



MERRAN ROY

Merran's career began as an arts activist during her Fine Arts degree at WITS in the late 80's, providing workshops in informal settlements for children denied arts education by Bantu Education.

She qualified as an Art Psychotherapist at Goldsmiths University in London in 1995. Merran gained 4 years clinical experience in adult psychiatry at Sutton Hospital, UK, before serving 5 years as Head of the Art Psychotherapy Department at HMP Grendon, a world-renowned therapeutic community prison in Buckinghamshire for high risk, repetitive male offenders. During this time Merran completed her introductory training at the Institute of Group Analysis, and a Research Masters in Art Psychotherapy at Goldsmiths where she was also a visiting lecturer.

She returned to SA to rural Eastern Cape in 2006, chaired Sakhuluntu Cultural Group in Joza (Makhanda) and offered arts activities for children there. In 2011 Merran began developing & piloting a community arts facilitator training for the Keiskamma Trust in Hamburg.

In 2015 she separated this programme from the Trust, founding Intlantsi Creative Development Project, which she still directs. Intlantsi trains unemployed, under-educated adults to provide arts-based psychosocial support for children in rural villages throughout Ngqushwa LM. They are developing a decolonised, accessible ladder of Level 1-4 certificates towards existing Level 5 Community Arts Counsellor and MA Arts Therapies qualifications. Intlantsi training is rooted in indigenous learning traditions, using apprenticeship, oral knowledge-sharing, and reflective practice (as opposed to academic models).

In 2020, Merran co-founded Frontline Support, a voluntary online crisis management response to Covid providing free arts therapies to those unable to access mental health support during lockdown. In March this year, they piloted KOKO!: a student mental health intervention at WITS & UCKAR (in partnership with Drama for Life) combining Playback Theatre with Visual Arts.