

VERA HELLER, Ph.D.

Psychotherapist & Art Therapist

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EDUCATION

- **Ph.D IN EXPRESSIVE THERAPIES (DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY)**
Lesley University. Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States - 2007
- **2nd CYCLE DIPLOMA IN STUDIES OF THE ARTISTIC PRACTICE**
University of Québec in Rimouski (UQAR). Lévis, Québec, Canada - 2023
- **MASTER'S IN ART THERAPY**
Concordia University. Montréal, Québec, Canada - 1994
- **BACHELOR'S IN VISUAL ARTS**
"With Distinction". Concordia University. Montréal, Québec, Canada - 1987
- **BACHELOR'S IN SOCIAL WORK**
Laval University. Québec, Québec, Canada - 1983

SUMMARY OF CLINICAL COMPETENCE

- **AFFILIATIONS:** Psychotherapist (OPQ)
Art Therapist (RCAT, AATQ, CATA)
Social Worker (OTSTCFQ)
- **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE:** 25 years in private practice, employees' assistance programs (EAP), CLSC, hospitals & community agencies
- **TEACHING EXPERIENCE:** 20 years of academic teaching in art therapy and social work: UQAT, UQAM - Montréal, Canada, IPATT - Bangkok, Thailand, JIPATT - Tokyo, Japan, Lesley University Extension - Netanya, Israel
- **FLUENT IN:**
English, French, Spanish & Romanian

SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

- CATA-ACAT - 2024
Altimetric award for journal article on immigrants' life stories
- Teaching fellowship - 2005
Lesley University Extension. Netanya, Israel
- Doctoral grant FRQ (former FCAR) - 2003 à 2005
Québec Research Funds for Society and Culture
- Travel grants - 1998 & 1999
Canada Council for the Arts
- Commemorative plaque from the City of Montréal - 1994
Hip-Hop mural - Centre jeunesse St-Denis
- "B-Grant" for mid-career artists - 1989
CALQ (former Québec's Ministry of Cultural Affairs)

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

PSYCHOTHERAPY/ART THERAPY

- Private practice; CBT Clinic; IVAC; EAP (Homewood - Human Solutions, Shepell - Morneau, Health Canada)
- Issues: Depression; Anxiety & Stress; Trauma; Bereavement; Self-esteem; Work-related issues; Relationships, family, marital & intercultural issues; Migration; Life transitions; Creative blocks.

ART THERAPY IN HOSPITALS & COMMUNITY AGENCIES

- Sainte-Anne Hospital. Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Québec, Canada
Combat stress (veterans & active military)
- Hôtel-Dieu Hospital - Ethnopsychiatry. Montréal, Québec, Canada
Evaluations, individual & family sessions
- Therapeutic day center (CTJ). Montréal, Québec, Canada
Implementation of art therapy mental health programs
- Multi-ressources organisation for people suffering from cancer OMPAC. Montréal, Québec, Canada
Group work
- Raw Art Foundation, Atelier de la Grande Cheminée. Montréal, Québec, Canada
Patients with chronic mental health issues
- Youth centres - Bloomfield, St-Denis, René Goupil, PEYO, The Bunker. Montréal, Québec, Canada
Urban murals design, art therapy workshops for youth
- Prise II: Implementation of art therapy program facilitating the reintegration of psychiatric patients into the community

TRAININGS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

CANADA:

- Bi-annual professional development workshops, intensive thematic workshops

INTERNATIONAL:

- Instituto da Familia (Family therapy institute). Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Association para el Desarrollo Integral de Personas Violadas, ADIVAC (Therapeutic center for victims of sexual aggression). Mexico City, Mexico
- Hospital de Dia del Neurotico Jael Nieves Casas, Day Center. Holguin, Cuba

SOCIAL WORK

- CLSC in Montréal: St-Louis du Parc ; Parc Extension ; Centre-Sud ; du Plateau
Intervention with immigrant children and families and the elderly
- Crisis Centre IRIS, Montréal : Mental health crisis interventions - individual sessions

