



South African Sandplay Therapy Society

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.

Visit our website at www.sasts.co.za

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2023

A PEEK INSIDE

Bush Telegraph

page 2

In the beginning

Braam remembers...

page 4

Indaba

**4-Day Intensive with
Dr Audrey Punnett**

page 6

Coming Full Circle

page 7

The Symbol Shack

The African Elephant

page 9



ISST LIAISON SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Friends

We as the Founding members wish you a year of happiness and good health. May 2023 be a year of more growth and transformation in Jungian Sandplay Therapy.

Thank you for all your support last year. We will continue this year with seminars on the last Thursday of every **second** month. We try to invite overseas ISST Teaching Members to enhance your growth and understanding of what Dora Kalff also referred to as a “way of life”. As long as we give the psyche room, a safe and protected space and time, it will reveal itself in sand pictures. How amazing is it that in this space we enliven matter with spirit in the presence of another! Almost always in the work we do and when we relook at a sandtray picture or process, there is something unknowable present. Something of the mystery of life we have no words for, just an image.

As you will notice, we have a new ISST Vice President for Africa in the place of Carlo Ruffino. Thank you Carlo for what you did for us and for your interest in South Africa. Congratulations Maria with the position – it is an honour to have you! I have known Maria for many years as a dear friend and a very hard worker. Maria played a big role to get our Society registered with the ISST Board.

We will start with the voting process for our Executive Committee soon. In March, I will travel to the ISST Conference in Israel with Sylvia Clutten and Nikki Themistocleous, where our newly established South African Sandplay Society will be officially announced. This is a big moment – a culmination of hard work over the past 12 years. A big thank you to all those who worked with us towards this goal, nationally and internationally.

Please keep on visiting our beautiful website for new information and updates. Enjoy reading our newsletter!

I send you all my best.

Braam Beetge

ISST VICE- PRESIDENT EUROPE/AFRICA MIDDLE EAST



Following Carlo Ruffino in the function of the Vice President for Europe, Africa and Middle East, I first want to thank Carlo for his integrative work in these regions of the world, and especially for his commitment to accompany the South African Sandplay Therapy Society towards becoming a member society of ISST. The last steps in this direction are being done and there will be a great opportunity to celebrate in 2023!

When I look at the expressive logo of your society, many thoughts and sensations come to my mind. I feel the dynamic energies of growth and strength in the trunk of the Baobab tree which evidently holds the atmosphere of Africa. Streams of energy seem to nourish the thick and thinner branches of the tree. Some of them have leaves on it, some of them do not. Perhaps those have already done their season, and surely will grow new ones. The crown of the tree is wide and dense. It can give shadow when heat dampens the forces and offers a comfortable place for people to meet and to talk together. The roots accumulate water, which is so precious for survival.

May this image in all its aspects be a living symbol for your activities in SASTS, based on the intensive efforts that have already been done in order to create and maintain the group of committed persons who develop activities around Sandplay in South Africa. What I hear about your projects, learn from your activities I share in and last but not least this newsletter breathes the atmosphere of the Baobab logo!

My best wishes for solid roots, a strong trunk and a continuously growing crown of SASTS!

Maria Kendler



BUSH TELEGRAPH

The very last adjustments to the Constitution for the South African Sandplay Society have been finalized.

Our home-grown Sandplay Society will be officially accepted at the next ISST Board Meeting and will be announced at the ISST Congress in Israel!!



AFRICA IS MOVING!

This beautiful bowl with its swirling spiral in our national flag's colours was created by Elizabeth Gwebu of African Art and Beadworks. It captures essential elements of our indigenous cultures and of movement. Perhaps it offers a symbolic image of the personal journey each one of us takes into the heart of Sandplay, as well as an inspirational vision of the quest of our young society.

Thank you to everyone who shared pictures and inspirations with the editorial team.
Keep them coming!

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In the beginning...

Braam remembers



Adapted from Sherwood, D.N. & Jackson, B.C. 2018. *Into the Heart of Sandplay*, p 247-257

Our footprints on this journey we call Life are at times understandable through synchronistic moments and at other times remain mysterious. They lead us back and forth, here and there, to the heights and into the depths. We are captured time and again by the impact of the inner and the outer walks we take.

