

South African Sandplay Therapy Society

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2022



This newsletter provides information about the South African Sandplay Therapy Society (SASTS) and Sandplay Therapy as developed by Dora Kalff. It aims to facilitate communication between all SASTS members and to provide access to current research, events, and educational opportunities in the field of sandplay therapy. SASTS is a member society of the International Society of Sandplay Therapy (ISST) that encourages the highest quality of sandplay therapy practice from ISST certified sandplay therapists.

Our website is currently under construction.

A PEEK INSIDE

In the beginning

Sandplay's SA story

page 3

Your next step

Training and events

page 5

The Symbol Shack

The African Baobab

page 7

Message from ISST Liaison for SA

Dear Colleagues in Jungian Sandplay

Thank you so much for this first opportunity to write a message to our Sandplay community in South Africa.

I want to thank Retha Roux and Imme Thom for their dedication, creativity and passion to give birth to our first South African Sandplay Therapy Society (SASTS) Newsletter. What a special moment. You did a great job!

I am very proud to be the local ISST liaison of a dynamic and passionate group of founding members. SASTS was established by its founding members - Braam Beetge, Imme Thom, Gwenda Euvrard, Reyhana Seedat, Judith Bredekamp, Sylvia Clutten and Retha Roux - in 2021 as a non-profit organization. During the year Gwenda stepped back from the development group to honour her path towards semi-retirement and a smaller practice but she remains an encouraging voice and knowledgeable resource for us all.

Following many months of preparation by our founding members, SASTS is in the process to become an officially registered ISST Society. We are excited to announce that our proposal for the constitution of the South African Sandplay Therapy Society is now on its way to the ISST board.

If all goes well, our acceptance into the ISST stall will become official next year at the 26th ISST Congress in Israel. The Congress is planned for March 26th to 30st 2023 in the beautiful landscape of the Jerusalem hills. The theme of the congress is "When East meets West: Past, Present and Future." More information on the congress can be found on page 6. We hope to see many of you there to celebrate the announcement of our Society.

As founding members, we are actively working to have our website up and running soon. The site will be administered by Sylvia Clutten, and you will find all the information you need about SASTS here. We will contact you all soon to invite you to become members of SASTS and to be part of the website.

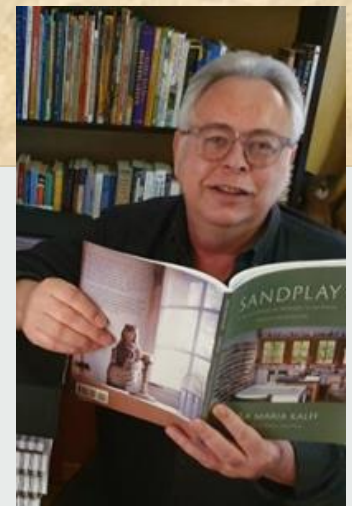
Nine more Candidates will complete their two-year intensive with me this year. Unfortunately, due to Covid, it took them longer than two years.

SASTS will continue this year to build a working relationship with SAAJA (The South African Association of Jungian Analysts). Most people don't know that when you register with ISST as a Certified Sandplay Therapist, you also become a member of IAAP (International Association for Analytical Psychology). ISST is an officially affiliated organisational member of IAAP.

We are proud of every member in our community who is committed to Frau Dora Kalff's vision and the guidelines of ISST to practice Sandplay Therapy in South Africa. This newsletter belongs to you as a Temenos where we in SA can learn from each other, share news regarding Jungian Sandplay therapy, and enjoy friendship - as if playing in the "free and protected space." May this newsletter develop, grow and transform in its content as we continue our journeys in this wonderful therapeutic modality.

I wish you all a good 2022 and my best to our new upcoming Society and its members.