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

SINCE 2005

UNIVERSITY OF QUÉBEC IN ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE (UQAT), SCHOOL OF ART THERAPY

- FULL-TIME PROFESSOR: 2014 to present
- PROGRAM DIRECTOR: 2018 to 2021: 2nd cycle microprogram in art therapy & master's degree
- LECTURER: 2010 to 2014
- COURSES TAUGHT: Imagination in art therapy; Psychopathology; Psychosomatic art therapy; Jungian approach; The creative process in art therapy; Case studies & research; Internship preparation; Supervision: art therapy internships; Ethics and standards of practice in art therapy; Initiation to art therapy
- PHENOMENOLOGICAL, ARTS-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS: "Exile, Identity, and Creation" (immigrant women); "Imaginal Journeys" (existential migrants - in collaboration with the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts); "My Life, an Artist's Book" (immigrant adults' visual life stories - in collaboration with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).
- ARTS-BASED, AUTO ETNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH PROJECTS: "Visual autoethnography: A Transformative practice of Remembering"; "This story will go further".

UNIVERSITY OF QUÉBEC IN MONTRÉAL (UQAM). SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK & VISUAL ARTS

LECTURER - 2008 to 2014

- Courses taught in social work: Internship coordination & group supervision
- Courses taught in visual arts: Therapeutic perspectives in fine arts

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING

- International Art Therapy Program in Thailand (IPATT), Bangkok - since 2016
Courses taught: Family art therapy (90 hours); Psychopathology (90 hours)
- Japanese Institute of Art Therapy (JIPATT), Tokyo - 2018
Course taught: Art therapy for children and adolescents (75 hours)
- Lesley University Extension, Netanya, Israel - 2005
Course taught: Ethics & standards of practice in art therapy (45 hours)

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

BOOK CHAPTERS

Heller, V. (2024). Visual auto-ethnography: A transformative practice of remembering. In M. López Fdez. Cao, R. Hougham, S. Scoble (Eds.). *Memory: Shaping Connections in the Arts Therapies*. Routledge.

Heller, V. (2023). The hero's journey: A group intervention with existential migrants (Le parcours du héros : une intervention de groupe auprès des migrants existentiels). In L. Pelletier and J. Lambert (Eds.). *L'art-thérapie auprès des groupes : Réflexions théoriques et développements cliniques. (Group therapy: Clinical reflections and developments)*. Presses de l'Université du Québec.

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

Heller, V. (2024). The visual life story approach, a tool for transformation and well-being in museum art therapy with immigrant adults. *Canadian Journal of Art Therapy*, 37(1), 30–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26907240.2024.2359751>

Heller, V. (2024). What is behind the mask of proletarian morality that silences me? (Qu'il y a-t-il derrière le masque de la morale prolétarienne qui me réduit au silence ?) *Revue internationale Animation, territoires et pratiques socioculturelles / International Journal of Sociocultural Community Development and Practices / Revista internacional Animación, territorios y prácticas socioculturales*, (25), 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.55765/atps.i25.2424>

Heller, V. (2012). Exile, identity and creation: An imaginary journey, a concrete destination (Exil, identité et création: Un voyage imaginaire, une destination concrète). *L'Observatoire : Revue d'action sociale & médico-sociale*, (72), 101-104. https://bib.henallux.be/index.php?lvl=notice_display&id=281124

Heller, V. (2010). Exile, identity and creation: An arts-based intervention project for Intervention through the arts with immigrant women (Exil, identité et création : un projet d'intervention par les arts auprès des femmes immigrantes). *Cahiers de l'action culturelle de l'UQAM*. 8(1)7-13. *Participation culturelle et action citoyenne*. https://actionculturelle.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/78/2020/03/cahiers_acv8n1_1.pdf

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Heller, V. (2007). *Exile, identity, and artistic creation: An arts-based phenomenological study with immigrant women*. Lesley University. Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States. https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_dissertations/33/

MASTER'S THESIS

Heller, V. (1994). *Death and rebirth in the creative process: Applications in art therapy*. Concordia University. Montréal, Québec, Canada. <https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/id/eprint/2906/>

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Heller, V. (February 2025). *Migratory mourning and art therapy*. Research paper. Virtual presentation at the World Art Therapy Conference. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (November 2024). *Life story as a tool for identity appropriation in intercultural art therapy (Le récit de vie, un outil d'appropriation identitaire en art-thérapie interculturelle (Part 2))*. Research paper. Presented online at the Laboratoire de recherche sur les difficultés d'adaptation et l'intervention psychosociale (LAREDAIP, UQAT). Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Canada. Available in French at <https://www.uqat.ca/midi-laredaip/>

Heller, V. (September 2024). *Immigrants' autoethnographies as artists' books: Overcoming dark times through the power of imagination*. Research paper. Presented at the 17th ECARTe (European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education) international conference. Gent, Belgium.

