

THE LEGACY OF  
**EDITH KRAMER**

— A Multifaceted View —



Edited by  
Lani Gerity and Susan Ainlay Anand



# The Legacy of Edith Kramer

*The Legacy of Edith Kramer* presents a unique exploration into the life and work of the groundbreaking artist and art therapist. This edited volume examines the artist's personal and cultural history prior to relocating to the United States, as well as the later years when she worked as an artist, art therapist, and teacher as she developed her theoretical understanding of art therapy. Kramer's solutions to creating a meaningful artist's life run throughout the chapters within this book, and provide the reader with a sense of what is possible. Written by an international group of contributors, this informative new text offers a multifaceted view of Edith Kramer that will be appreciated by current and future art therapists looking to better understand Kramer's exceptional mind and contributions to the field.

**Lani Gerity** is an author and art therapist with a master's and a doctorate from NYU. She studied with Edith Kramer and edited Edith's *Art as Therapy: Collected Papers*. She maintains a website, blogs, and online groups filled with encouragement and alternative arts for artists, art therapists, and art educators.

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# **The Legacy of Edith Kramer**

## **A Multifaceted View**

**Edited by Lani Gerity and  
Susan Ainlay Anand**

First edition published 2018  
by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Gerity, Lani Alaine, 1953– editor. | Anand, Susan Ainlay, editor.

Title: The legacy of Edith Kramer : a multifaceted view / edited by

Lani Gerity and Susan Ainlay Anand.

Description: First edition. | New York : Routledge, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017027290 | ISBN 9781138681231 (hbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781138681248 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781315545912 (ebk.)

Subjects: | MESH: Kramer, Edith, 1916–2014. | Art Therapy | Child | Paintings—psychology | Psychoanalytic Interpretation | Austria | United States | Biography

Classification: LCC RC489.A7 | NLM WZ 100 | DDC 616.89/1656—dc23  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017027290>

ISBN: 978-1-138-68123-1 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-68124-8 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-54591-2 (ebk)

Typeset in ITC Galliard  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Visit the companion website: [www.routledge.com/cw/gerity](http://www.routledge.com/cw/gerity)

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**With love from all of us**



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# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	xii
<i>Foreword: A Fortunate Life</i>	xvi
EDITH KRAMER	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxiv
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	xxv
<b>Introduction: A Generous and Challenging Artist's Worldview</b>	<b>1</b>
LANI GERITY AND SUSAN AINLAY ANAND	
<b>History and Context</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1 Feelings That Cannot Be Put into Words</b>	<b>15</b>
DARCY MARLOW	
<b>2 Mumi Kramer, Grundlesee, and the Caring Net</b>	<b>23</b>
JOHANNES REICHMAYR, CHARLOTTE ZWIAUER, LANI GERITY, MARTHA HAESELER, AND EDITH KRAMER	
<b>3 Edith Kramer Remembered</b>	<b>33</b>
ANNI BERGMAN	
<b>4 Edith Kramer on Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, Erna Furman, and Terezin</b>	<b>38</b>
INTERVIEWS WITH ELENA MAKAROVA	
<b>More Recent History</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>5 Edith Kramer: A Generous, Generative Genius</b>	<b>49</b>
JUDITH A. RUBIN	

<b>6 Importance of Cultural Roots</b>	56
IRENE ROSNER DAVID	
<b>7 Edith Kramer at New York University: Recollections</b>	59
LAURIE WILSON	
<b>8 Teaching with Edith</b>	67
IKUKO ACOSTA	
<b>9 Art Therapy Experiences with Edith and a Group of Adults</b>	71
RAFFAELLA BORTINO, WILMA CIPRIANI, AND RAFFAELA CAROLA LORIO	
<b>Artist Identity</b>	81
<b>10 Edith Kramer’s Artistic Legacy: Beyond the Studio</b>	83
GEOFFREY A. THOMPSON	
<b>11 Remembering Edith Kramer</b>	91
KARL PALLAUF (TRANSLATOR, MARTHA HAESELER)	
<b>12 An Edith Collage</b>	93
KATHERINE WILLIAMS	
<b>13 The Mosaic</b>	96
EDITH KRAMER	
<b>14 Create Your Own: Kramer’s Criteria for Quality as Central to Art Therapy</b>	99
JORDAN S. POTASH	
<b>Edith Kramer’s Theoretical Concepts</b>	105
<b>15 Edith Kramer’s Notion of “Quality”</b>	107
ELIZABETH STONE	
<b>16 On Edith Kramer’s Seminal Concept of Sublimation in Art Therapy</b>	115
ELIZABETH STONE	

<b>17 Sublimation Then and Now</b>	126
LAURIE WILSON	
<b>18 The Building of an Artist's Identity</b>	133
KEVIN MAXWELL	
<b>19 Edith Kramer's Third Hand: Intervention in Art Therapy</b>	141
KARIN DANNECKER	
<b>20 Kramer's Sublimation: Creative Expansion or Limitation?</b>	148
DAVID HENLEY	
<b>Memories</b>	157
<b>21 Panel Remarks: Edith Kramer</b>	159
DAVID HENLEY	
<b>22 Gleaning the Pearls: Reflections of a Student</b>	162
KATHRYN E. BARD	
<b>23 Tales of Edith</b>	166
PATTI GREENBERG	
<b>24 Formed Expression</b>	171
DAVID HENLEY	
<b>Edith Kramer's Concepts Applied to Practice</b>	183
<b>25 Edith's Legacy as Artist and Art Therapist in the Art Room</b>	185
MARTHA HAESELER	
<b>26 Hector: A Case Study Illustrating Edith's Teachings</b>	195
MARTHA HAESELER	
<b>27 Understanding Lineage, Difference, and the Contemplative Dimensions of Edith Kramer's Art as Therapy Model</b>	205
MICHAEL A. FRANKLIN	

<b>28 Art and Cancer: Transference and Countertransference: Channeling Edith Kramer</b>	214
ESTHER DREIFUSS-KATTAN	
<b>29 Edith Kramer's Influence on the Development of Medical Art Therapy</b>	223
IRENE ROSNER DAVID	
<b>30 Experiences of Learning from Edith Kramer and Translating Her Book</b>	228
SHYUEYING CHIANG	
<b>31 Edith, Puppets, and the Kindly Superego</b>	236
LANI GERITY	
<b>Art, Art Therapy, and Culture</b>	245
<b>32 Quality and Inner Satisfaction: Re-Visiting the Importance of Quality in Art and Art Therapy</b>	247
EDITH KRAMER, SUSAN AINLAY ANAND, AND LANI GERITY	
<b>33 Cultural Gifts of Wisdom, Hope, and Beauty</b>	258
EDITH KRAMER, LANI GERITY, AND SUSAN AINLAY ANAND	
<b>34 Religion and Cultural Humility: Lessons Learned in Conversation and Practice</b>	269
SUSAN AINLAY ANAND	
<b>35 Sense of Place: Edith Kramer's Wisdom for Times of Isolation and Dissociation</b>	275
SUSAN AINLAY ANAND	
<b>Saying Goodbye</b>	285
<b>36 Do You Require Inspiration Just to Breathe?</b>	287
ELENA MAKAROVA (TRANSLATOR, TALI MAGIDSON)	
<b>37 Lyceum Art Therapy Training Program</b>	297
MARGHERITA GANDINI (TRANSLATOR, ELEONORA MARCHESI)	

<b>38 On Leaving and Preserving</b>	<b>305</b>
DAVID HENLEY	
<b>39 Creating a World of Possibility: Life Lessons from Edith Kramer</b>	<b>310</b>
LANI GERITY	
<b>40 Conclusions: Is This the End or the Beginning?</b>	<b>317</b>
SUSAN AINLAY ANAND AND LANI GERITY	
<i>Index</i>	<b>323</b>

