

Global Researcher Introduces New Therapeutic & Educational Method Utilizing Art In Italy

Comprehensive Studies Show Drawing Facilitates Memory, Enhances Learning and Promotes Well-Being

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND, July 3, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Art Therapy Ottarsdottir, provider of a method where artistic expression is used for both therapy and education, today announced that its founder [Dr. Unnur Ottarsdottir](#), a global pioneer of the art educational therapy method – was honored to teach a seminar at Art Therapy Italiana and invited to give a keynote speech at the ninth annual Lab Talento International Conference, at the University of Pavia in Italy. Ottarsdottir covered topics such as memory drawing, emotional processing through art making, writing-images, and the importance of artistic expression in education.



From left: Camelia Corlatanu, medical doctor, art therapist, Italian translator; Dr Unnur Ottarsdottir, art therapist, artist, teacher, lecturer, researcher; Mimma Della Cagnoletta, art therapist, psychoanalyst, artist, founder of Art Therapy Italiana

[A landmark study conducted by Ottarsdottir in 2000](#), was the first comprehensive research project that systematically compared the impact of drawing and writing on memory functions. Participants were asked to draw the content of certain words and write other words down. Results showed that people were able to remember their drawings as much as five times more than when they wrote words down, nine weeks after the original memorization. Ottarsdottir has also spent years researching art educational therapy, a method where artistic expression is used for therapeutic and educational purposes - connecting emotional processing and children's learning through drawing.

LabTalento, the Italian Laboratory of Research and Development of Potential, Talent and Intellectual Giftedness, sponsors the yearly event to share current Italian and international research for professionals working with the gifted. Ottarsdottir's keynote lecture at the



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conference was attended mainly by psychologists and teachers who took part in a drawing and writing exercise to demonstrate the difference between memorization by drawing and writing. “I was pleased with the results which showed half of the participants at the keynote lecture remembered their drawings more than written words, and almost half remembered them equally. Only one remembered their written words more,” said Ottarsdottir.

Additionally, Ottarsdottir delivered the seminar "Art Therapy and Learning: Educational Art Therapy" at Art Therapy Italiana to school art therapists. Along with memory drawing, which again facilitates memory and the processing of emotions, Ottarsdottir introduced basic concepts of her art educational therapy method. The seminar and lecture also explored the possibilities of memory drawing in helping with the processing of vulnerable and complex emotions related to trauma.

“I practice art therapy daily in my private practice. I see mostly children and many of them have been traumatized, for example by the death of a parent. Some of the children also have specific learning difficulties. I also supervise both teachers and art therapists,” Ottarsdottir said. “As an art therapist, I am frequently amazed by the transformative potential inherent in artistic expression and the therapeutic relationship”.

Ottarsdottir received a doctoral degree from the University of Hertfordshire in 2006, and a Master’s in Art Therapy from the Pratt Institute in 1991, along with her B.Ed. from Iceland College of Education in 1986. She also holds a BA and Master’s in Visual Art. She founded Art Therapy Ottarsdottir in 1991 where she serves as director, art therapist, teacher and supervisor. She has also worked with a variety of institutions and organizations, including the Reykjavik Academy where she follows academic pursuits such as research and writing.

Ottarsdottir has published articles and book chapters and taught at universities internationally. An article about her research "[Processing Emotions and Memorising Coursework through Memory Drawing](#)" was published in ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine. Lastly, she serves on the steering group of the Research Committee of The European Federation of Art Therapy (EFAT).

Dr. Ottarsdottir is available for interviews about art therapy, art educational therapy, drawing in education and the memory drawing study. To schedule an interview, contact unnur@unnurarttherapy.is or +354 8670277.

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Dr. Unnur Ottarsdottir has practiced art therapy in private practice and in a variety of

organizations, including schools for over three decades. She has taught art therapy at the Iceland University of the Arts, the continuing education department of the University of Akureyri, the British Association of Art Therapists, the Art Therapy Association of Romania, the University of Hertfordshire, and Art Therapy Italiana. Unnur is a researcher at the Reykjavik Academy. She has written articles and book chapters about art therapy in education, memory drawing, and the methodology of grounded theory.

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