Braam



Who's Who

International Society for Sandplay

**ISST Vice-president for Europe,
Middle East & Africa**

Carlo Ruffino (Italy)

**ISST Liaison guiding SASTS
towards ISST registration**

Dr Alex Esterhuizen (Hong Kong)

South African Sandplay Therapy Society

ISST Certified Teaching Members



Braam Beetge
Paarl, WC



Irmgard Thom (Imme)
Krugersdorp, Gauteng



Gwenda Euvrard
Makhanda, EC

ISST Certified Therapists



Reyhana Seedat
Durban, KZN



Judith Bredekamp
Bloubergstrand, WC



Sylvia Clutten
Bloubergstrand, WC



Aletta Roux (Retha)
Brackenfell, WC



In the beginning...

Imme remembers

For me Sandplay started on the soil with mud and sand in the townships and shack towns around my city. I worked in these very poor areas as an art therapist, once or twice a week voluntarily. When no materials were available, we naturally started drawing and playing in the sand.

I gave each child a marked off area of the soil and soon we were busy with stones and metal pieces, bottle tops and 'found objects' making pictures. Later I added a few figures made of bamboo leaves and some cut from Coke and cold drink cans.

My work in these townships was interrupted in 1992/3 when my vehicle was stoned, and I was forbidden to enter the townships. I accepted work in Congo-Zaire as a metal tester in Kolwesi, north of Lubumbashi. as I was trained in metallics. Once more, I was surrounded by children that had seldom seen an *umlungu* (white person). This time they spoke a language I could not understand at all. I was fascinated by the possibility to communicate with them on what Jung would call the psychoid level. Transference and counter transference came naturally. I learnt so much from them. All my free time was spent doing natural sandplay in the soil and mud, with natural objects.

Back in South Africa I continued working as a therapist of mixed media in the townships. I focused on addiction, as my husband was an alcoholic and my daughter a heroin addict. I developed a therapy called object therapy forming pictures out of the valueless but invaluable little objects addicts were left with - when they successfully were able to live without drugs ... or died.

In 1998 my son died in a motorbike accident. My life stopped.

In 2004 I went to Germany with my brother and met Sigrid Löwen through a series of coincidences, due to my search for a therapy like the one I used. I found her on the internet and met her in a hospital garden in Berlin. She looked at photos of my work and immediately offered to train me in sandplay therapy, free of charge.



1. Sandplay in a cardboard box



2. Sandplay in a trough

I travelled to Germany and she to Africa where she trained my volunteers and helped me set up my sandplay room according to her spec.

In the township I was given a house to care for children that were abused or neglected. At first, I still used demarcated areas or boxes with soil (Picture 1).

As there were many children sent by the school, I set up a long trough filled with sand and marked off spaces, so each child still had a protected space (Picture 2).

During this time, I travelled to Scotland on occasion to visit my daughter when she was invited as an artist at a music festival. Here in the tents, we did sandplay with many diverse objects in boxes with sand. I was surprised at the similarities of expression, between these sandplay scenes and those I did with people in South Africa.

I presented my work in Germany on several occasions, at the Jungian institute and in conferences. In 2007 Eva Pattis and Sachiko Reece joined me in running a series of processes in a township – school... and another in a shack in a shack town, which was mainly for teenagers (Picture 3).

We carried sand in trash bags and had the boxes on stands that I had made. In the school we had to clear a classroom and install these self-standing boxes (Picture 4).

The experiment was very interesting and opened my eyes to even greater needs. Eva Pattis included two chapters about this work in her book, *Sandplay Therapy in Vulnerable Communities*. Sachiko Reece presented a paper on it in the seminar in Kyoto in Japan in 2008.

In 2009 I met Deborah Bedford-Strohm. She and her mom Ann helped fund my sandplay wagon (Picture 5), which made my work in the townships and the prison much easier. It was self-contained so the lack of space was now bridged. There were 12 boxes in the wagon.