# Figures

F.1	Edith painting after the Blitz. Photo contributed by David Henley	xviii
F.2	A fair in the rubble of urban renewal. Oil painting by Edith Kramer	xx
I.1	<i>In the Quietness of Her Studio</i> . Photograph taken by Raffaella Carola Lorio	3
I.2	<i>Her Teapot</i> . Photograph taken by Raffaella Carola Lorio	4
I.3	<i>Her Braid</i> . Photograph taken by Raffaella Carola Lorio	5
1.1	Etching by Edith Kramer. Christmas card from the collection of Elena Makarova	21
2.1	First set of film stills: Mädi's house, Pepa Kramer, Mädi Olden, and Liesl Neumann on the balcony. Mädi and, finally, Mädi with Pepa passing behind her.	27
2.2	Second set of film stills: Siegfried "Brassi" Bernfeld with Mumi, with an unidentified guest, being kissed by Liesl, and Bernfeld wading.	28
3.1	Edith Kramer sketching in Toronto, Canada. Photo by Herschel J. Stroyman	34
3.2	Edith and Anni	36
6.1	<i>Beets and Onions</i> , 1988. Oil painting by Edith Kramer	57
7.1	Edith teaching students at New York University. Photo taken by Herschel J. Stroyman	64
7.2	Retirement party for Laurie Wilson with Edith Kramer, NYU faculty, and students	66
8.1	Edith Kramer and Ikuko Acosta teaching together at New York University	69
9.1	Edith's painting of a mother and child	75
9.2	Painting of a boat by Carlo	76
9.3	Barbara's clay sculpture depicting a mother and her child	78
10.1	Treasured objects in Edith Kramer's loft	84
10.2	Gold still life with etching plates. Circa 2001. Oil, gold leaf, and egg tempera on canvas by Edith Kramer	88
10.3	<i>Landscape: The Alps</i> , circa 1935. Watercolor painting by Edith Kramer	89

12.1	Katherine Williams' granddaughters with the Edith Kramer subway mosaic at the Spring Street Station, New York City	94
13.1	Subway mosaic at Spring Street Subway Station. Photo by Herschel J. Stroyman	97
14.1	My sister's painting	100
15.1	Sitting clay figure	113
16.1	Reproduction of O'Keeffe's <i>Brooklyn Bridge</i> as Emma copies it	121
16.2	Large and small flowers, after Georgia O'Keeffe	122
16.3	Four flat clay heads	123
17.1	<i>Sky Presence I</i> (detail). Photograph taken by Laurie Wilson	130
18.1	<i>Broken Oven</i> . Tempera on paper	138
18.2	<i>Fixed Oven</i> . Tempera on paper	139
19.1	Edith Kramer and Karin Dannecker, 1990, Exhibit in der Galerie Taube, Berlin	142
20.1	Clay sculpture (unfinished) by Christopher	149
20.2	<i>Upon Leaving Chicago</i> . Graphite drawing by David Henley	151
20.3	<i>Uneasy Sleep</i> . Oil on sheet metal by Edith Kramer	154
22.1	<i>Alpine Wonders</i> . Oil on canvas by Kathryn E. Bard	165
23.1	Edith and Christmas tree. Photo from David Henley (no date)	169
24.1	<i>Six Persimmons</i> . Ink on paper by Mu Ch'i Fa-Ch'ang	172
24.2	Drawings by Edith Kramer (no date). Copy of oil painting by Velazquez. <i>Portrait of Sebastián de Morra</i> (1645).	176
24.3	Drawing by Edith Kramer (1930) of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette	180
25.1	Ceramic figures in subway. Clay and metal sculpture by Edith Kramer	187
26.1	<i>He Preyed at Dusk and Prayed at Dawn</i> . Painting by Hector	199
26.2	<i>Priests and Nuns in Catholic Heaven</i> . Painting by Hector	199
26.3	<i>Mother and Child</i>	203
28.1	<i>UCLA-SM, 2008, Salvage Chemo Ride</i> . Pen and markers on paper	217
28.2	<i>Untitled, 2008</i> . Pen and markers on paper	218
28.3	<i>Day after Chemo</i> . Pen and marker on paper	219
29.1	<i>Breast on Lawn</i> . Drawing by cancer patient	225
30.1	Cover of the Chinese version of <i>Art as Therapy with Children</i>	233
30.2	Edith with Shyueying Chiang	234
31.1	Edith Kramer and puppet. Photo by Edward Glanville	242
32.1	Photograph of fountain in Paris	249
32.2	Margaret at her home, Margaret's Grocery in Vicksburg, Mississippi, 2001	252
32.3	Mr George Berry in his home, Pearl, Mississippi, 2001	255
33.1	L.V. Hull in her home in Kosciusko, Mississippi, 2001	264
33.2	Young women being taught how to quilt at Cultural Crossroads, Port Gibson, Mississippi	265

33.3	Bottle Tree photo taken in Mississippi by photographer Eyd Kazery	267
34.1	Jane's puppet, "Lucifer"	272
35.1	Pastel drawing by a medical student showing him reaching out to a patient in distress	279
35.2	"Ganesha." Clay figure made by a resident raised in India	281
36.1	Edith Kramer's response to one of Friedl's exercises	291
36.2	Ruth Gutmann's response to Friedl's exercises in Terezin	292
36.3	Edith Kramer's response to one of Friedl's exercises	292
36.4	Charcoal study by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis from Bauhaus	293
37.1	E.Kr.A.M. logo	299
37.2	Portrait of Edith Kramer by female student in art therapy	302
37.3	"Thank you Edith." Collected papers placed on Edith Kramer's coffin	304
38.1	Painting by Edith Kramer. Photo courtesy of David Henley and New York University, Art Therapy Program	306
39.1	Juniper tree print by Edith Kramer. Contributed by Elena Makarova	313
39.2	<i>Don't Give Up</i> . Paper and digital collage by Lani Gerity	315
40.1	Laura McCann with a child's painting of a wedding. Photo by Susan Anand	319
40.2	Laura McCann with a child's painting, <i>Young Man with Switchblade</i> . Photo by Susan Anand	320

### List of Center Figures

- 1 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer at Wiltwyck School for Boys art show
- 2 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer and Eleanor Roosevelt at Wiltwyck School for Boys art show
- 3 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer
- 4 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer's painting of "urban renewal"
- 5 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith painting Herschel's children
- 6 Herschel J. Stroyman – Herschel's children supervising Edith
- 7 Herschel J. Stroyman – *Working in Stillness*
- 8 Herschel J. Stroyman – *The Loft 1*
- 9 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer
- 10 Herschel J. Stroyman – *The Loft 2*
- 11 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer with bas-relief subway study
- 12 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer teaching at NYU
- 13 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer studying drawings made with Friedl Dicker's techniques
- 14 Herschel J. Stroyman – *Objects in Window*
- 15 Herschel J. Stroyman – *Devil Puppet Obscured*

