

Art of Medicine

Kiara Cannizzaro

Program Manager
Doctors' Health SA

23rd November 2019

Australasian Doctors' Health Conference - WA

Doctors' Health SA
PROFESSIONAL • CONFIDENTIAL



Presentation Overview

Why are we encouraging our doctors to be creative

Creating a platform for them to share their creativity

Celebrating doctors' art with the broader community

What is next for creative doctors

How you can connect with creative colleagues and interesting arts broadly

"People who engage in the arts for two or more hours/week report significantly better mental well-being."⁽¹⁾

Art making significantly lowers cortisol levels.⁽²⁾

"Medical staff perform better when engaged in hospital arts programs."⁽³⁾

Musical activity throughout the life span preserves cognitive functioning in advanced age.⁽⁴⁾





“ Art gives you a transient break; a meditational pause, which is quite invigorating”

Dr Roger Sexton, Medical Director, Doctors' Health SA

Bringing together doctor and medical student artists

2015 & 2018



ARTIST EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (email or post details below)

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: _____

Medical Occupation/Field of Study:

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Mobile: _____

Alternative Phone: _____

Email: Email already advised OR

My art speciality: _____

I wish to submit _____ (approx. number of artwork)

Approx dimensions (detail on extra paper, needed & send with this form):

KEY DATES

Artists EOI's close midnight, **3 August**—
please submit all required details by this date.

Artworks to be delivered approximately 1 week prior to exhibition, will be advised in due course.

Exhibition opens on Thursday 20 September

Exhibition **VIP Launch** on Sunday 23 September, 1pm—4pm.

Exhibition closes on Friday 5 October

YOUR HOSTS

Doctors' Health SA

www.doctorshealthsa.com.au
Fax: 08 8232 4116

praxis ARTSPACE

www.praxisartspace.com.au

Contact for 'Art of Medicine'
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ART of MEDICINE

2018

EXHIBITION | 20 Sept—5 Oct

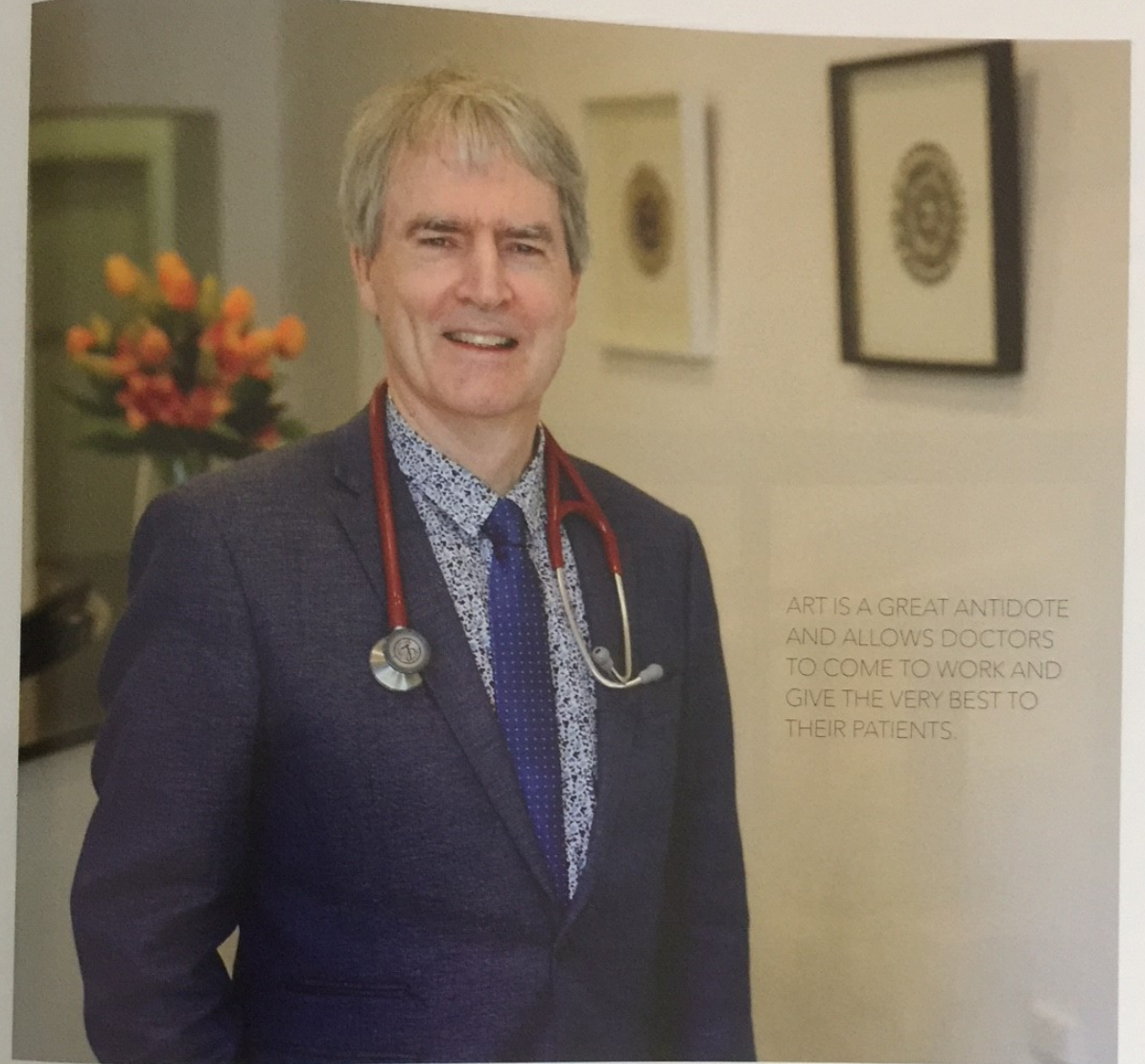
An initiative of **Doctors' Health SA**
Hosted by praxis ARTSPACE