Sandplay discovered me at a young age. Growing up on a farm near the small town of Lydenberg in South Africa, it was the sand that connected me and my African friends as we played. Our action play developed into serious symbolic play and not having access to manufactured toys, my African friends and I had to invent our own. At the edge of a river, not far from the farmhouse, we found the best clay any child could play with. From mother earth and easy to mold, the clay allowed us to create amazing miniature toys for the worlds we built in the sand. In this play - the language of childhood - we started to enrich our inner development and growth toward life.

Many years later, I discovered the book of Dora Kalff, an encounter that summoned my soul to psycho-analytical psychology and sandplay therapy. While attending a play therapy workshop in Johannesburg in 1988, I learned from the presenter, Reyhana Seedat, about this wonderful therapy of sandplay. Reyhana and I became soulmates in play therapy and sandplay therapy. Together, we travelled abroad many times to complete a 6-year study process towards ISST certification.

Referred by Dr Martin Kalff to Catherine de Dardel from Montreux, Switzerland (a first-generation student of Frau Kalff), I started my personal process in 2008. The safe and protected space and genuine relationship I experienced with her helped me to accept the largeness of my journey and that we all journey alone with our own footprints and those approaching us. I recovered a sense of my true path.



Sandplay siblings. Reyhana Seedat and I in Prague, on our way to a "Sandplay Training in Switzerland" Programme."



With my mentor and dear friend Dr Martin Kalff in front of Frau Kalff's home in Zurich, where sandplay was born. A true friend accepts who you are, but also helps you to become who you should be.

Two meaningful encounters occurred in 2008 when I attended a two-and-a-half-week training programme in Sandplay organized by Patty Flowers and Judy Zappacosta.



On safari with my dear soul friend Judy Zappacosta who gave me much holding and support during the painful losses I experienced during the COVID pandemic.



The First Two-Year Intensive Training group in South Africa, 2011-2013.



Teaching in South Africa with Deborah Bedford Strohm and Anke Seitz.

The first was hinted at by the old bell that announced our tea and lunch times. It was a bell that Dora had used herself, and it evoked in me a presence I find difficult to put into words.

As part of the curriculum, Martin Kalff presented a case study in which a child had created a sandtray of Africa. It brought up memories of my own encounters with the African elephant as a child. When I was invited to teach in this programme many years later in 2017, it became clear that the bell had heralded the constellation of my inner and outer journey with the African elephant in sandplay.

The African elephant energy guided me quietly on my sandplay journey, and it became the symbolic carrier of a transformative place within my psyche. I explored its symbolism in an article for the Swiss and German Sandplay Journal and presented a case study in which the elephant was a key symbol at an STA conference in 2016.

The second meaningful encounter was when Martin Kalff invited Reyhana and I outside into the garden one evening. Sharing stories of wisdom in the Buddha nature, a safe and protected space opened in me. It started my journey to learn sandplay with my heart and my senses, as well as a long friendship with Martin. Many visits to the ancient Swiss farmhouse at 8 Hinter Zeunen Zollikon followed to enrich my sandplay experiences. I always returned with a spiritual silence after my visits.

In 2009, Reyhana and I invited Martin and Sabine to South Africa. Martin presented the first formal training in sandplay on the African continent and 20 psychologists attended the 7-day training. Afterwards, on a safari in Kruger National Park, we had a deeply numinous encounter when a herd of African elephants surrounded us.

I then met Deborah Bedford Strohm from Germany, who had been coming to South Africa on a regular basis, and we decided to do the first 2-year intensive sandplay training in South Africa. In 2011, Reyhana, Deborah and I invited Ruth Amman, Martin Kalff and Judy Zappacosta to teach this programme. Ruth also became a trusted friend who asked me to become the representative of ISST in South Africa.

Since then, Deborah, Anke Seitz and I continued with 2-year intensive training in Paarl. I have also invited Lorraine Freedle, Gita Morena and Maria Kendler to continue the 6-day trainings in South Africa. Imme Thom, the first and for a long time the only certified ISST sandplay therapist in South Africa, helped me to not stop dreaming.



With Maria Kendler. True friends are never apart, maybe in distance but never in heart.



With Lorraine Freedle. Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart (Eleanor Roosevelt).



Teaching in China with Imme Thom.