- 16 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith Kramer
- 17 Herschel J. Stroyman – *Ladies and Bathtubs 1*
- 18 Herschel J. Stroyman – *Ladies and Bathtubs 2*
- 19 Herschel J. Stroyman – Edith and friends
- 20 Edith Kramer and Herschel J. Stroyman
- 21 Karin Dannecker – *Grundlsee*
- 22 Edith Kramer – *Child in Prague* (from Lani Gerity)
- 23 Edith Kramer – *Machinist during World War II* (from Lani Gerity)
- 24 Edith Kramer – *London after the Blitz* (from Martha Haeseler)
- 25 Edith Kramer – *Kostia Bergman* (from Lani Gerity)
- 26 Edith Kramer – *New York Subway* (from Kathryn Bard)
- 27 Edith Kramer – *Herschel J. Stroyman and Family*  
(from Herschel J. Stroyman)
- 28 Edith Kramer – *Still Life 1* (from Herschel J. Stroyman)
- 29 Edith Kramer – *Aunt Liesl* (from Kathryn Bard)
- 30 Edith Kramer – *Still Life 2* (from Herschel J. Stroyman)
- 31 Edith Kramer – *Juniper Tree* (from Susan Anand)
- 32 Edith Kramer – *Landscape* (from David Henley)
- 33 Edith Kramer – *Mountains* (from Martha Haeseler)
- 34 Edith Kramer – *New York Roof Top* (from Kathryn Bard)
- 35 Edith Kramer – *Still Life 3* (from Martha Haeseler)
- 36 Edith Kramer – *Vegetable Still Life* (from Martha Haeseler)
- 37 Edith Kramer – *Still Life in Window* (from Kathryn Bard)
- 38 Edith Kramer – *Potted Plants* (from Vinod Anand)
- 39 Edith Kramer – *Hay Stacks* (from Karin Dannecker)
- 40 Edith Kramer – *Telephone Book Page 1* (from Herschel J. Stroyman)
- 41 Edith Kramer – *Telephone Book Page 2* (from Herschel J. Stroyman)

# Foreword

## A Fortunate Life<sup>1</sup>

*Edith Kramer*

I'm going to tell you of my life in New York City, as it presented itself to me as an artist, later also as an art therapist, with brief excursions into other topics like nature, still life, and portraits and so forth (Kramer, 1994).

I have been a very fortunate person. Fortunate to have the chance to come to America, otherwise I would scarcely have survived the Nazi time in my native Austria. Fortunate in my upbringing, growing up in a bohemian environment, full of actors, psychoanalysts, artists, revolutionaries, where being an eccentric, where being stubborn and self-willed was quite normal. I did not have to fight to be myself. I was liberated from conventions; I did not have to liberate myself. I wasn't a part of this liberation movement because that was all prepared for me. This saved much energy that could be used for doing my work. I was fortunate to be in an environment during a time when I could learn my craft as a disciple from good artists for very little money, rather than as an art student. I think artists, even if they are competitive toward other well-known artists, are generous with young artists whom they like and respect. So I got my training without having to go into debt.

I worked with Friedl Dicker, a student of Johannes Itten, who was in Vienna before going to Bauhaus. Friedl also worked at the Bauhaus so this also was certainly part of my background. I worked with Fritz Wotruba, as a stone carving sculptor, as well as a few other sculptors. I was also fortunate to live in Vienna during a time when I could be acquainted with Freudian psychoanalysis (in its revolutionary days not its stodgy days) and with progressive art education theories. Viktor Lowenfeld was working with the blind in Vienna at that time, and that was the foundation of his theories of teaching art to children, which culminated in his book, *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947).

I was fortunate that when I came to this country, I was sufficiently formed as an artist and able to continue on my own. I was 22 years old, healthy, and educated; I could read with comprehension and knew where to find any information that I might need. I was at an age when it was natural to embark on a new career or adventure, live in a new environment, and begin a new life. I didn't have to suffer as many older people did when they were uprooted. It was the right time for me to come to the United States.

Looking back at the art I did prior to coming to the United States I see there were certain interests that began even then and have continued. I began to study art exclusively from age 18 when I finished high school. I was interested in industrial landscapes, ordinary people doing ordinary things together, and in children doing art. All this was there, even then.

When I came to New York, it was my good fortune that the Little Red School House needed a shop teacher but couldn't afford the salary of one. They hoped to find among all the refugees coming over from Europe, a sculptor who would be more pliable and inventive than a carpenter who would be too rigid to work with children. This person turned out to be me. Elisabeth Irwin, an independent spirit and founder of the Little Red School House, sensed that same spirit in me. She allowed me to live in a little room that was in the school building. I could get my food from the leftovers in the kitchen, and was given some pocket money. They had hoped for a man in this position, but were reconciled with me. I worked as their shop teacher for three years.

Again, I was very lucky to fall into this bohemian environment, much like the environment that I came from. The bohemian environment of Vienna and Prague in 1938 was not so different from Greenwich Village in 1938, so it was not such a terrible culture shock when I moved here.

When the United States entered WWII, I became a machinist in a little shop on Grant Street. Grant Street at that time was one machine shop after another, a whole row of machine shops. If you wanted to be a toolmaker, you could start at one end of Grant Street and work your way to the other end, and you would be fully trained by the end. I worked there and enjoyed it. I had an agreement with the boss that after doing my shift, I could punch out and stay on and do drawings. I drew every night and enjoyed it very much. The greatest compliment I received from the other machinists was that if I had started young enough I could have been a toolmaker. Some of this work I enjoyed as an artist because you must be good with your hands and as a sculptor, you must do a bit of carpentry, a bit of this and that. It came easy to me. I had an offer at that time to be a shop teacher at City and Country, a good progressive school, because their shop teacher was drafted in the army. I decided to stay on as a machinist because I knew I would never have that kind of chance again, to do that kind of work.

When the war was over, I decided to go back to Europe because I had come to the US under duress. I figured I should find out if I really wanted to stay here, or go back home, or live in Paris. Somehow I found a way to do that and stayed in Europe for a year and a half and was able to paint.

I did some paintings of London following the Blitz, always painting on the spot. The ruins with weeds growing among them, was a very interesting sight to me.

Another interesting place to paint was the Amiens Cathedral, situated on a ridge overlooking the River Somme in Amiens. It was standing in a wilderness. Amiens had been bombed and most of the other buildings had collapsed, but



*Figure F.1* Edith painting after the Blitz. Photo contributed by David Henley

the cathedral was built on arches and withstood the bombing. The windows of the cathedral had been removed to save them, which resulted in a strange appearance, so I did paintings there.

I decided to come back to the United States for several reasons. I had considered living in France, which I loved, but there was an unbroken line of visual artists and styles developing from the Romans on to the present. Because it was a mecca, receptive to artists from the whole world throughout history, I felt “so who needs one more artist in Paris?” America, on the other hand, was new territory with the beginnings of local schools – the Hudson River School, paintings of the West, paintings of the City, and of the industrial landscapes in America. However, this was swept away by abstract art and a kind of international style of a horrible, terrible sameness. I felt I could do something in America that would be new. Another reason for coming back was more practical in that it is easier to live on part-time work in the States than in Europe; at that time, it was possible to be poor without being destitute in New York. I returned in 1950 and even found a livelihood that I could pursue in good conscience without

selling my soul; I became an art therapist. The suggestion came from outside. People said, "You have been analyzed, you know a lot about psychoanalysis. You are a good teacher and you get along with difficult children. Put all this together and make something of it." There was one psychoanalyst who knew me, Viola Wertheim Bernard, who was on the professional advisory board of Wiltwyck School for Boys, where she suggested me for a position. In 1936, the school had been set up as an experimental summer camp for African-American juvenile delinquents and potential juvenile delinquents. Later, it became a year-round residential school, and in 1942 Judge Justine Wise Polier, Eleanor Roosevelt, and other interested judges were able to incorporate Wiltwyck as an interracial and non-sectarian institution. These judges wanted to create a place in New York City for children who needed treatment outside their homes, so they founded this school, which remained open until 1981.

I worked at Wiltwyck for seven years. When I first started there, Viola Bernard felt they needed an art teacher, an art therapist, because everything in this place had to be named "therapy," so I agreed to call what I did art therapy. There were some that felt they needed another counselor, but even they got used to me, and I was able to do a good job.

