



INSTITUTE FOR
Sensorimotor
Art Therapy

& School for Initiatic Art Therapy

Certificate in Clay Field Therapy®

Working with Adults

31 January – 15 February 2025

Claerwen Retreat
Apollo Bay, Victoria
Great Ocean Road, Australia

with

Cornelia Elbrecht

Art Therapist AThR, SEP, ANZACATA, IEATA, IACEAT

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The Clay Field is a flat rectangular wooden box that holds 10 – 15 kg of clay. A bowl of water is supplied. This simple setting offers a symbolic “world” for the hands to explore. There will be no artwork to be taken home. The hands enter the Clay Field and move in it; in their ability or inability to “handle” the material they tell the client's life story. The hands then can be encouraged to find ways to deal with situations and events, to complete actions that previously could not be coped with.

This unique art therapy approach is increasingly recognized in Europe and Australia as a most effective therapy, especially for traumatized children. Over 500 Clay Field Therapists are currently practicing in numerous institutions. It is part of the curriculum in many schools to support children with learning and behavioral difficulties; it is widely used in women's shelters, refugee centers and to facilitate trauma healing.

The four workshops will look at the application of Clay Field Therapy

- Experientially
- Via videoed case histories
- Through understanding core aspects of its theoretical basis

“Due to the texture, weight and resistance of the clay, the material demands physical effort. Very quickly the head – and with it our cognitive conditioning – is pushed aside to make way for the more “ancient” urges of our libido.

There will be no finished product, no artwork to show to friends, no sculpture to be fired in a kiln. At the end of a Clay Field session, only intense body memories will be taken home. The kinaesthetic motor action combined with sensory perception will have lasting therapeutic benefits, especially in cases of developmental delays and trauma healing.

Touch is the most fundamental of human experiences. The first year of our life is dominated by the sense of touch. Tactile contact is the first mode of communication we learn. Our earliest stages in life are dominated by oral and skin contact between infant and caregiver. Our earliest body memories and our core attachments were formed when we relied on sensorimotor feedback to feel safe and loved. Love as well as violence is primarily communicated through touch. Our boundaries are invaded through inappropriate touching. Sexual experiences are overwhelmingly ruled by the sense of touch – and so are medical procedures, as well as all other events that happened to our bodies.

Work at the Clay Field involves an intense tactile experience – it can link us to a primordial mode of communication, to a preverbal stage in our life. This is the truly beneficial quality of clay in a therapeutic context. Its regressive qualities will allow a therapist to address early attachment issues, developmental setbacks and traumatic events in a primarily non-verbal way, contained in the safety of the setting.

Toddlers may pile simple building blocks on top of each other and then enjoy knocking them down over and over again, thus learning creative destruction as a way to achieve object constancy (Winnicott 1971). Such play prepares children to cope with the real world as a continuum of constant change, of encounter and separation, of comings and goings of



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loved ones and events, of endings and beginnings. Trust is gained from the ability to survive such changes intact. Work at the Clay Field involves a continuous process of destruction and creation, because the material is both limited in its amount and unlimited in its possibilities. We can create at the Clay Field only if we dare to destroy the smooth surface and continue to have the courage to take something apart that we have put together before. We can learn to survive change; to grasp and handle it. In this manner the work can assist in dealing with the emotional injuries we suffered from overwhelming change and destruction in the past.

Pre-school children learn primarily through touching and handling objects. During the evolution of mankind, the cognitive brain was shaped through skilled hand movements; with our hands we learned to understand the world (Wilson 1999). These innate language skills become reactivated through handling things and through observing the hand-gestures of our caregivers, as a recent study at the University of Chicago showed (Rowe 2008; 2005).

School children will create three-dimensional representations in the clay – ‘real objects’, figures, scenes and landscapes that have meaning and emotional values attached to them. At the Clay Field adults and children alike weave these developmental layers into a complex web of biography, formative kinaesthetic body memories, frustrated or traumatized internalized patterns of behaviour and the search for more authentic impulses and holistic structures.” From C. Elbrecht, Trauma Healing at the Clay Field 2012

Sensorimotor Art Therapy

In recent years “sensorimotor” has emerged as a term to describe body focused psychotherapies that use a bottom-up approach. Instead of a cognitive top-down strategy, sensorimotor art therapy encourages the awareness of innate motor impulses in the muscles and viscera, also as heart rate and breath. The expression of these motor impulses followed by their perception through the senses, allows the development of new neurological pathways that can bypass traumatic memories; such an approach is capable of restoring wholeness and wellbeing.

