MASTER OF ARTS
ART THERAPY

Duration:
2 Years
(4 Semesters)

Award:
Master of Arts
Art Therapy

Mode:
Full-Time

Intake:
August
As an art therapist, you purposefully facilitate an art-making process to create self-expression, reflection, understanding and change with people and/or communities who encounter a range of stress, trauma, physical, mental or societal challenges and experiences. Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that helps people to effect change and growth through the use of art materials in a supported and safe environment. For those having difficulty expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally, art therapy is non-intrusive and can tap into the rich non-verbal aspects of communication and creativity.

Art therapists develop the necessary skills and training to effectively work with a variety of populations throughout the life cycle. They work within various medical, institutional, educational, and rehabilitative settings that may include learning, development, medical conditions, social work, marginalized groups, crisis and trauma within communities, ageing and eldercare to name a few. The practice of art therapy ranges from studio-based to clinical approaches, depending on the art therapist’s level of expertise, practice and working environment. Art therapists remain sensitive to cultural awareness, difference and diversity and adhere to international ethics and best practices.

The MA Art Therapy Programme at LASALLE is a two-year, four semester full-time training programme spanning a range of psychotherapeutic concepts, theories and practices. The experiential model of the programme places an emphasis on acquiring critical knowledge and understanding of the philosophy of the modality itself. You will undergo a substantial period of clinical practice through supervised clinical placements. Clinical work is further explored and discussed through structured group and individual supervision at the College.

As a Masters candidate you will be encouraged to attain an autonomous and reflective stance in your learning, development, and assessment in collaboration with tutors. This is a vital process in developing an approach to your professional practice as a confident, competent and ethical art therapist that will be based upon your ability to be analytical, critical, objective and self-reflective about your work.

Although personal therapy is required in semesters 2-4, it is recommended throughout the duration of the training. You are to arrange and pay for your own personal therapy as this is not included with tuition.

The MA Art Therapy Programme at LASALLE is the first of its kind to be developed and implemented in Southeast Asia. The programme is breaking new ground in relation to the varied and distinctive social, cultural and spiritual frameworks within which it is being nurtured. The Southeast Asian context is considered throughout the training and candidates are encouraged to research and work in a range of settings both local and if appropriate, international.

A blend of Eastern and Western approaches are considered and candidates are encouraged to develop a reflective and contemporary philosophical and practical stance. Although there may be several similarities in terms of the human experience, it is acknowledged that there are unique cultural considerations and local and/or region specific implications in terms of how mental health services are defined, perceived and implemented.

Self-reflexivity, mindfulness and a contemplative approach are practices wherein you may draw upon to further embrace and/or expand your understanding of an Asian context. It is acknowledged that cultural difference and diversity are at the heart of current art therapy debate and discourse both locally and around the globe.
The MA Art Therapy is a two-year full-time programme divided into four semesters of 13 teaching weeks. You must successfully complete the modules offered in sequence before you can progress to the next semester. You learn progressively, each module building upon the knowledge and skill base of the previous semester. The incremental learning structure of the programme ensures that you will acquire the essential knowledge and practical experience to become a professional art therapist.

FULL-TIME

SEMESTER 1

Psychoanalytic Theory and Pictorial Analysis
Introduction to Art Therapy
Group Training 1
Human Development and Clinical Theory

SEMESTER 2

Research Methods in Creative Arts
Child and Adolescent Art Therapy
Clinical Placement 1

SEMESTER 3

Adult, Geriatric and Family Art Therapy
Clinical Placement 2

SEMESTER 4

Group Training 2
Clinical Placement 3

SEMESTER 3 & 4

Final Research

Psychodynamic Processes and Pictorial Analysis

This module explores the contemporary psychodynamic theories including object relations and inter-subjective theories to name a few, with in-depth training in the understanding of the symbolism of sublimation and the language of art. This module will provide an introduction to a range of visual methodologies. There will be an exploration of art therapy assessment techniques and processes used within art therapy practice, and current debates about how best to make use of these within contemporary practice will be included as part of the discourse.

Introduction to Art Therapy

This module provides the foundation for the programme and the theoretical framework for safe and professional clinical art therapy practice. You are introduced to the history of art therapy and the psychodynamic theory that has evolved from object relations into inter-subjective theory and how these theories can be connected to the making of artwork. The importance of attachment, transference and countertransference, sublimation and trauma are all elements for discussion and incorporated into assignments. You will develop a beginning understanding of key psychodynamic theory, concepts and terms as related to professional art therapy practice.

