



# Institute for Sensorimotor Art Therapy

& School for Initiatic Art Therapy

## Certificate in Clay Field Therapy® 2017/18

Havelock North, New Zealand  
East Coast – North Island

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The Clay Field is a flat rectangular wooden box that holds 10 – 15 kg of clay. A bowl of water is supplied. This simple setting offers a symbolic “world” for the hands to explore. There will be no artwork to be taken home. The hands enter the Clay Field and move in it; in their ability or inability to “handle” the material they tell the client's life story. The hands then can be encouraged to find ways to deal with situations and events, to complete actions that previously could not be coped with.

This unique art therapy approach is recognized in Europe as a discipline in its own right. Over 500 Clay Field Therapists are currently practicing in numerous institutions. It is part of the curriculum in schools for disabled and disadvantaged children; it is widely used in women's shelters, refugee centres and to facilitate trauma healing.

The four workshops will look at the application of Clay Field Therapy

- Experientially
- Via videoed case histories
- Through understanding core aspects of its theoretical basis

*“Due to the texture, weight and resistance of the clay, the material demands physical effort. Very quickly the head – and with it our cognitive conditioning – is pushed aside to make way for the more “ancient” urges of our libido.*

*There will be no finished product, no artwork to show to friends, no sculpture to be fired in a kiln. At the end of a Clay Field session, only intense body memories will be taken home. The kinaesthetic motor action combined with sensory perception will have lasting therapeutic benefits, especially in cases of developmental delays and trauma healing.*

*Touch is the most fundamental of human experiences. The first year of our life is dominated by the sense of touch. Tactile contact is the first mode of communication we learn. Our earliest stages in life are dominated by oral and skin contact between infant and caregiver. Our earliest body memories and our core attachments were formed when we relied on sensorimotor feedback to feel safe and loved. Love as well as violence is primarily communicated through touch. Our boundaries are invaded through inappropriate touching. Sexual experiences are overwhelmingly ruled by the sense of touch – and so are medical procedures, as well as all other events that happened to our bodies.*

Work at the Clay Field involves an intense tactile experience – it can link us to a primordial mode of communication, to a preverbal stage in our life. This is the truly beneficial quality of clay in a therapeutic context. Its regressive qualities will allow a therapist to address early attachment issues, developmental setbacks and traumatic events in a primarily non-verbal way, contained in the safety of the setting.

Toddlers may pile simple building blocks on top of each other and then enjoy knocking them down over and over again, thus learning creative destruction as a way to achieve object constancy (Winnicott 1971). Such play prepares children to cope with the real world as a continuum of constant change, of encounter and separation, of comings and goings of loved ones and events, of endings and beginnings. Trust is gained from the ability to survive such changes intact. Work at the Clay Field involves a continuous process of destruction and creation, because the material is both limited in its amount and unlimited in its possibilities. We can create at the Clay Field only if we dare to destroy the smooth surface and continue to have the courage to take something apart that we have put together before. We can learn to survive change; to grasp and handle it. In this manner the work can assist in dealing with the emotional injuries we suffered from overwhelming change and destruction in the past.

Pre-school children learn primarily through touching and handling objects. During the evolution of mankind the cognitive brain was shaped through skilled hand movements; with our hands we learned to understand the world (Wilson 1999). These innate language skills become reactivated through handling things and through observing the hand-gestures of our caregivers, as a recent study at the University of Chicago showed (Rowe 2008; 2005).

School children will create three-dimensional representations in the clay – ‘real objects’, figures, scenes and landscapes that have meaning and emotional values attached to them. At the Clay Field adults and children alike weave these developmental layers into a complex web of biography, formative kinaesthetic body memories, frustrated or traumatized internalized patterns of behaviour and the search for more authentic impulses and holistic structures.” From C. Elbrecht, *Trauma Healing at the Clay Field* 2012

### **Sensorimotor Art Therapy**

In recent years “sensorimotor” has emerged as a term to describe body focused psychotherapies that use a bottom-up approach. Instead of a cognitive top-down strategy, sensorimotor art therapy encourages the awareness of innate

motor impulses in the muscles and viscera, also as heart rate and breath. The expression of these motor impulses followed by their perception through the senses, allows the development of new neurological pathways that can bypass traumatic memories; such an approach is capable of restoring wholeness and wellbeing.

