

Episode: *Editorial Fellow Interview: “Embodiment in Art Practice”*

Guest: Michaela Chan, MFA

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

[00:00:03] TIM HOFF: Welcome to another episode of the Editorial Fellow Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I'm your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Michaela Chan, a poet-cartoonist living and teaching in Rochester, New York, and one of the Journal's first Art of Medicine interns. She's back to discuss the June 2025 issue of the Journal, [Embodiment in Art Practice](#). Michaela, thank you so much for being here.

MICHAELA CHAN: Thanks so much for having me, Tim. [music fades]

[00:00:37] HOFF: So, what is the main ethics point of this issue?

CHAN: Artistic practices reveal, challenge, and illuminate human bodily experiences, and they can provide unique insights into understanding human physicality, health, and personal narratives.

[00:00:56] HOFF: And so, what should health professions students and trainees who are perhaps coming to this issue not even knowing what embodiment in art practice means, what should they be taking from this issue?

CHAN: So, health professions students and trainees should be moving toward a holistic understanding of embodiment, recognizing that patient experiences are deeply personal and contextual, and that those experiences are intrinsically linked to emotional, cultural, and social narratives. I would also add that this issue highlights how the body is dynamic and constantly changing, and that practices of caring for patient bodies should be responsive to those changes. And finally, I think this issue shows how health professionals and students and trainees might be open to alternative ways of knowing and experiencing the body.

[00:01:51] HOFF: And finally, if you could add something to this issue, or perhaps just highlight something you'd like to see more discussion around, what would that be?

CHAN: Something that I would like to see more of in this discourse is artworks that use the body's leavings as a raw material for making art. So here, I'm thinking about earwax and toenails and skin flaking and other possibly gross things like this. And the reason I'm interested in these materials as a medium is they point to something.... They point to the way that bodies degrade and how that's a natural process and how bodies become

part of their environment over time. And I think there's something, as we think about mortality and as health care professionals coach their patients through end-of-life care, that can be really restful about observing the way that our bodies are part of the world around us. And that's not a new phenomenon. When our consciousness escapes our body, it's sort of happening all the time. So that, I think, sort of these material considerations would be...material considerations in artworks having to do with embodiment are what I would like to see more of in this discourse. [theme music returns]

[00:03:26] HOFF: Michaela, thank you so much for being back on the podcast, and thank you for all the work you put in to bringing this issue to our audience.

CHAN: Thanks so much for having me, Tim.

HOFF: To read the full article, as well as the rest of this month's issue for free, visit our site, [journalofethics.org](http://journalofethics.org). We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.