Expression of Interest

To be received by 3 August 2018

Celebrating doctors' creativity!

SA Life Magazine – September 2018



ART IS A GREAT ANTIDOTE AND ALLOWS DOCTORS TO COME TO WORK AND GIVE THE VERY BEST TO THEIR PATIENTS.

A DOCTOR'S DOCTOR

"Art makes you stop, think and step out of your life into another world for a while," says Doctor Roger Sexton, who has a deep appreciation of art despite not being an artist himself. His mother's pen and wash paintings hung on the walls of his practice at Mount Pleasant, where he was a GP for 30 years. "Art gives you a transient break; a meditational pause, which is quite invigorating," he says.

Roger is medical director at Doctors Health SA; a general practice clinic set up in 2010 to cater specifically for doctors, including remote GPs in isolated communities. "Through their work, doctors can become patients without a doctor and end up

to pursue their careers. Now there is a counter-movement to encourage interests outside of work. "If you're going to remain a sustainable individual, personally and professionally, you must have an interest outside of work," Roger says. "What are you doing, other than your work, to make sure that when you come to work the next day you can give the very best to your patients?"

Roger helped establish *The Art of Medicine* exhibition in 2015, celebrating doctors who are artists; there are surprisingly many of them. The annual exhibition aims to spark discussion within the profession and inspire others to take up art as a hobby. "It's not



WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS BEN KELLY

A PICTURE OF HEALTH

Art is being prescribed as an unlikely antidote to burnout in one of the most demanding professions. *The Art of Medicine* exhibition will celebrate doctors who moonlight as artists, using creativity as an escape from the rigours of their careers.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART

There is so much life running through the veins of gregarious Doctor Pam Rachootin, it is hard to believe her heart stopped beating once for 10 whole seconds. The doctor, writer and artist required open heart surgery last year, when "everything that could go wrong, did".

During more than a week in intensive care, she was woken by three white-faced ICU nurses who looked like they had seen a ghost. "The next day I overheard them saying it was asystole (cardiac arrest); it stopped completely, but all they needed to do was shake me up and it restarted," says Pam, who hiked Mount Lofty just a few weeks before the incident. Despite the ordeal, the story was great material for her regular medical column.

After recovering from the surgery, she found herself back in an ambulance with an abnormal heart rhythm. "But they didn't just set off to hospital, a fly had gotten into the ambulance and the operator didn't want to leave until she had shooed out the fly. I couldn't believe it." Pam had recently enrolled in a stand-up comedy course and, the day after she was released from hospital, performed the fly story as a routine to her class.

It is a perfect example of how she uses humour as a "mechanism to survive this world; a real survival tactic". She often works humour into her writing and art. At the Henley and Grange Arts Society's weekly ceramics group, Pam starts without a plan, letting ideas flow through her "like a medium".

She even prescribes creative challenges to her patients, saying it is the essence of keeping healthy, enthusiastic and passionate about life. "There are many ways you can put art into your life, and it's a real energiser. It is so important for everyone to have some outlet of creativity and give them permission to explore, make mistakes and find what really drives them."