Work at the Clay Field is a sensorimotor, body-focused, trauma-informed art therapy approach. It is not necessarily concerned with an image-making process, but supports the awareness of body memories. While these memories are always biographical, the therapy itself is not symptom-oriented. Not the specific problem or crisis becomes the focal point, but the option to new answers and solutions as they are embedded in the body's felt sense. Such sensorimotor achievements are remembered similar to learning how to swim or ride a bike. They are lasting achievements that can transform even early infant developmental setbacks; they assist in finding an active response to traumatic experiences. They allow us to rewrite our biography towards a more authentic, alive sense of self.

**Cornelia Elbrecht** BA. MA. (Art Ed), AThR, SEP, has more than 40 years of experience as an art therapist. She is also a Somatic Experiencing trauma therapist (SEP). She has studied at the School for Initiatic Art Therapy in Germany, also Jungian and Gestalt therapy, Bioenergetics and bodywork. She is founder and director of the Institute for Sensorimotor Art Therapy, School for Initiatic Art Therapy. She worked as founder, co-worker and trainer in 'Neuenzell', a centre for self-awareness and meditation in the Black Forest. She is also the founder and director of 'Claerwen Retreat' in Apollo Bay, Victoria. She has lectured in Art Therapy at RMIT, Melbourne. Cornelia is a registered professional member of ANZATA, the Australian and New Zealand Art Therapy Association and ACATA, Australian Creative Arts Therapies Association and ILAAA International Life Alignment Association. Cornelia gives courses and individual sessions internationally, throughout Australia and in private practice in Apollo Bay and Melbourne.

**Liz Antcliff** BA (Psych); MA (Couns); Dip Initiatic Art Therapy; SEP; ACA; ACATA; ANZATA Clinical Member ACA, Professional Member ACATA; Associate member ANZATA. Liz holds a Bachelor of Sc. (Psychology); MA Counselling and PG Diploma in Sensorimotor Art therapy; SEP. She is a somatic experiencing

practitioner having completed training with Somatic Experiencing Training Institute (SETI). She has more than 30 years of experience in human services in the private and community health and social services sector. Liz is the Director of Heartspace Artspace & Counselling, a private sensorimotor art psychotherapy practice in Queensland Australia and teaches the Initiatic Art Therapy (Queensland) program. Liz has co-authored, with Cornelia Elbrecht, the article "Being touched through Touch. Trauma treatment through haptic perception at the Clay Field. A sensorimotor art therapy". Liz works with individuals, couples and groups with a broad range of concerns and holds a special interest in trauma related issues. Liz is available for supervision face to face and via skype as well as group supervision.

### **Publications:**

Some of Cornelia's publications have been translated into over 20 languages worldwide.

- 2015 Elbrecht, Cornelia, Antcliff, Liz; *Being in Touch: Healing Developmental and Attachment Trauma at the Clay Field*. Children Australia, 40pp 209 – 220 doi; 10.1017/cha.2015.30. Volume 40 – Issue 03. Interpreting neuroscience, creating evidence – a collection of Australian based Trauma informed Research and Practice – Sept 15.  
[http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_s1035077215000309](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_s1035077215000309)
- 2015 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *The Clay Field and Developmental Trauma*. In: Malchiodi, Cathy Ed., *Creative Interventions with Traumatized Children*. Guilford Press, Pennsylvania.
- 2014 Elbrecht, Cornelia, Antcliff Liz; *Being Touched through touch: Trauma treatment through haptic perception at the Clay Field: A sensorimotor art therapy*. INSCAPE, International Journal of Art Therapy, 2014  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1745482.2014.880932> Routledge.
- 2013 ANZJAT, the Australian New Zealand Journal of Arts Therapy Vol 8, No. 1, 2013, p.67 review of: *Trauma Healing at the Clay Field* by Maggie Wilson.
- 2012 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *Trauma Healing at the Clay Field, a sensorimotor approach to art therapy*; Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London/Philadelphia.
- 2011 Elbrecht, Cornelia; Deuser, Heinz: *Work at the Clay Field*. Set of 7 DVDs.
- 2011 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *Die Wandlungsreise. Der Prozess des Geführten Zeichnens, eine initiatische Kunsttherapie*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag.

