



Introducing the IEATA

April 2024 Member Spotlight

Rachel Rose



Biography

Rachel Rose (she/her) is an educator, writer, and contemplative artist from Calgary (Mohkinstsis), Canada, on Treaty 7 lands. She holds a Masters of Adult Education with a focus on arts-based interventions as well as accreditation with the International Expressive Art Therapy Association as a REACE. Along the way, she has been writing, creating art, and always reflecting, maturing on her own path towards blending contemplative practices with the expressive arts.

Rachel teaches people how to use creativity for self-care, awareness, and wellness. Her offerings fuse mindfulness Her offerings fuse mindfulness practices with the reflective arts,

supporting all types of creative folks to find awareness, insight, and inspiration through art. Through her online practice at workshopmuse.com and her book '[Creating Stillness: Mindful Art Stories and Practices for Navigating Anxiety, Stress, and Fear](#)', her offerings fuse the expressive arts with mindfulness for broader audiences and communities both locally and around the world.

In her own creative practice, every piece she makes begins with an exploration of an emotion and emerges as a symbolic story. Rachel's work is noted for its attuned vulnerability and sharp observation of how the emotional territories of our daily lives intersect with contemporary society. Rose distinctively draws on contemplative traditions such as meditation, movement, artmaking, and immersion in nature to inform her teachings and creative processes. Thematically, her work explores the varied ways we make meaning in our lives and come to know our place in the world. Through her formal training as well as decades on the cushion and in the studio, her unique blend of education and creativity aims to support reflection and awareness in the most subtle and vast terrains of our lives. Learn more about her supports and art at www.workshopmuse.com.

What drew you to the field of expressive arts?

I have been making messes my whole life. With paint, string, and words, as well as in love, mothering, and virtually every other way imaginable. Eventually, an expertise began to grow, and the confusion in my life began to make sense through my creations. The seemingly irrelevant words and textures, as well as the processes that brought me to them, started to tell me something about my life. When I rub up against the messes of my emotions, identity, and the complexities of contemporary society, I turn to contemplative practices to help me find my way. Each practice, including meditation, movement, art making and being in nature, is embodied, reflective, and integrative, seeking holistic actions to complement the mind. Over the course of my life, I have come to see that if we pay attention to what we express as well as how we express things, we can find our way through any mess we find ourselves in.

Over the past 20 years, I have been evolving my skills in facilitating the expressive arts through my roles as an adult educator, community mobilizer, and creator. During



my second year of university, my world dramatically opened up after a professor suggested to me that I should become an expressive arts therapist. After observing me jump between drama, fine art, creative writing, and a deep care for helping others she saw a place for my aptitude and interests. At the time, her suggestion seemed foreign and strange, but her words and the resources she shared with me stuck. Her suggestion was the permission slip I needed to begin integrating multi-modal arts into everything I was doing. I quickly dropped the idea of being a therapist and instead followed my passion for working on community development projects, bringing the expressive arts with me all the way. From remote Indigenous communities to urban community development projects, I have learned so much about the fundamental power of facilitating multi modally. From 2013–2015, as I simultaneously pursued my Masters in Adult Education as well as grant-funded research in the power of storytelling, I again found myself pulled into the world of expressive arts through the literature I was reviewing. This time I heard the call more clearly and decided it was time to formally commit myself to garnering specific training in the expressive arts. Since that time, my commitment to the profession, practice, and ethics have only deepened and grown.

How are you implementing multimodal expressive arts in the domains of therapeutic work, artistic practice, consultation, education, and activism?

One of the unique components of my own voice in the field of expressive arts has been the infusion of mindfulness practices. It has felt so natural for me to integrate my own learning and dedication to this practice into the arts. In a sense, mindfulness has been the curriculum, and the expressive arts have been the tool of inquiry in my work. Since the pandemic and the birth of my young children, much of my work has taken place in the online sphere and through my writing. However, over the past year, I have begun to get my feet wet again, facilitating workshops in my local community in person as well as with local organizations such as colleges and health care services. Along the way, I have held fast to my own artistic practice, exploring writing, poetry, and embroidery, as well as my long-held passion for making arts in the outdoors.



How do you envision your work and artistic practice moving forward?

In many ways, I see myself staying the course over the next decade. I will continue to teach through my online portal, Workshop Muse, to the inspiring international group of creatives that gather with me there and continue to answer the call to write as both a form of creative expression and as a tool for communicating how the expressive arts can be a tool for practicing mindfulness. Of course, I will also continue to teach in person as my schedule allows. I hope to get better at sharing publicly how making art and expressing inter modally allows me to make sense of my own life and serve as a contemplative practice. I am beginning to understand how sharing our own stories with care and intention can inspire others towards this work.

What are your thoughts on the current role of expressive arts in your region and internationally?

I am so thankful to be in a community where, because of our local school (the Prairie Institute for Expressive Art Therapy), there are many practitioners working in varied ways. I am constantly meeting folks who integrate the EXA into their own corner of the world and practice. We also have a few new spaces that have dedicated themselves to arts and wellness, which is so encouraging as we all seek community and support to sustain this work. As I look beyond and around the world, I see so many folks taking the principles and practices of the expressive arts and integrating them into their own contexts and unique expressions. The opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and expansiveness feel very real. I feel that we have no need to feel scarcity or protectiveness but rather can feel emboldened as we are part of this wave sweeping the world. I am so excited to see how, together as a community, we can grow this field to continue being responsive leaders and cultivate a more just, compassionate, and caring world for all.



Embroidery & Textiles as Meditation

How does being a part of IEATA impact your work in expressive arts?

Every day I am thankful for the guidance and professionalization of this community. IEATA provides me a container for my work which can feel at times boundless, but when I anchor myself in the practice of being and consultant and educator and hold myself to the principles, ethics, and guidelines we have all agreed upon, I feel support and guidance in my own little corner of the world. I see myself continuing to lay deeper and deeper roots in this community and both learn from and serve in it for many years to come. Thank you to all the folks that dedicate their time and expertise to IEATA you are all holding a bright beacon for so many of us spun out across the world to hold fast to!

Professional Links

Educational Institutes

Publications

[Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) workshopmuse@gmail.com

[Prairie Institute Expressive Art Therapy](#) [Masters of Adult Education](#)

[Creating Stillness \(the book\)](#) [The Art of Mindfulness: Lion's Roar Magazine](#)

[When You're Tired of Trying: Lessons in Mindfulness from a Woodpecker, Tiny Buddha](#)

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