Group Training 1

In this module, you will learn about the facilitation of different kinds of art therapy groups as well as developing an understanding of dynamically based group therapy. Led by an experienced and dynamically trained therapist, you will develop an empathic understanding of the differing stages of group dynamics, and will have the opportunity to co-facilitate a group.

Human Development and Clinical Theory

This module introduces students to the dynamics of human development across the lifespan looking at the psychology of child, adolescent, adult and geriatric development. The module examines these different stages of development and achievement through the additional lens of attachment and trauma. This module includes one seminar which will be integrated biologically, psychically and environmentally to understand human development.

Child and Adolescent Art Therapy

In this module there is an emphasis on developing therapeutic skills when working with children and adolescents. The coursework will be experiential as well as theoretical and practical. This module builds on dynamic skills, the awareness and understanding of human development and psychodynamic theory gained in semester one.

Research Methods in Creative Arts

This module introduces you to arts research through a thorough study of research methods and analytical techniques informing artistic and critical practices at the MA level. Research operates within a critical context and this module aims to prepare you to confidently articulate your practice, formulate your own critical arguments, and formulate methods to investigate and probe issues.

Clinical Placement 1

During the last week of semester 2 several Clinical Placement Mini Camps will be scheduled to further prepare you for your first clinical placement. You must accumulate a minimum of 272 hours at placement and carry a clinical caseload, under supervision, in Singapore. You will learn to engage with patients/clients/ beneficiaries and develop your ability to facilitate art therapy in the placement setting.

Adult, Geriatric and Family Art Therapy

You are introduced to arising theories and practical ways of working with adults, elderly adults and families. The coursework will be experiential and builds on the core skills developed in semester two. There is one comprehensive paper that critically explores the complexities of diagnosis, ethical practice and consideration as applied to practical work.

Clinical Placement 2

In this module, you will be more fully engaged with individual clients and groups within their clinical settings. You will continue to develop your clinical art therapy skills and understanding of the dynamic, psychosocial processes of your clients in the Southeast Asian context. You will continue to explore these processes within the context of the therapeutic relationship in supervision at your clinical placement and at the College.

Final Research

In this module, you will also engage in research on an aspect of art therapy of particular interest to you. The research topics, methods and presentation of findings will be discussed, negotiated and agreed upon with the Programme Leader and your research supervisor at the beginning of the module. This will allow you to seek advice from experienced researchers relating to the design of the research. Practitioners and researchers within art therapy will also provide you with differing perspectives to assist you in the development and the delivery of your research project. The reflective practitioner approach will provide evidence of a growth in understanding of art therapy practice.

Group Training 2

You will incorporate your theoretical and practical experiences over the last two semesters. You will be encouraged to further explore the complex clinical and contextual aspects of your therapeutic practice. You will take turns in leading your own experiential groups under the supervision of an experienced art therapist.

Clinical Placement 3

In this module, you will engage fully with individual clients and groups within your clinical setting. Emphasis is on the therapeutic relationship and your ability to function as an integrated member of a multiprofessional team. This module builds on the technical and the social and environmental dimension of working with clients.

Postgraduate Research

LASALLE has a long tradition of practice-led research in art and design. The College aims to assume a significant role in Singapore for practice-led research in visual, performing and literary arts, and aspires to add the distinctive viewpoint of Singapore to research into artistic practice in the 21st century.

The Research Methods in Creative Arts module is a common module which all students are required to undertake. You will have the opportunity to interact with one another in the first term (7 weeks), to network with peers in other MA programmes and foster a stronger community of research practice that enhances your respective discipline of study as well as within the College.

You will be introduced to relevant professional methods of research and creation which may include profiles of and/or dialogue with creative professionals, critical/theoretical discourse, action research, visual object analysis, textual analysis, case studies, historical and ethnographic research, interviews, life-stories/life biographies, etc. You will also be introduced to research practices such as literature reviews, process-based discovery, bibliographical searches, quantitative & qualitative methods, citations and the construction of research questions.

Postgraduate students are constantly exposed to first-hand experience in current practices of research and creation, leading to the acquiring powerful knowledge and of a wide set of skills by the time they graduate. You will have opportunities to develop expertise in accordance with your research interests.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

The programme is formally approved by the Australian, New Zealand and South East Asia Creative Arts Therapists Association (ANZACATS). Graduates are eligible to apply for professional registration (AThR) with the Australian Thera- peutic Register. In order to do so, candidates may apply for one membership with other international art therapy organisations and registration authorities. It is the graduate’s responsibility to familiar with the appropriate requirements in terms of requirements and procedures for professional membership, credentials, and, working within a country outside of Singapore. You are required to provide documentation of your professional membership in any of the professional art therapy organisations in addition to the Art Therapists’ Association Singapore (ATAS).

