

a group unconscious

What do we mean by 'the unconscious'? The staff team on the MA in Art Psychotherapy began to explore this question on hearing the increasingly and frequently stated view that the 'unconscious' was no longer relevant for consideration in the therapeutic process. We decided to use art-making, and tapes of our focussed discussions in response to the art made, as the data for our exploration. The Group Analytic Symposium has given us the opportunity to share the art of the early stages of this research with an audience sympathetic to our experiential method of teaching, that is, in psychodynamic, interlocking groups held together by a large art therapy group. Paralleling our students' end of year exhibition, this exhibition, 'a group unconscious', has raised issues about the potential of, and limitations to, art therapists' personal and social art practice and the role of art in art therapy. Trusting 'the unconscious', art-making and the group process in creating the exhibition, has been a form of staff team development that feeds reflexively into the students' learning in their progress towards becoming art therapists.

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