The Living Cloth ~
A Community Expressive Arts Ritual

Juan Li - China

L2PC
IEATA Regional Co-Chair
Expressive Arts practitioner, licensed psychological counselor, documentary filmmaker, and educator.

Rather than creating a collaborative artwork at the beginning of the Summit, I would love to invite participants into a shared Expressive Arts process that unfolds throughout the entire gathering. The cloth is not simply an art material.
It gradually becomes a living witness of our encounters, conversations, creativity and community over the three days.

Across many Asian cultures, we have beautiful words describing meaningful encounters and invisible connections (Go-en in Japan, Yuan in China, Inyeon in Korea, Kapwa in the Philippines, and many others). Rather than centering on one particular concept, I hope participants can experience these shared values through movement, image making, and collective creation.

Juan Li is an Expressive Arts practitioner, licensed psychological counselor, documentary filmmaker, and educator. She serves as the Co-Chair of regional committee for the IEATA. Her work explores moving image as an Expressive Arts medium, bringing together film, community arts, and intercultural dialogue.
Her documentaries “Words from the Heart” and “Expressive Arts in God” have been selected by international film festivals in Asia, Europe, North America, and South America.
Over the past decade, she has facilitated expressive arts projects in mental health hospitals, universities, refugee communities, hospice care, rehabilitation settings, and community organizations across China, UK, Ireland, India, Serbia, Cambodia, and the Thai–Myanmar border.
She is particularly interested in the dialogue between Asian cultural traditions and contemporary expressive arts practice.

Ancestral Echoes:
Mapping Emotional Inheritance & Healing

An experiential expressive arts workshop exploring inherited emotional patterns, intergenerational narratives, and the unconscious emotional legacies carried through families, cultures, and communities. Through reflective arts-based processes, storytelling, movement, and psychodramatic exploration, participants will be invited to examine inherited emotional beliefs, survival responses, strengths, and silences while reconnecting with personal agency and healing.
The session will include guided reflective prompts, emotional mapping, symbolic art-making, reflective writing, movement awareness, and witnessing/group reflection processes. Participants will be invited to explore emotional narratives and patterns that may have been unconsciously inherited through family systems, culture, and lived experiences.
The workshop will create space for awareness, expression, and compassionate witnessing, allowing participants to reflect on both inherited survival strategies and inherited strengths.

Surbhi Sethia is a child psychologist, expressive arts therapist, counselor, facilitator, and writer with over two decades of experience supporting women, children, young adults, and families. Her work focuses on emotional wellbeing, resilience, and creating safe spaces for healing through expressive arts.
Inspired by her work with children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), Surbhi recognized how anxiety, low self-esteem, shame, and relational patterns often remain hidden beneath academic or behavioral challenges. Her practice has since evolved to explore how expressive arts can foster emotional expression, resilience, and personal growth.
A central focus of her work is the intergenerational impact of emotional wellbeing. She believes that nurturing mothers emotionally strengthens families and helps create healthier environments for children to thrive.
Most recently, Surbhi was invited to speak as a delegate at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, where she presented on the importance of maternal emotional wellbeing and its lasting impact on families and future generations.

Surbhi Sethia - India

Mental Health Professional | Expressive Arts Therapist | Co-Coordinator, IEATA India | Founder & CEO, Wellness with Surbhi | Author | Feminist Writer | CEO - Roots the Foundation

Predictive Processing and Spiral Dynamics in Life
~ *Human Vitality in the Age of AI*

Mina Mo - Korea

REAT, RSMT/E, CNVC Certified Trainer, SEP, APTT

In an era where AI is surpassing human intellectual capacity, we return to explore the wisdom inherent in life itself. The brain constantly predicts the world, corrects its errors, and sustains aliveness through this process. Yet this process is not a cycle. We predict, we err, we correct, and we predict again — but we never return to the same place. It looks similar to where we were before, yet we are somewhere slightly different. Not a circle, but a spiral. Life moves this way by nature.
In this workshop, we will explore anticipatory postural adjustment to make sensory contact with the predictive processing process. And by creating spiral movements within our own bodies and among us as a group, we will share what each person harvests from their experience and learn together. What resources might this experience offer us in finding our orientation for how to live in the age of AI?

Mina Mo

● Founder & Director, Poiesis Expressive Arts Institute (Seoul) ● Visiting Associate Professor, Seoul National University ● Adjunct Faculty, European Graduate School (Switzerland)

Mina Mo explores the vital intersections of somatic movement, expressive arts, and science, including neuroscience and evolutionary biology. In her personal practice, she finds inspiration in improvisational dance and painting.
Mina is passionate about shifting the arts education paradigm toward a process where individuals can creatively "digest" their life experiences. She is committed to guiding others in developing self-love through somatic movement and facilitating the restoration of connections within human systems. She firmly believes that the capacity to accept and love oneself serves as the ultimate source of strength for loving the world.