Work at the Clay Field is a sensorimotor, body-focused, trauma-informed art therapy approach. It is not necessarily concerned with an image-making process but supports the awareness of body memories. While these memories are always biographical, the therapy itself is not symptom oriented. Not the specific problem or crisis becomes the focal point, but the option to new answers and solutions as they are embedded in the body's felt sense. Such sensorimotor achievements are remembered similar to learning how to swim or ride a bike. They are lasting achievements that can transform even early infant developmental setbacks; they assist in finding an active response to traumatic experiences. They allow us to rewrite our biography towards a more authentic, alive sense of self.



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Cornelia Elbrecht

Cornelia Elbrecht BA. MA. (Art Ed), AThR, SEP, has more than 40 years of experience as an art therapist. She is also a Somatic Experiencing trauma therapist (SEP). She is the director of the Institute for Sensorimotor Art Therapy.

She has studied at the School for Initiatic Art Therapy in Germany, also Jungian and Gestalt therapy, Bioenergetics and bodywork.



She is founder and director of the Institute for Sensorimotor Art Therapy, School for Initiatic Art Therapy. She worked as founder, co-worker and trainer in 'Neuenzell', a centre for self-awareness and meditation in the Black Forest. She is the founder and director of 'Claerwen Retreat' in Apollo Bay, Victoria. She has lectured in Art Therapy at RMIT, Melbourne. Cornelia is a registered professional member and accredited supervisor of ANZACATA, the Australian, New Zealand and Asian Art Therapy Association and IEATA International Expressive Arts Therapies Association. Cornelia gives courses and individual sessions internationally, throughout Australia and in private practice at Claerwen Retreat in Apollo Bay, Australia.

Publications:

Some of Cornelia's publications have been translated into over 20 languages worldwide.

- 2022 Elbrecht, Cornelia; *Healing Trauma in Children with Clay Field Therapy; How Sensorimotor Art Therapy Supports the Embodiment of Developmental Milestones*. Online Training; <https://training.sensorimotorarttherapy.com>
- 2022 Elbrecht, Cornelia; *Bilateral Body Mapping with Guided Drawing*. In: Malchiodi, Cathy Ed., *Handbook of Expressive Arts Therapy*. Guilford Press, Pennsylvania.
- 2021 Elbrecht, Cornelia; *Healing Trauma in Children with Clay Field Therapy; How Sensorimotor Art Therapy Supports the Embodiment of Developmental Milestones*. North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California.
- 2020 Elbrecht, Cornelia; *The Transformation Journey*. Online Training; <https://training.sensorimotorarttherapy.com>