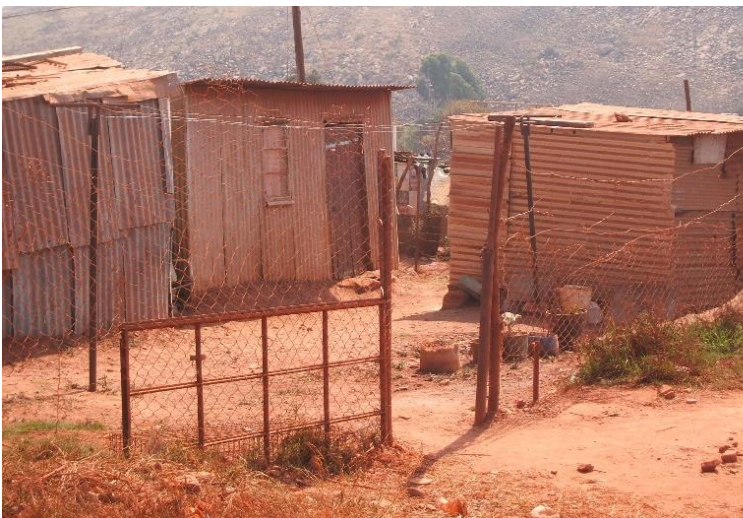
After this I met Braam Beetge and our joint journey ahead started. He had the organizational skill that I lacked to bring it all together.

*Start where you are. Use what you have.
Do what you can.*

Arthur Ashe



4. Teenagers helping to unload trays



3. Sandplay shack



5. Sandplay wagon

Your next step...

One does not need to see the whole staircase to be able to take the next step ...

Here are some ways to continue your own sandplay journey in 2022.



Going down these wooden steps at Hinderzunen 8, Zollikon, Switzerland takes one into Dora Kalff's Sandplay Room. The house was built in 1485. Picture with courtesy, Braam Beetge

***"There is a dream
dreaming us"***

San saying

Contact any ISST certified teacher or therapist to arrange your **personal process**

Individual Supervision

Contact Braam or Imme for **IN PERSON** or **ONLINE** supervision. Gwenda can be contacted for **ONLINE** supervision **ONLY**.

Group Supervision 2022

Last Saturday of every month

Group 1 9:00-11:00 one space left

Group 2 12:00-14:00 two spaces left

Contact Braam on his personal WhatsApp if you want to join one of his groups

2022 Webinar Series

First Quarter

19:00 - 21:00

On Zoom

Last Thursday of each month

27 January Dr Christine Laidlaw

In the skin of the Symbol. Donkeys as the Embodiment of Groundedness and Spirituality

24 February Dr Deon van Zyl

Is Life Fair? A Jungian Perspective on the Book of Job

31 March Carlo Ruffino

The Father and its expression in the Sandtray

E-learning: Archetypes

The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism

<https://aras.org>

The Mythology Channel

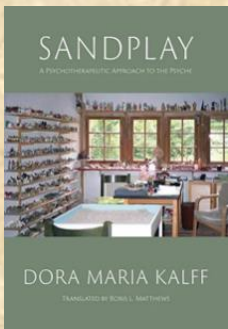
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEKeXu1g-Cqzow0wF3ysFpw>

The Assisi Institute: The International Center for the study of Archetypal Patterns

<https://www.assisiinstitute.com>

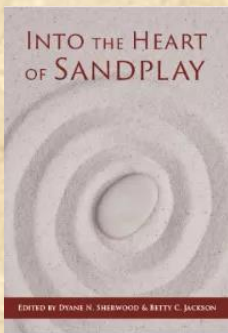


On the Shelf



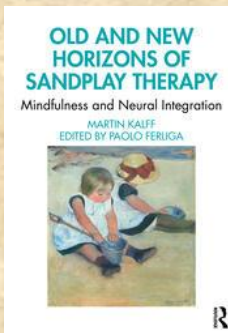
Sandplay: A Psychotherapeutic Approach to the Psyche

Dora Maria Kalff



Into the Heart of Sandplay

Edited by Dyane N. Sherwood &
Betty C. Jackson



Old and New Horizons of Sandplay Therapy: Mindfulness and Neural Integration

Martin Kalff & Paolo Ferliga

ISST Congress



The 26th ISST Congress will be held from March 26th to 30st 2023 at the Ye'arim Hotel in Kibbutz Ma'ale Hachamisha, 15 km. from Jerusalem, in the beautiful landscape of the Jerusalem hills.