At 64, Pam is one of few GPs who consult from home, which makes it important for her to have a social and creative outlet. "I





Above: When Doctor Josephine Newton decided to change careers and study medicine, one of the side-effects was the discovery of her talent for art.

ESCAPE ARTIST

Towards the end of Josephine Newton's medical degree, amongst the exams and late nights studying, something strange happened. "Somehow I just had the urge to start creating," says Josephine, who returned to university several years ago to study medicine and become a GP.

"I don't know where art came from, because I'd never been an artistic person prior to that. It was a busy time of life and I should have had a lot of spare time to do anything." Yet a hobby grew, perhaps as a creative outlet.

Patients are impressed by the pieces in her office and ask "Did you do that?" She also exhibits work at events such as the Clare Art Show, Southern Art Show and Loreto Spring ART.

While she enjoys exhibiting her work, it is the creative process that is most important to her. Starting from the outside of the circle and working inwards, she finds it to be almost meditative. Unlike medicine, art is experimental and there is no right or wrong. "There are no mistakes because I'm the only one I have to answer to. It lets me use a part of myself that I don't really use when I'm at work, as much as I love my work."

"It's just such a great switch off. We hear a lot about mindfulness these days and that's what it is really"

Dr Josephine Newton, GP and Artist





I'VE MADE A LOT OF FRIENDS IN THE ART WORLD THAT I WOULDN'T NORMALLY INTERFACE WITH.

"I've made a lot of friends in the art world that I normally wouldn't interface with in my social or work group; that's been broadening"

Dr Randall Sach, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon



Above: Tori Wade's *Inner Journey* is an example of how she creates landscapes in pastels, using their textures to portray leaves, earth and sky. *Opposite page:* Pastel artist Tori decided to get "art school hair" when she retired from medicine to focus on her passion for art.

A COLOURFUL DOCTOR

When she first enrolled in art courses, Tori Wade met a diverse cross-section of people whose backgrounds had no bearing on the quality of their artwork. "I've got a PhD, but these people were doing fantastic work that I wished I could do too," Tori says. "I soon realised we're all level in the art field."

While the former GP has been a "weekend artist" for most of her life, the loss of both parents in the same year prompted her to retire from medicine and pursue art full-time. "I woke up one day and thought: I really had better get on with this art thing, hadn't I? It sharpened my mind as to what I wanted to achieve in my life."

Tori studied medicine in her late 20s, having already studied and worked as a psychologist. Sadly, three of her peers committed suicide in her first year of medicine. Later in her career, she worked in curriculum development at Flinders University to manage the stress and burnout of medical students; while also encouraging professionals to take care of their wellbeing and seek help if needed. "We needed to destigmatise seeking help. Not only was the stress there, but there was a lot of pressure to not admit it," Tori says.

She was also part of an advisory council which brought about change so GPs could refer patients to psychologists under Medicare; bringing mental health into general practice. "If I look at my professional life, that's one of the things I'm most pleased about," she says.

In her own career she discovered art as a creative outlet, which allowed her to switch off from daily pressures. "It refreshed me, made me feel positive and go back to work



I WOKE UP ONE DAY AND
THOUGHT: I REALLY HAD
BETTER GET ON WITH THIS ART
THING, HADN'T I?

What's next?!

Continuous register of doctor & medical
student artists

Plans for another exhibition

Welcoming doctor artists from around Australia

Other creative events – Writers; Music

Where you can
connect with
creativity!

Doctors' Health SA <http://doctorshealthsa.com.au/resources/creative-doctors>

Dr Victoria Wade – Doctor Artist - <http://toriwade.com/>

NT Creative <https://www.corrugatediron.org.au/creative-health>

NSW <http://creativedoctorsaustralia.blogspot.com>

Queensland Doctors' Health Programme <https://dhasq.org.au>

London Arts in Health Forum (Facebook)

WHO <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/what-is-the-evidence-on-the-role-of-the-arts-in-improving-health-and-well-being-a-scoping-review-2019> (released November 2019)

@RanaAwdish (Twitter – Physician & artist based in USA)

Arts Tonic Series www.urbanmind.studio (available in postcards)



