of mended bodies in pain: A form of mending through therapeutic arts-based inquiries* (Woodford, 2023). Through this way of researching, I gained an embodied sense of Anouk's experience, different from when I first encountered her postcard image and poetic words. I felt the difficulty and emotions that Anouk described more closely than looking alone could give. I felt a version of the pain in my body, shaping my response to Anouk and our continued dialogue.

References

Moy, A (2023). Explainer – Working multimodally. *JoCAT*, 18(2). <https://www.jocat-online.org/e-23-moy>

Woodford, A. E. (2023). *An artistic holding of mended bodies in pain. A form of mending through therapeutic arts-based inquiries* [Doctoral dissertation, The MIECAT Institute]. Research. <https://miecat.edu.au/research/an-artistic-holding-of-mended-bodies-in-pain-a-form-of-mending-through-therapeutic-arts-based-inquiries/>



I redrew Anouk's pain-filled image. I explored her words through surface, materials, tools, and sensory considerations.



I moved my body in response to images and words, outside, in nature. My movements photographed, photos collaged.



I made frottage (prints) of the collages, touching and seeing the body shapes. I cut pattern pieces for a fabric appliqué.



*In the darkness,
pain scratches and scraps away
at the nerves,
all that can be heard,
agitation grows,
to the edges,
soaked into the body.
Silence.*

*Leaving the physical form,
rising from the pain,
stretching out of its skin.
Lighter, floating above,
rippling into the softer
blissful form,
almost unformed,
weightless,
into the clouds.
Calm.*

Fabric and pencil shapes with paint, formed a final image. The image accompanied by poetic words, as an expression of knowing.

Published: December 2023

Issue: Vol.18, No.2

About the author

Amanda E Woodford

ProfDoc, MA, ECAT, AThR

Amanda is a registered creative arts therapist (AThR), mixed-media artist, academic and professional practice supervisor. She is an educator at The MIECAT Institute and works out of her therapeutic arts studio, Holding Space, in Ōtepoti Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand. Amanda has recently completed a Professional Doctorate in Therapeutic Arts Practice, investigating experiences of living with post-operative on-going pain straddling arts-based and artistic research. Her current research brings attention to intersubjectivity with materials and emerging forms; and her past work includes creating spaces to tell life stories about culture. She loves details and, as a bricoleuse, enjoys finding alternative ways to do things to locate an individualised fit within a community of practices or ideas.



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Cite this creative piece

Woodford, A.E.. (2023). Working multimodally to experience, make, and come to know through creative relationships. Multimodal showings. *JoCAT*, 18(2). <https://www.jocat-online.org/c-23-multimodal-woodford>