- 2006 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *The Transformation Journey. The Process of Guided Drawing – An Initiatic Art Therapy*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag.
- 1999 *Guided Drawing, Drawing as Meditation*, in Golden Age Issue 41, March – May 1999
- 1995 *Guided Drawing*, in Australian National Art Therapy Association Newsletter Vol VII Winter 1995
- 1990 Das Geführte Zeichnen auf dem Hintergrund der Initiatischen Therapie, in: Die neuen Kreativitätstherapien, *Handbuch für Kunsttherapie*, Hrsg: Hilarion Petzold, Ilse Orth  
Guided Drawing on the background of Initiatic Therapie, in 'The new Creative Therapies, *Handbook for Art Therapy*, editor: Hilarion Petzold, Ilse Orth
- 1988 *Das Geführte Zeichnen* in: Integrative Therapie, Zeitschrift für Verfahren Humanistischer Psychologie und Pädagogik Guided Drawing, in: Integrative Therapie, Journal for Humanistic Psychology and Education

## Course Outline

The Clay Field Therapy Training Program comprises a series of 4 modules as an advanced training for a limited number of interested professionals and students. A course requirement is the completion of the 5-day introduction weekend into Clay Field Therapy.

The aim of the courses is to enable its participants to integrate Clay Field Therapy into the existing framework of their current practice, be it as counselor, social worker, teacher, nurse, artist or psychologist.....

The focus will be on the experience of Work at the Clay Field in an environment suitable for personal development. At the same time the approaches and techniques will be made transparent in order to make it possible to acquire profound techniques of working with the Clay Field in a therapeutic way. The 100 group hours will include individual sessions, seminars, co-counseling and supervision.

The two 6 day workshops, called Part I and Part II, should equip participants with fundamental skills to work with the Clay Field in a therapeutic way.

Part I includes Module 1 and 2 and focus on working with adults. Part II includes Module 3 and 4 and focus on working with children - to be held in 2018.

**Dates:**

Participants are asked to commit themselves to the entire training. The maximum group size will be 16.

The proposed dates for 2017 are as follows:

- **Part I:** **25 – 30 September 2017**
- **Part II:** **January 2018**

Commencing Monday 25 September at 9.30am and finishing on Wednesday 27 September at 1pm. Continuing on Thursday 28 September 9.30 am until Saturday 30 September at 5pm.

**Cost:**

Total cost for the entire 2-year training will be AU\$3200; AU\$800 per module. Each 6-day training represents 2 modules at AU\$1600 in total. A deposit of AU\$800 is due on application. Should an applicant be not accepted the otherwise non-refundable deposit will be returned in full. The deposit will roll over and account as part payment for the last module in 2018. Should someone be unable to attend one module, an effort will be made to find compensation on an individual basis to enable the student to catch up with the rest of the course material. In order to receive the training certificate at the end, the required hours must have been attended. The cost covers tuition fees including all course and art materials.

**Venue:****Taruna College**

The home of holistic adult education, Taruna offers both professional and personal development opportunities across Waldorf education, organic and biodynamic farming, holistic health and art, as well as various short courses.

Located on the slopes of Te Mata Peak in Hawkes Bay, it is a short 5min drive to the top of the peak lookout where you can see right across Havelock North, Hastings and over to Napier. It is a 5min drive/ 10min bike/ 20min walk to the Havelock North Village where there are a number of cafes, restaurants, retail stores, banks, and a supermarket. It is a short 10min drive to Hastings, 15mins to Haumoana beach, and a stone's throw from many of Hawkes Bay's best wineries.

Taruna also offers hostel accommodation on site at \$30 per

night. All are single rooms with shared kitchen, dining, lounge, laundry and bathrooms. The rooms are also already made up with bed linen. For all enquiries and bookings, please contact the Taruna office.