Heller, V. (April 2024). *Life story as a tool for identity appropriation in intercultural art therapy (Le récit de vie, un outil d'appropriation identitaire en art-thérapie interculturelle (Part 1))*. Research paper. Presented online at the Laboratoire de recherche sur les difficultés d'adaptation et l'intervention psychosociale (LAREDAIP, UQAT). Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Canada. Available in French at <https://www.uqat.ca/midi-laredaip/>

Heller, V. (July 2023). *Visual auto-ethnography*. Research paper. Presented online at the Annual Assembly of Thailand's Art-Therapy Association. Bangkok, Thailand.

Heller, V. (June 2023). *Why paint? A narrative of pictorial practice (Pourquoi peindre? Un récit de pratique)*. Research paper. Presented at UQAR's Artistic Practice Symposium. Lévis, Québec, Canada. Available in French at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhF3pGfJESs>

Heller, V. (May 2023). *My life, an artist's book: Visual life stories as tools for transformation and well-being. (Ma vie, un livre d'art : le récit de vie visuel portant sur l'ensemble de la trajectoire de vie des personnes immigrantes, un outil de transformation et de bien-être)*. Research paper. Presented at the ACFAS conference "Health and Visual Arts, Exploring the Place of our Museums in the Medicine of Tomorrow". Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (April 2023). *Visual auto-ethnography, a link between art, art therapy and society. (L'auto-ethnographie visuelle, un trait d'union entre l'art, l'art-thérapie et la société)*. Research paper. Presented online at the Francophone Art Therapy Summit.

Heller, V. (March 2023). *The hero's journey, a group intervention with existential migrants. (Le parcours du héros, une intervention de groupe auprès des migrants existentiels)*. Poster presentation at UQAT's Research and Creation Day. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS (continued)

Heller, V. (March 2023). *What is behind the mask that silences me? (Qu'il-y a-t-il derrière le masque qui me réduit au silence ?)*.

Research paper. Presented online at the international conference "The Masks of Virtue Used through Propaganda." Technical University Cluj-Napoca, Romania and North Baia Mare University Center, Romania, in collaboration with the University of Quebec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT).

Heller, V. (September 2022). *A visual auto-ethnography: Mapping memory through art and reflexivity*.

Research paper. Presented at the 16th ECARTe (European Consortium for Art Therapy Education) international conference "Memory: Shaping Connections in the Arts Therapies". Vilnius, Lithuania.

Heller, V. et Riccardi, M. (November 2021). *Revisiting life stories with sandplay figurines in multicultural intervention*.

Workshop and conference. Presented online at the 52nd annual conference of the American Art Therapy Association. (AATA) San Diego, California, United States.

Heller, V. (June 2021). *Knowing existential migration through art therapy: Creating a more compassionate living together in the world*.

Research paper. Presented online at the International Nordic Art Therapy Seminar. Siguna, Sweden.

Heller, V. (May 2021). *Art, mourning, and identity: An arts-based project with existential migrants in art therapy. (Art, deuil, et identité : un projet de réflexion- création en art-thérapie avec les migrants existentiels)*.

Research paper. Presented online at the ACFAS conference "Arts, Well-Being and Knowledge, a Trio to Consolidate the Well-Being of Individuals and Populations". University of Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (October 2020). *The psychoanalytic perspective of the creative process: Didier Anzieu, Anton Ehrenzweig, Marion Milner*.

Guest lecturer. Doctoral seminar "Study of Arts and Artistic Practices", École des arts visuels et médiatiques, University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (September 2019). *Existential migrants and the hero's myth: Imagining windmills, recreating the journey*.

Poster presentation of research project at the 14th ECARTe (European Consortium for Art Therapy Education) international conference. Alcalá de Henares, Spain.

Heller, V. (November 2018). *Existential migrants' art: Transforming identities through reflectivity and creation*.

Research paper presented at the 49th American Art Therapy Association (AATA), Miami, Florida, United States.

Heller, V. (March 2018). *Psychoanalytic perspectives of the creative process. Workshop-conference (12h)*.

