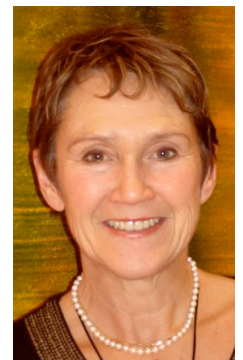




Our Third AAATNA Conference

Our guest speaker, Regine Kurek, deliberately took off her Arscura hat and put on her AAATNA hat. This was necessary for her, since the conference took place at the studio of Arscura School for Living Art, also the home of The Christian Community north of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Regine was one of the co-founders when AAATNA shifted from New York to Toronto, but she has not been part of the executive for some time.

Regine started the conference by reminding us how important it is for us to be proud of what we have to offer to the world through our Anthroposophic roots. Future recognition can arise out of people seeing us for what and who we are, rather than trying to fit in and “be like everybody else” in the art therapy community. On Friday afternoon we began with an artistic exercise, the instructions being to paint a picture of “me as a flower or tree in the landscape of Anthroposophy”. This very interesting process became the source of self assessment and insight as we listened to the parable from the bible of “The Sower of Seeds”. In this story we heard of four ways that the seeds were able to grow or not and used this image to see how we use the seeds of Anthroposophy in our life. To do this, we looked at our picture in small groups and helped each other to objectively “see” our roots, stems, blossoms or crowns in the landscape. After this we continued in the small groups and were asked to share with each other what we found accessible and “worked” for us and what is a challenge in Anthroposophy, as we meet it. These qualities we shared in the large group.



The shift in the room was amazing as we shared and one participant pointed out how a listening mood seemed to fill the room. Regine asked if perhaps the 'Being of Anthroposophia' had visited and become interested..... Before we shared dinner together, we went back to our paintings to bring something new - a transformation. The paintings changed dramatically as we reviewed our relationship to Anthroposophy.



In the evening lecture, Regine brought us a picture of the heavenly hierarchies and their working in the world. We touched on the task and our relationship to our angel, but the main focus was on the Archangels and their interest in supporting us to develop a language for our work. Archangels want to support communities, especially groups of people who are teachers, therapists and reformers. Their guidance can help us to identify our work and how to work out of a spiritual source. She talked particularly about Michael who is also a time spirit since 1879 and wants to help us re-spiritualize our understanding of the work. We heard of the seven Archangels who guide human civilizations in 350 year segments. Four of those have a particular importance for us as art therapists.

After Michael we looked at Raphael and his special leadership for healers. The story of Tobias and his journey, became a healing journey for us. Finally, Gabriel, the one who announces to Mary that she will bear a child, was introduced with qualities of deep listening, caring and support.

Mary hears all this and "keeps it in her heart". This approach to healing is a very gentle, caring gesture. Uriel, the spirit of Mid-summer was touched on but might be the topic of a later seminar because of the cosmic nature of this archangel.



We took all this into our sleep and returned the next morning to a brief overview of the need for watercolour technique for therapeutic painting and also for the need to work less into the “astral body” but more into the “etheric”. The more physically ill or weak a person is, the less talk there should be so the colour can really do its work... We also were given a colour circle for breathing: Exhaling into spring (peach blossom) to summer (greens) and then inhaling into autumn (reds and golds) and winter (violets and blues).

The day now turned to quite another task: We had the honour of meeting someone who was willing to tell us her struggles with lifelong health issues. We recognized a real illness picture and now gathered into three groups for the next two intensive sessions. In the groups we had a facilitator and focused intensely on one stream, either Gabriel, Raphael or Michael. Each group worked with a story and then a picture, building a possible healing path through one particular gesture. We were “building the temple” into which we then invited our patient (imaginatively, in reality she had left the room).

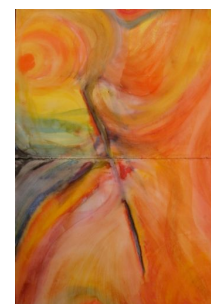
After lunch we set out to paint a picture together as a group from this earlier conversation and study-preparation.

In the final sharing in the large group we then became witnesses for each others’ processes and realized just what an amazing and deep journey we each had experienced in our groups. Each group had worked through obstacles and difficulties in their painting process but come out with a picture and a message. By that time our “patient” rejoined us and was eager to listen to what was shared in the three groups about their painting process.

It was observed that we had a profound experience of being in the presence of spiritual guidance, that we were able to give something meaningful to another person who was carrying a destiny with life long health challenges and that we had reversed the therapy process by being the ones “doing the work”, offering it up and being changed on the way. The person who received the healing had a profound sense of awe in seeing her challenges as if from the outside and being able to become more objective.



In the end it was clear that we all felt “yes, we have work to do and we, as Anthroposophic Art Therapists have something very special to offer to the world”. An intense but profound and worthwhile experience was had by all. Thank you, Regine.



Looking to the future, Regine suggested that perhaps those of us who feel so inclined might consider taking up a research field from our work this year and that our next conference could be carried by members, bringing individual presentations, as well as inviting interested art therapists of other streams to our conference.

On The Conference from Wendy Wardle, AAATNA member & conference participant

When I walked through the door and saw all the tables covered in white tablecloths, ready for dinner and through the other door more tables with carefully set out paints, sponges, and paintbrushes, I realized how much I had been looking forward to experiencing a conference led by Regine Kurek,.

Everyone involved had worked so hard to create this atmosphere . What a welcome sight to see that they were expecting us and everything was ready. It was like entering a treasure trove.

Talking with the other members during the breaks was a wonderful opportunity for us all to learn and share our experiences in the 'wide world'. It was fascinating to hear how each of us had a different way in how we take this work out into the world.

The gifts I received from the conference were an understanding of our relationship with the Archangels, a greater appreciation of Anthroposophy and the sure knowledge that a community of people, working together, can heal themselves and others.

Thank you for the opportunity to experience this.

The recent AAATNA conference was a wonderful opportunity to network and further develop my understanding of anthroposophical art therapy through the experience of a community art process . The facilitators did an excellent job leading us through the artistic exercises, and I personally found the experience very powerful. My thanks to the facilitators and organizers and especially to Regine Kurek for an informative and well organized conference.

Angela Smith, AAATNA Member & conference participant



As Wendy said above, it was lovely to have time to socialize over two dinners and a lunch and to hear what other people are doing in the world with the work. Two of the meals were catered at the Studio.



On the Saturday evening we went for a truly creative meal, as you can see by the photos, at Jazireh, a local persian restaurant.