



Arts Activism, Education, and Therapies: Transforming Communities Across Africa (Matatu)

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This second volume of research emanating from Drama for Life, University of the Witwatersrand, explores the transformative and healing qualities of the arts in South Africa, Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe. Essays on arts for social change illuminate the difficulties of conflict-resolution (in war-scarred countries, tertiary institutions, and child-offender programmes) to promote broader understanding of diversity and difference. Further essays focus on arts and healing, in which music therapy diagnoses, repairs, sustains, and enhances collective health. Intervention theatre - in prisons, fieldwork, and the ethics and politics of storytelling - is examined as a basis for collaboration with children and youth. The musical theatre traditions of Botswana's San people are investigated, as well as the benefits of arts counselling with educators to alleviate psycho-social stress in classrooms. Important insights are provided into ways of applying the arts and raise questions of ethics, effectiveness, and apposite usage. Also treated is the role of aesthetics in the effectiveness of art, particularly in social contexts. Included are overviews of the ways in which the aesthetics of drama have changed over the past four decades and of the cohesive potential of the arts. How can arts practitioners engage in inter-cultural dialogue to facilitate healing? The energy and inventiveness of the playful mode engender new ways of contending with social issues, whereby the focus is on how theatre affects an audience and on how communication in applied theatre and drama can reach audiences more effectively. These essays provide an insight into the application of the arts for transformation across Africa. Through their juxtaposition in this volume they speak to the variety and purposes of arts approaches and offer fresh perspectives on and to the field.

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