Art is something that is external to us. The children I worked with didn't have a set idea about what art was. It seemed amoral; it could do wild, crazy, and aggressive things without destroying them or anyone else. Childhood is a time when we have to live symbolically, we don't live quite in the real world entirely all the time; we prepare ourselves for adult life by living symbolically. Art is natural with children.

After five years of working at Wiltwyck, I felt that a book could be written about this work, and the board provided the financial backing to do so. In 1958, my first book, *Art Therapy in a Children's Community*, was published, and with that I was established as one of the pioneers of this new profession that kept me in bread and butter.

The first place I taught art therapy was at the New School for Social Research, a haven for people with new ideas. It was my luck that I did not have to go to school to be a teacher of art therapy, to be a professor, and I never had to take out a loan. I lived in New York City during this time on Orchard Street, in a rent-controlled apartment. I could draw on the street, even at night, which would not be as easy to do today. I had a little Volkswagen that I could sit in and paint. It worked okay. I'd paint the Sara Delano Roosevelt Park between Forsyth and Chrystie Street. After doing some paintings there I decided to do a collage.

I usually made a collage when I got stuck with a color or when something wasn't working in my painting. I would then embark on this terrible process of collage, where my whole apartment was turned into a palette, paper all over, and I would stand on a chair or a ladder and look down on my work. I was busy for months, caught in the paper. But it was worth it, because I could find colors that I could never invent, and I came out of it with a new sense of color and structure that was very helpful for my painting. Another good thing

about collage was that you could always glue over something. In oil painting, you have the liberty to go over it, but you mustn't abuse that liberty, or you get sticky, horrible paintings. However, in collage one can indeed glue a new piece of paper over an old one, and the old one does not make it lifeless. It can stay alive. I used acrylic medium as glue and protection. Collage is a fragile thing. I think it was kind of fun to reuse horrible advertising and all that junk and make something good of it. Use just the colors and make something new of it that has nothing to do with all those lies that are put in all those glossy, ugly pictures. I enjoy making all that disappear. It's an added pleasure to doing collage.

We had urban renewal then. Urban renewal can be fun, sometimes, for an artist. Near the river on Delancey Street, they were tearing down good neighborhoods and building brick beehives where people go crazy. But before the new things came up they had a Fair there that was fun to paint.

There was a park on Allen Street, now narrowed but still there with some trees. But for a while, during this urban renewal, everything was dilapidated. They had chopped down and dug up all the old trees and people sat there on pilings and stumps, sadly, waiting for it to be renewed a bit, waiting for new trees to be planted.

I also enjoyed painting the urban renewal projects on 9th Avenue between 22nd and 25th Street. This area had been a very nice neighborhood, a living



*Figure F.2* A fair in the rubble of urban renewal. Oil painting by Edith Kramer

neighborhood, which became a very sterile place. It was hard to paint there in the daytime, but I could paint at night from my car – those big excavators, bulldozers, and devouring machines. One night a policeman came by and saw my car with the light on inside. It was kind of drizzling, and as he looked inside he said, “At this time of the night, in this weather, I don’t believe it.” He went away saying he would come back in a little while to see that I was safe, which he did and so he kept me safe.

It seemed that I would always paint in series – usually a long series of urban renewal paintings. I also liked painting people who had survived. There was a park on Houston Street, called Green Guerillas Park, where I could paint the survivors, the homeless people that were sitting there even in the ’60s. I had to paint from my car because you couldn’t paint homeless people standing near, as they wouldn’t leave you alone. I have always been very interested in the world as I see it. I have lived in the city most of my life. I’ve also lived in the very real wilderness. I like both, the *real city* or *totally real country*, but not suburban life. There it is, and I couldn’t turn away from it.

Then there was the wilderness around New York. New York has its own wild places, particularly on the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn. I used to paint there quite a lot. There were areas that were not built up – marsh grasses, people fishing and swimming, and doing nice things there. It was filthy but very much alive, wilderness right there in the middle of the city. You could find cars there going back to the earth, in the spring, with all kinds of new growth coming out of them. I found this interesting, and I would paint there during all seasons except in the summer when I’d leave the city.

Sometimes it’s good to change your environment. I used to go to New England a good deal in the summer. For the last several years, I’ve gone back to Austria for the summer, where my Aunt Liesl has a house near a lake that’s very nice. I also have a little cabin in the mountains where nobody lives. It doesn’t belong to me, but is owned by the farmers who have grazing rights in the mountains. They let me use this extra cabin that they were using for storage and I was able to fix it up a bit. There’s no running water, just a stream that flows by. It’s real wilderness, where I can paint mountains and things like that.

After the summers in Austria, I would return to the city and paint all the things that the city has to give – objects, people, urban renewal, renovation, plants on Wards Island, objects we collect if we live a long time in a place, industrial scenes which are always fascinating, strange growth under the Pulaski Highway in that bit of wilderness, and people. Now I’m painting my helper, who is cutting up marble for a mosaic of the subway that I am working on. I’ve painted myself every once in a while, but I think we paint ourselves when we are at a loss for what to do next. You always have yourself to come back to. Otherwise, the rest of the world has interested me more than myself.

I’d like to say something about psychoanalysis and art. I was in psychoanalysis, not for my art but for my personal life. It helped me in many ways and certainly didn’t interfere with what I was doing as an artist. Perhaps for some people whose production is fueled by a lot of anguish, more anguish

than they can otherwise bear, maybe for them, it isn't good. I know when I was a child, Siegfried Bernfeld, an early analyst and husband of my Aunt Liesl, said that something could be destroyed in a creative child, that "she should do analysis when she's an adult and knows what she is doing." And when I was an adult and did it, I think it was very helpful, and it really did not touch the art. If you are a human being, you experience conflict and are troubled. What you want to do in analysis is get rid of those conflicts that are ego alien that you don't approve of . . . Why is this in me? But I liked myself as a painter so why shouldn't I continue to be a painter?

Finally, I should say a little about my credo in art. I really do feel that today we have a new task, to celebrate that which is perishable and endangered and nourish and cultivate our capacity for experiencing our lives in this world. We live today, bombarded by so many completely chaotic kinds of perceptions that don't make sense, which is difficult because our perceptual apparatus is programmed to distill meaning from complexity. The natural environment is complex, and we distill meaning from it. But we can't distill meaning from the cacophony of sounds, the noises in the streets, from the many things going on. We have to cut ourselves off from it. I think the danger is that we lose the capacity for experiencing it, from experiencing anything. We dull ourselves, we shut ourselves off; we learn to disregard stimuli. We work in windowless rooms, where temperature, light, and air are controlled beyond our reach. We kind of school ourselves in stoic resignation and endurance. This protection from overstimulation leaves an increasing incapacity for an emotional response to perception, and that's a kind of living death.

So as not to fall into this trap, we must brave the chaos, with its noise, with its craziness. If we do, we find it begins to make sense, and we come alive again. As artists, we have this task, to make this possible for people to perceive their world again and to make some sense of it. Today's artists must again become respectful and modest. The sovereignty that was natural to the artists from the beginning to the middle of the 20th century, like Picasso, Matisse, Kokoschka, Brock, or Klee, is no longer at our command. We have lost touch with the accumulated craftsmanship and wisdom of the past, and must begin anew and modestly. Rather than strive to astonish and shock, we must subordinate the personal experience to the task of interpreting the subject with respectful comprehension.

That's what I have been trying to do. We need to look again at what is really there; look at it respectfully, not with shock or hate. You can't protect anything through hating its enemies. You can only protect something well by loving it well, and then you might also go to battle for it or protect it. I think there must be an understanding of the intricacy and the intrinsic interest that there is in things that we tend to overlook. That's what I have been trying to do.