The footprints that were in front of me as a child playing in the sand of a farm in Africa met a set of footprints that approached mine on my journey in sandplay, which I honoured in my soul garden and in my work. Thank you to all those footprints that approached me!

Now, looking back at this part of a full circle of my Sandplay journey that had started in Switzerland and then being invited back there years later to teach in that same programme, taught me that the sand knew it all since my childhood. Dora Kalff used to say that if we succeed, we can speak of “grace”.

The call has been answered. It is a privilege today to continue as an ISST Teaching Member to teach Sandplay Therapy and to help my two wonderful colleagues Sylvia Clutten and Retha Roux on their journeys to become ISST Teaching Members. The object of life is not happiness, but to serve God or the Grail.



With the coordinators of the 2-Year Intensive Training I helped to facilitate in Turkey.

Indaba ...

(A word from the Nguni languages meaning discussion, conference, or business)

4-day Intensive with Dr Audrey Punnett

A group of 20 psychologists were fortunate to participate in the rich teaching by Dr Punnett on **Jungian Sandplay Therapy with Children** from 8-11 October 2022. We were inspired by the symbols of the orphan and the mandala.



Colleagues from all over the country met in Paarl for the 4-day workshop. Picture: Judith Bredekamp.



Listening and learning. Picture: Braam Beetge.



Table Mountain welcomes Audrey to Cape Town. Picture: Braam Beetge.



Concluding the training by circling a collective mandala made of the individual mandalas of trainees. Picture: Braam Beetge.

Insights that lingered:

“Wherever I am is where I need to be.”

“What especially resonated with me was the idea that things do not happen to me, all my experiences form part of my story.”

“When I am alone, I do not need to fear the emptiness. I can feel a belonging that has always been there.”

Coming Full Circle

Completion of Theoretical Component

A 2-year Intensive that took 3 years due to COVID!!

Not even a pandemic could dampen this group's enthusiasm for Sandplay. They started their theoretical training with Deborah Bedford Strohm, Anke Seitz and Braam Beetge in November 2019 and completed their final module on Individuation from a Jungian Perspective in Sandplay Therapy from 25-28 November 2022.

This training group will be remembered for their incredible commitment and for the containing temenos they helped to create during the training. They also welcomed Retha Roux and Sylvia Clutten (who are working towards ISST Teacher accreditation) as co-trainers into their space.

May the synchronicities, insights, and symbols we shared with sincere vulnerability and raucous laughter always be keepsakes on your personal journey with Sandplay.



Front row: Marit Woudstra, Niki Lindeque, Linda Sterkenburg, Glenda McCleod. Second row: Louise Hendersohn, Lanel Maré, Stephanie Terblanche, Jessica Laubscher, Elretha Bartlett. Picture: Retha Roux.



Ending off with a leisurely breakfast at Grand Provence in Franschhoek. Picture: Stephanie Terblanche.



Unwittingly relaxing in mandala-style around a tree during lunch break. Picture: Stephanie Terblanche.



This Anton Smit sculpture at Grand Provence seemed to capture the completion of a training cycle within a safe temenos perfectly. The last module was also co-trained by Sylvia Clutten, who wrote her first symbol paper on hands. Picture: Louise Henderson.

2023 Webinar Programme

Every second month, 19:00-21:00

23 Feb Judy Zappacosta

The Body in Sandplay

4 May Dr Linda Cunningham

Complexes in Jungian Sandplay Therapy

22 June Renee Ramsden

Anima and Animus

ISST Congress 2023



The 26th ISST Congress will be held in Israel from 26-30 March 2023.

The **EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION** for those wishing to attend **ONLINE** has been **EXTENDED** until **1 March 2023**.

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

Contact Braam or Imme for IN PERSON or ONLINE individual supervision. Contact Gwenda for ONLINE supervision.