Guest lecturer. Doctoral seminar "Study of Arts and Artistic Practices", École des arts visuels et médiatiques, University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V., Riccardi, M., et Delziel, B. (October 2017). *Symbolic journey: An introductory workshop to the symbolic value of sandplay figurines*.

Workshop-conference presented at the "Sandplay Day", Art therapy department, Concordia University. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (March 2017). *Psychopathology, diagnosis and us: Approaching psychopathology from various perspectives*.

Guest lecturer. Art therapy department, Concordia University. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (August 2016). *My world map: Between here and there*.

Research paper. Presented at the World Social Forum, University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. et Riccardi, M. (July 2016). *Creating imaginal narratives into a transcultural canvas: Reconstructing identities and installing meaning*.

Research paper. Presented at the 47th annual conference of the American Art Therapy Association (AATA). Baltimore, Maryland, United States.

Heller, V. (September 2015). *Between here and there: Creating hybrid identities*.

Research paper. Presented at the ECARTe (European Consortium for Art Therapy Education) international conference, Palermo, Italy.

Heller, V. (March 2014). *The hidden order of art: Anton Ehrenzweig's model of creativity. Workshop-conference (12h)*.

Guest lecturer. Doctoral seminar "Study of Arts and Artistic Practices", École des arts visuels et médiatiques, University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (January 2014). *Creating to know who we are and where we are going. Workshop-conference*.

Guest lecturer. École des arts visuels et médiatiques, University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada..

Heller, V. (April 2013). *Exile, identity, and creation. (Exil, identité et création)*

Research paper. Presented at the FFAT (Fédération Française d'Art-Thérapie) international conference. Paris, France.

Heller, V. (October, 2012). *From there to here: Tell your story. Workshop-conference (8 h) and exhibition*.

Art symposium "Talent Fou", College of Gaspé (CEGEP). Gaspé, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (March 2012). *Discovering art therapy: Creativity and social action*.

Research paper. Presented at the Social Work Conference. University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS (continued)

Heller, V. (December 2011). *Art and healing in the corporate world*.

Research paper. Presented at the international symposium "Artistic Mediation and Managerial Innovation".

University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (November 2011). *The use of art mediums by mental health professionals: Advantages and pitfalls*.

Guest lecturer. Music therapy department, University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (June 2011). *Exile, identity, and creation: A parallel between the migratory and the creative process*.

Research paper. Presented at the international art therapy conference "Quests for Identities: The Backdrop of Art-Therapies".

University of Québec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT). Rouyn-Noranda, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (February 2011). *Discovering art therapy: Workshop-conference (8 h)*.

Guest speaker. Annual meeting of the Association of Psychologists in Employees' Assistance Programs (RPPAE). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (March 2010). *Art and its creative applications in social work*.

Guest lecturer. Social work department, University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). Montréal, Québec, Canada.

Heller, V. (May 2008). *Redefining identity: An exploration of several immigrant women's experiences with art therapy*.

Research paper. Presented at the international conference "Art and Psyche: Reflections on the Image". San Francisco, California, United States.

PUBLISHED INTERVIEWS

Letarte, M. (March 19, 2021). Immigration : l'art peut-il aider à construire sa nouvelle identité? *Québec science*.

<https://www.quebecscience.qc.ca/partenariat/immigration-art-aider-construire-nouvelle-identite/>

Cucci, M. (February 5, 2020). Vera Heller et les perspectives florissantes de l'art-thérapie. *Affaires universitaires*.

<https://www.affairesuniversitaires.ca/articles-de-fond-fr/vera-heller-et-les-perspectives-florissantes-de-lart-therapie/>

Blondin, A. (August 3, 2017). Comprendre les migrants volontaires à travers l'art (entrevue sur la recherche Parcours Imaginaires).

Journal La Frontière (Rouyn Noranda).

<https://artherapievirtus.org/migrants/2018/06/comprendre-les-migrants-volontaires-a-travers-lart/>

ART EXHIBITIONS - www.veraheller-artiste.ca

SOLO EXPOSITIONS

2017 - *Symbolic Journey*; Concordia University, Art-Therapy Department. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

2010 - *Transitional Pathways (Parcours transitionnels)*, L'Espace Contemporain. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

1999 - *Rites of Passage (Rites de passage)*, Fiesta Ibéro-Americana. Holguín, Cuba.