Still Creating, Still Connecting

The Creative Brain in Dementia Care and Community

Ivy Chia, PhD - Singapore

Associate Professor and Head, Graduate Diploma in Expressive Arts Therapy
Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)

Dementia changes memory, attention, language, perception, movement and the ability to initiate or organize actions. Yet neurological change does not necessarily remove the capacity to sense, respond, choose, create and connect.

This presentation explores how practitioners can understand the changing brain while continuing to honor the person's lived experience. Through accessible neurological insights, practice examples and brief audience interactions, the session examines the often-hidden cognitive, sensory and motor demands of apparently simple creative activities.

The presentation will invite participants to consider practical ways to adapt creative invitations, materials, pacing, relationships and environments while preserving dignity, aesthetic possibility and agency. It concludes by considering how expressive arts can create opportunities for expression, connection and participation throughout the dementia journey.

Ivy Chia is an Associate Professor at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), where she heads the Graduate Diploma in Expressive Arts Therapy programme. She holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge and a Master of Dementia from the University of Tasmania.
Her teaching and research focus on expressive arts, ageing, and dementia care, with a particular interest in how creative practices can support participation, connection, and well-being among older adults. She is involved in arts-based research across hospital and community settings, aiming to strengthen the integration of creative approaches within health and social care.

Finding Voice Through Thematic Drawing

Understanding the Lived Experiences of Malay-Muslim Pregnant Teens in Malaysia

Mohd Makzan Musa - Malaysia

MA (Psychology) & Trauma-Informed Expressive Arts Therapy Consultant

Premarital sex resulting in unintended pregnancy is widely regarded as taboo, sinful, and shameful within many Malay-Muslim communities in Malaysia. Due to social stigma, many pregnant teenagers are placed in shelter homes, where they remain isolated until childbirth. Following delivery, many relinquish their babies for adoption, often against their wishes, resulting in profound grief, loss, and psychological distress.

This presentation explores the use of thematic drawing as an expressive arts approach to better understand the psychological experiences of Malay-Muslim adolescents facing unintended pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. Through guided themes, participants created drawings that expressed thoughts, emotions, and lived experiences often difficult to put into words. Each drawing was explored collaboratively with its creator, providing insight into their psychological reality.

The drawings revealed emotional turmoil, unmet needs, identity struggles, and the complex challenges of becoming a mother at a young age. More than artistic expression, they became symbolic cries for help from young women whose voices are often hidden by stigma and silence.

This presentation highlights thematic drawing as a culturally sensitive and accessible approach that can deepen understanding, support meaningful dialogue, and inform expressive arts practice and research within Malay-Muslim communities.

Mohd Makzan Musa is a former Senior Lecturer at the School of Applied Psychology, Policy and Social Work, University Utara Malaysia. He earned BA in Psychology from University Kebangsaan Malaysia and MA in Psychology from United States International University, San Diego, California, USA. He is also an alumni Trauma-Informed Expressive Arts Therapy Institute, USA. Mohd Makzan Musa founded Malaysian Art Therapy Association (MATA) and later renamed as Malaysian Expressive Arts Therapy Association (MEATA). Following his retirement Mohd Makzan Musa remained actively engaged in creative writing and promoting the used of art and expressive arts in helping professions in Malaysia.

7 Steps to Stillness

From Surrender to Creative Presence

Helen Lee MM - Korea / Singapore

IEATA Asia Regional Co-Coordinator

Founder, Expressive Arts Singapore
Founder, Studio H
Founder, Singapore Lifeline

We often speak of "letting go," but what if the invitation is not simply to let go, but to surrender?
This experiential workshop offers a gentle journey through seven embodied steps that invite participants to arrive fully in the present moment. Guided by sound, silence, movement, breath, and simple creative expression, we gradually quiet the mind, awaken the senses, and cultivate deep listening.
Rather than striving to create, participants are invited to surrender—to rest in stillness and notice what naturally emerges. From this quiet space, expressive arts become a way of witnessing and giving form to what remains within us.
No artistic or musical experience is needed. Only curiosity, openness, and a willingness to listen.

Helen Lee is an expressive arts educator, facilitator, musician, and visual artist dedicated to creating spaces where people can reconnect with themselves through creativity, presence, and authentic human connection.
Drawing from a lifelong background in music, visual arts, and contemplative practice, she integrates sound, movement, image-making, writing, and reflective dialogue into immersive expressive arts experiences. Her work invites participants to slow down, listen deeply, and discover what emerges through the creative process.
Helen is passionate about building expressive arts communities and fostering meaningful cross-cultural collaboration throughout Asia. As host of the 2026 IEATA Asia Regional Summit in Singapore, she hopes to strengthen connections among practitioners while making expressive arts more accessible across the region.