Holding the Darkness

February–December 2023



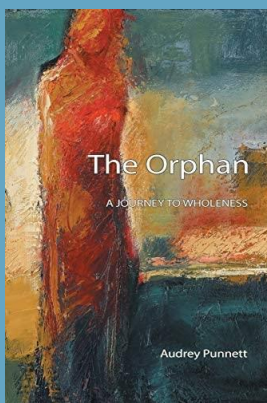
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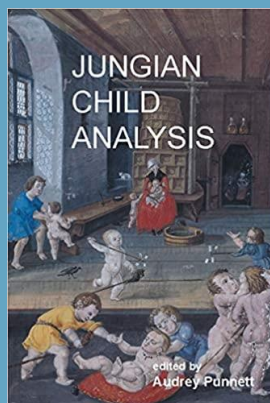
**For brochure and registration information
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BettyCJackson@mac.com

On the Shelf



The Orphan: A Journey to Wholeness
Dr Audrey Punnett



Jungian Child Analysis
Ed. Dr Audrey Punnett



The Symbol Shack

The African Elephant

"The dusk was deepening. We waited quietly on the roofs of our vehicles at the bend in the river. The plains covered in red grass and a thorny acacia canopy stretched towards distant horizons that melted into sky.

Initially, the approach was subtle. Their leisurely dignified stroll first reached our ears as the soft yielding of undergrowth, sometimes as creaking twigs and snapping branches. Then we heard the deep rumbles - like distant thunder. And then slowly, ever so slowly, colossal curves - silverish in the fading light - emerged from the trees.

Their flapping ears were negotiating the sweltering heat. Their trunks and tusks swayed, having served them throughout the day as they grazed. Now it was time to come down to the water.

Distinguishable groups approached from different directions, perhaps bond groups and clans loosely clustering into a herd in this dry region. Matriarchs approached one another amicably - sometimes just facing the other, sometimes greeting each other with their trunks - before returning to their own group and the appointment with the river. They scooped the refreshing water into their mouths and waded into the coolness, splashing with utter abandon. Young ones played mischievously between the large pillar-like legs of their elders, who patiently admonished them when things got too boisterous."

The largest surviving species of land animals, African elephants are herbivorous and adaptable to various habitats. Although they prefer to stay near water, elephant herds manage to survive in the Namib and Sahara deserts. Highly intelligent, they are known to use tools and have a remarkable long-term memory span. Elephants communicate by touch, visual displays, sound and long-distance infrasonic sound. Their emotional astuteness is displayed with behavior that hints of self-awareness, perceptive parenting, and altruism.

Family or bond groups usually consist of cows and youngsters and are led by a mature, often the eldest, cow. When young bulls reach puberty, they spend more time on the fringe of the group and start associating with other groups. When they leave their original family, they wander alone or with other bulls.

In Africa, these gentle giants are regarded with deep reverence. Considered a spiritual entity, they signify sovereignty, honour, wisdom, loyalty, and stability. With their large frames and regal demeanour, they seem to kindle in us the awareness of something much bigger within the field of consciousness. Their communication through infra-sound speaks of the necessity to listen closely to the subtle messages from our inner and outer worlds. Their dependence on water emphasizes the replenishment that may be found in the unconscious depths.



Known in indigenous languages as “The forceful one” or “The one who crashes through”, the elephant’s unassailable strength is both admired and dreaded. They may symbolize transformative energies that could remove obstacles and clear the way into unexplored vistas within the psyche. They may also depict powerful rampant drives that could wreak havoc and may need temperance.

Growing a new mouthful of teeth once the first set has worn out, elephants are associated with longevity, rebirth, and the transmigration of souls. In Africa, they are commonly respected as the reincarnation of deceased ancestors. Their tight-knit matrilineal social structure denotes the value of relationship and of an intimate connection to the instinctual inner feminine.

Co-existing peacefully with other herbivores which wisely respect their presence and space, elephants embody the principle of living in harmony with those who have different belief systems. In local fables, an elephant often represents a wise chief who impartially settles disputes among the forest creatures.

The San culture venerates a great rain beast that was able to dig for water and to call rain from the sky. In their rock paintings, this beast is portrayed as great elephant with raindrops of white paint all over his body (or as a pregnant rhinoceros or hippopotamus that releases rain when it gives birth). Dreams of stampeding elephants during times of great drought hold the promise that rain will soon fall on the land, connecting it to symbolism of good fortune and prosperity.

“The encounter was magical. We forgot about time and the tricky road that we would need to negotiate back to our campsite in the dark. These magnificent beasts awakened in us the realization of immense vitality and unquestionable resilience.”

Retha Roux & Madelise van Coller



Picture: Judith Bredekamp



Picture: Braam Beetge.