Art is so absent from our time now. The hunger for art therapy is partly the absence of art as a natural element in daily living. We are surrounded by objects that are machine-made, that don't tell us anything about the maker,

or anything about the *Weltanschauung* or worldview of that person. There is a hunger and really a lack that permeates all of our lives that then makes people search for art, or for an experience where they can do a little of that sort of thing – which might not have been necessary at the time when we made our own furniture. If we made a wardrobe, we might paint something on it, or if we embroidered things, or if we made a handle of a pitchfork, it got something of ourselves in the handle. All that is missing today. In part, I believe this absence has given rise to art therapy as a profession.

Another thing I had good fortune with is what you might call my “meshugge.” I have a little neurosis about taking art around to the galleries, but I think in part it saved me. We have to be meshugge somewhere as artists and I think it’s much better to be meshugge in the area of distributing my art than in the area of making the art. I never had a block in the area of making things. But I had tremendous blocks in the area of going out and begging people to show it. And maybe it was good because I’ve seen so many good artists really destroyed by being typecast or otherwise becoming successful and then being caught in this success. So maybe it was good having just a tiny bit of recognition, just a tiny bit coming to me at age 77 when it couldn’t destroy me anymore. And also I was lucky that I did have recognition as an art therapist, so I didn’t have to become bitter because I had one area where I was recognized as an authority. I didn’t become the bitter misunderstood artist whom I might otherwise have become. So that was good fortune again. Lots of luck.

## Note

1 The content of this foreword was transcribed from an audio recording of a lecture given by Edith Kramer at the New York Transit Museum in 1994.

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# Acknowledgments

We are deeply grateful for the support, enthusiasm, and generosity of each person who contributed to the writing of this collaborative book. Martha Haeseler provided translation from the German text into English, and because of her expertise, we could include some of Edith's typed and handwritten material that we found in the *Edith Kramer Papers* housed at the New York University Archives. In addition to the chapter authors, we appreciate the contributions made toward preparation of this book by: NYU Archivists and staff, Janet M. Bunde, Laura McCann, and Katie M. Ehrlich; Gretchen Miller for her answers to our questions about preparing the manuscript; and David Henley for his assistance in providing us with writing and additional information about Edith that was needed to complete the book.

The support and encouragement received from our spouses, Edward Glanville and Vinod Anand, and family members increased the joy and strength we received in working on this project together. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the wonderful example Edith was for us, showing us what is possible with a fair amount of determination, humor, curiosity, and generosity.

# Contributors

**Ikuko Acosta** has been an art therapist and art educator for more than 35 years, and has directed the Graduate Art Therapy Program at New York University for the past 15 years. In addition to devoting herself to training art therapy students she has been introducing the field of art therapy internationally for the past 25 years.

**Kathryn E. Bard** worked and taught in medical/psychiatric hospitals in New York for 15 years following her education and training at New York University in the late '70s and early '80s. Kathryn relocated to Zurich, Switzerland with her family and heads “MultiArt STUDIO,” which offers art therapy, the art studio, and art services/consulting to the international community. She is the author of several articles and exhibits artwork regularly. More information about MultiArt STUDIO can be found on her website: [www.artmultifacet.com](http://www.artmultifacet.com)

**Anni Bergman** was born in Vienna and immigrated to the United States in 1939. She graduated with a degree in music from the University of California and eventually settled in New York City with her husband – writer and publisher Peter Bergman – with whom she had two sons. While in California, she met the psychoanalyst Christine Olden, who became a close friend and important influence. In 1959, Dr Bergman began to work with Margaret Mahler on the observational study of the separation–individuation process. She is co-author with Margaret Mahler and Fred Pine of *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant*. Following her work with Dr Mahler, Dr Bergman continued to practice and teach dyadic work with autistic children and their primary caretakers. Some of this work has been published in her collected papers, *Ours, Yours, Mine: Mutuality and the Emergence of the Separate Self*, which was written in collaboration with Maria F. Fahey.

**Raffaella Bortino** is a psychotherapist and art therapist, sociologist, and Freudian psychoanalyst who has worked for years engaged in the practice and dissemination of art therapy. In 1983, Dr Bortino founded the

Psychotherapeutic Community “Il Porto” and the “Bus Stop Onlus Association” in 1998. She is the founder and teacher of the non-verbal school of psychotherapy, “Il Porto-ADEG,” that was formed in collaboration with New York University in 1983.

**Shyueying Chiang** is an art therapist and counseling psychologist. She graduated from the Graduate Art Therapy Program at New York University in 1997. Dr Chiang has a master’s degree in Children’s Literature from the National Taitung University, a master’s degree in art therapy from NYU, and a PhD in Art Education from the National Taiwan Normal University. She is currently an assistant professor in the Counseling Psychology Program at the Chinese Cultural University.

**Wilma Cipriani** is a philosopher and art therapist. In 1952, she graduated with a degree in Aesthetic Philosophy in Padova, Italy. Wilma has been a teacher for 50 years in high schools for state Italian literature and history. At the age of 52, she met Raffaella Bortino and Edith Kramer, and has been passionate about art therapy ever since. Following her training in Turin, she worked as an art therapist at the neuropsychiatric garrison Fatebenefratelli of San Maurizio Canavese for 12 years. Currently, Wilma is in private practice and under the supervision of Elizabeth Stone.

**Karin Dannecker** is the director of the Art Therapy Program at Weissensee Art School in Berlin, Germany. Dr Dannecker studied art, art education, and special education at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt/M., Germany. From 1983 to 1985 she studied art therapy at New York University. On her return to Germany, she first worked at the university in Cologne. She then went to Berlin to design an art therapy program and teach in the field. In 2000, her program started as the first MA Art Therapy training course in Germany at the Weissensee Art School. She has published several books and numerous articles, and does research. In addition to working at the University, she works with psychiatric and psychosomatic patients in a clinic.

**Irene Rosner David** is the director of Therapeutic Arts at Bellevue Hospital in New York. She has been a medical art therapist since 1973 focusing on the contributory role of artistic expression in coping with physical illness and disability. Patient populations have included trauma, brain injury, stroke, paralysis, chronic illness, oncology, and palliative care. Dr David has presented and published on medical art therapy, served in various capacities of the American Art Therapy Association, and is recipient of awards for her clinical work and advocacy for the profession.

**Esther Dreifuss-Kattan** is a senior faculty member of the New Center of Psychoanalysis in Los Angeles, psychoanalyst, art therapist, and psychooncologist in private practice in Beverly Hills. She is an art therapist at Simms/Mann UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology, and a practicing artist. Dr Dreifuss-Kattan received her PhD in Psychoanalysis from the New Center

for Psychoanalysis in LA in 1995; PhD in Art Therapy/Psychooncology at the Union Institute in 1989; MA in Art Therapy at Goddard College in 1976; and a Diploma in Fashion Design/Art in 1971 in Zurich, Switzerland. Her books include: *Practice of Clinical Art Therapy* (German); *Cancer Stories: Creativity and Self-Repair*; *Art and Mourning: The Role of Creativity in Healing Trauma and Loss*; *Creativity and Cancer: A Guide to Therapeutic Transformation* (Ed.), 2018. Chapters and publications can be found on her website: [www.dreifusskattan.com](http://www.dreifusskattan.com).

**Michael A. Franklin** is the chair of the art therapy program at Naropa University and has practiced and taught in various academic and clinical settings since 1981. Michael is the founder of the Naropa Community Art Studio, a long-term research project training socially engaged artists and serving marginalized community members through the art community. He is the author of numerous publications including *Art as Contemplative Practice: Expressive Pathways to the Self* (SUNY Press, 2017).