1999 - *Emotion and Gesture (Émotion et geste)*, Centre Castelnau. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

1998 - *Mythologies*, Las Romerías de Mayo. Holguín, Cuba.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

2023 - INTERARTS Symposium Foundation. Aiud, Roumanie.

1988 - *Landmarks/Paysages*, Painting Symposium/Symposium de peinture de Baie-St-Paul. Baie-St-Paul, Québec, Canada.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 - *Group exhibition of the participants to the INTER-ARTS Symposium*. INTER-ARTS Foundation Gallery. Aiud, Roumanie.

2023 - *Parcours imaginaires*. Québec Art Therapists' Association. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

2019 - *Parcours imaginaires*. Sherpa Gallery. Québec, Québec, Canada.

2018 - *Parcours imaginaires*. Seminary Gallery, McGill University. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

2018 - *Naturally (Naturellement)*. L'Espace Contemporain. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

2018 - *Blue period (Période bleu)*. L'Espace Contemporain. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

2013 - *Art Miami*. Art Fusion Gallery. Miami, FL, United States.

2010 - *Traces and textures*. L'Espace Contemporain. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

2008 - *Exile, identity, and creation*. Art & Psyche conference. San Francisco, CA, United States.

2005 - *Emergence*. Lesley University Gallery. Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States.

1998 - *Images of women (Images de femmes)*. Mile-End Library. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

1997 - *Large format paintings (Grands formats)*. Brancusi Center. Curator: Hedwige Asselin. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

1996 - *Large format paintings (Grands formats)*. Brancusi Center. Curator: Hedwige Asselin.

1995 - *Untitled (Sans titre)*. Le Zocalo. Longueuil, Québec, Canada.

1992 - *Differences and Sites (Différences et sites)*. La Centrale / Power house. Montréal, Québec, Canada.

ART EXHIBITIONS - www.veraheller-artiste.ca (continued)

- 1992 - *Contemporary painting from Québec (Peinture contemporaine du Québec)*. City Hall, Yverdon-Les-Bains, Switzerland. Curator: Dominique Gagnon & Francine Simonin.
- 1990 - *A new generation of artists (La relève)*. Expression Gallery, St-Hyacinthe, Québec, Canada. Curator: Michel Groleau.
- 1990 - *Untitled (Sans titre)*. Thomas Moore Institute. Ogilvy Gallery, Montréal, Québec, Canada. Curator: Hedwige Asselin.
- 1990 - *The Famous (Les fameuses)*. Pratt & Whitney Gallery, Longueuil, Québec, Canada. Curator: Hedwige Asselin.
- 1989 - *Coup de coeur : Installations and large formats. Free Entry to Contemporary Art (ELAAC)*. Cité de l'Image, Montréal, Québec, Canada. Curator: M. Groleau.
- 1989 - *Four (Quatre): Vera Heller, Renée Lavaillante, Louise Prescott & Martine Deslauriers*. La Chambre Blanche, Québec, Québec, Canada.
- 1989 - *The Famous (Les fameuses)*. Pratt & Whitney Gallery, Longueuil, Québec, Canada. Curator: Hedwige Asselin.
- 1989 - *Untitled (Sans titre)*. Maison de la culture Côte-des-Neiges, Montréal, Québec, Canada. Curator: Hedwige Asselin.
- 1988 - *The curator's choice (Le choix du commissaire)*. Expression Gallery, St-Hyacinthe, Québec, Canada. Curator: Michel Groleau.
- 1987 - *Some (Quelques)*. 4060 St. Laurent, Montréal, Québec, Canada. Curator: Jacques Doyon.
- 1987 - *Mouvement, matter, moment (Mouvement, matière, moment)*. Éclart Gallery (CAPQ). Montréal, Québec, Canada.
- 1987 - *Large formats (Grands formats)*. Brancusi Center, Montréal, Québec, Canada. Curator: Hedwige Asselin.
- 1987 - *Group show: Launch of the Esse Art Magazine*. Articule Gallery. Montréal, Québec, Canada.
- 1986 - *Nonsense (Absurde)*. Yahouda Meir Gallery. Montréal, Québec, Canada.
- 1986 - *Interface /Artist Power*. Cité de l'image. Montréal, Québec, Canada.