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Adult Education and the Arts: A Marriage of Mind, Body, Heart and Soul
Randee Lipson Lawrence, Keith Armstrong, Bette Donoho, Kristin Lems
Steven Noble, Kevin Olsen, Anne McCrary Sullivan

Abstract: The authors of an upcoming publication on artistic ways of knowing share their findings through poetic expression.

The arts are an important yet under-valued way of creating and sharing knowledge in adult education. The authors of this paper are collaborators on a book on artistic ways of knowing which discusses the power of music, theatre, photography, autobiography and poetry for teaching and learning. Since we believe that art should speak for itself, we present our research as a series of poems. Each of us has constructed a short poem that represents some dimension of our respective chapters in the book. We invite you, the reader to construct meaning in any way you see fit.

World Gets Well
Acting, we discover our own kind of wisdom, as we gather in a circle of folks.
Singing, we turn stories about the toughest times into symphonies of learning from life.
Dancing, we embody the joy of two left feet, negotiating the music of hope.

Artistic Expression
Extending boundaries how we know what we know indigenous

I do not speak your language
I cannot read your words
I do not share your experience
and yet
I feel your rhythms your colors move me your spirit touches my soul

RLL

Playing Strangers
Playing. On a stage is me Performing fictions of your Treatment of powerless others. Strangers.

SN

Music Works
Before our eyes, tough Ukrainian mechanic transforms into a compelling soulful singer young Chinese woman, shy covering her mouth as she laughs stands and sings a Chinese folk song with spirit

Polish punk rocker, hair spiked hauls in a heavy metal CD collection; he knows more English than he has ever let on

music, in its joyful din welcomes all learners in talking of music, listening to it, singing it in a strange new tongue.

Everyone sings, even the teacher And you learn from your students And heal yourself in the harmony.

KL
Struggling Art-fully

Many clutch my heart
As I act out.
"Bongo drums pounding,
Out of tune singing,
Guitars playing three chords...
Why, I doubt
Anyone in there has stepped
Into a conservatory!"

Old Man,
Have the Mozart and Beethoven
symphonies
Dulled your memories?
Memories of picking up an instrument
For the first time?
Of improvising and creating
Melodies completely your own?
Of singing familiar songs
In a company of strangers
Quickly becoming friends?

KO

Dark Pride

Shaken: Not Disturbed.
Closets and “freak” shows,
Shock treatments and pushed pills.
People wonder why we’re perturbed.
We do possess strong wills.
Our desire is to find our pride.
Out of the asylums; Not being deterred
Our darkness can now close.

SN

Research

I give them scissors, instruct:
search, select, cut, collect.
They want certainties, an outline,
a set of predetermined steps.
This is your page, I tell them.
The subject of the poem is you.
Dismayed, afraid, they
lay out the fragments
piece together a broken mirror
stare at their own astonished selves.

AMS

Pedagogical Images

Time’s on the wind
Blowin’ about the aprons of a tidy mind
Awaiting the industry of a busy kitchen
Where some slicin’ and dicin’ need being done.

In the proverbial kitchens of each upcoming
or outgoing mind, also waiting some slicin’
and dicin’, readied for the transformative knife,
time, a blue steel cut at impermanence
captured in photographic stages
stored on paper from mindful attics
expressions foreign yet familiar;
the apron strings untangle,
images set themselves free,
the suspended journey completes.

KA

Harmony

"That's not music!"
Growls the man in the tuxedo
Clutching his violin case.
"Bongo drums pounding,
Out of tune singing,
Guitars playing three chords...
Why, I doubt
Anyone in there has stepped
Into a conservatory!"

Old Man,
Have the Mozart and Beethoven
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Dulled your memories?
Memories of picking up an instrument
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