

ARCHITECTS OF ART THERAPY

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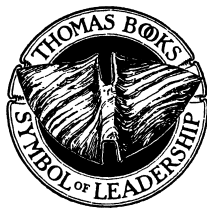
MEMOIRS AND LIFE STORIES

Edited By

MAXINE BOROWSKY JUNG

and

HARRIET WADESON



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To our students, with love.

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INTRODUCTION

The richness in the art therapy profession stems from those who pioneered its development. They are a creative, spirited collection of people bound by their mission to develop this unique, hybrid discipline. Otherwise, they differ vastly from one another in backgrounds, temperaments, talents, approaches to the work, and visions of art therapy.

The American Art Therapy Association (AATA) was formed in 1969. Although a few pioneers were practicing several decades earlier, art therapy as a formal profession is still quite young. We are fortunate, therefore, that many of the profession's early "architects" are still living, although some of our earliest pioneers are already deceased.

As we, the editors of this book, moved into retirement ourselves, we felt it a necessity to gather personal histories of those who have been prominent in shaping art therapy while they are still among us. The urgency of our enterprise came home to us in the initial stage of our work when one of our authors who had agreed to write a chapter, died suddenly.

So many art therapists have added significant ramifications to our diverse field that we recognized that selection of those to be included would involve difficult decisions. We were able to solve that problem quite simply, however, by letting the American Art Therapy Association make the selections for us: The highest honor awarded in art therapy is the American Art Therapy Association Honorary Life Membership (HLM). It was first awarded to Margaret Naumburg, whom many consider to be "The Mother of Art Therapy," at the inaugural meeting of the American Art Therapy Association in 1969 at Airlie House outside Washington, D.C. Since then, an AATA Honors Committee has nominated art therapists for the HLM award. This nomination is then ratified by a vote of the entire membership. Although the Honors Committee deliberates each year, in some years no art therapist is put forward for the HLM award. As editors, we recognized the thorough process of review leading to nomination and ratification of AATA's Honorary Life Members. Those who have been so honored became those we invited to write a personal memoir for this book. We asked them to include what brought them to art therapy, how they entered the field, their

major accomplishments and struggles in the field, what art therapy has meant to them in their lives, and their predictions, recommendations, and admonitions for the future of the profession. We also encouraged them to include personal aspects of their lives. For the eight HLMs who are deceased, we contacted art therapists who knew them well with a request for a brief biography.

Who are these pioneering art therapists of this book? The most stunning characteristic of this sample of art therapy leaders is that most are women: Of the 28 HLMs in this book, 23 are women. At a time when middle-class women stayed in their homes as wife and mother, before the Women's Movement of the late twentieth century, these women ventured out to start the art therapy profession. During that period, women of this kind often felt isolated and different in their yearnings, but through art therapy and the American Art Therapy Association (established in 1969), they discovered a group of professional colleagues and friends who shared their unique aspirations. The evolution of art therapy as a profession was primarily driven by women of courage who were unusual in that they left home and hearth to found a profession of importance and creativity, to educate future generations of art therapists, and to propel their innovative profession toward broad acceptance in the mental health hierarchy. Still today, most art therapy training programs are directed by women. Beginning on the East Coast and in the Midwest, art therapy soon developed on the West Coast as well, to become a national profession.

Another interesting aspect of this group's experience is that many benefited from mentors who helped them along the way, before that word was common. These mentors, who were both male and female, served as important role models. Some were art therapy pioneers; others were psychiatrists and psychologists interested in stimulating the development of this new profession.

Although histories of art therapy are available elsewhere, this collection is unique in that it provides personal reflections from many different vantage points, often inside scoops on behind-the-scenes machinations of art therapy's development not found in other sources. It is a very personal history of art therapy's beginnings and thoughts by its creators about its current and future state, as well as its history. Art therapy's colorful creators come to life in their own words. Their voices differ vastly from one another, some theoretical, some extremely personal, some practical, some whimsical, all embodying significant wisdom, from the place of art therapy among the helping professions to the business end of practice, to spiritual growth through art, and beyond. We believe that this diversity among those who have helped to build art therapy's structure has served as a template for the development of the profession into a "coat of many colors."