**Margherita Gandini** is the teaching director, supervisor, and professor of the three-year training program in clinical art therapy at Lyceum, Milan, Italy. She is a graduate of the four-year training program in art therapy, Porto-ADEG, in Turin under the supervision of Elizabeth Stone. She became a registered art therapist in 2012 through the Professional Board of Art Therapists in Italy (APIART). She founded the “Edith Kramer Association” of Turin for which she conducted supervision, conferences, and seminars for art therapists. Margherita has enjoyed teaching “Reading in Art Therapy,” “Methodology,” “Experimental Paths,” and supervising internships. She also enjoys giving presentations and conferences, and writing about art therapy.

**Patti Greenberg** is a writer living in Brooklyn and a member of Brooklyn Poets. She became Edith’s student in 1979 when she entered the Graduate Art Therapy Program at New York University. They remained colleagues, fellow painters, and friends for as long as time allowed. She is indebted to Edith and all her teachers at the NYU Art Therapy Graduate Program for all they taught her about mothering and children, which proved invaluable in mothering her own children.

**Martha Haeseler**, painter and fiber artist, has been a student and friend of Edith Kramer since 1972. Martha has worked as an art therapist with children, adolescents, adults, and US veterans. Retired adjunct assistant professor at NYU, she has published and presented widely about her work with a variety of populations, as well as about ethics, PTSD, outsider art, resilience, and positive psychology.

**David Henley** is a renowned child art therapist, professor emeritus, and distinguished author, including three books, the latest titled *Creative Response Activities for Children on the Spectrum* (Routledge, 2017). He is also a practicing mixed media artist, working and living near Boulder, Colorado.

**Raffaella Carola Lorio**, art therapist and photo-art therapist, is specialized in the Michael Sapir Method. She became a registered art therapist in 2007 through the Professional Board of Art Therapists in Italy (APIART). In the same year, Carola became a member of the American Art Therapy Association. She began teaching at the Lyceum School in Milan, Italy in 2015. Since 2002, Carola has been working as an art therapist and photo-art therapist in the therapeutic community of Bus Stop and Bluish Strawberries in Italy for dual diagnosed patients, where she specializes in trauma and abuse. In 2014, she became responsible for the exhibition *Abuse: Witnesses from a Therapeutic Community*, which has grown each year with new artwork from the patients of Bus Stop and Bluish Strawberries. A catalog of the exhibit was published in 2016.

**Elena Makarova** is a freelance writer, art therapist, historian, and exhibit curator specializing in Jewish spiritual resistance in the Terezin (Theresienstadt) concentration camp in 1941–1945. She received her master's from Moscow University and has written more than 40 books and numerous articles in 11 languages, and directed a large number of international exhibitions. Her book on Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (Vienna 1898–Auschwitz 1944) was translated into five languages. She resides in Haifa, Israel.

**Darcy Marlow** is an affiliate faculty member of Antioch University in Seattle. Darcy received a BA in art from the University of San Diego, an MEd with an emphasis on gifted education from Seattle University, and an MA in Art Therapy and Mental Health Counseling from Antioch University Seattle. Marlow has presented at both regional and national art therapy conferences on subjects including self-care and art therapy, strengths-based art therapy, and the influences of Edith Kramer on the field of art therapy.

**Kevin Maxwell** is a senior activity therapist and works with inpatients and outpatients at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. Originally from Salt Lake City, Utah, he received a BFA at the University of Utah. Kevin studied under Edith Kramer at New York University where he received his MA in Art Therapy. Kevin is an exhibiting figurative and landscape artist in New York City.

**Karl Pallauf** was born in 1954 in Lower Austria as the sixth of a total of 13 children. In 1974, he immigrated to New York. Apart from his profession as a kitchen chef, later as a private cook with a high-ranking personality in the print media area, he was interested in art early on and acquired the first painting by Josef Floch in the autumn of 1975. Subsequently, he has worked intensively on promoting the works of painter Edith Kramer, and many other artists of Classical Modernism. He lives in New York, with occasional stays in Vienna.

**Jordan S. Potash** is a registered, board-certified, and licensed art therapist, and a registered expressive arts therapist. He is Assistant Professor in the Art

Therapy Graduate Program at The George Washington University. Jordan is primarily interested in the applications of art and art therapy in the service of community development and social change.

**Johannes Reichmayr** is affiliated with the Sigmund Freud University. Dr Reichmayr studied psychology at the University of Salzburg. He has been a deputy director of the Magisterium and head of the Department for Transcultural and Historical Research in Psychotherapy at the Sigmund Freud University (SFU) in Vienna. Since November 2009, he has also been the Dean for the foreign-language and foreign programs. Dr Reichmayr is doing research on the history of the psychoanalytic movement and ethno-psychology. He has worked in collaboration with Paul Parin, the Swiss psychoanalyst, ethnologist, and writer, and currently maintains and manages the archive and estate of Paul Parin.

**Judith A. Rubin** is a licensed psychologist, child and adult psychoanalyst, and board-certified art therapist. A past President and Honorary Life Member of the American Art Therapy Association, she has written seven books and created 13 films. President and co-founder of Expressive Media, she is currently working on the creation and dissemination of an online Training Film Library.

**Elizabeth Stone** is a New York State-licensed psychoanalyst and art therapist in private practice in Grenoble, France. She has been a faculty member of the Ecole de Psychologues Praticiens of the Catholic University in Lyon, NYU's Graduate Art Therapy Program, and has supervised the training of art therapists in Italy, Switzerland, and France.

**Herschel J. Stroyman** is an artist, art therapist/educator, and photographer residing in Toronto, Canada. Herschel met Edith in 1959, after walking into a storefront art exhibition in New York City, attracted by the obviously hand-lettered sign which read: "Exhibit: Art and the Troubled Child." The sign also indicated that Ms Kramer could be contacted at the Turtle Bay Music School. Wanting to know more, he called Turtle Bay, went for an interview, and ended up studying with her. That began his life-long mentorship and friendship with Edith. <http://herschelstroyman.zenfolio.com/p1024744045>

**Geoffrey A. Thompson** is an artist, creative art therapist, and assistant professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School. Dr Thompson has transdisciplinary research interests in art, aesthetics, art therapy, psychotherapy, and philosophy, and serves on the editorial board of the American Art Therapy journal, *Art Therapy*. He is also Editor-in-Chief of *Human Science Perspectives*, the journal of the Human Science Institute.

**Katherine Williams** is Associate Professor Emerita and former Director of the Art Therapy Program at The George Washington University. Currently, Katherine is an art therapist and clinical psychologist in private practice.

She teaches at the Washington School of Psychiatry and the Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis.

**Laurie Wilson** is an art therapist, an art historian, and a psychoanalyst. She directed the Graduate Art Therapy Program at New York University for 23 years and is Professor Emerita there. In 2008, she was awarded the Honorary Life Membership in AATA in recognition of her “Distinguished Contributions to the Education of Art Therapists and to the Interdisciplinary Recognition of Art Therapy.” She practices in New York City. Her book *Alberto Giacometti: Myth, Magic and the Man* was published by Yale University Press in 2003, and her biography, *Louise Nevelson: Light and Shadow*, was published by Thames & Hudson in Fall 2016.

**Charlotte Zwiauer** is affiliated with the University of Vienna. She has completed diploma studies in sociology as well as doctoral studies in philosophy at Freie Universität Berlin and at the University of Vienna.