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- 2020 Elbrecht, Cornelia; Healing Artist' Block. Online training:
<https://training.sensorimotorarttherapy.com>
- 2019 Elbrecht, Cornelia; Prof Heinz Deuser; Work at the Clay Field. Three Masterclasses 2009, 2010, 2019. Online training:
<https://training.sensorimotorarttherapy.com>
- 2019 Elbrecht Cornelia; Online Training: *Certificate in Healing Trauma with Guided Drawing.* <https://training.sensorimotorarttherapy.com>
- 2018 Elbrecht, Cornelia; *Healing Trauma with Guided Drawing: A Sensorimotor Approach to Bilateral Body Mapping.* North Atlantic Books, Berkley, California.
- 2015 Elbrecht, Cornelia, Antcliff, Liz; *Being in Touch: Healing Developmental and Attachment Trauma at the Clay Field.* Children Australia, 40pp 209 – 220 doi; 10.1017/cha.2015.30. Volume 40 – Issue 03. Interpreting neuroscience, creating evidence – a collection of Australian based Trauma informed Research and Practice – Sept 15. http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_s1035077215000309
- 2015 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *The Clay Field and Developmental Trauma.* In: Malchiodi, Cathy Ed., *Creative Interventions with Traumatized Children.* Guilford Press, Pennsylvania.
- 2014 Elbrecht, Cornelia, Antcliff Liz; *Being Touched through touch: Trauma treatment through haptic perception at the Clay Field: A sensorimotor art therapy.* INSCAPE, International Journal of Art Therapy, 2014
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1745482.2014.880932> Routledge.
- 2013 ANZJAT, the Australian New Zealand Journal of Arts Therapy Vol 8, No. 1, 2013, p.67 review of: *Trauma Healing at the Clay Field* by Maggie Wilson.
- 2012 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *Trauma Healing at the Clay Field, a sensorimotor approach to art therapy; Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London/Philadelphia.*
- 2011 Elbrecht, Cornelia; Deuser, Heinz: Work at the Clay Field. Set of 7 DVDs.
- 2011 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *Die Wandlungsreise. Der Prozess des Geführten Zeichnens, eine initiatische Kunsttherapie.* Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag.
- 2006 Elbrecht, Cornelia. *The Transformation Journey. The Process of Guided Drawing – An Initiatic Art Therapy.* Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag.
- 1999 *Guided Drawing, Drawing as Meditation,* in Golden Age Issue 41, March – May 1999
- 1995 *Guided Drawing,* in Australian National Art Therapy Association Newsletter Vol VII Winter 1995
- 1990 Das Geführte Zeichnen auf dem Hintergrund der Initiatischen Therapie, in: Die neuen Kreativitätstherapien, *Handbuch für Kunsttherapie,* Hrsg: Hilarion Petzold, Ilse Orth Guided Drawing on the background of Initiatic Therapie, in 'The new Creative Therapies, *Handbook for Art Therapy,* editor: Hilarion Petzold, Ilse Orth
- 1988 *Das Geführte Zeichnen* in: Integrative Therapie, Zeitschrift für Verfahren Humanistischer Psychologie und Pädagogik Guided Drawing, in: Integrative Therapy, Journal for Humanistic Psychology and Education



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Co-Facilitator: Chris Storm



MA.Ed (Experiential Learning & Development), BA (Sociology), Grad Dip Experiential Learning & Development; Grad Dip Counselling; Grad Cert Social Science (Male Family Violence); Dip. VET. Art Therapy Post Graduate studies: Cert. Initiatic Art Therapy, Cert. Work at the Clay Field, Dip. Sensorimotor Art Therapy, Cert Sandplay Therapy, Cert Child Centred Play Therapy; EMDR Therapy. Professional Associations: Professional member of ANZACATA (AThR); Clinical member ACA (Australian Counselling Association); Board member of NTV (No To Violence). SEP Somatic Experiencing Practitioner
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Chris is the director of Storm Insight, a private Sensorimotor Art Therapy practice. She specialises in Work at the Clay Field, and utilises Sensorimotor Art Therapy techniques to support children, women, men and families. She has completed her training as a trauma therapist with the Somatic Experiencing Institute SETI. She is a registered provider of therapeutic services for the NDIS. Areas of speciality include sexual assault, addiction issues, family violence, grief, and loss.

Course Outline

The aim of the courses is to enable its participants to integrate Clay Field Therapy into the existing framework of their current practice, be it as art therapist, expressive arts therapist, play therapist, psychologist, counsellor, social worker, or educator.

The Part I in-person training will focus on the hands-on experience of Clay Field Therapy including many individual sessions in an environment suitable for personal and professional development. The tutorials are consolidated with supervised co-counselling practice sessions to support learning by direct experience. The approaches and techniques will be made transparent to encourage the acquisition of profound Clay Field Therapy techniques.

The 10-day workshop, called Part I and the online self-paced training called Part II, should equip participants with fundamental skills to work with the Clay Field in a therapeutic way.

- **Part I: Clay Field Therapy with Adults** includes Introduction (4 days), Module 1 (3 days) and Module 2 (3 days) to be held in-person – in total 72 group hours.
- **Part II: Clay Field Therapy with Children** – is available online as 12 modules of self-paced learning, in total 60 hours, released over 6 months, with access to all tutorials for 1 year. They are richly illustrated tutorials covering sessions with children from 2 – 18 years of age. <https://training.sensorimotorarttherapy.com>

Part I and Part II can be attended in reverse sequence. Part II: *Clay Field Therapy with Children* is a separate course and not included in the fee of this Summer School.