Deadline for presentation submissions: 1 July 2022

<http://sandplay.co.il/en/the-26th-isst-congress/>

From the editorial team

Please share your activities, photos, learning opportunities & inspirations with us to make our newsletter a true community paper.

alettamroux@gmail.com or immethom@gmail.com

The Symbol Shack

The African Baobab Tree

The Baobab tree has stood sentry over the vast African plains since prehistory. It is an indigenous “Tree of Life” renowned for its longevity, protection, and nourishment in a resource-poor habitat often afflicted by drought.

Imbued with spirit, the African Baobab shares the joys and sorrows of those living around it. Dominating the landscape with its formidable form, it is a beacon of hope - drawing animals and humans from afar to its rich reserves.

Hollowing out from the inside as it grows older, the trunk absorbs and stores large volumes of water. During the dry season, the bark becomes a water-saturated snack for elephant, eland and other wildlife. Water retention renders the inner centre and bark of the tree soft and fibrous, as well as fire resistant. These qualities make it useful for weaving cloth and rope. The large branches and hollowed out interiors offer nesting space to birds, insects, and reptiles. Baobabs are also used by humans for housing, storage, and workspace.

Huge white Baobab flowers appear after the rainy season and are pollinated by bats during a fleeting reproductive window of 12-18 hours. Starting to open at dusk, they produce a sweet fragrance that fades with the bloom by dawn. Fruit is produced during the dry season. Baobab leaves, the large oval fruit and seeds are eaten fresh by humans and other species such as baboons and warthogs.

Baobab fruit dries naturally on the tree. Baking in the sun for up to six months transform the velvety green fruit coating into a tough shell. Once harvested, the dehydrated fruit and seeds are used whole or grounded in cooking, medicine and beer-brewing. With a shelf life of up to 3 years, it offers a truly organic nutrient-dense supplement rich in Vitamin C and potassium (among other ingredients). The seeds of some baobab species also yield an oil that is used as moisturiser.



Picture: JG Roux

The resilient Baobab continues growing throughout its lifetime. Succumbing to neither fire nor the stripping of its bark, it is notoriously difficult to kill. Some believe that a baobab elder simply disappears when it dies – the tree usually rots from the inside and collapses suddenly, leaving a heap of fibres. In Africa, the tree is considered to live on in the rope or cloth made from this last offering.

The Baobab tree is an embodied image of the life force that courses throughout history and through the individuation process. It represents Africa’s own version of reversed tree symbolism and is known locally as “the upside-down tree” because of its exceptional branches that resemble tree roots.

A Baobab’s nurturing protection and hollowed-out trunk mirror the free and shielded space of sandplay therapy - a resource-rich liminal space with the potential to become a unique mystical portal. As the ego acquiesces to the fertilising influences of the unconscious, psychic hubris is cleared out. Hidden psychological assets may be uncovered. New growth unleashes powerful opportunities to unify the dualities of instinctual and spiritual life, of natural and ancestral demands.

Metaphorically rooting into both soil and air, the baobab simultaneously draw water from the earth, hold rainwater from the air and absorbs the fiery African sun into its body. It exemplifies the integration of psyche, soma and spirit as it can be witnessed in a sandplay journey, where the client interacts physically and symbolically with the elements. Over time, the potent alchemical mix of sand work within a constructive co-transference field produce visible ripening and brings forth fruit that benefits the client and the community.

The brief night-time budding of Baobab flowers epitomises sandplay encounters with the mysterious beauty of uncharted psychic landscapes. These short-lived occurrences often leave lasting impressions on the psyche, just as the therapeutic journey bequeaths a legacy of psychic fibre that continues to strengthen the client long after the therapy process has come to an end.

Retha Roux