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE THERAPIST’S TRAINING EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL THERAPY

You are required to receive regular personal therapy during semesters 2, 3 and 4 of the taught programme; personal therapy in semester 1 is recommended. This provides you with an opportunity to explore and reflect on issues that may arise for them during the experimental learning process. The programme maintains a list of recommended therapists; therapists on this list have been recommended by candidates and are not endorsed by the programme.

END-OF-SEMESTER MEETINGS

At the end of each semester, students meet individually with the Programme Team to review your progress academically, clinically and artistically. You will have the opportunity to verbally review your fitness to practice with the Programma Team during these meetings.

ETHICS AND WORKSHOPS ON ABUSE/VIOLENCE IDENTIFICATION, INTERVENTION, DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING WITHIN THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Discussions on ethics will be integrated throughout the programme, in supervision and other coursework, in addition to a risk-assessment workshop at the beginning of semester 1. Child abuse identification and intervention training will take place in the second term by a local agency, and in semester 3 training on elder abuse and a family violence identification and intervention workshop will be scheduled.

CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

Therapists often provide services to culturally diverse groups of people with varying backgrounds and experiences. Throughout your course of study you are expected to further develop cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity as you develop your professional skills, identity, experience, and knowledge. This will assist in your eventual practice and will enrich your clinical skills while working in the rich diversity of cultures in Singapore and abroad.

FITNESS-TO-PRACTICE/TRAINING

You will be required to satisfy the programme of your fitness to work and undertake training, which involves children and vulnerable people. You are required to sign a Suitability Declaration related to criminal convictions and to occupational health prior to admission to the Program. Professional fitness of your health and your occupational fitness will be based on your ability to satisfy the following criteria, taking into account any personal matters which you will undertake as part of your training, including clinical placement and community projects, and any health problems you may have.

• You are physically able to cope with the day-to-day duties of training (at the College and at the placement)
• You can communicate effectively with children, parents, clients and colleagues
• You have sound judgement and insight, and can remain calm and assertive
• You are able to respond to clients’ needs rapidly and effectively
THE FACULTY

Ronald P.M. Lay
MA, ATR, ATR-BC, EdD (candidate), Programme Leader
• MA in Art Therapy, Concordia University; Montreal, QC, Canada
• BA in Fine Arts Studio and History, University of Guelph; Guelph, ON, Canada
• BA in Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University; Waterloo, ON, Canada

Grounded in a psychodynamic psychotherapy paradigm Ron’s career blends both practical and academic pursuits. His 20 years of experience working full-time as a forensic art therapist, in California’s Department of Mental Health, acknowledges the invaluable role that education plays in developing and preparing Masters candidates in becoming competent, ethical, and professional therapists. Ron developed a sustaining art therapy internship at this facility, provided clinical supervision, held several leadership positions including Acting Chief of Rehabilitation Therapy Services and Chair of the Professional Rehabilitation Therapy Practice Group, and he was an active member on several local and state-wide committees that addressed assessment, development, budgets, documentation, quality assurance, privileging, credentialing, treatment intervention and planning, and Continuing Professional Development. The California State Legislature awarded him the prestigious Sustained Superior Accomplishment Award, a two-year honour, on two separate occasions recognizing his art therapy services and contributions to the facility.

Emylia Safian
MA, ATR, Lecturer
• MA Art Therapy, Open University, UK
• BA Psychology & Humanities, Monash University, Australia
• Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Supervision, The University of Derby
• Certificate of Teaching in Higher Education, Temasek Polytechnic

Emylia is a practicing art therapist and educator with specialist training in stress, trauma, and loss. Her practice gravitates towards mind/body sciences and integrates psychology with physiology for an encompassing approach in capitalising human development. Since 2007, she has been in partnership with educational institutions, voluntary welfare organisations, government agencies, and NGOs within Southeast Asia, working with persons of all ages in situational and developmental crisis within different communities. As a clinician, Emylia is also informed by science of yoga and expressive arts therapies. She is passionate in reconnecting children and adults alike with the essential joy de vivre through play, creativity, warmth, compassion, and sensitivity, and to bring joy to the mind, body, and spirit.

