



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

LYCIA RODRIGUES

BA (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2006)

“The Meaning of a Visual Arts Program for Older Adults in Long-Term Care”

Social Dimensions of Health Program

Thursday, August 18, 2016

10:00AM

Cornett Building

Room A317

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Debra Sheets, School of Nursing, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Andre Smith, Department of Sociology, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:

Dr. Anne Bruce, School of Nursing, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Feng Xu, Department of Political Science, UVic

Abstract

This research is focused on the experiences of older adults participating in an innovative visual arts program at a long-term care facility in Victoria, British Columbia. The program offers participants an opportunity to explore their creativity and identity as artists. Conceptually, the study draws from Tornstam's gerotranscendence framework (Tornstam, 2005) and the theory of meaning (Frankl, 1963). A narrative inquiry approach was used with data collected through face-to-face interviews and observations of 10 residents and three staff involved in the visual arts program.

Findings indicate that the program fostered a sense of community among participants and enhanced their quality of life. The public exhibition of their artwork at a community-based art exhibit validated the merit of their work and gave meaning and purpose to their participation in the program. Findings contribute to a greater understanding of the importance of arts programs that foster creativity in later life and resonate with Tornstam's (2005) argument that older people living in institutions can experience multiple dimensions of the self through individualized forms of expression. This study concludes by highlighting the need to increase access to arts programs for older people living in residential care.