[www.taruna.ac.nz](http://www.taruna.ac.nz)     [info@taruna.ac.nz](mailto:info@taruna.ac.nz)

## Course Structure

Each part represents one week of 48 group hours. The modules will not strictly focus on the course content lined out below, as the group's needs and special interests will also be taken into account.

### Part 1: Working at the Clay Field with Adults

#### **Module 1: The Nine Situations at THE CLAY FIELD ®**

Prof. Heinz Deuser has mapped out 9 stages, "situations" as he has called them that characterize the Work at the Clay Field. These are partially based on D. W. Winnicott's theories on a child's developmental stages, but also relate to the human need to create mythical correspondences.

A particular focus will be given to these Nine Situations and how these situations are being acquired in the Clay Field:

- Reliability, being reliable to me: Perceiving myself in my body
- Reliability, relying on something other than me: Shifting focus onto an opposite
- Finding orientation: Finding reliability in what is present
- Acquisition of Object Constancy: Acquiring emotional constancy through creative destruction
- Acquisition of Subject Constancy: Establish my own position in a foreign place
- Centering, Grounding: Acquisition of one's own ground
- Shadow integration: Acquisition of one's individuality; self-correspondence, object accordance
- Destruction as self-realization: Taking on the consequences of one's own realization
- Accepting one's humanity: Integration with one's own Other.

#### **Module 2: Haptic Perception and the Gestalt Formation**



### **Process at THE CLAY FIELD ®**

In order to “read” the hands of a client the therapist needs to understand certain movements and how they relate to particular developmental stages; stages that express a client's age-specific developmental needs and a process-specific pattern of action.

- The topography of the hands
- Proprioception
- Kinaesthetic messages of the hands
- The Skin Sense
- Sense of Balance
- Depth Sensibility
- Haptic Perception
- Haptic object relations
- The therapeutic dialogue with the hands

We will learn to identify the dynamics of the Gestalt Formation Process through:

- How fundamental experiencing progresses from diffuse motor impulses to sensory awareness and from there to fulfillment and cognitive integration.
- The structure of the Primary Gestalt and the Optimal Gestalt
- Afference and re-afference

We will also look at:

- Crisis/Integration
- Aspects of trauma healing, in particular Pendulation

## **Part 2: Working at the Clay Field with Children (2018)**

### **Module 3: Realizations in the Actional Process of Children and Adolescents at THE CLAY FIELD ®**

The Work at the Clay Field with children and adolescents differs in various ways to the way a therapist works with adults. We will look at:

- Age-specific developmental actional patterns
- Premises for self- and actional orientation
- Organization in haptic actions and representations: the Clay Field confronts as a repository
- Organization in field arrays: The Clay Field becomes a two-dimensional field; the landscaping of the field; groupings and interconnectedness
- Organization in relational fields: The Clay Field becomes an effect field for qualitative-emotional and

- actional orientation
- Organization of own positionings: The Clay Field becomes a field for one's own formation: own gain, own appropriation, own position, in factual-concrete depictions and non-simulation games; in intersubjective exchange; in picture stories.
- Organization in experience forms: The Clay Field becomes a field of one's own foundation: one's own world, one's own realization

#### **Module 4: Haptic Diagnosis of the Actional Process of Children and Adolescents at THE CLAY FIELD ®**

This weekend will in particular focus on the hands as diagnostic tools:

- Age-specific haptic organization of the arms
- Age-specific haptic organization of the hands
- Developmental markers of hand and arm movements
- The perception of the clay from infancy to adolescence
- Gestalt Formation in Children's Work
- Different stages of Centering
- The appropriate use of tools
- Supervision

# **CERTIFICATE IN CLAY FIELD THERAPY 2017/18 New Zealand Questionnaire**

Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Telephone:

1. Will you or did you attend the Introduction into Work at the Clay Field, a 5 day training?
2. What is your professional background and present occupation? This does not need to be a complete CV, but please include; whatever you think is relevant.
3. What is your motivation for this course?
4. Payment is possible by:

Credit Card: Name – Card Number – Date - Signature

Electronic Funds Transfer:

BSB733 600                      ACC 516463

IBAN:                              WPACAU2S

ACC name: Cornelia Elbrecht

Please add your name!

And please make sure that bank fees and currency variations are your responsibility.



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