Many of our authors have been trail-blazers. Charting new territory can be perilous, and some of these memoirs describe roadblocks, challenges, and failures, as well as the successes these pioneers experienced. Between the lines, the reader can see the creative drive that propelled those who have developed the art therapy profession. Art therapy bridges the worlds of art and human services, so both advocates and adversaries were encountered in each, as we presented new visions of how art could be used for healing and growth.

The book is organized more or less chronologically. Part I “Beginnings” is composed of chapters about art therapy’s pioneers who were practicing before 1960. In many respects, these individuals were the progenitors of art therapy. Part II “Growth” covers the second wave of art therapy leaders who entered the field in the 1960s. Although art therapy was still little known at the time, this decade covers the establishment of the profession’s first journal and the beginnings of art therapy training programs and ends with the organization of a professional association. Some who entered the field at this time were students of those in Part I. Part III “Expansion” is composed of AATA Honorary Life Members who began their art therapy careers in the 1970s. During this period, art therapy training programs proliferated, so that some benefited from newly-established formal art therapy education. Others had been working in related areas such as art and psychology, and moved into art therapy in the early 1970s.

In their various venues of influence, the authors presented here are highly accomplished visionaries whose dedication to the development of art therapy has been remarkable. The influence of these few has expanded in ever-widening circles to change the lives of countless others. Through their chapters, we chart the development of an important mental health profession. We hope that the ways paved by these “architects of art therapy” will serve as an inspiration, not only for those involved in art therapy today, but for the generations of art therapists to come.

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We thank Benjamin Junge and Keith Sinrod for their generous technical assistance. Harriet Wadeson composed the cover for the book and Maxine Borowsky Junge came up with the idea for this collection. We thank our memoir contributors for their interesting lives and for their hard work creating the profession of art therapy.

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*Deceased

ARCHITECTS OF ART THERAPY

What we, or at any rate, what I refer to confidently as memory—meaning a moment, a scene, a fact that has been subjected to a fixative and thereby rescued from oblivion—is really a form of storytelling that goes on continually in the mind and often changes with the telling. Too many conflicting emotional interests are involved for life ever to be wholly acceptable, and possibly it is the work of the storyteller to rearrange things so that they conform to this end.

—William Maxwell
So Long, See You Tomorrow

Part I

**BEGINNINGS: ART THERAPISTS WHO
BEGAN PRIOR TO 1960**



Margaret Naumburg

Chapter 1

MARGARET NAUMBURG (1890–1983)

The Mother of Us All

JUDITH A. RUBIN

When the American Art Therapy Association held its first conference in September of 1970, there were disputes about many issues, but no one questioned the choice of Margaret Naumburg as the first Honorary Life Member. At the age of 80 the founding mother of art therapy looked elegant, spoke fluently, and delivered a stimulating address on the importance of training in the psychiatric interview. As always, she modeled for her audience the high standards that had given the discipline its earliest credibility among those in other professions.

The daughter of Max and Theresa Naumburg, Margaret grew up in a well-to-do New York German-Jewish family. Her older sister, Florence, became an artist and a teacher, and is now acknowledged as a pioneer in the therapeutic use of *art as therapy*. (Florence Cane wrote *The Artist in Each of Us* published in 1951.) In contrast, Margaret's pioneering work developed over time in the direction of what is now known as *art psychotherapy*.

According to her son, psychiatrist/psychoanalyst Thomas Frank, Margaret was "constrained and miserable . . . as a child;" fueling her desire to liberate other children to express themselves freely. A Renaissance woman, she pursued learning in a wide range of disciplines, always from the experts. After attending Vassar, then Barnard (B.A., 1912), Margaret studied with such innovators in education and psychotherapy as John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Jacob Moreno. Analyzed by both a Jungian and a Freudian, she was comfortably eclectic and open-minded in her approach to both education and therapy. She was a truly amazing woman.

Note: Further details about Margaret Naumburg's life and work can be found in the tributes and obituaries in *Art Therapy* (1983, 1: 4–7); the *American Journal of Art Therapy* (1982, 22: 10–11; 28–29); and *Art Psychotherapy* (1984, 11: 3–5).