From Mindful Self to Creative Facilitation

Lessons from a Mindfulness and Expressive Arts Certification Course for Nurses

Dominic T. Paguio - Philippines

IEATA Board Member and Membership Co-Chair

nurse, educator, educational psychologist, and expressive arts practitioner

How can mindfulness and expressive arts strengthen resilience, presence, and compassionate care?

Drawing from a Mindfulness and Expressive Arts Certification Program developed for nurses in the Philippines, Dominic Paguio shares key insights from training healthcare professionals. Participants will then experience a guided mindfulness and expressive arts process, discovering practical ways to cultivate self-awareness, emotional well-being, and authentic connection in healthcare, education, and other helping professions.

Dominic T. Paguio is a nurse, educator, educational psychologist, and expressive arts practitioner from the Philippines whose work bridges healthcare, education, and the creative arts. For more than a decade, he has been an active member of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA), currently serving as Membership Co-Chair on the Board of Directors. In recognition of his leadership and contributions to the field, he received the IEATA Rising Star Award in 2023. Dominic's professional work centers on supporting neurodiverse children, educators, medical professionals, and helping communities through mindfulness and expressive arts. He currently leads a Mindfulness and Expressive Arts Facilitation Certification Program for nurses at the Philippine General Hospital, integrating reflective practice, creativity, and compassionate care into healthcare education. A Foundation of Arts Therapy (FOAT) Practitioner, Therapeutic Expressive Arts Facilitator, and Mental Health Practitioner, Dominic is passionate about cultivating resilience, presence, and authentic human connection through experiential learning. His workshops invite participants to discover how mindfulness and expressive arts can enrich both personal well-being and professional practice.

Meeting Through Creative Expression

What Children on the Autism Spectrum Have Taught Me About Communication and Relationship

Massami Ichikawa - Japan

ATR-BC, REAT

We often try to understand one another through words. Yet meaningful connection can also emerge through sound, rhythm, movement, and creative expression. In this experiential workshop, participants will engage in expressive arts processes inspired by insights gained through work with children on the autism spectrum. Together, we will explore the possibilities of communication and relationship beyond words, and discover new ways of meeting one another through creative expression.

Massami Ichikawa is a psychologist specializing in developmental psychology and a Registered Expressive Arts Therapist (REAT) based in Japan. She works with children and adults through expressive arts in both social welfare and community settings.
Her interests include creative expression, nonverbal communication, and the role of the arts in supporting emotional well-being and connection with others, particularly for neurodivergent people.
In addition to her practice, she translates books on expressive arts and art therapy, and facilitates workshops, study groups, supervision, community art activities, and community-based Creative Wellness Service Initiative (CWSI) programs.

Through these activities, she supports the development of the expressive arts community in Japan and encourages dialogue with the international community.

“Be Water”

as an analogy of embodied presence of goodness

Lai, Ka Kit (KK) Drago
- Hong Kong
PhD, MSS, MA, DVATI, RCAT, REAT

Goodness in Taoist philosophy is not concerned with doing “good” out of a sense of duty according to a system (e.g., Confucianism) or generally as a virtue according to the Western framework; rather, the notion of goodness is linked with wu-wei. We will use the concept of “being water [be water]” in the text Tao Te Ching chapter 8 to explore the qualities of “goodness.”

KK is a psychotherapist, registered expressive arts therapist and registered art therapist. KK obtained his Ph.D. in expressive arts at European Graduate School. He has a master’s degree in psychotherapy and a second master’s degree in theological aesthetics.

KK is the faculty member at the European Graduate School for the Masters and Ph.D. programs. He was a former honorary lecturer and supervisor for Master of expressive arts therapy at Hong Kong University. He is also the founding director of Kunst Expressive Arts Academy in Hong Kong.

KK’s areas of research, teaching and practice span the spectrum from the conversation of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and Zhuangzi’s Taoist philosophy and theological aesthetics. Since 1998, he was involved in Hong Kong government projects to promote creative arts education in numerous secondary schools. Beginning in 2003, KK has been integrating expressive arts and therapy/consulting through serving in various settings including commercial sectors, non-governmental agencies and communities. For over two decades, he has been serving special need children, youth and families, mental health patients and dementia elderly in North America, Cambodia, HK and other parts of Asia.

KK has contributed articles and editorial of Hong Kong Section to the international journal Creative Arts in Education and Therapy. His Chinese book on arts therapy and Christian spirituality Marginal Center is published in 2012.