Dates:

The dates for 2025 are as follows:

- **Part I:** 31 January – 15 February 2025
- **Part II:** Annually in February and August

Cost:

Total cost for the Summer School Part I will be \$2420; \$880 for the introduction, the first 4 days and then \$770 for each of the three-day modules 1 and 2. A deposit of \$770 is due on application. Should an applicant be not accepted the otherwise non-refundable deposit will be returned in full. The deposit will roll over and account as part payment for the last module. Should someone be unable to attend one module, an effort will be made to find compensation on an individual basis to enable the student to catch up with the rest of the course material. To receive the training certificate at the end, the required hours must have been attended. The cost covers tuition fees including all course and art materials.

Course Structure

Part I and Part II each represent two weeks of face-to-face or the equivalent of 80 tuition hours online. The modules will not strictly focus on the course content lined out below, as the group's needs and special interests will also be considered.

PART I:

Introduction 1: Day 1 and 2

Haptic Perception and the Gestalt Formation Process at the CLAY FIELD ®

Clay Field Therapy is a powerful haptic medium that can evoke, structure, and transform the inner world and an individual's biography. It is important that every participant aiming to work with this modality experiences its power and impact first. It is a unique approach that is predominantly non-verbal and kinaesthetic.

Workshop:

- Individual art therapy sessions at the clay field

Seminar:

- Understanding the structure and dynamics of the field
- Understanding the haptic language of the hands

We will learn to identify the bottom-up Gestalt Formation Process through:

- How fundamental experiencing progresses from diffuse motor impulses to sensory awareness and from there to fulfillment and cognitive integration.
- The structure of the Primary Gestalt and the Optimal Gestalt
- Afference and re-afference
- The Bottom-up Approach

Introduction 2: Day 3 and 4

Trauma Informed Practice at the CLAY FIELD ®

The second clay weekend will focus more on the understanding of the psychodynamic processes as they occur in the Clay Field and how these processes can be supported in therapeutic sessions.

- Co-counselling sessions with the Clay Field
- Trauma Healing at the Clay Field
- Pendulation
- Body-focus
- Sensory Interventions
- Motor Interventions
- Haptic perception
- Pathological indicators and their expression in the Clay Field.



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Module 1: The Sensorimotor Foundation

To “read” the hands of a client the therapist needs to understand certain movements and how they relate to developmental stages; stages that express a client’s age-specific developmental needs and a process-specific pattern of action. The sensorimotor base is essential for children’s early development and is formative in all adults’ processes.

- The topography of the hands
- Proprioception
- Kinaesthetic messages of the hands
- The Skin Sense
- Sense of Balance
- Depth Sensibility
- Haptic Perception
- Haptic object relations
- The therapeutic dialogue with the hands
- Haptic diagnosis

Module 2. The Nine Situations in CLAY FIELD Therapy ®

Prof. Heinz Deuser has mapped out 9 stages, “situations” as he has called them that characterize the Work at the Clay Field. These are partially based on D. W. Winnicott’s theories on a child’s developmental stages, but also relate to the human need to create mythical correspondences.

A particular focus will be given to these Nine Situations and how these situations are being acquired in the Clay Field:

1. Reliability, being reliable to me: Perceiving myself in my body.
2. Reliability, relying on something other than me: Shifting focus onto an opposite.
3. Finding orientation: Finding reliability in what is present.
4. Acquisition of Object Constancy: Acquiring emotional constancy through creative destruction
5. Acquisition of Subject Constancy: Establish my own position in a foreign place.
6. Centring, Grounding: Acquisition of one’s own ground.
7. Shadow integration: Acquisition of one’s individuality; self-correspondence, object accordance.
8. Destruction as self-realization: Taking on the consequences of one’s own realization.
9. Accepting one’s humanity: Integration with one’s own Other.

Course Program Part II

Healing Trauma in Children at the CLAY FIELD ® Online

This online course will consist of 60 hours of online tutorials, illustrated with over 300 videoed case histories with children between the age of 2 – 18 as they work at the Clay Field. The fee for Part I does not cover the fee for the Part II online course.