References

1. Davies, Christina et al (2016) *The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational arts engagement and mental well-being in the general population*. BMC Public Health.
2. Kaimal, Girija, Ray, Kendra and Muniz, Juan. (2016). *Reduction of Cortisol Levels and Participants' Responses Following Art Making*. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*. 33(2):74-80. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07421656.2016.1166832>
3. Wikoff, N. (2003). *Cultures of Care: A Study of Arts Programs in U.S. Hospitals*. Washington, District of Columbia: Americans for the Arts.
4. Hanna-Pladdy, Brenda, Mackay, Alicia. 2011. *The Relation Between Instrumental Musical Activity and Cognitive Aging*. *Neuropsychology*. 25(3): 378-386. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21463047>

Thank you

Email

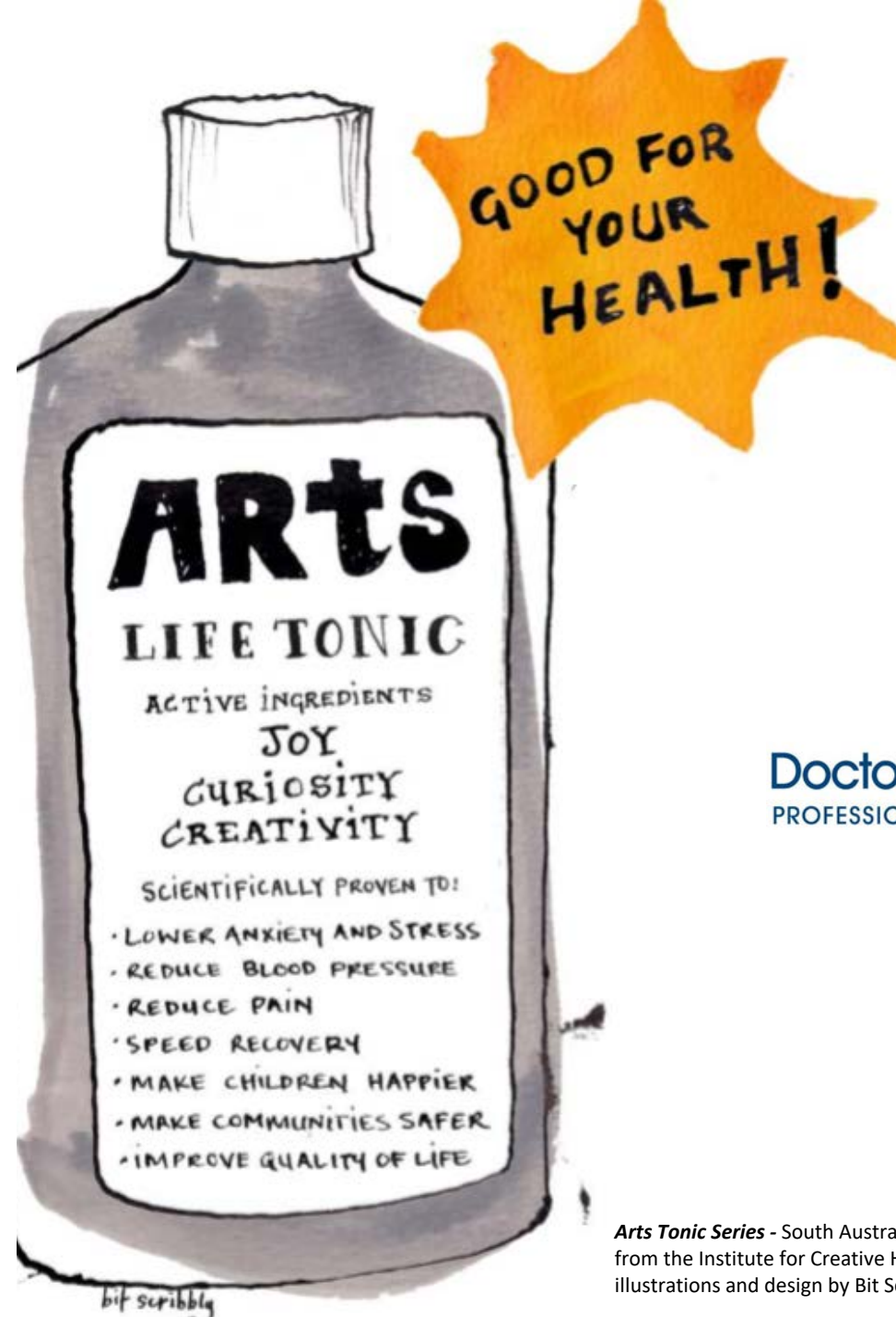
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Arts Tonic Series - South Australian Creative Health Leadership Group, with support from the Institute for Creative Health. Content developed by Urbanmind with illustrations and design by Bit Scribbly Design in 2019.