Daniel Wong
• MA, ATR-I, Lecturer
• MA Art Therapy, Western Sydney University, NSW, Australia
• MA Art Administration, University of New South Wales, NSW, Australia
• BA Fine Art, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL, USA

Daniel is a practicing art therapist, trained facilitator and clinical supervisor, with over 15 years of experience working directly with groups and individuals in Australia and Thailand. He has worked with diverse populations in long-term care and day settings, including several years at Cumberland Hospital, a large public mental health facility in greater western Sydney. Populations include older adults, terminally ill patients, adults with mental illness and co-existing disorders, and children with learning disabilities and those on the spectrum. The programme maintains a roster of well-known local and international teaching staff, guest lecturers, artists, consultants, researchers and Artist-in-Residences including: Jessica Koh, Joanna Tan, Joyce Tan, Shubopi Rao, Adeline Dayser, Weixin Chong, Dr John Wong, Ann Wee, Professor Eugan Koh (Australia), Dr Arnulf Ehrentingen-Reader (US/UK), Dr Christian Widdaschuck (Germany), Dr Lynn Kaptian (USA), Dr Neil Springham (UK), Dr Mercedes Balbi ter Maat (USA), Marrian Crawford (Australia), Cathy Moon (USA), Jana M. Adams (USA), Dr Val Huut (UK), Pilar Diabarr (USA), Dr Marian Liebmann (UK), Dr Lorna Collins (UK) and Dr Bill Gilham (UK) to name a few.

SUITABILITY DECLARATION AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

You are required to complete a suitability declaration indicating whether you have any criminal record and/or history at the point of admission to the programme. You will also complete an Occupational Health Declaration, verified by a medical physician prior to admission to the programme.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS

You are encouraged to consider and integrate collaboration across LASALLE faculties into your coursework where appropriate and according to individual interests.

SELF-REFLECTIVE JOURNAL REVIEW

During the end-of-semester meetings you will present your self-reflective journal to the Programme Team to demonstrate your active engagement in a self-reflective process through visual and written means. You are to include response art, reflections from art exhibition and studio visits, reflections from course material and lessons, and documentation of art existentialities from your training and/or outside experiences. The artwork can be cross faculty based and include drama, fine arts, design, media and film to name a few. Studio-time is provided in the course schedule.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

You must fulfill the following requirements:
• Bachelor’s degree in visual arts or psychology, or an equivalent level of training in a relevant medical, social or human sciences field.
• Relevant experience in a rehabilitative setting in the form of paid or unpaid/voluntary work.
• Demonstrable ability to discuss and reflect on the creative process.
• A willingness to undergo weekly personal therapy for the duration of the programme.
• A minimum of IELTS 7.0 or TOEFL iBT 100 for applicants from countries where English is not the first language or whose qualifications are obtained from institutions where English is not the medium of instruction.
• Portfolio: At least 7 - 10 pieces of original artwork (actual or documented) that demonstrates your creative practice.
• Three references: one personal, one professional, and one academic.
• Statement of Purpose: A 500-word statement outlining your reasons for pursuing Master’s studies, your suitability and expected benefits from the programme.
• Additional coursework may be required and/or suggested following acceptance into the programme based on your qualifications.
• Sign a suitability declaration indicating whether you have any criminal record and/or history at the point of admission to the programme (form can be obtained from the College).* Please note that many clinical placement settings require a mandatory background security check for potential student interns, and many employers request this as well, given the nature and sensitivity of confidential case material, professional and ethical best practices and the potential vulnerability of their clientele * Complete an Occupational Health Declaration, verified by a medical physician prior to admission to the programme (form can be obtained from the College).
• An interview with the Programme Leader and academic staff. All applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

GRADUATE CAREER PATHS

Art Therapist

RELATED CAREERS

Counsellor, Educator, Social Worker, Artist, Researcher, Writer
PHOTO

1. Embracing Ripples of Growth: An International Critical Reflection on the Discourse of Contemporary Art(s) Therapy Research & Practice - a two-day research and professional practice symposium jointly presented by the MA Art Therapy Programme and the Australian & New Zealand Arts Therapy Association (now known as ANZACATA - the Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Therapies Association).

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ABOUT LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore is a leading tertiary institution in cutting edge contemporary arts and design education and practice. The college offers more than 30 diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in fine arts, design communication, interior design, product design, film, animation, fashion, dance, music, theatre, arts management, arts pedagogy and practice, art therapy, Asian art histories, and creative writing.

Its faculty is led by a community of award-winning artists, designers, educators and researchers, and their practice-led research sets LASALLE apart as an international centre of excellence. Critically acclaimed alumni form the core of the cultural and creative sectors in Singapore and increasingly, internationally.

Founded in 1984 by De La Salle Brother Joseph McNally – a visionary artist and educator – LASALLE is a not-for-profit, private educational institution. LASALLE receives tuition grant support from the Singapore Ministry of Education. Its degree programmes are validated by Goldsmiths, University of London.

CONTACT US

For Programme consultation or to schedule a guided campus tour, contact our Admissions Office.

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Monday – Friday, 9:30am – 5:30pm
Closed on weekends and Public Holidays

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