Clay Field Therapy with children and adolescents differs in various ways to the way a therapist works with adults. We will look at:

- Stages of Engagement of the Hands in the Clay Field
- Haptic Perception and Haptic Diagnosis
- Trauma and the Autonomic Nervous System in Children
- Trauma Informed Interventions to Strengthen the Sensory Division in the nervous system.
- Trauma Informed Interventions to Strengthen the Motor Division in the nervous system.
- Sequential Development and the Expressive Therapies Continuum
- The Developmental Building Blocks:
 1. The Sensory Cortex – age 0 to 1 years
 2. The Motor Cortex – age 1 – 4
 3. Vital Relationship and Perception – age 4 – 6
 4. Symbolic Play – age 6 – 9
 5. Departure from the Relational Field of the Parents – age 9 – 11
 6. Centring as Discovery of the Inner World – age 11 - 13
 7. Centring as Search for Identity – age 13 – 16
 8. Centring as Search for the Own Base – age 16 – 18
- Age-specific self-perception and orientation in the Clay Field
- Age-specific body-perception

Focus on the diagnostic markers concerning missing developmental milestones:

- Embodiment or dissociation
- Age-specific haptic organization of the arms
- Age-specific haptic organization of the hands
- The Five Situations for Children
- Age-specific Cognitive Integration
- The appropriate use of tools
- Child specific trauma interventions
- Child specific body perception
- Dialoging with children at the Clay Field

More information on <https://training.sensorimotorarttherapy.com>



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Course Program Part I

The 2025 Program in Detail:

Introduction: The Introduction will cover a first hands-on experience of Clay Field Therapy in the form of individual sessions and co-counselling practice. The core concepts of trauma-informed practice will be introduced. Parallel to the Introduction advanced students will have the opportunity for revision and supervision.

PART I: Working with Adults 2025:

Friday 31 January: Day of arrival – welcome dinner at 6.30pm

Introduction:

Saturday 1 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 4pm - 7.30pm – Introduction or Supervision

Sunday 2 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 4pm - 7.30pm - Introduction or Supervision

Monday 3 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 4pm - 7.30pm - Introduction or Supervision

Tuesday 4 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 2pm - 5pm - Introduction or Supervision

Wednesday 5 February: free day - no program

Thursday 6 February: free day - no program

Module 1:

Friday 7 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 4pm - 7.30pm – The Sensorimotor Base: Skin Sense

Saturday 8 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 4pm - 7.30pm – The Sensorimotor Base: Balance

Sunday 9 February 9.30 - 1pm; 2pm – 5.00pm – The Sensorimotor Base: Depth Sensibility

Monday 10 February: free day - no program

Tuesday 11 February: free day - no program

Module 2:

Wednesday 12 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 4pm - 7.30pm – The Nine Situations

Thursday 13 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 4pm - 7.30pm – The Nine Situations

Friday 14 February: 9.30 - 1pm; 2pm – 5.00pm – The Nine Situations

Friday 14 February: farewell party 7pm....

Saturday 15 February: departure at 10am



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Clærwen Retreat:

Clærwen Retreat is situated in peaceful solitude, on top of the hill, overlooking the coastline along the Great Ocean Road and the Otway National Park. It offers 4-star rated self-catering single or shared accommodation settled in the beauty of 400 acres of park, farm, bush and fern gullies, a salt-water pool and amazing views from all rooms. The beach is 10 minutes away.

Apollo Bay is a 2 1/2 to 3-hour drive from Melbourne. Turn off the Great Ocean Road after the first 50 km sign approaching Apollo Bay. Clærwen Retreat is the last and only place on top of Tuxion Road.

Cost for accommodation is additional. The suites and cottages where participants can stay have a 4-star rating and are self-catering. So, it is BYO food and cook together. There will be no extra charge for meals. Up to 4 participants can share a three-bedroom cottage.

Five types of accommodation are available. Cost per night:

- Shared room in one of the cottages \$90
- Single room in one of the cottages \$125
- Single in a self-contained studio \$150
- Suite in the guesthouse, single \$180
- Suite in the guesthouse, double/twin, pp \$110

All linen and towels are supplied.

Please let us know together with your application, which accommodation type you would prefer.



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CERTIFICATE IN CLAY FIELD THERAPY 2025

Claerwen Retreat, Apollo Bay Questionnaire

Name:

Date of Birth:

Street:

Town/City:

Postcode:

Country

Email:

Telephone:

1. What is your professional background and present occupation? This does not need to be a complete CV, but please include whatever you think is relevant.
2. What is your motivation for this course?
3. Please pay the deposit of AU\$770 into my Australian account. Please make sure that bank fees and currency variations are your responsibility.
Electronic Funds Transfer:
BSB733 600 ACC 516463 ACC name: Cornelia Elbrecht
Swift Code: WPACAU2S Please add your name!

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