# Introduction

## A Generous and Challenging Artist's Worldview

*Lani Gerity and Susan Ainlay Anand*

Have you ever noticed that there are times in life when synchronicity seems to be at play? For example, we may find ourselves in extremely challenging circumstances, in a cultural shift toward fear and aggression, when social unrest and injustice make the future seem uncertain and bleak. It is exactly these times when we yearn for voices of gentle wisdom. As we worked on editing this book, we found ourselves in that very position. Fortunately, we were working with a lot of material on resilience, strength, perseverance, and wisdom. Immersing ourselves daily in these varied impressions and stories of the life, wisdom, and generosity of Edith Kramer, was heartening during our troubled times.

Consequently, it is with great pleasure that we introduce *The Legacy of Edith Kramer: A Multifaceted View*. Many of you know Edith from studying her theories in graduate school. However, we are very interested in sharing with you much more than the theory itself. In the chapters that follow, you will find stories and illustrations of Edith's amazing strength and courage, out of which her theories emerged.

Following a plenary presentation devoted to Edith's life at the 2015 American Art Therapy Association conference, art therapist Lisa Furman thanked us and said, "I had no idea Edith was so 'bad-assed!'" and she seemed quite happy to have her view of Edith broadened. And, we were happy to broaden it. What Lisa was pointing out to us, the thing that we didn't realize very clearly, was that if you are only studying Edith's theories, you might not realize how much grit and determination she had. It is *that* Edith Kramer that we are confident you will find within these pages.

Not only will you read some of Edith's previously unpublished material, but you will also find an array of impressions and memories from various corners of the world. You will read summaries and applications of important ideas that Edith taught, but also some of the historical and cultural context behind these ideas. When looking at Edith's legacy in this way, you can see the antecedents, the things that gave Edith her strength and ideas. The contributors have connected the antecedents with Edith's concepts, so the book as a whole is a collection of what she gave us, and continues to give us. You will discover a rich tapestry of thought and art, and possibly see your own place in this tapestry – this is her legacy, and you are a part of it.

## 2 *Lani Gerity and Susan Ainlay Anand*

For the editors, working on the material submitted by each contributor has taught us so much. We knew our views were necessarily limited, but what we failed to realize was how much we would learn about Edith from working on this book. Working with all the chapters, like pieces of very tough, homespun fabric, was a comfort, and a joy. The tapestry for us, as a whole, is inspiring and full of stories of resilience, strength, and generosity; brilliant flashes of light and color come from the various jewels sewn into the fabric.

While attending the memorials for Edith at New York University and in Vienna, it became evident to us that if we could persuade our fellow presenters to contribute to this book, we would all benefit by having a multifaceted view of Edith, her life, and her legacy. We were eager for others to see this wider view, so we created a collaborative presentation for the American Art Therapy Association and informed contributors that we hoped their contributions to this plenary would be developed into the book you now hold.

Because Edith emphasized quality and art, we felt it essential to include both her paintings and the exquisite photography of Edith's dear friend Herschel J. Stroyman, who captured much of her day-to-day life, from when she worked at Wiltwyck School for Boys through the years of teaching at NYU. Our publishing editor at Routledge agreed, so in the book you will find Herschel's photography along with paintings from an exhibit in Austria, which Martha Haeseler, Kathryn Bard, and Lani Gerity documented. Edward Glanville, Susan and Vinod Anand, Karin Dannecker, David Henley, and the New York University Archives provided artwork and photos as well. So, please enjoy the images, quality, and memories that you will find in the book. (For more on New York University Archives, please see David Henley's "On Leaving and Preserving" and our "Conclusions" chapters.)

Although you will read various points of view throughout this book, you will find commonalities. There are many examples of Edith Kramer's inclusive, perhaps even what might be called "decolonizing," way of working, first noticed by Dr Venture, a Black art therapist from Maryland. She had written the first doctoral dissertation in the US on art therapy, "The Black Beat in Art Therapy Experiences" (Venture, 1977). Venture wanted to create an art therapy program that would benefit communities, that, in her observation, traditional forms of psychoanalytic art therapy did not reach. She felt the traditional models perpetuated exclusivity, while Edith Kramer's *art as therapy* model worked well with varied populations, including the poor, minorities, and oppressed. Venture felt that Kramer offered a way to build on strengths from within that would lead to growth and new possibilities. You will find in the various chapters aspects of Edith's life and identity, which contributed to her flexibility, strength, and belief that change and growth can and should come from within.

In considering Edith's strength and flexibility, we'd like to look at her identity as an artist and how her studio supported her. In the Foreword, "A Fortunate Life," Edith spoke to this identity in great detail, and in the "Artist Identity" section you will discover how Geoffrey Thompson came

to curate an exhibition of Edith's works for the annual conference of the American Art Therapy Association in 2009 in Dallas, Texas. You will find Karl Pallauf, an Austrian art collector, writing about his views as a collector, curator, and friend. Katherine Williams writes passionately about various memories around Edith's subway mosaic, and to complement that, we included Edith's own description of creating that same mosaic. Jordan Potash's chapter, "Kramer's Criteria for Quality as Central to Art Therapy," is included in this section and expands upon the concept of the artist's identity.

When the authors wrote about Edith's studio, they often mentioned that it was a quiet place, a haven from the chaos of New York City, a place where one could hear oneself think. We wondered if this quiet haven might be what was central to her productive mind and life. Geoffrey Thompson, in his chapter, "Edith Kramer's Artistic Legacy: Beyond the Studio," described this stillness as he explored her studio space looking for artwork for the 2009 exhibit. Although she had left for Austria and wasn't likely to return, he felt her presence in the stillness of the space. And as photo-art therapist, art therapist Raffaella Carola Lorio said, "Nella quiete del suo studio, non potevo non posare lo sguardo sulle sue sue sculture, la sua treccia e la sua teiera." (In the quietness of her studio, I could not merely glance at her sculptures, her braid, and her teapot.)



*Figure I.1 In the Quietness of Her Studio.* Photograph taken by Raffaella Carola Lorio



*Figure 1.2 Her Teapot.* Photograph taken by Raffaella Carola Lorio

Edith always emphasized the importance of stillness for her creativity, even when attending someone else's workshop. She would let it be known that silence was preferable to any music the facilitator might have brought. She wanted to be able to access what she called the "inner life." If she came up against a problem in an art piece as she was working on it, she wanted to be able to find the solution for herself, from within herself, rather than listen to external, cultural dictates. She wanted this for the children she worked with as well; she wanted them to have the freedom to explore their internal worlds. For more on the inner life, please visit Michael Franklin's chapter, "Understanding Lineage, Difference, and the Contemplative Dimensions of Edith Kramer's Art as Therapy Model."

Part of the artist identity for Edith, was her understanding about the things that helped her best work emerge; for her, these things revolved around intrinsic motivations or inner satisfaction. She observed from personal experience and from the children she worked with that when we create from an internal prompting, we are rewarded through inner satisfaction, which produces resilience



*Figure I.3 Her Braid.* Photograph taken by Raffaella Carola Lorio

and inner strength. No amount of external reward can give us this inner shift, this growth. To explore more of these ideas, please see the chapters, “Quality and Inner Satisfaction: Re-Visiting the Importance of Quality in Art and Art Therapy” and “Creating a World of Possibility: Life Lessons from Edith Kramer.”

Edith would draw everywhere, even in her own workshops, or when she was with patients. As you will read, she felt the act of perceiving is a slow process. It cannot be hurried. She felt that photography doesn’t replace the integration of messages that occurs when we observe the world through our eyes, with an active and receptive mind. As Elena Makarova recalls from a conversation with Edith in her captivating chapter “Do You Require Inspiration Just to Breathe?” Edith said, “A photograph – a historic document; a painting – an enigma with no age. It is no slave to time.” Drawing was her way of interacting with the world, a way of slowing things down so that they could be understood and integrated. Her dear friend Anni Bergman explores this idea in her chapter, “Edith Kramer Remembered.” She saw the need to

## 6 *Lani Gerity and Susan Ainlay Anand*

create as a part of Edith's being. She felt that Edith was not motivated to accomplish something, as much as she had a need and ability to turn her perceptions into works of art.

In the book's Foreword, in Edith's own words, we can imagine what New York was like through the eyes of a young refugee from Europe. Among Edith's first American experiences when she arrived in New York, was a ride on the subway. Because of her training as an artist, she saw the chaos and noise, the huge numbers of people all around her, as an excellent subject for her art, rather than something to be overwhelmed by or to hide from. Later, the subway became the inspiration and installation site for a large mosaic Edith made when she was 77 years old, which you can read more about in Katherine Williams' and Edith's short chapters.

Laurie Wilson includes in her chapter on recollections of Edith Kramer at New York University a quintessential Edith story about her studio, and her way of working with obstacles, which epitomized her approach to almost everything. At the time, when Edith was moving into her loft, she was planning to share it with Laurie and Jill Schehr. Although it had windows across the front that faced Vandam Street, Edith wanted more light and a view of the Hudson River. So, she persuaded Laurie and Jill to start chipping away at the solid brick wall facing west. After weeks, they finally broke through to the outside and Edith could have a window installed exactly where she wanted it.

This story clearly shows us another one of Edith's strengths, her willingness to create new points of view. She knew how to adapt to the hard facts of reality, but if she could create a way to break through them to a better reality, she would. In Ikuko Acosta's chapter on her experiences teaching alongside Edith, there are wonderful examples of how Edith helped students to open up and move beyond their habitual patterns of responding to the world and others, and to discover a "creative solution" or creative "genuineness." In Shyueying Chiang's chapter "Experiences of Learning from Edith Kramer and Translating Her Book," we see these same experiences, but from the student's point of view. Shyueying explains very clearly how the emphasis on art was so helpful in negotiating a new culture as well as a new profession.

Edith's studio became a generous meeting place to discuss ideas while sharing tea, often a mix of lapsang souchong and Earl Grey (Elinor Ulman's favorite), and bread and cheese from the Lower East Side. She believed the essence of art and of psychotherapy is flexibility and openness, and we observed the essence of her enjoyment of life was found in that same flexibility and openness. Edith never found life monotonous or mundane, and we could always expect the unexpected when in her presence. If she thought she needed a wider view on life, she would make it happen, quite literally. She actively sought out ways to feed her intellectual curiosity, new subjects for artistic exploration, and new media to work with. Readers can expect the unexpected as they delve into chapters by David Henley, Judith Rubin, Kathryn Bard, Irene Rosner David, and Patti Greenberg. In their descriptions of Edith's life and studio, we find diversity of experiences, flexibility, generosity, and openness.

Martha Haeseler, Anni Bergman, Charlotte Zwiauer, Johannes Reichmayr, Elena Makarova, Karin Dannecker, Darcy Marlow, and Edith herself helped us develop a deeper appreciation for the cultural and historical influences of Edith's life. Within the chapters in the section on history and context, you will find a rich, in-depth account of Edith's life. Karin Dannecker generously provided us with additional information regarding Edith's background and history whenever it was needed.

Edith was born in Vienna, Austria on August 26, 1916 and her childhood was informed by a world that had recently experienced the "Great War." Johannes Reichmayr (contributor to the Mumi chapter) told us Edith's parents and the generation of men and women that had just come through the war were very concerned about the generations that followed them. They worked hard to provide the children with stimulating, meaning-filled lives, within a supportive "caring net," as Professor Reichmayr called it. Her summers in Grundlsee were very important for Edith's development. Her inner strength, her internalized good objects, her generosity of spirit, and her love of intellectual stimulation were all fostered here. For more on Edith's childhood and her Grundlsee experiences, please see "Mumi Kramer, Grundlsee, and the Caring Net."

When Edith was 17 years old and in the midst of her final exams, her mother gave her Freud's *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Edith said that this book changed her in ways that art had not and that psychoanalysis somehow provided exercise for the part of her brain that loved intellectual pursuits and conceptual thinking. In research for her chapter on Edith Kramer, Darcy Marlow uncovered information that was new to her about the relationship Edith had with her mother, which helped us gain some sense of the loss Edith must have experienced when her mother died, when she left Europe for the first time, and when she discovered her mentor, Friedl, was murdered in Auschwitz.

We discovered, while working with the chapters related to history and context, a deeper appreciation for Edith's life and that being a part of a lineage creates a sense of community. Lani observed that sense of community and lineage when visiting Edith in Austria in the late '90s. The sense of a history going back generations and the sense of a strong, living, generous, caring community was so very alive in Grundlsee. Edith wasn't just Edith Kramer, artist/art therapist in Grundlsee; she was called "our Kramer," in a way held by the community, as if they had created a supportive transitional space with this feeling of history and community.

The land itself around Grundlsee reflects this holding environment – mountains holding the lake and the community. This community held the property for Edith's family until they could return after the war, not a common circumstance. Grundlsee was very important to Edith's survival, both as a community and as an amazingly beautiful natural environment. She returned each summer to paint while she lived and taught in New York. She could internalize this holding environment and carry it with her. By doing that, Edith

## 8 *Lani Gerity and Susan Ainlay Anand*

could help her students and the children she worked with to do the same. Just knowing such communities can be possible creates a sense of hope and is deeply comforting.

Edith believed and taught us that mentors are very important. For her, having mentors in the fine arts and being a “disciple” of several master artists rather than an art student at a university was most beneficial. Friedl Dicker-Brandeis was central to Edith’s development of her ideas of art as therapy, and she felt art therapists ought to know something about Friedl – her ideas and her fate.

Many of the chapters discuss this relationship of Edith and Friedl, but Elena Makarova’s chapter, “Edith Kramer on Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, Erna Furman, and Terezin. Interviews with Elena Makarova” and Margherita Gandini’s chapter, “Lyceum Art Therapy Training Program,” go into the most depth, giving North Americans a much clearer understanding of the relationship between a mentor and a mentee.

In looking through images of Edith’s work, her home in Austria, and photos from her family, we realized that Edith valued history very much, as well as the idea of being a part of a generous lineage. We learned the things that Edith learned from Friedl, and of course you will discover them now, as well. Lineages are a very good thing to be a part of – we aren’t as isolated and separate as we might imagine.

Edith joined Friedl in Prague from 1934 to 1938, to study with her and to help her work with refugee children and families who were fleeing Germany. She learned much from Friedl, and one of the best things she taught us – that we don’t have to wait to do good things in the world – came from Friedl’s life experience.

Friedl told Edith that she thought something was wrong with her for feeling very alive when she was locked up for communist activity and that this must be masochism, so she should be analyzed immediately. However, her ability to remain fully alive under extreme adversity served her and the children she taught in Terezin very well. This is comforting because if Friedl could do so much good without achieving perfection and under such impossible conditions, then surely we can also do some good, wherever we find ourselves.

During the Prague years, both Edith and Friedl were in psychoanalysis with Annie Reich (married to Wilhelm Reich). Analysis and attending lectures on child development were extremely helpful in understanding some of the art work they were seeing from the refugee children and was later beneficial to Friedl’s continued work in Terezin. The children’s work in Prague showed a willingness to identify with their persecutors. When the children were helped to break free from identification with the aggressor and able to recognize their own very real inner strengths through their art, the result would be powerful and empowering. This, we believe, is the core of Edith’s decolonizing art as therapy method.

Edith felt that much of her sense of heritage was bound up in art, art education, and psychoanalytically informed psychotherapy. Her Freudian